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Opinion



Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

A constructive meeting was held between His Highness the Prime Minister and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to assess the requirements for exiting the grey list, review the progress achieved, and strengthen

coordination mechanisms in this area. The meeting also aimed to develop a roadmap for the country's economic recovery, particularly in light of recent developments that have affected various sectors.

In another positive step, Minister of Finance Dr. Yaqoub Al-Rifai revealed the government's intention to stimulate the economy to address the impact of recent events on the domestic market. This includes the Central Bank of Kuwait's directive to

local banks to support the sustainability of economic activity and financial stability, provide facilities for companies, and avoid pressuring them to repay their dues by granting them additional time and flexibility.

This particular issue has drawn considerable discussion, especially regarding the strict procedures adopted by commercial banks, which they claim are in line with Central Bank instructions. This places borrowers under double pressure of

covering monthly operating expenses while also facing stricter bank loan repayment requirements. This

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NATIONWIDE RESTART ACROSS EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE BEGINS

Kuwait gears up traffic control for peak return

Schools reopen with streamlined curriculum plan

By Munif Naif and Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: The Ministry of Interior continues its operations in various field sectors to ensure smooth traffic flow on all roads, coinciding with the return of civilian employees to their workplaces at 100 percent capacity on Sunday and the resumption of in-person classes for high school after a hiatus of more than 60 days following

the Iranian aggression against the country in February and the subsequent implementation of distance learning to guarantee the safety of everyone.

The newspaper obtained information from a security source that Undersecretary of the ministry Major General Abdulwahab Al-Wahib issued a circular mandating the return to 100 percent attendance for civilian staff starting Sunday, as per the directive of the Civil Service Commission

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KUNA photo

A Kuwait Airways plane takes off in this file photo.

Key carriers scale up ops as 'recovery' accelerates

KUWAIT CITY, May 2, (KUNA): Kuwait Airways Corporate announced on Friday the resumption of its operations to 13 destinations from Kuwait International Airport, Terminal 4 (T4), starting Sunday.

This comes as part of the second phase of its gradual operational plan, bringing the total number of resumed destinations to 29.

Acting CEO Abdulwahab Al-Shatti told KUNA that the destinations include London, Paris, Dubai, Madrid, Milan, Bangkok, Istanbul, Jeddah, Riyadh, Doha, Bahrain, Sabiha, Cairo, Beirut, Amman, Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Kochi, Trivandrum, Islamabad, Dhaka, Manila, Colombo, Bangalore, Guangzhou, Ahmedabad, Sohar, in addition to Casablanca. Al-Shatti affirmed the national carrier's full operational readiness and its ability to handle various

operating conditions with high efficiency and flexibility, noting that the selection of destinations was based on market demand and increasing travel needs.

He added that Kuwait Airways is implementing well-studied plans to ensure continuity of operations while maintaining the highest standards of safety and quality, reflecting its leading position in the aviation sector.

Al-Shatti noted that the expansion in resumed destinations comes as part of the company's ongoing efforts to enhance operational efficiency and improve services provided to passengers.

He also affirmed that the airline will continue coordinating with relevant authorities in the country to further increase the number of

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KGAC strengthens border security without disrupting flow

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: In the midst of diverse challenges brought about by the Iranian aggression, the Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC) played a vital role in ensuring the uninterrupted transit of goods and the movement of individuals through the national borders.

This commitment is clearly reflected in the modernization and acceleration of border procedures, which maintained balance between stringent security requirements and the need for smooth commercial flow, thereby, securing a steady supply of commodities.

During a field visit to Salmi border, the newspaper observed customs personnel diligently carrying out their national duties by facilitating the entry of medical and food supplies and conducting daily inspection of incoming shipments.

Salmi Customs Director Saad Al-Quraini informed the newspaper that since the start of the aggression in February, KGAC has been fully operational and on high alert. He said this effort includes coordination with Saudi Al-Ruqai border, which has been operating at full capacity to maintain

Continued on Page 4

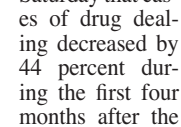


Photo by Samer Shiqr

Salmi Customs officers gather for a team photo at the border post.

Drug cases drop 44 percent

KUWAIT CITY, May 2, (KUNA): Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait said on Saturday that cases of drug dealing decreased by 44 percent during the first four months after the implementation of the new law, compared to the same period the previous year.



Al-Sumait

The Public Prosecution showed a

decrease of 111 cases, as the number dropped from 255 to 144, Minister Al-Sumait explained in a statement.

He added that this reflects the impact of the new legislation in confronting this type of crime, especially when combined with the efforts of the Ministry of Interior in apprehending perpetrators.

The Amiri Decree Law No. 59 concerning the control of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, regulating their use and trafficking, came into effect mid-December last year, forming a comprehensive legislative covering all aspects related.

Multi-agency sweep exposes breaches in restaurants, cafes

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in cooperation with the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) and the Ministry of Interior, conducted a joint inspection campaign in several restaurants and cafes in the Capital Governorate.

This campaign is part of ongoing



Photos during a MoCI inspection campaign in coordination with the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition and the Ministry of Interior.

efforts to intensify market oversight and ensure compliance with health and commercial regulations.

During the campaign, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry issued six citations for various violations like the absence of price lists, conducting promotional offers without a license, failure to use Arabic, issues with meat menus and charging additional fees.

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MoCI photos

Kuwait part of US \$8.6 billion weapons 'deal'

WASHINGTON, May 2, (Agencies): The U.S. administration has bypassed congressional review to offer arms sales worth over 8.6 billion U.S. dollars to Israel, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

Among the items were advanced precision kill weapon systems, air and missile defense replenishment services and an integrated battle command system, according to the state department.

The United States and Israel launched attacks on Iran on Feb. 28, and Iran responded with its own strikes on Israel and U.S. bases in Gulf states.

Elsewhere, the successful test of the new British-built Skyhammer interceptor missiles and launchers in Jordan will provide better protection for British troops and Gulf partners, said the UK Defense Ministry on Friday.

A statement by the ministry revealed that the trial came "less than two weeks since the Ministry of Defence signed a multi-million-pound contract with UK veteran-led start-up Cambridge Aerospace to buy Skyhammer interceptor missiles for the UK Armed Forces."

The statement added that the missiles have a range of 30 kilometers and a maximum speed of 700 km/h, noting

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UN resolution rebukes attacks on Kuwait, Gulf ICT networks

GENEVA, May 2, (KUNA): The Council of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) adopted on Friday a resolution condemning the unlawful and deliberate Iranian targeting of civilian Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure in Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, Bahrain and Jordan.

The resolution submitted by the GCC countries and Jordan before the Council session taking place in Geneva warned also against additional threats issued by Iranian authorities targeting further telecommunications facilities in the concerned countries.

Speaking in KUNA, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen welcomed the adoption of this resolution which include clear condemnation of Iran for violations of the union's charters.

He also reaffirmed Kuwait's firm rejection of any threats to cut internet cables in maritime corridors particularly the Strait of Hormuz warning of

the serious economic and social consequences of such actions.

In a statement delivered in the same session during the discussion of another draft resolution proposed by Iran which failed to secure the endorsement of the ITU Council Al-Hayen described it as lacking balance and impartiality.

The Kuwaiti Ambassador warned Iran's representative in Geneva about using descriptions that lacked credibility and professionalism and that carried misleading implications regarding the Gulf Arab states.

The Kuwaiti Ambassador reaffirmed that Gulf nations had gone to considerable lengths to avoid this dispute, but that Iran had persisted in flouting international law and targeting countries across the region.

The UN resolution adopted the ITU council statement that the Iranian strikes have affected data centers submarine cable landing stations connected to terrestrial networks satellite ground stations and space-based communications facilities across GCC member states and Jordan.

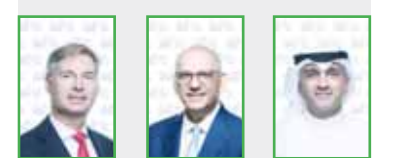
The resolution describes this king of attacks "as unprecedented globally" marking the first known case of intentional attacks on civilian cloud computing infrastructure.

It also condemned the widespread

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Amid exceptional geopolitical challenges, Boursa Kuwait records a net profit of KD 5.99 mln in first quarter of 2026



Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait Group holds Q1 2026 Analyst Conference Call

National Bank of Kuwait issues its 2025 Sustainability Report titled: 'Sustainability at the Core: From Strategy to Impact'



Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:40 Asr 15:21
 Sunrise .. 05:06 Maghrib .. 18:25
 Zohr 11:45 Isha 19:48

GCC countries surpass global average in Economic Freedom Index 2026

MUSCAT, May 2, (KUNA): The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Statistical Center announced Saturday that GCC countries achieved a "clear outperformance" in the 2026 Economic Freedom Index, surpassing the global average and reflecting strong economic openness and an improved business environment across the region.

In a report on GCC progress in the index, the Center stated that the bloc's average score reached 66.9 points, exceeding the global average of 59.9 by nearly seven points.

The data showed that all GCC countries recorded either "improvement" or "stability" in their scores between 2025 and 2026, with only "limited" variation in performance levels, indicating continued economic reforms and growth-supporting policies.

At the Arab level, GCC countries ranked among the top seven, reinforcing their position as the most economically open in the region.

The Center explained that higher index scores, ranging from zero to 100, indicate greater economic freedom and openness, with countries classified into categories from "repressed" to "open."

It added that the index is based on four main pillars: rule of law, government size, regulatory efficiency, and market openness, and is calculated using 12 sub-indicators covering 184 countries worldwide.

The Center noted that improvements in economic freedom contribute to attracting foreign investment, stimulating growth, creating jobs, enhancing competitiveness, improving living standards, reducing corruption, and stabilizing financial markets.

It affirmed that the progress reflects the success of economic policies and structural reforms pursued by GCC countries, highlighting their ability to build an attractive investment environment and achieve sustainable growth aligned with global best practices.

The Center, headquartered in Oman, serves as the official body for data, statistics, and information related to GCC countries, while supporting national statistical centers and planning agencies.



KUNA photo
 Kuwait's Ambassador to Indonesia Khaled Jassim Al-Yaseen, meets Speaker of Indonesia's People Consultative Assembly, Ahmad Muzani.

Kuwait, Indonesia seek to upgrade deep-rooted ties

KUALA LUMPUR, May 2, (KUNA): The Embassy of Kuwait in Indonesia announced on Saturday that Kuwait's Ambassador to Indonesia Khaled Jassim Al-Yaseen, met with Speaker of Indonesia's People Consultative Assembly, Ahmad Muzani.

During the meeting, which took place on Friday, the two sides discussed ways to enhance the strong relations between the two friendly countries and issues of mutual interest.

In a statement, the embassy said both sides highlighted the depth of bilateral relations between Kuwait and Indonesia, stressing the importance of intensifying efforts to strengthen

these ties across various political, economic, and cultural fields in a way that serves the shared interests of both nations.

It pointed out that Speaker Ahmad Muzani praised the vision and wisdom of Kuwait's political leadership which resulted in a comprehensive development and sustainable growth in the country.

Muzani also expressed Indonesia's regret over the attacks that targeted Kuwait during the recent crisis in the Gulf region, commending Kuwait's stance in avoiding repeated provocations and refraining from being drawn into a destructive war amid regional tensions.

Kuwait urges urgent steps to curb nukes

Use threats undermine disarmament efforts: Al-Enezi

NEW YORK, May 2, (KUNA): Minister Plenipotentiary Faisal Al-Enezi, Deputy Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations, stressed on Thursday evening that nuclear disarmament remains the cornerstone of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

In a speech before the Main Committee of the 11th Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, Al-Enezi noted that the credibility of the non-proliferation regime is closely linked to the implementation of commitments pertaining to the full elimination of these weapons.

He expressed the country's concern over international situation which witnessed amounting discourse related to the use of nuclear weapons and the continuation of developing nuclear arsenals that run counter to the context and spirit of the treaty.



Faisal Al-Enezi at the United Nations

KUNA photo

He has shed light on the need for the full and effective implementation of Article VI of the treaty, rejecting any attempts to reinterpret it or link it to preconditions.

He underlined that the obligations in this treaty constitute an unconditional legal commitment that must be completed without delay.

In the name of Kuwait, Al-Enezi called on countries having nuclear weapons to provide accurate and transparent data about their nuclear arsenals and plans to disarm them.

Continued dependence on nuclear

deterrence, expanding scenarios of the use or threat of nuclear weapons and developing new generations of such weapons undermine international efforts toward disarmament and weaken confidence in the international system, he said.

Kuwait stressed the importance of taking immediate measures to reduce nuclear risks, including decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons, strengthening confidence-building measures, and working on lessening the role of nuclear weapons in military doc-

trines, he noted.

He reiterated the country's support for finding binding legal instruments that provide effective, unconditional, and non-discriminatory negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon states.

He also urged bidding to the principle of no first use of nuclear weapons as an essential step toward building trust and strengthening collective security.

Al-Enezi appealed to the international community to push negotiations ahead aiming comprehensively and non-discriminatorily to ban the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons purposes, including existing stockpiles, in a manner that contributes to achieving both disarmament and non-proliferation objectives simultaneously.

He expressed hope for establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMDFZ), as a main step toward achieving international and regional stability and security.

He called on all relevant parties to engage seriously in efforts aiming to achieve this goal without delay.

'Citizens holding Hajj permits only can enter Makkah area'

JEDDAH, May 2, (KUNA): The Consulate General of Kuwait in Jeddah urged on Thursday all Kuwaiti citizens wishing to perform the Umrah pilgrimage that the deadline to enter Makkah will be on Friday, May 1, 14 Thu Al-Qi'dah 1447 AH.

The consulate emphasized in a statement that the final departure from Makkah should be no later than the end of Saturday, 15 Thu Al-Qi'dah 1447 AH, May 2.

It added that entering Makkah is

only allowed for those holding a Hajj permit or Makkah entry permit issued by the relevant authorities in Saudi Arabia, starting from Saturday, 15 Thu Al-Qi'dah 1447 AH, May 2, until the end of this year's Hajj season.

The consulate stressed the importance of full compliance with these instructions and decisions regarding the Hajj season of 1447 AH, issued by the competent authorities in Saudi Arabia.

King Faisal Road 'opens' after 2-day total closure

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: The General Traffic Department (GTD) announced the complete closure of King Faisal Bin Abdulaziz Road (Riyadh Road), under the South Surra and Khaitan Bridge, opposite Al-Siddiq, for traffic coming from Kuwait International Airport and heading towards Kuwait City, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The department explained that vehicles will be diverted via the South Surra and Khaitan Bridge towards Ibrahim Al-Muzain Street (No. 404) and Mohammed Al-Fares Street, leading to the Fifth Ring Road. The exit from Street No. 404 towards King Faisal Road in the direction of Kuwait City will remain open.

The closure began at dawn on Friday, May 1, and will continue until 5:00 AM on Sunday, May 3.

3 arrested for illegal trade in subsidized water cards

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: General Department of Criminal Investigation, represented by the Counterfeiting and Forgery Crimes Department, apprehended three Asian nationals, one of whom was wanted on an arrest warrant for absconding, on charges of illegally trading in subsidized water, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the Ministry of Interior explained that information was received indicating the individuals were illegally trading in water refill cards issued by the Ministry of Electricity and Water. The information was verified, and the necessary legal procedures were initiated.

The suspects were apprehended in possession of 250 water refill cards, a large number of collection receipts, and bank statements.

It was discovered the suspects were selling the water refill cards, which are issued to individuals and companies that own water tankers for their own use, despite the fact that this water is subsidized by the state and not intended for sale.

The ministry affirmed its continued security campaigns to apprehend anyone exploiting government subsidies or manipulating public resources, and to take deterrent legal action against them.

Expat workers transfers start, end on June 30

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) announced that the decision regarding the transfer of expatriate workers in certain sectors to other sectors came into effect on Friday, May 1, and will continue until June 30, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

PAM stated in a post on its X account on Thursday that applications to benefit from this decision will be submitted through the "Ashal Companies" online service. The approval of the original employer is required for accepting the transfer request and proceeding with its implementation.

The sectors covered by the ministerial decision include small and medium enterprises, industry, agriculture, livestock, and fishing.

PAM pointed out that the decision is a flexible regulatory step to meet labor market demands and achieve a balance between the various parties involved in the employment relationship.

Car belongs to Iraqi

By Munif Naif
 Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Commenting on a video that went viral on social media showing a Range Rover with Kuwaiti plate number involved in a horrific traffic accident in Iraq, a security source clarified to the newspaper that the vehicle in the video belongs to an Iraqi residing in Kuwait.

Other Voices

SRS and 75 years of 'charitable work'

By Ahmad alsarraf

THE roots of the "Guidance Society" go back to the late 1940s, before its historical leadership, name, and objectives were later changed. It was subsequently transformed into the Social Reform Society (SRS), evolving from a local charitable organization into a large social structure operating in coordination with the Muslim Brotherhood's international organization in Egypt.

This transformation turned SRS into a powerful social and financial institution, overseen by a leadership structure that includes a guide, a consultative council, trustees, and a highly complex organizational and financial structure. This led some members to sever their ties with it, particularly after the shameful position of the Muslim Brotherhood's international organization and many of its leaders in Kuwait regarding the liberation of Kuwait was revealed.

As usual, the government pardoned them for their transgressions and overlooked their leaders' strong opposition to seeking assistance from American and European forces to liberate the country from the Iraqi invasion, despite their firm belief that no entity other than the United States could have expelled Iraq from Kuwait.

The Muslim Brotherhood repeated a similar stance when they delayed condemning the Iranian attacks.

The propaganda arm of the Social Reform Society asked its senior officials to appear in the media to defend the society's positions. At that time, the society's president, Khaled Al-Mathkour, stated that the society would be at the service of the nation.

I responded with this social media post - "I, along with a million Kuwaiti citizens, would like to know what service you have provided to the nation over your 75 years of political activity."

As expected, I received no response from SRS,



alsarraf

likely because there was no response to be given. I therefore revisited the interview, where I found the following list of achievements the society claims to have provided to the nation:

In times of crisis, "national institutions" emerge to support the state, and the Social Reform Society is described as an important partner in promoting stability and spreading reassurance through its initiatives.

The list stated that the society demonstrated its commitment to the values of solidarity, compassion, and institutional work.

Based on its religious duty, it worked to instill reassurance and calm in the hearts of citizens and residents. It mobilized all its resources to support the state's efforts under such circumstances.

The society is working to promote social stability while ensuring cooperation and integration with all state institutions. It calls for unity, mutual support, and overcoming any differences or divisions.

It has developed a clear vision for addressing the current situation. It has ensured that its message was balanced, combining reassurance and awareness, while strengthening social cohesion.

The society also distributed iftar meals to patients in hospitals, supporting both patients and medical staff.

The society implemented a water distribution project in hospitals and vital facilities. It also participated in equipping shelters in cooperation with the Union of Charitable Societies and Foundations. In addition, a blood donation campaign was launched.

Aside from the last four points mentioned above, the remaining points raised by the aforementioned individual were merely general statements.

Furthermore, the actions referenced pertain only to the past few weeks, while the discussion concerns a period of over 70 years.

This raises the question - what has the Social Reform Society contributed to the nation during this period? What projects has it established in Kuwait?

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KUNA photo
 Undersecretary of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Lt Gen Hamad Al-Barjas visits a site under his jurisdiction to check combat readiness and progress.

33,615 Kuwaitis waiting for jobs since six months: PAM

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) revealed that 33,615 job seekers have been registered at the authority for more than six months.

According to PAM, these individuals are currently unemployed, do not receive pension, and are not enrolled in any educational institution.

Statistics from PAM showed that the registered individuals include 31 doctorate degree holders, 565 masteral degree holders, 18,629 university graduates, 6,952 diploma holders, 2,210 high school graduates with two or more

years of study, 249 high school graduates with one year of study, 944 high school graduates, 534 with high school diploma and one year experience, 308 with a two-year intermediate certificate, 311 with a one-year intermediate certificate, 511 hold an intermediate certificate with a course of three years or more, 539 hold an intermediate certificate with at least one year experience, 1,000 hold an intermediate certificate, 80 have vocational qualifications and parallel education, 488 with qualifications below the intermediate level, 30 hold below intermediate qualification with a course, and 234 hold below intermediate qualification with at least two years experience.

World cannot be hostage to 'chaos-creators' gang

"WHEN a country the size of Iran becomes an arena of influence for a group that pursues expansionist policies and fuels crises, the repercussions are not limited locally but extend to the global economy, energy security, and the stability of nations," Kuwaiti lawyer **Dr. Abdullah Mohammad Al-Turaiji** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Their danger is no longer confined to the Gulf region or the surrounding Arab countries; it has expanded to become a wide-spread threat affecting global stability as a whole.

"What we are witnessing these days is not merely passing political disputes, but a recurring pattern of crises managed with a conflict mindset rather than a state-building one. Disrupting interests, threatening vital waterways, and stirring unrest in multiple regions are all indicators of a deep flaw in the way this influence is being managed.

"The question that arises is - how can the world stand by and watch this expansion that recognizes no sovereignty and respects no stability?"

"The world today is more interconnected than ever, and any instability in a sensitive region is immediately reflected in other countries, from rising energy prices and disrupted supply chains to security tensions and waves of political anxiety. Everyone ends up paying the price.

"Therefore, this is no longer a regional matter that can be contained through silence or neglect. It has become an international issue requiring a firm stance and a collective vision.

"How long can this situation continue? The answer is not easy, but it begins when the international community realizes that tolerating sources of tension does not create peace, but it only delays an explosion.

"There must be a balance between deterrence and dialogue, and between protecting interests and enforcing respect for international laws. The world cannot afford to have critical decisions held hostage by those who choose escalation as a path and use crises as a means of influence.

"Global stability is not a secondary option but a shared necessity. Any party that bets on chaos will sooner or later discover that the fire it ignites will not stop at the borders of others."

Also:

"Since its establishment in 1945, the Arab League has represented a long-standing aspiration for Arab peoples and their leaders to achieve greater integration and cooperation among member states," Kuwaiti writer **Faisal Al-Harbi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"However, over time, it has become evident that the Arab League has not fully achieved the objectives for which it was created. The organization's permanent headquarters was moved from Cairo to Tunis following Egypt's signing of the Camp David Accords with Israel and the subsequent boycott by several Arab states.

"The Arab League's stance has been quite weak, particularly in the wake of regional war involving the United States, Israel, and Iran, and the targeting of the Gulf states, despite the fact that the latter contribute more than 37 percent of the Arab League's budget.

"The Gulf states have consistently supported this organization, which is supposed to serve as a pillar of support for Arab countries.

"Why has the Arab League not taken firm positions regarding the Iranian aggression against Arabian Gulf states? Why has it not called for an emergency meeting of its members to condemn these attacks immediately after they occurred? Don't the Gulf states deserve support in the face of such aggression?"

"When will the Arab League take a decisive and courageous stance if not now?"

"This painful reality prompted Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to declare that the Arab League has proven its clear inadequacy.

"Accordingly, there is a call for a comprehensive restructuring of the Arab League to align with the current perilous circumstances facing the Arab region, particularly the Gulf region.

"These measures include replacing the current headquarters of the Arab League with a rotating hosting system among Arab states, along with appointing a new Secretary-General for each term.

"We pray that God protects the Gulf Cooperation Council states and restores the Arab League to its leading role in the region."

□ □ □

"In a world experiencing rapid disruption, technology is no longer merely a tool for growth. It has become an integral part of the equation of national sovereignty," writer Eng. **Yasmine Al-Rifai** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Recently, several governments have reconsidered their digital strategies by nationalizing data, strengthening national systems, and reducing dependence on foreign entities. This shift

was not a choice but a necessity.

"With fragile supply chains and escalating geopolitical tensions, external digital dependence is no longer without risk.

"With the acceleration of artificial intelligence, data and digital infrastructure have become elements that directly impact national security and decision-making.

"In this context, sovereignty is no longer measured solely by border protection, but also by a state's ability to control its data, manage its digital infrastructure, and make independent decisions.

"Therefore, a clear national framework for artificial intelligence governance is needed, based on several factors:

■ Defining digital sovereignty in a way that aligns with the state's position and interests

■ Identifying what should remain under national control and what can be managed through partnerships

■ Protecting national data as the foundation of artificial intelligence

■ Strengthening digital infrastructure as a sovereign asset, no less important than traditional resources

"This requires the development of governance frameworks to ensure clear responsibilities, enhance transparency, and maintain continuous human oversight.

"At the same time, technology can no longer be separated from national security. Artificial intelligence and digital infrastructure have become integral to a nation's defense capabilities, particularly in cybersecurity and information protection.

"Despite all this, the human element remains the most crucial pillar.

"Building digital sovereignty is not achieved through technology alone, but through national competencies capable of managing it consciously and independently.

"In this landscape, the countries that will prevail are not only those that adopt technology faster, but those capable of controlling it.

"A successful state is one that manages technology, not one that is managed by technology."

□ □ □

"The golden opportunity refers to the time, circumstance, or available possibility to achieve something long awaited, or to fulfill a critical life necessity," Kuwaiti writer **Dr. Khaled Al-Janfawi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Some of the signs indicating a golden opportunity in life and how to seize it include the following:

1. Signs of a golden opportunity: Many such opportunities appear during pivotal life stages. The more a person's circumstances become difficult, the more life presents golden opportunities to help them pull themselves out of despair or achieve something they have sought for years but were unable to accomplish. Problems and difficult life challenges often carry within them rare golden opportunities to transform an individual's present into something better than their past.

"Golden opportunities also emerge when a person interacts with new people in their life. Every individual we meet for the first time brings with them a life reality completely different from what we have known before. A highly perceptive person seizes what these new personal and social relationships offer in terms of golden opportunities to improve their life and add a new dimension to their existence.

"When a person begins to free themselves from toxic relationships they were involved in during previous periods, a golden opportunity arises to form constructive relationships with psychologically healthy individuals.

"The more a person understands themselves with greater clarity, the more golden opportunities become apparent to them that they had not noticed before. The more they begin to shift their habitual way of thinking toward a more practical approach, the clearer these opportunities in life become, opportunities that were previously hidden or obscured by routine thinking.

"And of course, the more successful a person is in thinking outside the box, the more life reveals golden opportunities that were always in front of them, but which they were unable to seize properly.

- Seizing golden opportunities: An individual seizes the golden opportunities that appear in their life by continuously focusing their mind to take advantage of any suitable time or circumstance to change their life for the better, and by being courageous in their decisions.

"They only need to imagine themselves as if they were sitting by a river and fishing. A skilled fisherman does not tire or grow weary of catching and pursuing his targets. The one most capable of seizing life's opportunities, opportunities that may not be repeated, is the one who quickly realizes that they may never come again."

- Compiled by **Simi K. Kutty**



Minister of Defense (MoD) Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah paid an inspection visit to Mubarak Al-Abdullah Joint Command and Staff College.



KUNA photos

Tests stepping stone to leadership: MoD

KUWAIT CITY, May 2, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Defense (MoD) Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah paid recently an inspection visit to Mubarak al-Abdullah Joint Command and Staff College to review the college's preparations for the military culture examination of candidates applying to the joint command and staff courses for 2027-2028.

In a press release, the Ministry said that the minister was briefed on administrative and organizing preparations to ensure the smoothness of tests held in line with high standards.

The minister listened to an explanation of

those responsible for the examinations about the mechanism of evaluation and the standards of selecting candidates, it noted.

The statement quoted Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ali as saying that these tests are paramount in preparing and rehabilitating military leadership and raising the efficiency of the Armed Forces' personnel.

He stressed the ministry's keenness on backing and developing military educational institutions, wishing success to all candidates.

Upon arrival, the minister was received by the command of the College Air Vice Marshal Fahad Al-Khurainj.

Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ali also paid an in-

spection visit to the Technical Affairs Sector (TAS) at its headquarters in the Sheikh Sabah Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Building and chaired a meeting to review key projects.

The Ministry of Defense stated in a press release that Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ali chaired the meeting with sector leaders during his visit to review several key projects managed by the Technical Affairs Sector.

Upon his arrival, the minister was received by Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defence Sheikh Dr Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah, a number of senior army officers, and several directors of departments of the TAS, the statement concluded.

KFF highlights misuse of 'electronic devices'

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) released an awareness video, calling for adherence to safety guidelines when using smartphones and electronic devices such as scooters, tablets, and batteries, in order to avoid accidents, reports Al-Anba daily.

KFF emphasized the importance of using high-quality, certified chargers and warned against leaving devices charging while sleeping, as this poses a significant risk.

It also stressed the need to avoid leaving devices plugged in for extended periods unnecessarily.

In addition, KFF highlighted the importance of not leaving devices inside vehicles or in areas exposed to direct sunlight, as this can lead to overheating, malfunctions, or fires.

It advised against storing lithium batteries in enclosed or unventilated spaces to prevent dangerous incidents.

In case of any emergency, KFF urged the public to immediately call the Emergency No. 112.

Court Cases

50 persons let off

Four get three years in 'tweets' lawsuits

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: The Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Nasser Al-Bader, with Judges Omar Al-Mulaifi, Abdullah Al-Faleh and Salem Al-Zayed as members, issued its verdicts on the 'Tweets' cases, specifically the publication and republication of certain contents on social media in the past.

The court sentenced four defendants to three years in prison with hard labor after finding them guilty of the charges.

It abstained from imposing penalties on 50 defendants, obliging them to sign pledges of maintain good conduct supported by financial guarantees ranging from KDI,000 to KD3,000, while it acquitted eight defendants due to insufficient evidence.

The verdicts were announced in a public session attended by the defendants' families under heightened security measures.

The defendants faced accusations that included inciting sectarian strife, expressing sympathy with hostile entities, and spreading false news that could undermine public order.

The court ordered the confiscation of the mobile phones used in committing the offenses and mandated the deletion of the tweets in question, considering this necessary to halt the circulation of the offending contents.

The cases were filed after the competent authorities monitored contents circulating on social media platforms, which prompted the Public Prosecution to charge the defendants with acts deemed to violate public order.

It is worth mentioning that the same court previously issued rulings in similar cases, sentencing 17 defendants to three years in jail and another defendant to 10 years in prison in two separate cases.

It had also abstained from punishing 109 defendants, requiring them to maintain good conduct and delete the tweets, in addition to acquitting nine defendants.

In its reasoning, the court stated that the conduct in question, given the current circumstances in the country and the necessity of unified efforts and strengthened solidarity, cannot be regarded as a mere passing expression.

Rather, it constitutes a violation of national duty at a time that reinforcing national unity and protecting its foundations is of utmost importance.

The court explained that nations are built through the cooperation of their citizens and their support for State institutions, particularly those operating on the front lines.

It indicated that the defendants' actions weakened these values and undermined the foundations of social cohesion.

The court added that such conduct, considering its timing and context, is likely to provoke discord and deepen divisions within society, thereby, destabilizing the established unity and cohesion of the community at a time public interest requires strengthening national unity.

It stressed that invoking symbols of an entity that attacks the State of Kuwait, in a context suggesting support or sympathy during exceptional circumstances, entails disruption of social balance and violation of the principles underpinning national interests in all their forms, which justifies the criminalization of such behavior in light of its repercussions.

□ □ □

Buyers pay penalty: Court of Cassation issued a final and binding ruling overturning the Court of Appeal's ruling, and ordered a contract for the sale of a property to be cancelled upon the buyers' request, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The case began in 2020 when the two parties signed a contract for the sale and purchase of a property. The buyers paid the down payment and agreed to stay in the property until the sellers completed the procedures and transferred ownership.

Both parties agreed to pay the remaining amount upon finalizing the procedures, but the buyers refrained from paying the remaining sum. The sellers filed a lawsuit, and the Court of First Instance rejected the sellers' request and ordered the buyers to pay rent for occupying the property during that period.

However, both parties appealed the decision before the Court of Appeals, which upheld the Court of First Instance's ruling. The disputing parties then appealed the decision before the Court of Cassation, which decided to cancel the contract and obligate the buyers to pay for the period they occupied the property.

The Court of Cassation stated that the contract must be cancelled because the buyers refrained from paying the remaining price.

Gang robbing travelers held

Fahaheel makeshift stalls raided

By **Munif Naif**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Officers from Farwaniya Security Command, represented by Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh Police Station, apprehended a three-person gang consisting of Bangladeshi nationals who had committed several robberies targeting bus passengers in various areas.

In a press statement released on Friday, the Ministry of Interior explained that a ticket inspector from a public transportation company reported that a group of individuals had been repeatedly stealing from passengers on buses. Coordination was established with the inspector, and a security force was assigned to verify the report and locate the suspects.

The investigation led to the arrest of the suspects, and some of their crimes were uncovered through surveillance camera footage from inside the buses. The suspects were found in possession of KD 333, believed to be proceeds from the robberies.

The suspects were referred with the seized money to the concerned authorities for legal action.

The Ministry of Interior affirmed its commitment to continuing its security campaigns to apprehend violators and lawbreakers, and urged everyone to cooperate and report any suspicious activity by calling the emergency number 112.

□ □ □

Makeshift stalls raided: Ahmadi Security Directorate, represented by the Operations and Patrols Department, conducted intensive security and inspection campaigns in Fahaheel and Mahboula on Friday, and arrested eight individuals who were caught in the act of setting up makeshift stalls to sell goods.

In an official statement, the Ministry of Interior explained that the seized items included tobacco, vegetables, clothing, shoes, household appliances, and various devices. All those arrested were referred to the relevant authorities to take the necessary legal action against them. Coordination was established with Kuwait Municipality to address the phenomenon of random markets.

The Ministry of Interior affirmed that its security and inspection campaigns will continue throughout the country to apprehend violators and those who break the law.

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PADA seeks to expand sign language services

Agencies explore training programs

KUWAIT CITY, May 2, (KUNA): Kuwait's Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) held a meeting on Friday chaired by Director General Dr. Dalal Al-Othman, with the participation of senior officials from PADA, Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), Civil Service Commission (CSC),

and the Kuwait Association of Sign Language Interpreters (KASLI).

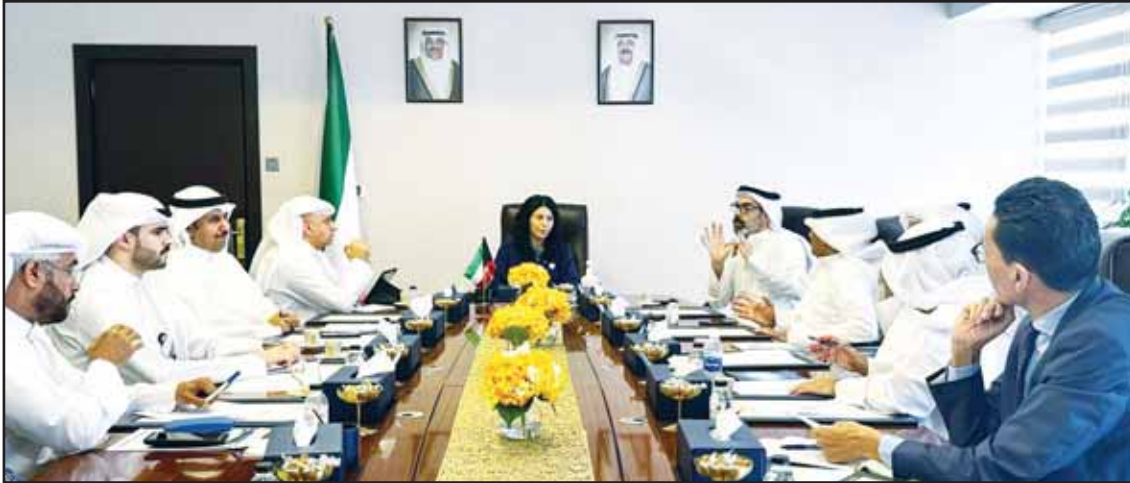
In a statement to KUNA, PADA said the gathering aimed to unify efforts among concerned entities to develop services that meet the diverse needs of people with disabilities, particularly strengthening communication with people with hearing impairments.

The meeting focused on enhancing joint cooperation to support and em-

power people with disabilities and improve the quality of services provided for them.

The participants discussed introducing a specialized sign language curriculum within PAAET's programs to prepare qualified national cadres.

They also reviewed the possibility of adopting sign language as an official job title in government structures to create specialized positions, enhance national competencies, and elevate the quality of services for people with disabilities.



PADA photo

Part of the meeting chaired by the Director General of the Disability Affairs Authority, Dr. Dalal Al-Othman.

Seasonal marine die-off linked to red tide

Kuwait Dive Team removes 3 tons of dead fish from Al-Watiya, Shuwaikh

KUWAIT CITY, May 2, (KUNA): Kuwait Dive Team, affiliated with the Environmental Voluntary Foundation, announced on Saturday that it has removed three tons of dead fish during field cleanup campaigns along the Al-Watiya and Shuwaikh coasts.

The team affirmed continued close coordination with authorities and the submission of periodic reports to the Environment Public Authority (EPA) documenting the quantities recovered.

Team leader Waleed Al-Fadhel told KUNA that with the participation of junior members, the team conducted volunteer cleanup campaigns over the past two weeks along the southern shores of Kuwait Bay. The latest efforts targeted Al-Watiya and Shuwaikh, successfully removing three tons of dead fish in addition to plastic waste.

Regarding the causes of the fish deaths, Al-Fadhel explained that current observed levels fall within normal seasonal rates, linked to red tide activity (microalgae) and warm water currents, a global phenomenon commonly referred to as "summer fish kill."

He expected the phenomenon in Kuwait Bay to subside within the next few days, coinciding with strong northwesterly winds forecast this week, which are likely to alter water currents and improve marine conditions in the bay.

Al-Fadhel stressed the importance of continued comprehensive environmental surveys across all coastal areas, particularly in the northern regions, to monitor any sudden changes. He noted that the rapid removal of dead fish before decomposition is crucial to prevent oxygen depletion in the water and avoid unpleasant odors.

He added that Kuwait Bay is considered the



Kuwait Dive Team photo

The Kuwait Dive Team affiliated with the Environmental Voluntary Foundation during field clean-up campaigns.

world's second-largest nursery for fish, underscoring the need to protect fish stocks and maintain ecological balance. He also announced the preparation of five specialized boats to monitor fish mortality cases and ensure rapid response to minimize environmental impact.

Al-Fadhel urged beachgoers, especially in areas such as Sharq, Al-Watiya, and Shuwaikh, to avoid touching dead fish, including species like "Chim" or "Khen," due to their sharp and venomous spines.

He also called on institutions and individuals to play an active role in preserving these resources for future generations.

MoSA completes co-op general assemblies

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: The acting Assistant Undersecretary for Financial and Administrative Affairs and Cooperative Affairs at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Director General of Planning and Administrative Development Dr.

Sayed Issa announced the completion of the general assemblies for cooperative societies whose fiscal year has ended.

Six general assembly meetings will be held for five cooperative societies and one agricultural cooperative society.

In a press statement, Dr. Issa explained that the ministry continues to schedule and hold

general assemblies sequentially as soon as each cooperative society's fiscal year ends, ensuring the smooth operation of financial and administrative procedures.

Several other cooperative societies have also completed their fiscal year, and their general assembly meetings will be held sequentially in the coming period.

CSC compliance before payments

MEW forms committee to oversee 2025 performance bonus payouts

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Adel Al-Zamel issued a decision on the formation of a specialized technical committee tasked to disburse the outstanding performance bonus for 2025.

The committee is chaired by Director of the Administrative Follow-up and Development Department in the Administrative Affairs Sector Seeta Al-Shammari and it consists of several members.

Article Two of the decision stipulates that the committee must review and archive the annual reports for 2024/2025 within the system



Dr. Al-Zamel

after receiving them from the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

The committee should calculate payroll entitlements for employees working regular and flexible shifts, as well as those assigned to two different shifts.

Article Two mandates the preparation of a list of employees eligible for the bonus after verifying their actual attendance, in accordance with CSC Resolution No. 43/2016.

The committee should prepare supplementary lists of eligible employees following the disbursement of outstanding performance bonuses throughout the year. Article Three of the decision sets out the procedures for the meetings of the committee, which will be held at the headquarters of the ministry upon invitation by the chairman or his deputy.

Meetings are valid only if quorum consisting of majority of the members – half plus one – including the chairman or his deputy is achieved. The minutes of the meetings must be documented and signed by the attending members.

KU Director wishes students success

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Director of Kuwait University Dr. Dina Al-Mailam expressed her sincere wishes for students' success in the remainder of the current semester and their final exams, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Dr. Al-Mailam emphasized that the exam period represents the culmination of hard work and perseverance and the harvest of a full semester.

She wished students success in achieving results that reflect their aspirations and academic abilities.

Dr. Al-Mailam also welcomed the resump-

tion of work at the university, and expressed her best wishes for success to the academic, assistant, and administrative staff. She commended their ongoing efforts that contribute to the continuity of operations and the smooth educational process.

She praised the commitment and dedication of all university staff members in fulfilling their duties, affirming that these achievements were made possible through teamwork, a strong sense of responsibility, and a deep sense of belonging to the university and its national mission, under the wise guidance of the political leadership.

Continued from Page 1

KGAC strengthens

continuous truck movement. He indicated that around 400 to 500 trucks enter daily, transporting a wide range of goods including livestock, medical equipment and various food products. He stressed that all vehicles, such as passenger cars, undergo thorough inspection and advanced X-ray screening to verify their contents.

In addition, Al-Quraini stated that vehicles passed through radiation detection systems after the initial inspection to make sure they are free from contamination, affirming that no radioactive materials have been detected so far.

Meanwhile, he confirmed the commitment of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef to equip the border with advanced technologies to detect prohibited materials.

He also highlighted the importance of human resources and the need for their ongoing support through continuous on-site presence.

He added that the minister visited the border during the Iranian aggression to evaluate its preparedness and closely follow up customs operations.

He said the average time required for trucks to pass through inspection devices is around 10 minutes. He revealed that an economic lane has been allocated for food, medical supplies and livestock, which are the priority in the inspection and entry procedures.

The KGAC has proven its capability to overcome challenges, providing a well-organized work environment that guarantees immediate completion of tasks. This is a manifestation of a high level of readiness and continuous preparations to handle various situations under the supervision of KGAC Director Yousef Al-Nuwaif and Deputy Director for Ports and Customs Investigation and Research Saleh Al-Omar.

Salmi Customs stood out as a successful example of integrated institutional performance, where field leadership and operational efficiency come together to achieve the

objectives: serving the nation and ensuring the smooth and secure flow of supplies.

Several travelers at Salmi border expressed their gratitude and appreciation to the border administration, as well as the customs and security personnel, commending the tremendous efforts exerted under the exceptional circumstances, which ensured smooth entry and exit.

They also praised the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its genuine and brotherly gesture in the seamless opening of its land borders, emphasizing that such cooperation reflects the deep-rooted historical ties and shared destiny between the two countries.

At the border, trucks are subjected to comprehensive inspection using modern and advanced equipment, while the travelers' vehicles are carefully examined using devices capable of detecting prohibited items.

Commenting on this, Al-Quraini stated that Salmi Customs monitors trucks entering the country until they reach the land customs office in Sulaibiya, while trucks heading to merchants are allowed to proceed directly after inspection.

He emphasized the importance of travelers declaring any amount exceeding KD3,000 or its equivalent in foreign currency to avoid legal consequences.

Meanwhile, during the visit at Salmi Customs, the camera of the newspaper captured Corporal Mubarak Jumaan from the border administration, whose constant smile while welcoming travelers exhibited a spirit of hospitality and courteous service.

This simple gesture embodies the honorable image of the Ministry of Interior personnel and their humanitarian role in delivering service with a positive attitude, enhancing the experience of the passengers and reinforcing the principle that a smile is the essence of a warm service.

This appreciation also extends to all employees at Salmi border for their ongoing efforts in easing traffic flow and completing tasks with accuracy and discipline, proving the high level of professionalism in security operations.



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One night stay in a Two Bedroom Chalet for 4 persons inclusive of Breakfast	BHD 119.173 / Net	

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Continued from Page 1

Thank you,

situation puts employers in a difficult position, as if they alone must bear the blame for all the problems, when in reality what they are facing today is the result of seven years of political and economic conditions, as well as recent war.

We must not forget that since 2019, the region has witnessed numerous crises that have cast a shadow over the local economy. No proper steps have been taken to address the root causes. This has affected overall development and the economic cycle, placing significant pressure on debtors, whether individuals or corporations.

Today, when we read the Minister of Finance's statement, we find that the instructions issued to the Central Bank of Kuwait appear unusual, as do the procedures followed by commercial banks.

We also note that referring debtors to court for failing to make payments, even for a month or two, has become a norm, which places companies and individual borrowers in a very difficult position. Some may even face bankruptcy, which is the last thing the government wants.

When countries face extraordinary circumstances, such as geopolitical or financial crises, governments usually instruct banks to reschedule debts and extend repayment periods. This benefits both banks and borrowers, as it helps stimulate the financial cycle and reduces inflation. Other countries address the issue by injecting liquidity into the economy, which is in line with the state's strategic objectives.

As mentioned earlier, Kuwait is dealing with this problem in a way that differs from many other countries.

For example, while many countries have decriminalized bounced cheques, this practice still exists in Kuwait. This situation weakens public confidence and turns government agencies into collection bodies for creditors, who may exploit borrowers' needs to seize their assets and place them under severe financial strain, even by confiscating their salaries. We emphasize the legal and ethical principle that the creditor who has mismanaged their funds bears responsibility.

It is good that the government is addressing this situation, but it would be even better to curb excessive demands by banks on companies. The announced plan is a step in the right direction, but it requires additional support to help companies overcome the significant financial burdens accumulated over the past seven years, culminating in the recent war that affected the entire region.

It's true that it is better late than never. However, increasing development spending remains the most crucial step.

The most dangerous approach for national economies is restricting financial spending and imposing stricter conditions on companies and borrowers, as this leads to accumulated deficits reflected in several negative indicators, most notably

in the highly sensitive business sector. Finally, why are some banks being so strict in collecting loan installments despite the fact that they already hold sufficient guarantees in the form of assets and properties that may exceed the loan amount by one to four times? Rescheduling installments would help ease the situation.

Kuwait part of

that they are designed to "counter Shahed-style attack drones."

"The interceptor missile was tested in Jordan in demanding desert conditions at one of Deep Element's defence development facilities," the ministry continued, noting that Minister for Defense Readiness and Industry Luke Pollard witnessed the trial.

The trial came as Pollard visited Kuwait and Jordan and held discussions on "regional security, the Strait of Hormuz and further defence cooperation," the statement concluded.

Multi-agency

A warning was issued to one establishment for non-compliance with regulations on the sale and distribution of energy drinks.

Meanwhile, PAFN recorded 10 violations, confiscated spoiled and expired food products, and closed one establishment.

The Ministry of Interior recorded other violations during the campaign, proving its support for regulatory bodies and its commitment to enforce the law.

The relevant authorities affirmed their commitment to continue conducting joint campaigns and taking legal action against violators to protect consumers and maintain public health.

UN resolution

targeting of critical civilian assets including telecommunications services stating that these actions alongside ongoing Iranian threats against neighboring states are inconsistent with Iran's obligations under the ITU Constitution and Convention.

The UN resolution further denounced coordinated cyber campaigns carried out by Iran affiliated groups supported by Iranian entities which have targeted vital digital infrastructure in the affected countries exacerbating security challenges and reflecting the complexity of threats facing the telecommunications sector.

It also called on the ITU to strengthen measures aimed at safeguarding human life through enhanced cooperation between telecommunications services, stressing that the protection of this infrastructure is no longer a regional is-

sue but an international priority requiring broad coordination.

The ITU Council mandated the Directors of the Union's three offices to monitor attacks on telecommunications services and infrastructure in the affected countries and assess their global impact.

It also tasked the Secretary-General with coordinating efforts across the Union's sectors to ensure an effective international response.

Key carriers

destinations, stressing its commitment to providing all necessary services to ensure passenger comfort and meet their needs.

Meanwhile, Jazeera Airways announced on Friday it will fully resume its operations from Terminal 5 (T5) at Kuwait International Airport starting Sunday, May 3, with daily flights operating from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

In a statement for KUNA, Chief Executive Officer Barathan Pasupathi said that the full resumption follows the partial restart of direct flights last week, marking a successful conclusion to 57 days of suspended operations and a temporary dual-country operational setup that included a base in Saudi Arabia.

With all operations returning to T5, the airline will operate all flights directly from Kuwait, offering passengers a seamless and efficient travel experience while serving 27 destinations across its network, reconnecting Kuwait with key regional and international markets.

Pasupathi expressed appreciation to the Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA), the Ministry of Interior, and other government authorities for their continued support in facilitating the full resumption of operations, as well as to Saudi Arabia for its valuable cooperation.

Passengers are advised to report to Jazeera Airways' "Park and Fly" building at least four hours prior to departure, from where they will be transferred to T5 to complete check-in and boarding procedures.

He also highlighted the airline's "Barakah Initiative," launched following the temporary closure of Kuwait International Airport, which maintained connectivity through an integrated land-air corridor via airports in Saudi Arabia, including Al-Qaisumah Airport and King Fahad International Airport.

During this period, the airline operated more than 1,500 flights, facilitated over 9,000 bus transfers, and transported nearly 200,000 passengers with the support of more than 500 employees and a fleet of 14 aircraft.

Kuwait gears up

(CSC) regarding the reinstatement of the official working hours.

According to the source, the decision covers employees under the official seven hours per day work system, along with the adoption of the morning shift system. Evening shifts will be organized at the discretion of the relevant authorities and in accordance with the nature of work.

In related news, Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei convened an extensive meeting with ministry officials on Thursday.

The meeting focused on the mechanisms and procedures for implementing the decision, effective Sunday.

Al-Tabtabaei instructed officials in the Educational Affairs Sector to proceed with the resumption of in-person classes in public and private secondary schools.

He stressed that final examinations must be conducted in person, underscoring the need to prepare and administer new exams that take into account the reduced curriculum, in line with the remaining duration of the academic year, while ensuring that students have adequate review sessions covering the material taught during the distance learning period. He highlighted the importance of setting dates for final examinations for all three secondary school levels and adjusting the academic calendar accordingly.

As part of organizing the educational process, he emphasized the need to unify curricula at the secondary level in public schools, religious schools and adult education programs, while streamlining content to suit the remaining time in the academic year and focusing on comprehensive revision of the material covered.

He also issued a directive that the school day schedule for secondary levels be adjusted to prioritize core subjects, and that teaching staff attendance be organized according to approved schedules, indicating teachers are required to conduct their assigned classes and permitted to leave immediately afterward.

Regarding other educational levels, he confirmed the continuation of distance learning for kindergarten, primary and intermediate stages in public, private and religious schools, as well as adult education and literacy programs.

He said teachers and administrative staff will continue working remotely, and student assessment processes will proceed at these levels.

He instructed the development of a clear mechanism for evaluating intermediate-level students, with a detailed circular outlining this mechanism to be distributed to technical supervisors and school administrations.

On special education schools, and in light of the circumstances of students

with disabilities, it was decided that teachers must attend in person in public and private institutions offering specialized education. Student attendance in these schools will remain optional, subject to parental preference.

For schools under the Special Education Department that follow the general education curriculum, distance learning will continue for kindergarten, primary and intermediate levels, while secondary school students will return to in-person classes.

Regarding private schools, Al-Tabtabaei explained that given their particular circumstances, they will be granted flexibility to choose between resuming in-person classes or continuing distance learning for secondary school students only, depending on the applicable foreign curricula. Final examinations, however, will be conducted in person for all secondary school classes, effective immediately.

High schools in Kuwait reopens Sunday to receive students, marking the resumption of in-person learning in a step that reflects the country's firm approach to balancing educational field safety as a top priority with sustaining the learning process.

Since the onset of the exceptional circumstances caused by the Iranian aggression, the State demonstrated notable flexibility by swiftly transitioning to distance learning, relying on advanced digital infrastructure and continuously updated platforms to ensure smooth and uninterrupted education delivery.

On the organizational level, the Ministry of Education adopted a detailed plan via Microsoft Teams, setting five daily classes of 25 minutes for theoretical subjects, while kindergartens followed a non-synchronous system with four recorded sessions daily, and adult education centers maintained five classes.

Technical support teams across educational districts were tasked with resolving platform issues, while the Information Systems Department ensured system efficiency and cybersecurity, addressing any technical challenges or threats to digital infrastructure promptly.

The Ministry also updated the "Salem and Abeer" application to align with kindergarten curricula, offering interactive content including questions, activities, and educational games tailored to young learners.

In response to prevailing conditions, short exams were postponed on March 9 and again on March 24 to ease psychological pressure on students, before introducing an "achievement assessment" mechanism on April 19 as an alternative evaluation method for core subjects.

Further adjustments included revising school hours for secondary students, with a schedule running from 9:00 a.m. to 1:15 p.m., comprising six 35-minute classes daily to enhance learning quality and content distribution.

Educational continuity was maintained through coordinated efforts among school administrations, technical supervision, and teaching staff, ensuring lessons and assessments proceeded smoothly via digital platforms.

To enrich learning resources, the Ministry launched a digital library with 1,417 digitized books and documents, while also executing a comprehensive plan to deliver school textbooks to students' homes through 500 service points using school buses and available logistical resources.

Parallel to crisis management, development efforts continued through initiatives such as the artificial intelligence project, specialized training workshops for outstanding students, and programs to identify and nurture talent.

The Ministry also began preparations for the 2026/2027 academic year by conducting detailed studies on staffing needs, organizing transfer requests, and carrying out field inspections to ensure school safety and maintenance through "Balligh" platform.

In promoting community partnership, the Ministry analyzed results of a public survey on curricula via the government "Sahel" application, aiming to incorporate feedback from educators and parents into continuous improvement efforts.

Psychological support was reinforced through activating "IstaShir" platform, providing confidential social and mental health consultations by qualified national professionals to support students and their families.

Minister of Education Jalal Al-Tabtabaei has chaired a series of meetings since February 28 to closely monitor the educational process and ensure continuity under the highest safety standards, stressing that student welfare remains the central pillar guiding all decisions.

The Ministry emphasized ongoing coordination with relevant state bodies to monitor developments and ensure that all measures prioritize safety while maintaining stability of the educational system.

The Cabinet had approved the return of in-person attendance for all secondary students and staff starting Sunday, with the Ministry affirming full readiness to implement the decision through a comprehensive and organized plan.


It noted that all administrative and organizational details related to the return would be announced, alongside integrated plans for each educational stage to ensure efficiency, stability, and balance between the rights and duties of students and teachers.

Kuwait had shifted to distance learning across all stages on February 28 following more than 40 days of Iranian aggression, which resulted in casualties, including the martyrdom of members of the Kuwaiti armed forces and border security personnel, as well as injuries and damage to infrastructure.




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A crashed Cessna airplane is seen in a wooded area on Round Rock Road in Wimberley, Texas on May 1. (AP)

America

5 dead in Texas plane crash: A small plane carrying pickleball players crashed among trees in Texas Hill Country, killing all five people aboard, authorities said Friday.

The crash happened around 11 p.m. Thursday in Wimberley, a city about 40 miles (64 kilometers) southwest of Austin, the Texas Department of Public Safety said.

"The pilot and four passengers on board were pronounced deceased on scene," Sgt. Billy Ray told reporters.

Names of the victims were not immediately released by authorities, though the Amarillo Pickleball Club in Amarillo, Texas, said they were members who were flying to a tournament.

An unidentified woman wiped her eyes and fanned her face with her hands as she stood behind yellow police tape near the crash site Friday afternoon. A man consoled her.

The plane, a Cessna 421C, took off from Amarillo and was headed to New Braunfels National Airport, according to the flight history. Aerial photos posted online by the Austin American-Statesman showed the aircraft destroyed in a wooded area. (AP)

Florida identifies body: A body found in Tampa Bay has been identified as the second missing University of South Florida doctoral student from Bangladesh, a sheriff said Friday. He described their killings as "a mon-

strous crime" and said a motive was still unknown.

Nahida Bristy's remains were found Sunday in a garbage bag discovered by a kayaker whose fishing line got snagged, said Hillsborough County Sheriff Chad Chronister. The positive identification on the badly decomposed body was eventually made using DNA and dental records, he said.

The body of her friend, fellow USF doctoral student Zamil Limon, was in another garbage bag found two days before that on a bridge over the bay. Limon's roommate, Hisham Saleh Abugharbieh, 26, was taken into custody the same day has been jailed since then, facing two charges of first-degree murder. (AP)

Man charged in bank robbery: An 18-year-old Kentucky man who led police on a high-speed chase Thursday night has been charged by federal investigators in a bank robbery that left two people dead.

Brailen Weaver is charged with armed bank robbery and firearms offenses that caused death, according to federal court records.

Weaver entered a branch of US Bank in Berea on Thursday, just before 2 p.m. and "immediately shot and killed a male victim" and then fatally shot a teller, according to an FBI affidavit filed in federal court Friday. He checked multiple drawers in the bank and then fled, the affidavit said. Investigators have not said if any money was taken from the bank.

"While there is no longer imminent danger, we understand that the tragedy is far from over for the community," Olivia Olson, special agent in charge of the Louisville FBI office, said at a news conference Friday. "The only solace that we can offer is that this individual, who valued a stolen dollar more than two human lives, will be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law." (AP)

Calif. woman charged: A California woman has been charged with manslaughter after an 81-year-old man who was struck by her teen son on an e-motorcycle died from his injuries, prosecutors said Friday.

On April 16, Tommi Jo Mejer's 14-year-old son was riding a Surron e-motorcycle and doing wheelies when he hit Ed Ashman, according to prosecutors. Ashman, a former captain in the U.S. Marine Corps, was walking home from his job as a substitute teacher at a high school in Lake Forest.

He was critically injured and died Thursday, and Mejer, of Aliso Viejo in Orange County, was charged with involuntary manslaughter as a result on top of a previous count of felony child endangerment.

"This mother essentially handed her 14-year-old son a deadly weapon, and despite multiple warnings of the dangers, continued to let him illegally ride an e-motorcycle until he finally killed someone," Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer said in a statement. (AP)

Some GOP senators growing uneasy about war's timeline

Trump administration says its war in Iran has been 'terminated' before 60-day deadline

WASHINGTON, May 2, (AP) — The White House asserted to Congress in a letter Friday that hostilities with Iran have "terminated" despite the continued presence of US armed forces in the region.

The message from US President Donald Trump effectively skirts a May 1 legal deadline to gain approval from members of Congress to continue the war with Iran. That deadline was already set to pass without action from Republican lawmakers who are deferring to the president.

The letter brings into stark relief the bold but legally questionable assertion of presidential power at the heart of Trump's war, which he began without congressional approval two months ago.

"The hostilities that began on February 28, 2026, have terminated," Trump wrote House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., and Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, the Senate president pro tempore.

Yet he also made it clear in the letter that the war may be far from over.

"Despite the success of United States operations against the Iranian regime and continued efforts to secure a lasting peace, the threat posed by Iran to the United States and our Armed Forces remains significant," the Republican president said.

Under the War Powers Resolution of 1973, Congress must declare war or authorize the use of force within 60 days - Friday was the deadline - or

within 90 days if the president asks for an extension. This Congress made no attempt at enforcing that requirement, leaving town Thursday for a week after the Senate rejected a Democratic attempt to halt the war for a sixth time.

Some GOP senators are growing uneasy about the war's timeline, which Trump initially said would last a few weeks. But Trump's letter showed how the president continues to forego congressional approval. It contends the deadlines set by the law do not apply because the war in Iran effectively ended when a shaky ceasefire began in early April.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said Thursday he did not plan on a vote to authorize force in Iran or otherwise weigh in.

"I'm listening carefully to what the members of our conference are saying, and at this point I don't see that," Thune said.

The reluctance to defy Trump on the war comes at a politically perilous time for Republicans, with public frustration mounting both over the conflict and its impact on gas prices. Still, most GOP lawmakers say they are supportive of Trump's wartime leadership or are at least willing to give him more time amid the fragile ceasefire.

Sen. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., said he would vote for an authorization of war if Trump asked for it. But Cramer questioned whether the resolution passed during the Vietnam War era, as



US President Donald Trump walks from Marine One to board Air Force One at Ocala International Airport, in Ocala, Fla on May 1, after speaking at an event in The Villages, Fla. (AP)

a way for Congress to claw back its power, was constitutional.

"Our founders created a really strong executive, like it or not like it," Cramer said.

Some GOP senators did make it clear that they eventually want Congress to have a say.

Indiana Sen. Todd Young said in a statement that lawmakers "must ensure that the people, through their elected representatives, weigh in on whether to send our military into combat."

with Democrats on Thursday to halt the war. She said in a statement that she wants to see a defined strategy for bringing the conflict to a close.

"The president's authority as commander in chief is not without limits," Collins said, adding that the 60-day deadline is "not a suggestion, it is a requirement."

In addition to Collins and Young, Republican Sens. John Curtis of Utah, Thom Tillis of North Carolina, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Josh Hawley of Missouri, among others, have said they would eventually like to see a vote.

Curtis said he would not support continued funding for the war until Congress votes to authorize it.

"It is time for decision-making from both the administration and from Congress - and that can happen in league with one another, not in conflict," Curtis said.

Thune suggested the White House step up its outreach to lawmakers with briefings and hearings if it wants continued support from Capitol Hill.

"Obviously, getting readouts from our military leadership on a somewhat regular basis, I think, will be helpful in terms of shaping the views of our members about how comfortable they are with everything that's happening there, and the direction headed forward," Thune said.

With the 60-day window under the War Powers Resolution expiring Fri-

day, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said during a congressional hearing Thursday. "We are in a ceasefire right now, which our understanding means, the 60-day clock pauses or stops."

The administration is making that argument even though Iran maintains its chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz and the U.S. Navy is maintaining a blockade to prevent Iran's oil tankers from getting out to sea.

Trump on Friday echoed Hegseth's argument, and stressed that other presidents had similarly not sought congressional approval as laid out under the 1973 law.

"Every other president considered it totally unconstitutional, and we agree with that," Trump said at the White House as he departed for Florida.

Democrats scoffed at the suggestion that May 1 was not the real deadline. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., said on social media, "There's no pause button in the Constitution, or the War Powers Act. We're at war. We've been at war for 60 days. The blockade alone is a continuing act of war."

The development came as little surprise to at least one House Democrat who oversees the military.

Washington Rep. Adam Smith, the ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, told The Associated Press: "Is the expectation that the Trump administration is going to follow the law? I do not have that expectation."



German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, (center), uses a remote to control a military robotic dog during his visit to the army at the Bundeswehr base in Munster, Germany, on April 30. (AP)

US to withdraw 5,000 troops from Germany in next 6-12 months, fulfilling Trump's threat

WASHINGTON, May 2, (AP) — The United States will withdraw about 5,000 troops from Germany in the next six to 12 months, the Pentagon said Friday, fulfilling President Donald Trump's threat as he clashes with the German leader over the US war with Iran.

Trump had threatened to withdraw some troops from the NATO ally earlier this week after Chancellor Friedrich Merz said the US was being "humiliated" by the Iranian leadership and criticized Washington's lack of strategy in the war.

Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said in a statement that the "decision follows a thorough review of the Department's force posture in Europe and is in recognition of theater requirements and conditions on the ground."

Germany hosts several US military facilities, including the headquarters of its European and Africa commands, Ramstein Air Base and a medical center in Landstuhl, where casualties from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were treated. US nuclear missiles are also stationed in the country.

The number of troops leaving Germany would be 14% of the 36,000 American service members stationed there.

German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius called it "foreseeable" that the U.S. would withdraw troops from

Europe and Germany, while he sought to stress mutual benefit from the US military presence on the European continent.

"The presence of American soldiers in Europe, and especially in Germany, is in our interest and in the interest of the U.S.," Pistorius told the German news agency dpa, while adding that European allies needed to adjust their defense postures - and were doing so.

"We Europeans must take on more responsibility for our security," he said, stressing recent efforts by Germany to boost its armed forces, accelerate procurement and develop infrastructure.

News of the troop withdrawal drew swift pushback from Democrats in Congress as well as a hawkish Washington think tank. They said the move will benefit Russian President Vladimir Putin and weaken US security interests.

The withdrawal "suggests American commitments to our allies are dependent on the president's mood," said Sen. Jack Reed of Rhode Island, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee.

"The president should immediately cease this reckless action before he causes irreversible consequences for our alliances and long-term national security," Reed said.

Bradley Bowman, a scholar at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, said the US military's presence in

Germany and elsewhere in Europe "not only strengthens deterrence against additional Kremlin aggression but also facilitates the projection of American military power into the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and Africa."

Trump ignored questions from reporters about the withdrawal on Friday as he boarded Air Force One in Ocala, Florida, following a rally to tout his economic agenda.

Trump made a similar threat in his first term, saying he would pull about 9,500 of the roughly 34,500 US troops who were then stationed in Germany, but he didn't start the process and Democratic President Joe Biden formally stopped the planned withdrawal soon after taking office in 2021.

The mercurial US leader has muscled for years about reducing the American military presence in Germany, and has railed against NATO for its refusal to assist Washington in the war, which began on Feb. 28 with US-Israeli strikes on Iran.

Trump wrote Wednesday on social media that the U.S. was reviewing possible troop reductions in Germany, with a "determination" to be made soon. On Thursday, he was still thinking about Merz, posting that the German leader should "spend more time on ending the war with Russia/Ukraine" and "fixing his broken Country" than concerning himself with Iran.

King Charles III wins praise for deft handling of Trump on US state visit

LONDON, May 2, (AP) — US President Donald Trump sang the praises of King Charles III after the monarch's state visit this week. He even lifted some tariffs on Scotch whisky as a favor to the British monarch.

The king delivered a diplomatic master-class on the trip, mixing praise for his host with subtle criticism. It's unclear, though, whether it will make a major difference to a trans-Atlantic relationship troubled by divisions over issues including the Iran war.

"In the short term probably yes, in the long term probably no," said Kristofer Allerfeldt, a University of Exeter professor specializing in American history. But he said Charles had "definitely clawed back some of the prestige of the monarchy" in his homeland with his assured performance.

"He's done us proud," Allerfeldt said.

Like all royal visits, the four-day trip to Washington, New York and Virginia by the king and Queen Camilla was a carefully choreographed diplomatic event carried out at the request of the UK government. Timed to help mark the United States' 250th birthday, it was a chance to heal rifts between the UK government and the Trump administration.

The president has lambasted Prime Minister Keir Starmer -- whom he once



Britain's King Charles III listens as President Donald Trump speaks during a state visit arrival ceremony on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, April 28 in Washington. (AP)

praised -- over his unwillingness to join US military attacks on Iran, dismissing Britain's leader as "not Winston Churchill," the World War II prime minister who coined the phrase "special relationship" for the UK-US bond.

It's part of a wider split between Trump and the United States' NATO allies, whom he has called "cowards" and "useless" for not joining action

against Iran.

None of that has soured Trump's fondness for the British monarchy, which seems to have been deepened by the president's unprecedented second state visit to the U.K. in September.

Some UK opposition politicians had called for the king's reciprocal trip to be canceled, lest the president do or say something to embarrass the monarch.



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Service, firefighters put out a fire building following a Russian drone attack in Odesa region, Ukraine on May 2. (AP)

Drone kills two in Ukraine minibus strike, say officials

KYIV, Ukraine, May 2, (AP) — Two people were killed after a Russian drone attacked a minibus in the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson, local officials said Saturday, in the latest barrage of civilian areas, a hallmark of Moscow's full-scale invasion of its neighbor.

Seven people were also wounded in the attack, regional head Oleksandr Prokudin said. Hours later Russia attacked another minibus in Kherson, wounding the driver, he said.

On Ukraine's Black Sea coast, a Russian strike damaged port infrastructure in the city of Odesa. No casualties were reported.

Ukrainian civilians have endured relentless air assaults since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of its neighbor more than four years ago. US-brokered talks between Moscow and Kyiv over the past year have brought no respite, with Russia rejecting Ukraine's offer of a ceasefire, and in recent weeks the Iran war has diverted international attention from Ukraine's plight.

Meanwhile, on the roughly 1,250-kilometer (750-mile) front line, Russia claimed Saturday it had taken control of the village of Myropillia in Ukraine's northeastern Sumy region.

It was not possible to independently verify the battlefield claims, and Ukraine did not immediately comment.

INTERNATIONAL

Chinese vice premier meets Belgium's deputy PM on deepening cooperation

BEIJING, May 2, (Xinhua): Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng has called on China and Belgium to continue the tradition of mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation, and to promote the sound development of China-Belgium and China-EU relations.

He, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks during his meeting with Belgium's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Maxime Prevot at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Thursday.

China and Belgium have established a close cooperative relationship featuring mutual benefits and win-win results since the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations 55 years ago, He said. He stressed that both sides have carried out fruitful and practical cooperation in the fields of medicine, the chemical industry, finance and logistics, which has helped the bilateral relations to move forward.

As both defenders of multilateral-

ism and supporters of an open world economy, China and Belgium should continue the tradition of mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation to promote the sound development of China-Belgium and China-EU relations, he added.

Belgium and China are friendly cooperative partners on all fronts, Prevot said, stressing that Belgium is willing to take the 55th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries as an opportunity to promote the development of bilateral relations, strengthen cooperation in various fields such as economy and trade, and jointly uphold multilateralism and free trade.

Also:

BEIJING: Li Hongzhong, vice chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, attended on Thursday a reception marking the 65th anniversary of China-Laos diplomatic relations and the Year of China-Laos Friendship.

Li, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said the building of the China-Laos community with a shared future has been continuously deepened and solidified under the strategic guidance of the leaders of the two parties and the two countries.

China is willing to enhance strategic communication, promote mutually beneficial cooperation and deepen people-to-people friendship with Laos, Li added.

BEIJING: China Coast Guard (CCG) said it conducted law-enforcement patrols in the territorial sea of China's Huangyan Dao and its surrounding areas on Thursday.

The service noted it has enhanced law-enforcement patrols in the territorial sea of Huangyan Dao and its surrounding areas since April, and regulated illegal and infringing vessels in accordance with laws and regulations.



Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, meets with Belgium's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Maxime Prevot at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, April 30. (Xinhua)

Asia

Crowd riots outside Australian hospital: An angry crowd rioted outside an Australian Outback hospital where a man accused of killing a 5-year-old girl was treated for a vigilante beating.

The suspect, Jefferson Lewis, allegedly abducted the girl at an Indigenous community near Alice Springs in the central Australia at the weekend. The body of the girl, who is now known as Kumanjavi Little Baby because of an Indigenous ban on naming the dead, was found on Thursday.

Lewis had been beaten unconscious by a mob before police arrested him at an Indigenous community later Thursday, police said.. (AP)

2 use drone to deliver drugs in Australia: Police in the Australian state of New South Wales (NSW) have charged two men over an alleged attempt to use a drone to deliver methamphetamine.

The NSW police force said in a statement on Thursday that officers were deployed to reports of two men acting suspiciously at a residential complex in the city of Wollongong, 68 km south of Sydney, on Tuesday night. (Xinhua)

4 killed in Indonesia train-car collision: A train collided with a car in Central Java province on Friday, killing four people, including two children, Indonesian police said.

In a statement, local police said the accident occurred at a level crossing. Due to thick fog at the scene, the driver of the car failed to see the approaching train, leading to the collision.

Traffic accidents are relatively common in Indonesia due to factors such as inadequate road infrastructure and traffic



A police vehicle burns outside the Alice Springs Hospital where a man suspected of killing a five-year-old girl is under police guard in Alice Springs, Australia on April 30. (AP)

violations.

On Monday night, a train collision in Bekasi, West Java province, killed 16 people and injured more than 80 others. (Xinhua)

Indonesian police bust int'l online gambling ring: Police in Bali, Indonesia, have dismantled an international online gambling network controlled from Cambodia, arresting three students and another suspect.

Bali Police Cybercrime Director Aszhari Kurniawan told local media on Wednesday that all four suspects, Indonesians aged 22 to 31, had previously worked in online gambling operations in Cambodia and moved to Bali after raids shut down their overseas operations. (Xinhua)



South Africans protest against illegal migration, in Johannesburg, South Africa on April 29. (AP)

Hundreds march in Johannesburg against illegal migration

Hundreds of South Africans took to the streets of Johannesburg on Wednesday to protest high levels of illegal immigration, which has fueled tensions between locals and foreign nationals.

The demonstration is part of a broader wave of protests, including in the capital, Pretoria, on Tuesday. Anti-immigration groups are calling for the strict enforcement of immigration laws and mass deportations.

As one of Africa's most industrialized economies, South Africa attracts migrants -both those who entered the country legally and illegally in search of opportunities.

The protests in Johannesburg resulted in the closure of many shops, owned by both locals and migrants, due to fears of potential looting or opportunistic crimes.

Organized by the anti-immigration group March and March, it also attracted similar organizations, including Operation Dudula and political parties ActionSA and Patriotic Alliance.

"We are not xenophobic, we just want the right thing to be done in South Africa, to put the South African first. We do want to live with foreigners in our country, but those foreigners must be legally in the country," said Themba Mabunda of ActionSA, who participated in the march. (AP)

Brazil's Congress overrides Lula's veto of bill to cut ex-prez sentence

SAO PAULO, May 2, (AP): Brazil's Congress voted to override a presidential veto and adopt a bill to reduce former President Jair Bolsonaro's 27-year prison sentence for plotting a coup, in a blow to his political rival and current President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

The legislation, which will be challenged in court, indicates a weakening of Lula's position in Congress ahead of his bid for reelection in the country's October presidential election.

It's unclear how much time Bolsonaro will serve for his conviction for leading a coup attempt, but analysts say the move could shave 20 years off his sentence. The former right-wing president, who began his sentence in November, is currently under house arrest.

The conservative opposition successfully drew centrist senators and federal deputies to comfortably override the leftist president's veto of last year's sentencing bill. Bolsonaro supporters expressed confidence in the outcome even before the voting began.

"This is a first and much awaited step by those who are afflicted. The next stage is full amnesty," said Sen. Espiridião Amin, a Bolsonaro ally.



Brazil's former president Jair Bolsonaro stands at the entrance of his home where he is under house arrest in Brasilia, Brazil on Sept. 2, 2025.

The bill that lawmakers passed last year reduces prison terms for several crimes, including those against the democratic rule of law and leading a coup when a person is convicted in both. The new legislation states that the sentence should be based only on the count carrying the highest sentence.

Ahead of the vote, the president of Brazil's Senate said only cases similar to ones that led to convictions for Bolsonaro, his allies and supporters in the attempted coup trial would be eligible for the softer penalties, though legal experts say that claim will be questioned in court.

Thailand's former premier Thaksin to be released on parole on May 11

BANGKOK, May 2, (AP): Former Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra is set to be released from a Bangkok prison next month after a Justice Ministry panel decision to grant him parole, the Corrections Department announced.

The decision to release him from Klong Prem Central Prison on May 11 comes as the 76-year-old Thaksin completes the legally required minimum of two-thirds of his one-year sentence.

His freedom will mark the end of a tangled legal saga that began after Thaksin returned to Thailand from more than a decade of self-imposed exile in 2023. He was sentenced the same year to eight years in prison for abuse of power.

The billionaire telecommunications magnate served as prime minister from 2001 to 2006, when a military coup ousted him. His ouster triggered nearly two decades of deep political polarization, pitting his supporters against opponents. The political machine he founded remains active and influential, though not as popular as it once was.

Although Thaksin's original sentence was commuted to one year by King Maha Vajiralongkorn, he was



Thailand's former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, center, and his daughter and former Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra, (center right), arrive at Supreme Court in Bangkok, Thailand on Sept 9, 2025. (AP)

ordered into a prison cell in September after the Supreme Court ruled that a previous six-month stay in a police hospital did not count as served prison time.

The court found that his stay in a hospital suite was a violation of procedures, as his medical conditions were

not serious enough to justify avoiding prison facilities.

He briefly returned in 2008 to face charges but skipped bail and fled abroad again, where he tried to dodge a barrage of lawsuits and criminal charges he claimed were politically motivated.

Subcontinent

Afghan forces seize smuggled firearms: Afghan security forces have intercepted a significant cache of smuggled weapons and ammunition in eastern Paktia province, including 10 American-made Beretta pistols, the Ministry of Interior Affairs said on Saturday.

Acting on intelligence tips, the operation took place in Dand Patan district, where authorities seized the 10 Beretta pistols along with 1,000 rounds of ammunition. Officials said the arms were being smuggled into Afghanistan from a neighboring country.

According to the ministry, the smugglers managed to escape the scene, and security forces have initiated a manhunt to apprehend them.

This latest seizure forms part of a broader crackdown on illicit arms trafficking in the region. Last week, police in the same province foiled another smuggling attempt, recovering 58 pistols from a vehicle.

Afghan authorities have intensified efforts to curb the flow of illegal weapons into Afghanistan, particularly along the border areas. (Xinhua)

Pakistan kills 13 terrorists: Pakistan's security forces killed 13 terrorists as they foiled two infiltration attempts along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border in the northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the military said on Thursday.

The operations were carried out on Tuesday and Wednesday in Mohmand and North Waziristan districts, the Inter-Services Public Relations said.

In Mohmand, troops engaged a group attempting to cross the border, killing eight terrorists. In North Waziristan, five more were killed in a separate clash after another infiltration attempt was thwarted.

The military said clearance operations are ongoing to eliminate any remaining militants. (Xinhua)

Boat capsizes in India, 9 dead: The death toll in central



Excavators dig graves for victims of a Monday air-strike on a drug rehabilitation hospital in Kabul, Afghanistan on March 18. (AP)

India's boat capsizing rose to 9 on Friday, even as the boat's wreckage was pulled out, confirmed a government official.

The tragedy occurred in the Jabalpur district of the central state of Madhya Pradesh on Thursday. There was a total of 29 tourists onboard the ill-fated boat when it capsized at Bargi Dam, built on the river Narmada.

The boat was navigating through the river waters when it was suddenly struck by powerful winds, causing it to lose balance before it capsized. (Xinhua)

India's traffic accident kills 16: At least 16 laborers were killed and 30 others injured, some of them critically, after a pickup van carrying them overturned and crashed into another vehicle in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh, police said Thursday.

The accident occurred on Wednesday night near Chikliya crossing in Dhar district, about 265 km west of Bhopal, the capital city of Madhya Pradesh.

According to police, the injured were removed to the nearest hospitals in ambulances.

Police have registered a case and ordered an investigation into the accident. (Xinhua)

Mali accuses army officers of working with jihadis to carry out attacks

BAMAKO, Mali, May 2, (AP): Some military officers in Mali worked with jihadis and separatists who recently launched their biggest round of attacks in over a decade in the conflict-battered country, authorities said late Friday.

The separatist fighters, meanwhile, said earlier in the day that they captured a strategic military camp in the northern town of Tessalit after the withdrawal of Mali's army and its Russian allies from there.

The claim by the Azawad Liberation Front separatist group was the latest setback for Mali's ruling junta, which lost control of the major city of Kidal earlier in the week as part of the attacks that killed Malian Defense Minister Sadio Camara.

Mali has been run by the military since a 2020 coup and has long suffered violence as jihadi groups expand in surrounding territories in the wider Sahel region south of the Sahara Desert, which is known as global hotspot for violent extremism.

The latest assault in the West African nation began Saturday after al-Qaida-backed Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin, or JNIM, and the Azawad Liberation Front, or FLA, partnered to target the main interna-



In this photo taken on Friday, Nov. 1, 2019, an aerial view of Gao airport in Mali, where French soldiers have massive presence. (AP)

tional airport in the capital, Bamako, as well as other Malian towns and cities in near-simultaneous attacks, with the fighters riding on motorcycles and trucks.

A statement from the public prosecutor at the Military Court of Bamako, which was read on state television on Friday, noted that investigations found "solid evidence regarding the

complicity of certain military personnel" in the attacks, including serving and recently dismissed officers.

The officers participated in "the planning, coordination, and execution" of the attacks, the prosecutor's statement said, while also alleging the involvement of politicians, including Oumar Mariko, a prominent Malian politician in exile.

Kuwait announces May propane, butane rates

KUWAIT CITY, May 2. (KUNA): Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) announced on Friday the new prices for liquefied petroleum gas, propane and butane, for the month of May.

In a statement for KUNA, the corporation said that propane will be sold at USD 750 per metric ton during May, while butane will be priced at

USD 800 per metric ton. Liquefied petroleum gas, including propane and butane, is widely used in the petrochemical industry, as well as for cooking, heating, and other applications.

Liquefied petroleum gas prices are influenced by global oil market trends, rising and falling in line with crude oil prices.

Business

Amid exceptional geopolitical challenges, Boursa Kuwait records a net profit of KD 5.99 mln in first quarter of 2026

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Boursa Kuwait Securities Company held its Board of Directors meeting on Thursday, 30 April 2026, and announced its financial results for the three months ended 31 March 2026, recording a net profit of KD 5.99 million. The company also achieved total operating revenues of KD 10.15 million for the three months ended 31 March 2026, while operating profit for the period stood at KD 7.31 million. Meanwhile, earnings per share stood at 29.82 fils for the period ended 31 March 2026.

Boursa Kuwait's total assets reached approximately KD 145.24 million, while shareholders' equity attributable to the parent company stood at KD 85.26 million as of 31 March 2026.

Resilient performance in a highly volatile environment

"Despite regional geopolitical tensions and economic uncertainty, Boursa Kuwait recorded a net profit of KD 5.99 million during the first quarter of 2026, with operating revenues reaching KD 10.15 million, a direct affirmation of the resilience of the company's business model, its ability to generate sustainable revenues and the efficiency of its cost management," said Chairman Mr. Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi.

The Kuwaiti capital market continued to benefit from ongoing structural reforms and institutional infrastructure development, which have enhanced its efficiency and resilience, enabling it to reach advanced levels of institutional stability and operational depth, supporting its ability to respond effectively to regional and international developments.

"This performance reflects Boursa Kuwait's resilience and its ability to sustain its strategic momentum, particularly amid the geopolitical challenges of March, with the market recording one of the most stable performance levels among GCC markets," said Al-Kharafi.

"This is the outcome of a long-term development strategy focused on advancing market infrastructure, strengthening regulatory frameworks and embedding a governance framework aligned with international best practices," he added.

Stable environment to reinforce investor confidence

The market demonstrated a clear ability to adapt to the escalation of geopolitical tensions in early March and the resulting rise in uncertainty, which brought pressure on energy supplies, costs and global trade routes.

The Boursa Kuwait Chairman stated that the All-Share Index recorded a limited decline of 1.82% during March, the lowest monthly decline among GCC markets, reflecting the Kuwaiti market's ability to absorb geopolitical shocks in the region and maintain its balance, supported by a more diverse and deeper investor base.

Enhancing market structure to attract investments

"Boursa Kuwait continued to work in close coordination with the Capital Markets Authority to ensure full compliance with regulatory directives and to enhance market stability and efficiency, reinforcing confidence and mitigating risks in line with its rigorous institutional commitment to the highest standards of governance, risk management and business continuity," stated Al-Kharafi.

He noted that market structure indicators continue to improve, with the share of trading by international investors, including GCC nationals, rising by 8.92% in the first quarter to 21.60% of total trading, compared to 78.40% for local investors.

Meanwhile, the turnover percentage of institutional investors increased by 7.20% to reach 73.28% of total market trading, while retail investors' trading accounted for 26.72%, reflecting a qualitative shift in market composition that enhances pricing efficiency and reduces volatility.

Product development and deepening the market

Al-Kharafi also addressed the market development strategy, noting that the launch of the bonds and sukuk trading platform in early April marks a significant new phase in the evolution of the Kuwaiti capital market's infrastructure. "This transition positions Boursa Kuwait beyond an equity-focused exchange toward a multi-asset market, expanding investment options for a broader range of investors and opening new avenues of financing for companies and financial institutions," he said.

The Chairman emphasized that this initiative stems from a clear strategy that places asset class diversification at the core of building a mature capital market comparable to its emerging international peers. He added that Boursa Kuwait is confidently advancing toward the launch of exchange-traded funds (ETFs), noting that all technical and operational testing has been completed and that regulatory approval is pending. "This product will provide investors with a flexible tool to diversify their portfolios and help attract a wider investor base."

Al-Kharafi revealed that Boursa Kuwait is progressing with the upgrade of its trading systems, one of its most significant ongoing infrastructure development projects. The initiative will be implemented in successive phases, with the new system providing the technical foundation to support the launch of derivatives in the next stage of market development, which will enhance the market's competitiveness and further align it with its peers across the globe.

Supporting leadership and sustaining operational continuity

The Chairman also expressed his appreciation for the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir and the country's political leadership, noting that their continued support and prudent guidance have played a pivotal role in reinforcing confidence and strengthening the resilience of the Kuwaiti capital market. "This is reflected in operational continuity, orderly trading and the market's ability to efficiently fulfill its role in serving the national economy and protecting investor interests."

Future outlook

Concluding his statement, Al-Kharafi added that Boursa Kuwait continues to execute its strategy with confidence, focusing on maximizing long-term share-



Bader Al-Kharafi



Mohammed Al-Osaimi

■ Total operating revenues reached KD 10.15 million, with operating profit at KD 7.31 million and earnings per share at 29.82 fils
 ■ Total turnover of institutional investors rose to 73.28% while international investors (including GCC nationals) increased their share of total market trading to 21.60%
 ■ Despite regional tensions, Boursa Kuwait weathered geopolitical shocks with operational resilience

holder value, enhancing market competitiveness, expanding the investor base and developing its suite of products and services.

"The company is well-positioned to capitalize on future opportunities, further strengthening Kuwait's standing as a regional financial center in line with the objectives of Kuwait Vision 2035," he said.

Stable operations and growth in trading activity

The Kuwaiti capital market's performance during the first quarter of 2026 demonstrated stable trading activity, supported by operational and structural developments that have enhanced overall market efficiency. This stability was underpinned by the continued implementation of infrastructure initiatives, contributing to a more efficient and transparent trading environment.

"Trading activity was stable during the first quarter of 2026, with total traded value reaching KD 3.72 billion and an average daily trading value of KD 66.44 million. Foreign trade confirmations increased by 30.38% year-on-year, driven by ongoing infrastructure enhancements that have improved market efficiency and strengthened the reliability of settlement processes for all participants," said Boursa Kuwait Chief Executive Officer Mr. Mohammed Saud Al-Osaimi.

Boursa Kuwait continued to advance its Market Development (MD) program, completing all regulatory requirements necessary to launch fixed-income instruments (bonds and sukuk) during the first quarter of 2026. This culminated in obtaining the required regulatory and legislative approvals in early April 2026, a milestone that represents a qualitative shift aimed at enriching investment options and unlocking new financing opportunities for both issuers and investors.

The exchange also continued to enhance market attractiveness during the first quarter, which was highlighted by the listing of Trolley General Trading Company on the "Premier" Market. The listing brought the total number of listed companies to 141 and reflected the growing confidence in the Kuwaiti capital market and its ability to attract high-quality companies, which contributed to increased market capitalization and deeper liquidity.

"The listing of Trolley amid the geopolitical tensions that affected the region in March 2026 sent a clear message about the resilience of Kuwait's business environment. It also demonstrated the strength of the national economy and the Kuwaiti capital market, supported by solid underlying fundamentals," said Al-Osaimi.

"This underscored the efficiency of the country's financial institutions and regulatory framework in ensuring business continuity and financial stability despite geopolitical challenges, further reinforcing Boursa Kuwait's position as a leading regional investment destination," he added.

Continued progress was also achieved in developing market structure and enhancing its standards, particularly following the annual segmentation review, which resulted in the promotion of several companies to the "Premier" Market, contributing to a deeper flagship segment and improving the quality of listed capital.

Total market capitalization stood at approximately KD 50.48 billion at the end of the first quarter, reflecting the strength of the market's issuer base and its ability to sustain consistent operational performance.

The market also demonstrated a strong ability to absorb pressures and adapt to global and local developments at a steady pace as the All-Share index closed the first quarter of 2026 at 8,416.5 points, recording a year-to-date decline of 5.51%, while the "Premier" Market index closed at 9,009.2 points, down 5.15% for the quarter.



Al-Osaimi emphasized that Boursa Kuwait demonstrated the efficiency and resilience of its technical and operational infrastructure amid geopolitical tensions, implementing risk management frameworks in line with international best practices to ensure business continuity and safeguard investor interests.

"This high level of preparedness in managing exceptional circumstances reflects the market's strong institutional discipline and supports the development of a robust investment environment that reinforces Kuwait's position as a leading regional financial hub," he added.

Institutional commitment

Boursa Kuwait reaffirms its commitment to fulfilling its national and economic role with responsibility and resilience, in close coordination with the capital market apparatus, recognizing that the stability of the financial market serves as a fundamental pillar of support for confidence in the national economy.

The continued operation of trading activities with efficiency and transparency despite prevailing regional conditions reflects the strength of the institutional framework and its ability to ensure business continuity. Boursa Kuwait continues to work in alignment with the Capital Markets Authority, Kuwait Clearing Company and all relevant state entities to enhance market efficiency and uphold the highest levels of transparency and governance across all asset classes.

Boursa Kuwait also continues to develop its infrastructure and technical systems to enhance the efficiency and reliability of trading services, contributing to Kuwait's transformation into a leading financial and investment center in the region in alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035.

Other Voices

Emirates is out of OPEC!

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

The United Arab Emirates is the sixth member of the oil organization to quit. Its main reason for leaving OPEC and OPEC+ is to free itself from production restrictions or the so-called OPEC quota.

Emirates believes it has reached a crude oil production level of more than three million barrels per day, while holding spare capacity near 4.8 million barrels. However, the oil production capacity of over 3 million is not proven physically yet. Current OPEC rules make it free to produce at any level and reach 4.8 million barrels at any time without restriction, as it suits it.

The question that needs to be asked or answered is what will happen to oil prices with over one million barrels of new oil hitting the market, which will certainly lead to a decrease in oil prices globally.

It may also force OPEC+ to meet and discuss new quota levels and adjustments to make room for the arrival of new oil at a large volume, leading of course to lower oil prices.

While Emirates has to search for new outlets for the coming volume of more than one million barrels per day, its former colleagues have access to spare capacity of more than 5 million barrels shared between Russia and Saudi Arabia.

In addition to Iraq and Iran, which are working on improving production, if they do not already have spare capacity, they are in the waiting.

Iraq sits on the fifth largest oil reserve, with production capacity between five and six million barrels per day between now and 2029, reaching the latter volume of six million.

Iran is ranked the third largest oil producer in OPEC, currently producing three million barrels per day, with production capacity of more than 4.1 million barrels per day.

Emirates is the sixth OPEC member to leave the oil organization, with various reasons. Some

left after running out of crude or being unable to export, Qatar wanted to focus on gas, and others wanted to be freed from production quotas to produce at their own discretion. Gabon pulled out and later rejoined OPEC again, while Indonesia has frozen its membership. So in total, only five members remain.

Certainly, we anticipate that oil prices will come down soonest once the Strait of Hormuz is open again and free for the trading and movement of crude oil, finished products, and gas, amounting to more than 20 million barrels per day.

Today it is constrained with limited movement, unless ship-owners pay \$2 million per oil tanker. Of course, this would eventually lead to higher oil prices for final consumers globally.

We must wait for next week to find out the impact of Emirates' withdrawal from OPEC and its consequences. It seems more likely that it will lead to weaker oil prices, with more oil entering the market.

Before that, we have to find out when the Strait of Hormuz will open for free oil trading to the international market in order to assess the reaction. Certainly, oil prices will be stronger in that case, as the world needs supply to meet demand, but also needs to fill its commercial and strategic reserves, if not depleted, which could mean a longer period of higher oil prices.

Demand is also at its peak during the summer and car driving season.

So, the price impact of Emirates pulling out of OPEC will not be known until possibly the end of the summer season.

There is also hope for the Arabian Gulf states to return to their colleagues in OPEC and OPEC+ soon, as any gain in oil prices will benefit all, while weaker prices will certainly hurt all.

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Al-Harami

Launching a specialized training program for new recruits

Kuwait Finance House continues investing in national young talent

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has introduced an extensive training program designed to equip new contact center staff with the skills necessary for high-level customer engagement.

By investing in local talent, KFH aims to sharpen the professional capabilities of young nationals, ensuring they remain competitive in the service sector. This program further cements KFH's status as a leader in delivering top-tier banking solutions and exceptional customer care.

KFH Executive Manager Talent Management, Mohammed Al-Musalam, said that the three-month training program benefited 50 new employees across three separate batches.

Al-Musalam added that the program was delivered by highly experienced certified trainers from KFH staff, which provided the new employees with a unique opportunity to develop their communication and benefit from their expertise, making the training more effective and applicable to their work.

Al-Musalam noted that KFH attributes its strategic success and market leadership primarily to the efficiency and excellence of its human resources. He emphasized that the bank is committed to investing in its workforce by providing a stimulating environment and a comprehensive vision for professional development. Furthermore, he highlighted KFH's strategy of offering high-level specialized training programs and leveraging digital platforms to enhance skills, an approach that directly boosts performance indicators and operational efficiency.

Meanwhile, KFH Executive Manager Contact Center Service Channels, Ali Azeran, noted that the training program addressed key contact center operations. It focused on customer



Mohammed Al-Musalam



Ali Azeran



Part of the training program.

service concepts, professional inquiry handling, and an introduction to Islamic banking. Participants also received an overview of core banking products, such as accounts, cards, and deposits.

Azeran added that the program includes various assessments to measure job readiness, providing trainees with the confidence and skills to handle customer inquiries and workplace challenges efficiently. He explained that by utilizing the latest technologies,

aligned with global banking standards, the program sets new employees on the right path to perform their duties to the highest standard.

He emphasized that KFH was keen to ensure the training program was multifaceted, where its goal was not limited to the contact center but also extended to supporting them in their career paths in the banking sector, raising their efficiency, and enriching their financial skills.

Highlighting ESG progress, eyeing sustainable growth

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait Group holds Q1 2026 Analyst Conference Call

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) hosted its Q1 2026 analyst conference attended by Giel-Jan M. Van Der Tol, Group CEO; Shiamak Soonawalla, Group CFO; Dr. Abdulaziz Jawad, Chief Strategy Officer; and Osama Ezzeldin, Assistant General Manager of Strategy and Follow Up.

Delivering Stability

Van Der Tol said, "At the outset, I would like to acknowledge the continued efforts of the Central Bank of Kuwait in maintaining monetary and financial stability amid heightened regional uncertainty, alongside the regulatory responses across other GCC markets. These actions have reinforced confidence and demonstrated the resilience of the banking sector."

He praised the Central Banks in Kuwait and the UAE, stating that they acted in a timely and well-calibrated manner to enhance system flexibility and support economic activity. He emphasized, "These actions have supported funding conditions and enhanced overall balance sheet resilience."

Commenting on Q1 2026, Van Der Tol claimed it "was characterized by a more challenging operating environment, driven by ongoing regional geopolitical developments, volatility in energy markets, and a more cautious business sentiment. Despite these conditions, Kuwait's macroeconomic fundamentals remained broadly resilient, supported by stable fiscal dynamics, a well-regulated banking sector, and an adequate liquidity system."

Within this context, ABK's priorities remained centered on preserving balance sheet strength, maintaining disciplined risk management, and supporting customers in a consistent manner.

He added, "Net profit attributable to shareholders increased by 15.7% year-on-year, from KD 15.7 million to KD 18.2 million, with earnings per share rising by 20% from 5 fils to 6 fils. This reflected the resilience of our core business and the consistency of execution across the Group."

He emphasized, "Our total assets expanded by 5.2% compared to December 2025, reaching KD 7.3 billion, driven by our loan portfolio which grew by 4.9%. In parallel, our customer deposits grew by 7.1%, reinforcing our strong and well-funded position."

This growth was supported by a disciplined approach to credit underwriting, with continued emphasis on higher-quality exposures aligned with our risk-return framework. As a result, asset quality improved, with the non-performing loan ratio declining to 1.32% from 1.38% in the same period last year.

Capitalization remained robust, with a total capital adequacy ratio of 17.90% and a CET1 ratio of 12.36%, maintaining a comfortable buffer above regulatory requirements and supporting future balance sheet growth. He reflected, "Overall, the quarter's performance reflects a well-balanced outcome, combining earnings growth, controlled balance sheet expansion, stable asset quality, and strengthened capitalization within a dynamic operating environment."

He continued, "In tandem, our credit ratings remained unchanged, with Fitch reaffirming our 'A' rating and Moody's maintaining its 'A2' rating, both with a stable outlook, reflecting the continued strength of our balance sheet and the consistency of our financial performance."

Van Der Tol highlighted that a key enabler of this progress is ABK's organizational strength, supported by an experienced leadership team and a highly capable workforce. He said, "Kuwaitis represent approximately 73% of leadership roles, while women account for around 40% of our workforce. We continue to invest in our people and foster a performance-driven culture to ensure consistent delivery across the Group."

He concluded, "Looking ahead, while the regional environment remains fluid, ABK Group remains steady in its approach, with a clear focus on protecting shareholder value. Overall, the quarter's performance reflects a well-balanced outcome, combining earnings growth, controlled balance sheet expansion, stable asset quality, and strengthened capitalization within a dynamic operating environment."

Financial Indicators

On his part, Soonawalla affirmed, "Q1 delivered improved earnings year-on-year, supported by higher net interest income, an optimized cost of funds, and a decline in credit impairment charges, alongside continued uplift in our core franchises, while return on average equity improved by 113 basis points (bps) to



Giel-Jan M. Van Der Tol, Group CEO



Shiamak Soonawalla, Group CFO



Dr. Abdulaziz Jawad, Chief Strategy Officer

9.23%, reflecting enhanced profitability and more efficient capital deployment."

Capitalization strengthened further, with the total capital adequacy ratio at 17.90% and CET1 at 12.36%, above the regulatory minima. Moreover, operating income increased by 13.0% year-on-year to KD 57 million, driven primarily by a 17.8% growth in net interest income. This was supported by effective asset-liability management, disciplined pricing, and an optimized funding mix, underpinned by an improved liability structure.

Operating expenses increased by 16.3% year-on-year, reflecting continued investment in strategic initiatives, digital transformation, and franchise expansion. As a result, operating profit reached KD 32.4 million, up 10.7% year-on-year, demonstrating continual earnings progression.

From an efficiency perspective, Soonawalla said, "The cost-to-income ratio increased modestly to 43.1%, compared to 41.9% in the prior year, reflecting ongoing investment in strategic priorities and business expansion, while maintaining overall cost discipline. Nonetheless, it remains below our cost to income ratio of 43.8% as of FY 2025."

Commercial Banking remained the primary contributor to operating income at 45%, followed by Retail Banking at 35%, and Treasury and Investments at 20%. This distribution is broadly reflected in the balance sheet, with 56% of assets allocated to Commercial Banking, 13% to Retail Banking, and 31% to Treasury and Investments, highlighting a diversified business mix and balanced risk profile.

Furthermore, net interest margin increased to 2.48%, up 38 bps year-on-year, supported by a lower cost of funds and an improved asset-liability mix, reflecting disciplined pricing and effective balance sheet optimization.

He added that net loans and advances grew by 4.9% to KD 4.8 billion, customer deposits expanded by 7.1% to KD 4.4 billion, and total assets increased by 5.2% compared to December 2025, reaching KD 7.3 billion, in line with our selective and risk-adjusted growth strategy, underscoring the strength of our deposit franchise and a stable, low-cost funding base.

Soonawalla stated, "Asset quality improved, with the non-performing loan ratio declining to 1.32% from 1.38%, reflecting enhanced portfolio monitoring, proactive risk management, and disciplined credit underwriting. The provision coverage ratio remained strong at 356%, with loan loss provisions maintained in accordance with Central Bank of Kuwait guidelines and exceeding IFRS 9 requirements by KD 210 million, providing additional buffers."

Liquidity metrics remained robust, with the liquidity coverage ratio at 338% and the net stable funding ratio at 110%, both comfortably above regulatory thresholds and supporting a resilient funding profile.

He summarized, "The Group delivered a balanced financial performance in the first quarter, combining earnings growth, margin expansion, improved asset quality, and strong liquidity and capital positions."

While the external environment continues to evolve, the Group's strong fundamentals, diversified business model, and robust risk governance framework position it well to sustain performance and deliver long-term shareholder value.

Enhancing Digital Capabilities

Commenting further, Dr. Jawad stated, "Despite the evolving market environment, we remained focused on strengthening our Kuwait franchise through enhancing customer offering, advancing digital capabilities and improving operational efficiency. From a retail banking perspective in Kuwait, we continued to advance our digital and customer engagement capabilities launching "ABK Build", a digital homebuilding platform that simplifies customers' journey to design and fund their dream homes through integrated design tools and exclusive partner offers."

He added that ABK also enhanced its product suite with the launch of the limited-edition ABK Visa Platinum Advantage prepaid card and resumed the Alfouz account draws. Operationally, the Bank implemented system enhancements to improve efficiency, reinforced customer protection frameworks, and continued to enhance its ATM network.

Alongside business performance, ABK was recognized by Global Brands Magazine with the 'Excellence in Corporate Governance - Kuwait' award, reflecting the strength of its governance framework and its continued adherence to best-in-class practices.

Strong Momentum

He continued, "In the UAE, our Corporate Banking business has delivered a number of landmark transactions during the first quarter including the participation in syndicated loans in excess of USD12 billion and acting as the bookrunner and lead arranger for a USD 5 billion facility."

Dr. Jawad added, "In Consumer Banking in the UAE, we launched an enhanced mobile banking application, marking a key milestone in our digital transformation journey. The upgraded platform delivers improved functionality and strengthened security, enabling a more seamless customer experience while providing a scalable infrastructure to support future growth."

Meanwhile, ABK Wealth Management continued to broaden its product capabilities through asset-backed solutions while expanding our regional reach through its DIFC platform. This is in addition to achieving strong momentum in AUM flows and client onboarding, supported by increased discretionary mandates.

ESG

Dr. Jawad highlighted, "We made steady progress during Q1 2026, advancing our sustainability agenda through stronger governance, enhanced disclosures, and disciplined execution across key initiatives. We progressed the 2025 ESG report into the content drafting phase following comprehensive Group-wide data collection, reinforcing our commitment to transparency and best-in-class reporting standards."

At the same time, ABK continued to advance its sustainable finance agenda in Kuwait, including supporting green infrastructure initiatives, and successfully completing key regulatory climate risk submissions. He expressed, "These efforts reflect our commitment to embedding ESG considerations across the business, strengthening resilience, and aligning with evolving regulatory requirements and stakeholder expectations."

Concluding his statement, Dr. Jawad said, "Looking ahead to the remainder of 2026, our focus is on accelerating execution against our strategic priorities while maintaining a disciplined and agile approach in a dynamic operating environment. Ongoing developments in the Middle East further reinforce the importance of prudent risk management, a strong capital position, and a diversified business model, which collectively underpin our resilience and consistency of performance."

As ABK progresses through the year, its strategy refresh will provide clearer direction for the next phase of growth, with increased emphasis on quality of earnings, digital acceleration, and enhanced customer value propositions, ensuring it continues to deliver sustainable long-term value.



ABK headquarters

Reflecting the Bank's notable progress in strengthening its leadership in sustainable finance and responsible banking

National Bank of Kuwait issues its 2025 Sustainability Report titled: 'Sustainability at the Core: From Strategy to Impact'

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Aligned with its leadership role and institutional approach to fully embedding sustainability at the core of its business and operations, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) issued its tenth Sustainability Report titled: "Sustainability at the Core: From Strategy to Impact". Reaffirming its commitment to delivering tangible, long-term impact across environmental, social, and governance (ESG) dimensions, strengthening business resilience and reinforcing its leadership in the banking sector.

The report reflects the Bank's notable progress during 2025 in advancing its leadership in sustainable finance and responsible banking, through the continued development of governance frameworks, enhanced climate transparency, expansion of sustainable financing solutions, and improved resource efficiency, in line with leading global standards and best practices.

Structured around four core pillars that form the foundation of the Bank's ESG strategy, it outlines key achievements across each pillar: Governance for Resilience, Responsible Banking, Capitalizing on Our Capabilities, and Investing in Our Communities. Alongside the material topics associated with each pillar and the initiatives implemented by NBK across these areas.

This year's Sustainability Report highlights NBK's strong progress in advancing its sustainable finance agenda, noting that the Bank's sustainable assets portfolio grew by 23% year-on-year to reach USD 6.11 billion as of end-December 2025. This growth was driven by a diversified suite of ESG-linked products and remains aligned with the Bank's strategic objective of reaching USD 10 billion in sustainable assets by 2030. The report also underscores that NBK surpassed its interim operational emissions reduction target for Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions, achieving a 37.35% reduction in 2025 compared to the 2021 baseline. This performance reflects the accelerated execution of its strategy toward achieving net-zero emissions by 2060.

In addition, the report highlights the Bank's continued efforts to enhance disclosure and transparency, marked by the publication of its first Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) report in April 2025, alongside the release of its inaugural Green Bond Allocation and Impact Report in May 2025, following the issuance of NBK's first green bond in mid-2024.

Governance for Resilience

NBK made substantial progress under the Governance for Resilience pillar during 2025, through the implementation of the ESG Risk Scorecard circulated across all Group non-retail lending portfolios in October 2025. This ensures the integration of sustainability considerations into credit decision-making and alignment with global responsible banking standards.

The Bank also developed a standalone ESG risk management framework encompassing climate-related risks, with climate considerations fully embedded into risk management processes and capital planning. Furthermore, NBK utilized its proprietary climate-adjusted stress test model alongside scenario analysis based on the Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS) to assess climate risks on a semi-annual basis as part of its Internal Capital Adequacy Assessment Process (ICAAP), reinforcing the alignment between financial resilience and environmental responsibility.

During 2025, NBK continued to advance its participation in the Partnership for Carbon Accounting Financials (PCAF) initiative by integrating emissions intensity data to enhance ESG scorecards and obligor-level assessments and refine its approach to calculating its baseline absolute financed emissions.

Responsible Banking

Aligned with the Responsible Banking pillar, NBK continued to expand its sustainable finance activities, with total accumulated sustainable assets reaching USD 6.11 billion as of 31 December 2025.

Furthermore, the Bank published its first Green Bond Allocation and Impact Report for its inaugural Green bond issuance mid-2024, reflecting an allocation of USD 625.44 million toward financing green projects and delivering tangible environmental benefits. NBK's inaugural green bond contributed to financing 18 green projects across the Middle East, Europe, North America, and Asia-Pacific.

Among NBK's key achievements in 2025 within the Responsible Banking pillar was the execution of Kuwait's first green financing agreement, through which the Bank provided KWD 25 million to Mabaneh, one of the largest real estate developers in the Middle East and North Africa, to

EU slams planned US auto tariffs as 'unacceptable'

Trump says he'll place 25% tariff on autos from EU, accusing it of not complying with trade deal

WASHINGTON, May 2. (AP): President Donald Trump said on Friday that he will increase the tariffs charged on cars and trucks from the European Union next week to 25%, a move that could jolt the world economy at a fragile moment.

Trump said in a social media post that the EU "is not complying with our fully agreed to Trade Deal," though he did not flesh out his objections in the post.

Asked by reporters on Friday about the increase in import taxes as he departed the White House for Florida, Trump said the EU was not "as usual" adhering to last year's trade framework, without detailing the source of the tension. He added that he believed the shift to higher tariffs "forces them to move their factory production much faster" to the U.S.

Trump and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen had agreed to the trade deal last July. It set a tariff ceiling of 15% on most goods, though the Supreme Court this year ruled against the legal authority that Trump had used to charge that tax. This left Trump looking for substitute authorities, and his administration has imposed a 10% tax while investigating trade imbalances and national security issues to put in new tariffs to make up for lost revenues.

The tariffs hit at a moment when the Iran war has crushed the world economy with expectations of slower growth and higher inflation, as oil and natural gas prices have risen due to the effective closure of the critical Strait of Hormuz after strikes by the U.S. and Israel began at the end of February.

At the same time, Trump faces political pressure in the U.S. going into November's midterm elections because of rising levels of inflation. Trump, a Republican, returned to the White House last year on the explicit promise that he could quickly tame prices that jumped in the aftermath of the government's response to the coronavirus pandemic, but

higher energy costs pushed annual inflation in March to 3.3%, which was higher than what he had inherited.

Just 30% of U.S. adults approved of Trump's handling of the economy, according to the latest poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

The European Parliament has been moving slowly on finalizing last year's trade agreement but was expected to finish work on the deal next month. The EU said in a statement that it was implementing its "commitments in line with standard legislative practice" and should the U.S. "take measures inconsistent with" that agreement "we will keep our options open to protect EU interests."

Trump administration officials have not responded to questions about the tariff increase and why Trump said the agreement had been violated. But Trump has had a testy relationship with Europe, having threatened earlier this year to take control of Greenland and later blasting NATO allies for not providing more support to the U.S. for the Iran war.

Bernd Lange, chair of the European Parliament trade committee, posted on social media that Trump's tariff hike on autos was "unacceptable" and that the Trump administration "keeps breaking its commitments," including on import taxes for steel and aluminum products.

Jennifer Safavian, CEO of Autos Drive America, which represents the American operations of foreign auto manufacturers, said the tariff increase "would threaten the progress that has already been made to open EU markets and grow the U.S. auto industry."

Both the U.S. and the EU had previously confirmed their commitment to preserving the trade framework, known as the Turnberry Agreement, which was named after Trump's golf course in Scotland.

The status of the 2025 deal was first cast into doubt after the Supreme Court this year ruled that the president lacked the legal au-

thority to declare an economic emergency and charge tariffs on goods from the members of the EU and other states.

The Trump administration has opened up trade investigations under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 to replace the tariffs struck down by the court. One of the investigations is looking into whether those trading partners have been lax in cracking down on forced labor. And the other is pursuing allegations that they've overproduced goods, driving down prices and putting American manufacturers at a disadvantage.

The alternative tariffs being explored by the Trump administration could ultimately put the agreement with the EU in risk of violation, though European Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security Maroš Šefčovič told reporters last week that the relationship with the U.S. had become more positive over the past year.

To raise tariff rates, Scott Lincicome of the libertarian Cato Institute's Center for Trade Policy Studies said, the president would likely use Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, which allows for duties on national security goods.

Trump imposed 25% Section 232 tariffs on foreign autos in March 2025, but those tariffs were then lowered as part of the trade framework with the EU.

Lincicome also said Trump's threats are "just another example of why these trade deals are vaporware. They all rely on handshakes and winks and hopes that Trump doesn't get mad about something."

The EU had said it expected the bilateral deal would save European automakers about 500 million to 600 million euros (\$585 million to \$700 million) a month.

The value of EU-U.S. trade in goods and services amounted to 1.7 trillion euros (\$2 trillion) in 2024, or an average of 4.6 billion euros a day, according to EU statistics agency Eurostat.



- NBK's sustainable assets portfolio reached USD 6.11 billion, reflecting a 23% year-on-year growth
- The Bank exceeded its interim operational emissions reduction target, achieving a 37.35% reduction in 2025
- NBK introduced its ESG Risk Scorecard across all Group non-retail lending portfolios, embedding ESG considerations into credit decision-making and aligning lending practices with global Responsible Banking standards
- NBK financed 18 green projects across the Middle East, Europe, North America, and Asia-Pacific
- NBK successfully structured and led Kuwait's first-ever green loan, valued at KD 25 million
- NBK published its first Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) report
- The Bank reduced its water consumption by 11.6% compared to the 2021 baseline
- The Bank scaled the adoption of AI technologies across core functions to enhance operational efficiency
- The Bank enabled digital onboarding, delivering a more seamless and accessible banking experience
- Women accounted for 42.4% of the NBK's workforce, with 27.2% holding management positions
- The Bank achieved a Kuwaitization rate of 77.4% by year-end
- NBK expanded the SME financing portfolio to KWD 26.4 million, reflecting 5.43% year-on-year growth
- The Bank extended the Bankee program's reach to 53,098 students and 11,321 teachers

support Sabah Al Ahmad Project (S3). The financing agreement is aligned with the Green Loan Principles (GLP) published by the Loan Market Association (LMA) in 2023 and will support the project in achieving a LEED Gold Certification.

In addition to its progress on emission reductions, NBK achieved an 11.6% reduction in water consumption in 2025 compared to its 2021 baseline, alongside improvements in energy and water efficiency across all operational locations, including its headquarters and branch network. These efforts were supported by building management systems, optimization of cooling systems, water circulation upgrades, and solar solutions, enhancing environmental performance and operational efficiency across its footprint.

The Bank also continued to offer preferential pricing on eco-friendly housing loans and electric vehicle financing, supporting more sustainable consumer choices.

Capitalizing on Our Capabilities

Building on the Capitalizing on Our Capabilities pillar, NBK continued to progressively expand the adoption of artificial intelligence technologies across its core functions to enhance operational efficiency and innovation. This initiative earned the AI Excellence Award at the Microsoft AI Summit - Kuwait.

The Bank also enabled customers to open accounts fully online using Kuwait Mobile ID and facial recognition, without the need to visit branches, delivering a more seamless banking experience and supporting inclusive

banking.

Moreover, NBK recorded notable progress in empowering its workforce and strengthening diversity and inclusion. Women represented 42.4% of the total workforce across the Group and held 27.2% of managerial positions. In 2025, NBK further reinforced its commitment by establishing a Group-wide Diversity and Inclusion Council, enhancing governance, accountability, and the strategic integration of D&I priorities across the organization.

Enhancements also included the modernization of procurement systems through the integration of SharePoint and OpenText, enabling the automation of invoice management and workflows, alongside the digitization of credit approvals and exception monitoring, strengthening governance and efficiency.

In 2025, NBK advanced its digital transformation agenda through initiatives such as PIN digitization and Digital Eidiya, promoting cashless transactions, improving operational efficiency, and reducing paper usage in line with Kuwait's digital economy vision. In the same context, Weway Bank, Kuwait's first digital bank continued to scale eco-friendly practices, with over 80% of its cards manufactured from recycled materials and the Aura Prepaid Card transitioning to a fully digital format, eliminating paper and plastic packaging.

Investing in Our Communities

Reflecting the Investing in Our Communities pillar, NBK continued to play a key role as a partner in sustainable development, supporting a broad range of community initiatives throughout 2025.

The year also marked the completion and commissioning of the Shuwaikh Waterfront development project, a landmark addition to Kuwait's recreational and tourism infrastructure. This was complemented by the development of a multi-storey parking facility as part of the Shaqra area redevelopment project, undertaken in collaboration with Kuwait Municipality and Al Shaab National Real Estate Company. The project further includes a public park, underscoring the Bank's commitment to urban development, enhancing quality of life, supporting sustainable growth, and creating tangible social value.

In terms of workforce nationalization, NBK continued to prioritize attracting, developing, and retaining local talent. As a result, the Bank's Kuwaitization rate increased to 77.4% by the end of the year, in line with the requirements of the Central Bank of Kuwait.

Building on its commitment to supporting Kuwait's economic diversification, NBK also strengthened its support for entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises. The Bank's SME financing portfolio grew by 5.43% year-on-year, reflecting sustained demand and NBK's role in enabling private-sector growth.

In parallel, NBK advanced financial inclusion efforts, with continued expansion of tailored services. The number of accounts within the "Al Aamil" segment increased to 125,850 by year-end, representing 14.3% year-on-year growth and reinforcing the Bank's focus on inclusive access to financial services.

Complementing these efforts, NBK further invested in financial literacy and capability-building. During 2025, the Bankee program—one of NBK's flagship initiatives aimed at promoting financial awareness among school students in Kuwait—continued to expand, reaching 53,098 students and 11,321 teachers.

These achievements underscore NBK's strong and accelerating ESG performance, reflected through its continuous improvement in ratings across leading global ESG assessments, and recognition from Euromoney and Global Finance as Kuwait's leading bank for ESG and sustainable finance in 2025. Building on this momentum, NBK's forthcoming strategy update will refresh and deepen the integration of environmental, social, and governance principles across the Group's core operations, while fostering innovation, inclusive growth, and robust governance. Central to this next phase will be the launch of a centralized ESG data management system to ensure consistent, accurate, and transparent reporting across all locations, enhancing auditability, strengthening oversight, and enabling informed, data-driven decision-making. Through a continued focus on sustainable finance, climate risk management and portfolio emissions, capacity building, and reducing its environmental footprint, NBK reaffirms its commitment to leading a just transition toward a low-carbon future and delivering long-term value for all stakeholders.

'Zero tariffs, big strategy'

China opens market to Africa with two-year tariff-free deal

CAPE TOWN, May 2. (AP): A China policy giving Africa's biggest economies tariff-free access to its market for the next two years came into effect Friday while its economic rival the United States seeks to impose new import taxes under President Donald Trump's push for protectionism.

The China deal covers Africa's 20 largest economies, including South Africa, Egypt, Nigeria, Algeria and Kenya. China had already dropped tariffs on 33 poorer African countries, meaning 53 of the continent's 54 nations are now eligible for "tariff-free treatment" for their goods, according to China.

The country not eligible is the small nation of Eswatini because it is the only one in Africa that maintains formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan.

The Customs Tariff Commission of the State Council in China said the agreement would promote the common development of China and Africa. China's official Xinhua News Agency said a shipment of 24 metric tons of apples from South Africa that cleared customs in Shenzhen in the early hours of Friday was the first batch of goods to enter under the new zero-tariff policy.

According to Xinhua, China's Commerce Ministry said it would especially benefit African products like cocoa from Ivory Coast and Ghana, coffee and avocados from Kenya, and citrus fruits and wine from South Africa, which used to face tariffs of between 8% and 30%.

Ivory Coast is by far the world's biggest cocoa producer and it and Ghana account for more than 50% of the global supply. South Africa is a major citrus fruit exporter.

Several of Africa's top economies said they would look for new markets for some of their U.S.-bound products after the Trump administra-

tion imposed reciprocal tariffs a year ago - at one point with rates of 30% for Africa's leading economy, South Africa, and higher than 40% for some other African countries.

"South Africa looks forward to working with China in a friendly, pragmatic and flexible manner," South African Trade Minister Parks Tau said in February during bilateral talks in China.

While the U.S. Supreme Court struck down Trump's far-reaching global tariffs as unconstitutional in February, the Republican president said his administration had "very powerful alternatives" and promptly rolled out temporary import taxes to replace them.

China is already the biggest trade partner for Africa, a continent of 1.5 billion people that's expected to nearly double to 2.5 billion by 2050, according to the United Nations, when it would have more than a quarter of the world's people.

China hailed its tariff-free deal as promoting common development, but there is a large trade imbalance between it and Africa, while African nations owe Beijing billions in debt repayments.

China-Africa trade reached a record \$348 billion in 2025, though China's exports to Africa increased by around 25% to \$225 billion, while its imports from Africa increased by only around 5% to \$123 billion, widening the trade deficit for Africa.

China has long imported raw materials from Africa and sent back manufactured goods. Thierry Pairault, a China-Africa expert at France's National Center for Scientific Research, said that while the new policy might have some benefits for agricultural products, most African raw material exports like oil and minerals already had tariff-free access to China.



Audrey Nuna, from left, EJAE, and REI AMI arrive at Billboard's Women in Music event on April 29, at Hollywood Palladium in Los Angeles. (AP)



Left to right: Zara Larsson, Tate McRae, Thalia arrive at Billboard's Women in Music event on April 29. (AP)



Lainey Wilson arrives at Billboard's Women in Music event on April 29. (AP)



Members of the group BINI arrive at Billboard's Women in Music event on Wednesday, April 29, 2026, at Hollywood Palladium in Los Angeles. (AP)

Eurovision still hitting notes and nerves at 70

LONDON, May 2, (AP) — The Eurovision Song Contest is turning 70, with a few political clouds hanging over its glitter-drenched party.

The annual musical extravaganza that has been likened to a pop music Olympics takes place in Vienna, Austria, May 12-16. It will see singers and bands from 35 countries compete onstage for the continent's musical crown — but with some high-profile absentees who are boycotting to protest Israel's participation.

Here's a guide to all things Eurovision: What it is, who to watch for and how to take part.

Eurovision is an international pop music competition founded in 1956 to test new live-broadcasting technology and foster unity after the trauma of World War II. From an initial seven contestants, it grew to include dozens of nations from across Europe, as well as farther-flung Israel and Australia.

The contest is a campy yet heartfelt celebration of diversity, national pride and the joyous power of pop with a global fanbase. Organizers say last year's competition was watched by 166 million people around the world, and fans from 75 countries have bought tickets for the live shows in Vienna.

The contest has displayed moments of supreme silliness — winning songs “La, La, La” and “Boom Bang-a-Bang,” anyone? — as well as pieces of pop perfection like ABBA's 1974 winner “Waterloo.”

Other memorable winners include Canadian chanteuse Celine Dion — who competed for Switzerland in 1988 — Austrian drag diva Conchita Wurst in 2014, Italian rock band Måneskin in 2021 and Ukrainian folk-rap group Kalush Orchestra in 2022.

Eurovision's motto is “United by Music,” but it has repeatedly been embroiled in world events. Russia was expelled in 2022 after its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

The 2024 contest in Malmö, Sweden, and last year's event in Basel, Switzerland, saw pro-Palestinian protests that called for Israel to be expelled over its conduct of its war against Hamas in Gaza and allegations it tried to manipulate voting in favor of its contestant.

Tensions came to a head in December when five countries — Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Spain — pulled out of the contest after organizers decided to allow Israel to compete.

Bulgaria, Moldova and Romania have returned after skipping the event



3,000 drones depict the logo sign in preparation for the upcoming Eurovision Song Contest in front of castle Schonbrunn in Vienna, Austria, Monday, April 27, 2026. (AP)



JJ from Austria stands on the stage with the trophy after winning the Grand Final of the 69th Eurovision Song Contest, in Basel, Switzerland, May 18, 2025. (AP)

for artistic or financial reasons in recent years, meaning 35 countries will compete in Vienna, down from 37 in 2025. Several pro-Palestinian protests are planned during Eurovision week.

Eurovision historian Dean Vuletic said “Eurovision is Europe's biggest election,” with winners decided by a mix of national juries and viewers' votes.

Finland is the odds-makers' favorite with “Ljekinheitin” (“Flamethrower”), a high-intensity mashup featuring violinist Linda Lampenius and pop singer Pete Parkkonen.

Also highly rated are 17-year-old French singer Monroe with pop-operatic love ballad “Regarde!” and Denmark's Søren Torpegaard Lund with the sultry “Før Vi Går Hjem”

(“Before We Go Home”).

Australia, a keen Eurovision participant despite being thousands of miles from Europe, has sent established star Delta Goodrem with “Eclipse,” a slick midtempo ballad. Greece's Akylas is becoming a fan favorite with party-rap track “Ferto” (“Bring It”).

Vuletic also tipped Cyprus' entry, the folk-influenced dance-pop song “Jalla” by Antigoni. It's already a hit on YouTube and “could be the up-tempo feelgood song that people vote for,” he said.

Israel, which has won Eurovision four times and came second in 2025, has sent crooner Noam Bettan with the ballad “Michelle.” Singer Sen-

hit, representing tiny San Marino, has enlisted 1980s icon Boy George to make a guest appearance on party anthem “Superstar.”

Paul Jordan, an expert known as Dr. Eurovision, said the contest has moved beyond its reputation for “sugary pop.” This year's entries range from classically influenced “popera” to electro-pop, power ballads and folk-influenced songs.

“There's not a lot of cheesy pop numbers,” Jordan said. “There's such diversity that I don't think there is such a thing as a ‘Eurovision sound’ anymore.”

Traditionally the competition is hosted by the previous year's winner, and last year's victor was Austrian singer JJ with pop-opera song “Wasted Love.” The 2026 contest is being held at the Wiener Stadthalle in Vienna, the third time Austria's capital has hosted Eurovision.

The competition will be aired by national broadcasters in participating nations, on streaming service Peacock in the United States and on the Eurovision YouTube channel in some countries.

Participating countries each enter a singer or band with an original song that can be no more than three minutes long and is performed live, often with spectacular staging.

Two semifinals, on May 12 and 14, will winnow the field of competitors down to 25 who will compete in the grand final on May 16, hosted by Austrian singer/crystal heiress Victoria Swarovski and actor Michael Ostrowski.

Viewers in participating countries can vote during the live final by phone or text message, but aren't allowed to vote for their own country's act. Viewers in the U.S. and other nonparticipating countries can vote online at www.esc.vote.

Each country's public vote is translated into points, on a scale of one to 12, for the highest-ranked acts.

The European Broadcasting Union, which runs Eurovision, has toughened voting rules in response to vote-rigging allegations, halving the number of votes per payment to 10 and tightening safeguards against “suspicious or coordinated voting activity.”

After a voting interval, each country in turn announces its jury and public voting results, with the points tallied on-screen until a winner emerges. The fast-changing rankings and suspense about whether any country gets the dreaded “nul (zero) points” are all part of the excitement.

Twain takes the mic

ACMs shake the saddle with a Vegas shake-up

NEW YORK, May 2, (AP) — It's time to cowboy up, y'all. The 2026 Academy of Country Music Awards are right around the corner, and they look different this time around.

Buckle up for a few seismic changes. Shania Twain will host for the first time ever, taking over for Reba McEntire. The awards ceremony will also take place May 17 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, leaving the Ford Center at The Star in Frisco, Texas, just north of Dallas, after three years. And women lead the nominations.

But where will the 2026 ACM Awards stream? Who is nominated? What else is noteworthy this year and who will perform?

Read on for those answers and more. The 2026 ACM Awards will stream on Prime Video and the Amazon Music channel on Twitch as well as the Amazon Music app on May 17 at 8 p.m. EDT.

It's the emo cowgirl herself. Megan Moroney leads the 2026 Academy of Country Music Awards with nine nominations.

She's followed by Miranda Lambert, the most-decorated artist in ACM Awards history, with eight, as well as Ella Langley and Lainey Wilson with seven.

Then it is Chris Stapleton with six, Zach Top with five and Cody Johnson with four.

In addition to Moroney, those competing for entertainer of the year are Wilson, Stapleton, Johnson, Luke Combs, Jelly Roll and Morgan Wallen.

In 2025, Wilson took home the top prize — for a second year in a row. In the album of the year category, Wallen's “I'm the Problem” faces off against Top's “Ain't In It For My Health,” Riley Green's “Don't Mind If I Do,” Parker McCollum's “Parker McCollum” and first-time nominee Carter Faith's “Cherry Valley.”



Ella Langley arrives at Billboard's Women in Music event on Wednesday, April 29, 2026, at Hollywood Palladium in Los Angeles. (AP)

Human touch still takes center stage as Oscars draw AI line

LOS ANGELES, May 2, (AP) — The organization behind the Oscars is for the first time addressing the use of artificial intelligence in performances and scripts for the 2027 Academy Awards. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences on Friday released updates across many categories, stressing the importance of human authorship while not banning AI.

The new rules also include significant changes to the much-criticized international film category, expanding eligibility to include films that won top qualifying awards from prestigious film festivals like Cannes, Venice and Toronto.

“As we do every year, we made a lot of, we think, really smart and progressive changes,” film academy CEO Bill Kramer told The As-

sociated Press. “Obviously, as the academy becomes more global, we need to think about how we are inviting international films into the Oscars conversation.”

As part of its annual review of Oscar eligibility rules, the academy is tackling one of the global filmmaking community's biggest concerns: generative artificial intelligence.

The new rules state that “the tools neither

help nor harm the chances of achieving a nomination” and that the academy and each branch “will judge the achievement, taking into account the degree to which a human was at the heart of the creative authorship when choosing which movie to award.” They're also reserving the right to request more information from the filmmaking team about the nature of the use of AI and “human

authorship.”

“Humans have to be at the center of the creative process,” said academy president Lynette Howell Taylor. “As AI continues to evolve, our conversations around AI will do so along with that. But for the academy, we are always going to put human authorship at the center of our awards eligibility process.”

Exhibition



A ceramic Aztec vase depicting Tlaloc, the god of rain, is among the artifacts to be displayed in the exhibition On Top of the World Tree: Ancient Civilizations of the Americas. Inset: A stone statue to be displayed at the exhibition titled On Top of the World Tree: Ancient Civilizations of the Americas. (Xinhua)

Shanghai to host exhibition on ancient American civilizations

Shanghai will host a major exhibition on ancient civilizations of the Americas beginning in early July, local authorities said Thursday.

Titled "Ancient Civilizations of the Americas," the exhibition will run for 16 months at the Shanghai Museum on the People's Square, said Zhong Xiaomin, head of the Shanghai Municipal Administration of Culture and Tourism.

It will be the sixth installment in the museum's "A Dialogue with the World" series of art and cultural relics exhibitions, and another landmark show on global ancient civilizations following its popular exhibition on Ancient Egypt.

According to Zhong, the museum will for the first time dedicate its entire People's Square venue to a single exhibition. The show is expected to be

one of the largest and most comprehensive presentations of ancient American civilizations ever staged.

After two years of preparation, more than 1,000 cultural relics from the Americas will be displayed -- many making their debut in China -- offering a systematic overview of the civilizations including the Olmec, Maya, Aztec and Inca.

The exhibition will also feature two programs providing immersive virtual reality experiences.

Public interest in museums and cultural exhibitions continues to grow in Shanghai. In 2025, the city hosted nearly 1,600 exhibitions in museums and art galleries, drawing close to 50 million visits from both domestic and international audiences, Zhong added. (Xinhua)

Culture

Tradition meets talent in Taifa Hall

Chinese language proficiency inspires Kenyan youth to spearhead cultural ties



Students dance during warm-up performances before the national finals of the 25th Chinese Bridge Chinese Proficiency Competition in Nairobi, Kenya, April 30, 2026. Kenya on Thursday hosted the national finals of the 25th Chinese Bridge Chinese Proficiency Competition, featuring 20 university students who competed in both speech and talent categories. (Xinhua)

NAIROBI, May 2, (Xinhua): With tears of joy, Miriam Achieng was carried shoulder high by a rapturous crowd to the podium when she was announced the overall winner at the national finals of the 25th Chinese Bridge Chinese Proficiency Competition in Kenya.

Dressed in a sparkling green dress on Friday night, the geospatial engineering student from the University of Nairobi had earlier electrified the crowd with a powerful drumming performance themed around the courage of a female general.

Achieng, also pursuing the Chinese

language as a minor, won accolades from judges and spectators after delivering a speech in fluent Mandarin.

"It was my first time to participate in a (Chinese) Bridge competition, and my first time to be on any stage. It felt nice and exciting to find my new self. Sometimes it was overwhelming, but I was reassured by my strong support team of teachers and friends," Achieng said.

Achieng said that being declared the overall winner of this year's Chinese language proficiency contest has inspired her to champion the Kenya-

China relationship to a new level.

Held at a packed auditorium in the University of Nairobi's Taifa Hall, the 25th Chinese Bridge Chinese Proficiency Competition's national finals for college students in Kenya was characterized by elegance, pomp, and adulation.

Twenty participants shortlisted for the finals put their best foot forward during the competition, which included speech and cultural performances, such as a cappella music, dance, martial arts, and drumming.

Alice Usla Wanjala, a microbiology

and biotechnology student at the University of Nairobi, wowed the audience with her rhythmic moves while performing a lion dance.

Wanjala defied earlier nervousness to deliver a speech in fluent Mandarin, highlighting how language creates bridges of friendship and how it can bring diverse cultures together for a common cause.

"We should use language to bring Kenyan and Chinese communities together," said Wanjala, who won in the Outstanding Talent category for displaying prowess in blending lion dance, Kungfu, singing, and acting.

She noted that the Kenya-China friendship is getting better as more local youth take up the Chinese language while immersing themselves in culture, culinary delights, and costumes from the Asian country.

Beatrice Muganda Inyangala, principal secretary in the State Department for Higher Education and Research, hailed the competition for creating a platform for local youth to hone their skills in spoken and written Mandarin.

Kenyan and Chinese ministries of education have already signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to foster cooperation on joint Chinese language education in the East African Nation, Inyangala said.

Thanks to this MOU, Kenya has set high standards for teaching the Chinese language in local schools and colleges, with the annual Chinese Bridge competition attesting to the growing appeal of Mandarin countrywide, according to Inyangala.

"We endeavor and promise to continue mobilizing more and more people to participate in this particular competition so that we can jointly witness the achievements of Chinese language education in Kenya," Inyangala said in a speech read on her behalf by Carol Hunja, secretary for higher education and research in the Ministry of Education.

Film

73 films featured from over 30 countries

Aswan Women Film Festival fuels rise of new Egyptian filmmakers

ASWAN, Egypt, May 2, (Xinhua): The Aswan International Women Film Festival (AIWFF) has succeeded in building a solid base of young filmmakers across southern Egypt over its first decade through workshops and programs designed to empower local talents, said festival president Mohamed Abdel Khalek in a recent interview with Xinhua.

"One of the most important achievements of the festival during its first decade is establishing a real base of young people capable of working in the film industry in southern Egypt, especially in Aswan," Abdel Khalek said.

Nearly 700 young people have received training through the festival's annual programs. About 50 trainees have become writers or directors, among whom 16 are currently working within the festival's own team, according to the festival head.

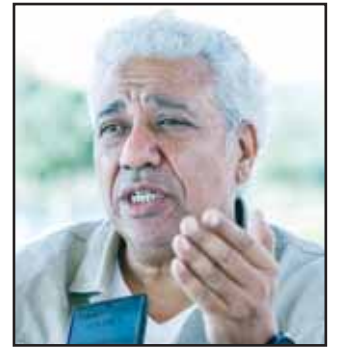
The festival adopts a learn-by-doing training model centered on hands-on filmmaking practice, allowing participants to gain experience through real projects and trial and error, he noted, adding that this year alone, the festival's workshops have produced 18 short films, introducing 18 emerging directors and writers.

Abdel Khalek said he had once expected it would take around 20 years to develop a local generation of young filmmakers in Aswan and southern Egypt, yet the goal had been realized in just a decade since the festival's launch.

The forum is not intended to provide theoretical lessons, but to enable young filmmakers to meet experts, programmers, funders, and festival representatives to learn how to market their films and obtain funding, according to Abdel Khalek.

Speaking about the festival's role in supporting women, he recalled that some people who once mocked the idea of a women-focused film festival when it launched in 2017 have eventually become supporters of the festival and women-related initiatives.

In his view, cinema is more effective than administrative policies in raising public awareness, noting



Mohamed Abdel Khalek, president of the Aswan International Women Film Festival (AIWFF), receives an interview with Xinhua in Aswan, Egypt. (Xinhua)

that the festival focuses on southern Egypt, where women need greater support and more attention.

The festival promotes awareness of women's rights through films, discussions, and training for female filmmakers from southern Egypt, enabling them to express their concerns and tell their stories, he added.

The recently concluded 10th AIWFF featured 73 films from more than 30 countries in its international and local competitions. While these numbers may not be particularly striking compared with other international film festivals, Abdel Khalek believes that the festival's success is not measured by the number of entries or participating countries, but rather by the quality and significance of the selected films.

Regarding the festival's international development, Abdel Khalek said AIWFF has been considering cooperation with China since its first edition, citing the country's strong artistic appeal, advanced filmmaking techniques, and extensive audience base.

"We would be pleased to invite guests from Chinese cinema, and we would also be pleased to hold an edition in which Chinese cinema is celebrated," he said, adding that the festival is looking forward to engaging with Chinese counterparts to launch such cooperation in the near future.

Art



Ibrahim Kamissoko (right) ties old fan grilles in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. (Xinhua)

Each fabric has its own name

Ivorian designer turns waste into hope for his community

ABIDJAN, May 2, (Xinhua): On a humble street in Abobo, a densely populated area in the northern part of Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire's economic capital, Ibrahim Kamissoko's studio stands out in a neighborhood once associated with disorder due to security concerns.

Inside the designer's studio, one finds straw mats, discarded CDs, mobile phone accessories, fan grilles, and various rubber products, everyday waste materials dismantled and reassembled into striking, unconventional fashion pieces.

Kamissoko began learning sewing at the age of 14 and chose to turn his interest into a profession after his father's passing.

"At that time, I didn't have many options, but I knew clearly what I liked -- making clothes," he recalled.

Years of learning and experimentation have helped him develop a design philosophy centered on "reinvention" and "expression." In his creations, different materials are assigned new functions and display diverse visual effects.

In one series inspired by mobile phones, he assembled thousands of tiny components into garments to reflect the impact of modern communication on daily life. "A phone connects the world. I can be in Abidjan and communicate with someone in China -- that's its significance," he explained.

Rubber is one of his most frequently used materials. Widely used locally but difficult to decompose, it poses long-term environmental challenges. By incorporating it into his designs, Kamissoko aims to give new life to non-biodegradable materials while promoting environmental consciousness.

"Some rubber materials take hundreds of years to break down. If discarded carelessly, they harm the environment. We can find another way to deal with them," he said.

Kamissoko also places strong emphasis

on incorporating local cultural elements into his designs. Cote d'Ivoire's diverse ethnic groups offer a rich heritage of traditional textiles. "Each fabric has its own name, as well as unique colors and patterns," he noted, adding that these elements provide endless inspiration for contemporary fashion.

Dagnogo Mamadou, who runs a cafe near the studio, has witnessed Kamissoko's journey over nearly 15 years. The designer often stops by for coffee and sits by the roadside, observing the flow of people and drawing inspiration from daily life.

"He is a true creator," Mamadou said. "Every time he walks into the cafe, it feels like a 'star' has arrived."

Beyond fashion design, Kamissoko is deeply involved in organizing cultural initiatives. The Abobo Fashion Art festival he founded is now approaching its seventh edition, attracting designers from across West Africa and even Europe.

It has become one of the area's major cultural highlights, drawing large crowds and industry professionals, boosting local business activity, and gradually reshaping external perceptions of Abobo.

For Kamissoko, fashion is not only a form of personal expression but also a driving force for community transformation. "We want to show young people that they don't necessarily have to leave here to find opportunities; they can create something valuable locally," he said.

Inspired by such initiatives, young people are beginning to explore careers in fashion and the creative industries. Inside Kamissoko's studio, several apprentices are learning design and production under his guidance.

Mohamed Diabate, 28, said that he was attracted by Kamissoko's creativity. "He can create different works using all kinds of materials," Diabate said.

Travel

Angkor Park reports 322K foreign tourists in early '26

PHNOM PENH, May 2, (Xinhua): Cambodia's famous Angkor Archaeological Park received a total of 322,004 international visitors in the first four months of 2026, a year-on-year drop of 32.1 percent, said a press release on Friday.

The UNESCO-listed world heritage site earned about 15.5 million U.S. dollars in revenue from ticket sales during the January-April period this year, down 30.2 percent year-on-year, said the press release from the state-owned Angkor Enterprise.

Situated in northwest Siem

Reap province, the 401-square-km park, the kingdom's most popular tourist destination, is home to 91 ancient temples, which were built from the ninth to the 13th centuries.

Thong Mengdavid, deputy director at the China-ASEAN Studies Center of the Cambodia University of Technology and Science, said the decrease in the number of foreign tourists was likely due to global and regional economic slowdowns, online scam issues, border conflict with Thailand, and fuel price hikes.



Tourists visit the Angkor Wat in Siem Reap province, Cambodia. (Xinhua)

HEALTH/SCIENCE



A new Russian medium-class launch vehicle Soyuz-5 was launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome on April 30 as part of its first flight tests, Russia's state space corporation Roscosmos said. (AP)

Russia launches new Soyuz-5 rocket

Russia launched its new-generation Soyuz-5 medium-class carrier rocket, marking its maiden launch under the framework of flight development tests, state space corporation Roscosmos said.

According to a statement released on Roscosmos' official website, the Soyuz-5 rocket lifted off from Launch Pad 45 at the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan at 9 pm Moscow time on Thursday (1800 GMT), carrying a mock payload into a suborbital trajectory.

The first and second stages of the rocket operated normally, and the mock payload subsequently splashed down in a designated area of the Pacific Ocean, the statement said.

Roscosmos head Dmitry Bakanov said the Soyuz-5 is capable of delivering up to 17 tonnes to low-Earth orbit with high precision and is expected to reduce the unit cost of payload delivery significantly. (Xinhua)

Rising temps during summer could disrupt natural balance of skin, causing surge in dermatological issues: Dr Al-Raqam

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Consultant dermatologist and cosmetologist Dr. Hanin Al-Raqam revealed that the rising temperatures during summer could disrupt the natural balance of the skin, causing a surge in various dermatological issues.

In an interview with Kuwait TV, Al-Raqam explained how the changing climate affects the skin by stimulating sebum output and accelerating water loss. She stated this condition leads to irritation, dryness and allergic reactions, indicating that the manifestation of the imbalance varies depending on the skin type of an individual.

She talked about rosacea, describing it as a condition frequently ignored in its early phase when it is only a slight redness on the nose and cheeks. She warned that without proper management, this can evolve into chronic redness characterized by dilated blood vessels, and in more severe instances, the development of pimples. She added that although rosacea is a chronic illness without a complete cure, it can be effectively managed, while its impact may sometimes reach the mouth or eyes.

She stressed that treatment strategies must be tailored to the specific stage of the disease, adding that timely medical intervention is vital to prevent complications like the spread of pimples or the thick-

ening of the skin.

She said the initial signs of infection include redness triggered by environmental factors or heat, and the development of the condition affected by acquired and genetic factors.

On the most common summer skin concerns, she cited acne, redness, allergies, irritation, pigmentation fungal infections, burns, and dehydration that affects both the internal and external health.

She suggested a thorough skincare regimen, which includes consistent sunscreen use, proper cleansing, appropriate therapeutic creams and maintaining high water intake.

On perspiration, she pointed out that sweat can obstruct pores when combined with sebum, creating an environment for bacteria that leads to acne or infections. She said fungal issues are common in poorly ventilated areas or spots prone to friction.

She added that sensitive skin is vulnerable to UV (ultraviolet) rays, especially when using treatments or exfoliants, while oily skin tends to be more resilient than dry skin, which has a more fragile protective layer.

She clarified that minor skin issues often respond to routine moisturizing and daily care, but persistent cases or conditions that do not improve require the intervention of a specialist to establish an effective treatment plan.



An aerial view of the Xochimilcol canals in Mexico City on Feb 16, 2022. (AP)

Mexico City sinking so quickly, it can be seen from space

MEXICO CITY, May 2, (AP): Mexico City is sinking by nearly 10 inches (about 25 centimeters) a year, according to new satellite imagery released this week by NASA, making it one of the world's fastest-subsiding metropolises.

One of the world's most sprawling and populated urban areas, at 3,000 square miles (about 7,800 square kilometers) and some 22 million people, the Mexican capital and surrounding cities were built atop an ancient lake bed. Many downtown streets were once canals, a tradition that continues in the rural fringes.

Extensive groundwater pumping and urban development have dramatically shrunk the aquifer, meaning that Mexico City has been sinking for more than a century, leaving many monuments and older buildings - like the Metropolitan Cathedral, where construction began in 1573 - visibly tilted to the side. The contracting aquifer has also contributed to a chronic water crisis that is only expected to worsen.

"It damages part of the critical infrastructure of Mexico City, such as the subway, the drainage system, the water, the potable water system, housing and streets," said Enrique Cabral, a researcher studying geophysics at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. "It's a very big problem."

Mexico City is sinking so fast that the subsidence can be spotted from space. In some parts it is happening at an average rate of 0.78 inches (2 centimeters) a month, according to NASA's newly released report, such as at the main airport and the iconic monument commonly known as the Angel of Independence.

Overall that means a yearly subsidence rate of about 9.5 inches (24 centimeters). Over the course of less than a century, the drop has been more than 39 feet (12 meters), according to Cabral.

"We have one of the fastest velocities of land subsidence in the whole world," he said.

The NASA estimates are based on measurements taken between October 2025 and January 2026 by a powerful satellite known as NISAR, which can track real-time changes on the Earth's surface and is a joint initiative between NASA and the Indian Space Research Organization.

NISAR scientist Paul Rosen said that by capturing details of the Earth from space, the project is also "telling us something about what's actually happening below the surface."

"It's basically documentation of all of these changes within a city," Rosen said. He added: "You can see the full magnitude of the problem."

With time the team hopes to be able to zoom in even more on specific areas and someday get measurements on a building-by-building basis.

More broadly, researchers hope to apply the technology around the world to track things like natural disasters, changes in fault lines, the effects of climate change in regions like Antarctica and more.

Rosen said it could be used to bolster alert systems, letting scientists alert governments to the need for evacuations in cases of volcano eruptions, for example.

For Mexico City the technology amounts to a big advance in studying the subsidence issue and mitigating its worst effects, according to Cabral.

Researchers warn of rising lead risks in Africa's solar energy boom

NAIROBI, Kenya, May 2, (AP): Years after a lead acid battery recycling plant shut down in Kenya's coastal city of Mombasa, residents of Owino Uhuru say they are still suffering from lead poisoning, a growing public health risk as Africa's clean energy boom drives a surge in battery use.

Faith Muthama, 40, a mother of four, says her health has never recovered.

"Life has never been the same," she said, wiping away sweat. "I still struggle to do heavy chores as I suffer from breathing difficulties. When I was tested in 2012, I was found with high lead levels in my blood."

Experts warn that similar risks have emerged across Africa as the continent adopts more renewable energy. A February report by the Centre for Global Development, an independent think tank based in Washington and London, warned that the rapid expansion of off-grid solar systems and battery storage, seen as critical to closing Africa's energy access gap, is driving a sharp increase in demand for battery recycling.

Much of that recycling is done in informal or poorly regulated settings.

The contamination in Owino Uhuru dates back to 2007, when Kenya Metal Refineries EPZ, a local subsidiary of a company based in Mumbai, India, operated a lead-acid battery recycling plant within the settlement.

Residents say toxic waste from the plant, which exported processed lead to India, seeped into the soil and water, causing widespread illness. More than 20 deaths have been linked to the pollution. Although the factory was shut down in 2014, the damage lingers.

Lead exposure is linked to neurological damage, reduced cognitive development and long-term health impacts, particularly in children whose brains are still developing.

In 2025, Kenya's Supreme Court awarded about \$12 million in damages to about 3,000 residents after they won a class-action lawsuit against the smelting company, a rare legal victory for victims of industrial pollution. But activists say the state has failed to follow through on timely compensation.

"I am just waiting for help as I have exhausted all my resources treating myself," said Alfred Ogulo, 70, a village elder, his speech slightly slurred.

At one point, Ogulo said tests showed extremely high lead levels in his blood, leaving him with nerve damage and limited mobility.

"I cannot walk without a stick," he said. "I also suffer from serious chest pain and coughs from the toxic fumes that we breathed in here when the factory was still in operation."

Lead-acid batteries are widely used in many low-income markets because they



Locals sit and stand along a street in Owino Uhuru village, an informal settlement in Mikindani, Mombasa County, Kenya, on April 10, (AP)

are cheaper than alternatives like lithium-ion batteries. But safely recycling them requires costly infrastructure that is often lacking. So, informal recyclers often use rudimentary methods that can release lead particles into the air, soil and water.

"Off-grid solar could account for a substantial share of batteries entering the recycling stream in Africa," said Lee Crawford, a senior research fellow at the Centre for Global Development, who reviewed the report. "That's on top of existing demand from vehicles like cars and motorbikes."

"Safe recycling is expensive and that creates a strong incentive to do it unsafely," Crawford said, adding that since banning lead-acid batteries is unfeasible, the solution is to make recycling safer.

Across Africa and South Asia, studies estimate that between one-third and half of children have elevated blood lead levels, making it one of the most widespread environmental global health risks. In many countries, weak enforcement of environmental regulations compounds the problem. While rules often exist, experts say implementation remains inconsistent.

Humpback whale released in N. Sea

BERLIN, May 2, (AP): A rescue team on Saturday released from a barge in the North Sea a humpback whale that had been stranded in shallow waters near Germany since March, witnesses said.

Nicknamed Timmy by German media, the whale was spotted swimming near Germany's Baltic Sea coast on March 3, far from its natural habitat in the Atlantic Ocean.

The mammal's health deteriorated as it became repeatedly stranded in shallow waters near the coastal city of Wismar, and unsuccessful efforts to coax it toward deeper seas were livestreamed across the globe.

The environment minister for Germany's Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania state gave the green light for the attempt to save the whale, proposed by a private initiative, despite some warnings from the scientific community that it may be too much for the animal.

Jens Schwarck, a member of the private initiative who was on site, said the whale was released around 9 a.m. local time, according to the German news agency dpa. The agency reported that the whale was released 70 kilometers (about 45 miles) from the coast of Skagen, Denmark.

Drone footage showed a whale swimming and spouting water near the barge, though it was not immediately confirmed that the animal was indeed Timmy.

A debate emerged about whether to let the whale die in peace or try to assist its return to the Atlantic Ocean. Activists staged protests on the beach in Wismar calling for its liberation, while others have supported new ideas about how the whale could be transported.



The humpback whale, stranded in the Baltic Sea, has arrived in the barge intended for its transportation near the island of Poel, Germany on April 28. (AP)

Experts advance safer, scalable indoor solar tech in Australia

SYDNEY, May 2, (Xinhua): Researchers in Australia have developed a safer method to produce high-efficiency indoor solar panels without toxic materials, potentially paving the way for wider use in homes and offices.

Chemical engineers at Australia's University of Queensland (UQ) have developed a new fabrication method that eliminates the need for toxic lead and other hazardous solvents in perovskite indoor solar panels, said a UQ statement released Friday.

"Halide perovskites are an emerging technology that could replace silicon, offering much higher efficiencies and commercial potential," said UQ's Lyu Miaoliang, co-author of the study published in ACS Energy Letters.

The UQ team developed a safe and scalable vapor-

based manufacturing process for lead-free perovskite cells, achieving a record 16.36 percent power conversion efficiency under indoor light, compared with about 10 percent for conventional silicon technology.

"This material has very attractive properties that can absorb indoor light and convert very weak indoor light efficiently into electricity," Lyu said, adding that the process is much better suited to scalable manufacturing.

Lead-free perovskite indoor solar cells are seen as a potential replacement for coin-cell and button batteries in low-power devices, including environmental sensors, wearables, medical and health monitoring devices, and electronic shelf labels used in retail, researchers said.

"With suitable voltage management, these devices can replace coin cell batteries, reducing the number of small batteries that end up as waste or in children's toys," Lyu said, adding that commercial applications are expected within a few years.



Lyu

Meaning and Counting Stars complete the podium

Always a Runner wins 152nd Kentucky Oaks in historic night race

LOUISVILLE, Ky., May 2, (AP): Trainer Chad Brown got the scary call last fall that Always a Runner had a serious case of pneumonia, something that would keep her from racing as a 2-year-old.

"This filly was struggling," Brown said. "Her career was really up in the air."

After more than a month in a veterinary clinic and treatment with a hyperbaric chamber, she began her racing career in February. On Friday night, Always a Runner showed her toughness once again by winning the Kentucky Oaks against some of the best 3-year-old fillies around in the 152nd edition of the race and the first run under the lights in prime time at Churchill Downs.

"This filly is very resilient, very tough," Brown said after winning the Oaks for the first time. "She didn't have to be here today. She didn't have to run again. She could have never run, easily. I've had it happen with several horses. The fact that not only did she overcome it and ended up here today as an undefeated horse in the Oaks is just remarkable."

Ridden by Jose Ortiz, Always a Runner made a move around the final turn and needed every bit of the stretch to pass Bob Baffert's Explora and Michael McCarthy's Meaning before the finish line of the 1 1/8-mile race.

Meaning was second by 1 1/4 lengths and Counting Stars third. Always a Runner finished in 1:48.62 and paid \$13.04 to win, \$7.46 to place and \$5.44 to show.

"We were there every step of the way," McCarthy said. "Kudos to Chad, that filly came running. We were second best."

Always a Runner impressed Ortiz, who had never ridden her in a race before the Oaks - just a morning workout. She's now 3 for 3.

"Chad was very confident in her," said Ortiz, who won five races on Friday at Churchill Downs. "He knew what he had. He told me, 'Just go out there, get to know her in the work and you're going to feel like a sports car, like she's a Ferrari.' And he was right. I loved the way she worked, and here we are. We won."

"I stick with things that are working," Brown said. "So, two starts, we should be good."

The first night Kentucky Oaks was one for the history books, but also took place in front of large swaths of empty seats. Many of the 100,000-plus fans who filled the grandstand and the track from the late morning through the afternoon had departed before sunset. The Oaks has typically been run before 6 p.m.

"For me it's just a very long day," Ortiz said. "It was just amazing. Good vibe. It's for the public. If they have fun, it's good to me."

Brown lamented not being able to get presented with the trophy in the infield, the tradition for the Oaks and the Derby that was moved to the paddock because of the time. Other than that, he had no complaints.

"It was a really cool experience, and it's nice to utilize this facility with the lights and all and I would definitely do it again. Obviously, my horse ran terrific," Brown said. "(The ceremony) was the only negative. Everything else about it was an incredible experience today with this post time."



Always a Runner, left, ridden by Jose L. Ortiz wins the 152nd running of the Kentucky Oaks horse race at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Ky. (AP)

Delhi ends three-match losing run



Delhi Capitals' Pathum Nissanka plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Delhi Capitals and Rajasthan Royals in Jaipur, India. (AP)

Rajasthan's 15-year-old batting sensation Sooryavanshi out for 4

JAIPUR, India, May 2, (AP): Opening batters Lokesh Rahul and Pathum Nissanka struck half-centuries to help end Delhi Capitals' three-match losing streak at Rajasthan Royals' expense in the Indian Premier League.

Rahul smashed 75 off 40 balls, his third fifty this season plus a century, and Nissanka hit 62 off 33 as their century partnership led Delhi to 226-3 with five balls to spare and a win by seven wickets.

Rajasthan made 225-6 with captain Riyan

Parag's 90 his first half-century of the season. Donovan Ferreira added a whirlwind unbeaten 47 off just 14 balls with six sixes and two fours in the last three overs.

Rahul and Nissanka wiped off nearly half of the target in their 110-run stand as Delhi posted their highest powerplay score of 70-0.

Ravindra Jadeja broke them up in the 10th over but Rahul kept scoring at a healthy rate and added 61 runs with Nitish Rana (33) before both set batters departed in successive overs.

Mitchell Starc boosted Delhi's struggling bowling resources with 3-40 as the Australian pace bowler struck with his third delivery in his first match in

over three months due to a shoulder injury.

Starc caught opener Yashasvi Jaiswal off his full toss and dismissed Parag and Jadeja with slower deliveries in the death overs.

"Nice to get the cobwebs out. Nice return," Starc said. "I've been bowling for weeks but haven't bowled at a batter until three nights ago. In terms of ticking the boxes with the skills, I was in a position to do most of what I wanted to do."

Rajasthan's 15-year-old batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi was out for 4, clean-bowled by Kyle Jamieson with a full-pitched ball.

But Parag and Dhruv Jurel (40) combined for 102 and Ferreira exploded at the death.

'Really exciting'

4 US-born players could be in the mix for Mexico's WC roster

MEXICO CITY, May 2, (AP): Mexico's World Cup roster could owe more than a little bit to its northern neighbor.

The country has already had Mexican-American players on previous World Cup squads, but as many as four who were born and developed in the United States could be suiting up for El Tri in 2026.

"It would be a tremendous impact for the Mexican Americans for me to play in the World Cup," said midfielder Brian Gutiérrez, who was born in Berwyn, Illinois, and was selected for the World Cup roster Tuesday. "It would be really exciting."

Gutiérrez could be joined on the Mexican squad by Chivas teammate Richy Ledezma, a midfielder and right back born in Phoenix, as well as Obed Vargas, a midfielder from Anchorage, Alaska, and right back Julián Araujo, a native of Lompoc, California.

Coach Javier Aguirre released a partial World Cup roster this week composed exclusively of players from Liga MX. Although Ledezma wasn't included, that doesn't mean he couldn't be on the 26-man roster Aguirre announces on June 1. Mexico plays its tournament opener against South Africa on June 11 in Mexico City.

Vargas, who plays for Atlético Madrid, and Araujo, who plays for Glasgow Celtic, will have to wait alongside Ledezma. Araujo has been training in Mexico's facility alone this week even though his place is not assured.

"I am Mexican, I feel the flag, the country and coming to Guadalajara was amazing," Ledezma said. "It is an honor, a dream of mine to play in the World Cup in the country where my parents were born."

Gutiérrez played two games for the U.S. national team and Ledezma and Araujo one each before switching affiliation, and all four appeared for the American Under-23 and Under-20 teams. The quartet found themselves far back on the American depth chart.

Araujo made his Mexico debut in 2021, becoming the third player to appear for the U.S. and Mexican senior teams after Martín Vásquez and Edgar Castillo. Vargas debuted in 2024, and Ledezma and Gutiérrez this past January.

Mexico has never had more than two Mexican Americans suit up for a World Cup.

Two California natives, Isaac "Conejito" Brizuela and Miguel "Pochito" Ponce, represented Mexico in the 2014 tournament in Brazil.

Brizuela was born in San Jose, California, moved to Mexico when he was 2 and is now contemplating retirement after playing 16 years in the Mexican League.

Ponce, who was born in Sacramento, California, also returned to Mexico when he was a child after his mother was deported. She had worked as a housemaid in Sacramento.

"I don't remember it because I was very young, but my mother told me about the deportation. It was a difficult time because my father stayed behind and we returned to Mexico, although years later we reunited," said Ponce, who helped Mexico win the 2012 Olympic men's soccer gold medal.

Gutiérrez, 22, played for the U.S. in January 2025 friendlies against Venezuela and Costa Rica.

The 25-year-old Ledezma played for the U.S. at the 2019 FIFA Under-20 World Cup and had one appearance with the senior squad in a friendly against Panama on Nov. 16, 2020. His career was slowed by a torn right ACL suffered with PSV Eindhoven in December 2020.

Araujo appeared for the U.S. in a December 2020 friendly against El Salvador.

Ledezma joined Chivas last summer from PSV and Gutierrez this year from the Chicago Fire.

"After the MLS season I was looking for another opportunity and Chivas came up. It was a dream come true," Gutierrez told The Associated Press. "It was a no-brainer; it was bound to happen and I am glad that it happened now."

Playing under the Chivas spotlight helped both players reach the Mexican national team quickly, but both had already been contacted by Andrés Lillini, who oversees Mexico's youth teams.

The same was true for Vargas, while Araujo had already been called up in 2021 when Argentine Gerardo Martino coached Mexico.

"Scouting is the foundation of any development process, that's why I came to the national team," said Lillini, who worked as a scout for CSKA Moscow. "Every eligible Mexican player with the necessary skill level should be here, and we decided to begin with the United States."

As part of Lillini's and the Mexican Federation's plan, the presence of Mexican American players could increase in the future. In the last call-up for the Under-16 national team, six players born in the U.S. were selected.

And although Lillini initially focused on the northern neighbor, he has also extended recruitment to children of Mexican parents living in Europe. He said he already has contacted 30 players abroad.

"All the federations in the world do it, we had to do it, too," Lillini said.

Some fans and analysts believe the Mexican national team should consist only of Mexican-born players.

When Ponce and Brizuela played in the World Cup, there was no controversy because both were substitutes, and Brizuela's nationality was only revealed after the tournament.



In this file photo, Mexico's Obed Vargas, right, and Morocco's Mohamed Hamony battle for the ball during a FIFA U-20 World Cup Group C soccer match at Elias Figueroa Brander Stadium in Valparaiso, Chile. (AP)

Exorbitantly expensive tickets for early World Cup games still on general sale

MANCHESTER, England, May 2, (AP): Tickets for most of the World Cup group games remain on general sale with just over a month to go until the tournament kicks off on June 11.

But prices are exorbitantly high, topping out at \$4,105 for the United States' opening game against Paraguay in Los Angeles, and many costing around \$2,000.

Tickets are still available on FIFA's official website through its "last-minute sales" section after batches had been released through various phases since September.

The cheapest tickets currently are \$380 for seven different games, including World Cup debutant Curacao vs. Ivory Coast in Philadelphia.

Prices vary dependent on the category of ticket, with Front Category 1 the most expensive and Category 4 the cheapest. Yet a Category 3 ticket for USA vs. Paraguay is listed at \$1,120 compared to a Category 2 ticket for Austria vs. Jordan, which is \$380.

Prices are also subject to change as FIFA adopts dynamic pricing for the first time at the World Cup.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino said in January the demand for tickets for this year's tournament in the U.S., Canada and Mexico was the equivalent of "1,000 years of World Cups at once", and all 104 matches would be sold out.

While only a handful of tickets remain for some games, fans willing and able to pay can still watch even the biggest nations such as defending champion Argentina, Brazil, Spain, France and England.

Tickets for Lionel Messi's Argentina range from \$2,475-\$2,925. For Brazil it is \$2,280-\$2,310.



FIFA President Gianni Infantino speaks during the 76th FIFA Congress in Vancouver, British Columbia. (AP)

FIFA has been accused by fans of a "monumental betrayal" on ticket costs, but soccer's governing body has repeatedly defended its pricing strategy.

"There are expensive tickets, yes, and there are also affordable tickets," Infantino said Thursday in addressing the FIFA Congress in Vancouver, British Columbia. "And what is important is that all the revenues that we generate from the world go back to you, go back to the entire world and finance football in all of your countries, and you know it better than me, in big majority of our countries, we could not have organized football the way we know it without the grants and the revenues and the Forward program."

Fans have been further angered by the addition of more expensive categories as the tournament approaches. Many of the tickets still on general sale are for the more expensive categories.

Tickets are also available via resale platforms including FIFA's own marketplace and last

month four seats for the World Cup final were listed at just under \$2.3 million each. FIFA does not resell tickets or set prices on the platform, but can cash in for a second time by taking a 30% cut from any sale.

Austria vs. Jordan, New Zealand vs. Egypt, Jordan vs. Algeria, Cape Verde vs. Saudi Arabia, Algeria vs. Austria, Congo DR vs. Uzbekistan and Curacao vs. Ivory Coast are all currently available for \$380.

There are also a number of games with prices ranging from \$400-\$455.

The USA's opener against Paraguay on June 12 is the most expensive for the group games. While a number of tickets remain on general sale, the cheapest are \$1,120 for Category 3.

Argentina vs. Austria (\$2,925), Ecuador vs. Germany (\$2,550), Uruguay vs. Spain (\$2,520) and England vs. Croatia (\$2,505) are also among the costliest.

A total of 17 group-stage games are sold out according to FIFA's website, including the tournament opener between Mexico and South Africa in Mexico City on June 11.

Seven games staged in Mexico are sold out, including the co-host's two other matches against South Korea in Guadalajara and Czech Republic in Mexico City.

Turkey vs. USA in Los Angeles, Brazil vs. Morocco in New York/New Jersey and Scotland vs. Brazil in Miami are among other games sold out.

No tickets for the final are on general sale, but there is still the chance to book seats for semifinals if you have around \$10,000 going spare.

A Front Category 1 ticket for the Atlanta semifinal is listed at \$9,660. It's even more for the Dallas semifinal, with an equivalent ticket priced at \$11,130.

Takuma beats Ioka to retain WBC bantamweight title

Inoue retains titles with unanimous decision over Nakatani

TOKYO, May 2, (AP): Naoya Inoue retained his undisputed super-bantamweight crown with a unanimous decision victory over Junto Nakatani on Saturday in one of the biggest bouts in Japanese boxing history.

Two judges scored the fight 116-112, while one had it 115-113, all in favor of Inoue after 12 rounds before a sell-out crowd of 55,000 at the Tokyo Dome.

Inoue (33-0, 27 KOs) kept his WBA, WBC, IBF and WBO belts - and then apologized for not delivering a knockout.

The 33-year-old Inoue, nicknamed "The Monster" and hailed as Japan's greatest boxer, also praised Nakatani (32-1, 24 KOs).

"He was a fighter with a strong heart. That's what makes this win mean so much," said Inoue, a four-division champion.

The highly anticipated bout galvanized fans here for the past year with former champions and other experts offering commentary. Most predictions had favored Inoue because of his experience, speed and power.

The fight amply displayed both boxers' dexterity, in offense and defense, with both taking nice swings as well as jabs, but a lot simply failed to land.

The 28-year-old Nakatani, a southpaw, used his longer reach to keep Inoue's punches at bay, while Inoue simply swayed his body or got out of the way.



Naoya Inoue of Japan, left, punches Junto Nakatani of Japan during the twelfth round of a boxing match for the WBA, WBC, IBF and WBO super bantamweight world title in Tokyo. (AP)

The challenger became more aggressive after the sixth round, moving forward to try to land punches. But Inoue used his quick footwork to evade them, landing some jabs back in the process.

"I came prepared so there were no surprises, but the champion was great," a somber Nakatani said after absorbing his first professional loss.

Nakatani suffered a cut above his left eye in what appeared to come from an accidental clash of heads, and officials said he was going to a hospital afterward to get it checked.

In a closely watched undercard, Inoue's younger brother Takuma (22-2, 5 KOs) beat former four-division champion Kazuto Ioka (32-5-1, 17 KOs) by

unanimous decision to retain his WBC bantamweight title.

"I really enjoyed the 12 exciting rounds, all thanks to my opponent, who is a legend," Takuma Inoue said. "I want to prove I'm not just Naoya Inoue's brother."

Still, Takuma prevented Ioka from becoming a five-division champion, handing that possible honor to his brother, believed to have a good chance of doing just that.

The story of the Inoue brothers, who took up boxing as youngsters and grew up in loving families that encouraged their pursuit, is well known among boxing fans here. Their father Shingo Inoue was at ringside for both fighters, as always.

Lakers crush Rockets with 27-3 blitz, book Thunder showdown

Pistons, Raptors force Game 7s

HOUSTON, May 2, (AP): LeBron James had 28 points and the Los Angeles Lakers eliminated Houston with a 98-78 win in Game 6 of their Western Conference first-round playoff series by holding the Rockets to a season low in points.

The No. 4 seed Lakers move on to meet the top-seeded Thunder with Game 1 Tuesday in Oklahoma City.

Los Angeles has advanced to the second round for the first time since 2023 when it lost to Denver in the West finals despite missing top scorer Luka Doncic for the entire series.

The Lakers used a 27-3 run in the first half to take an 18-point lead at halftime. They led by 22 with about three minutes left in the third quarter before Houston went on an 8-2 run to cut the lead to 71-55 entering the fourth.

But Los Angeles opened the quarter with a 10-3 spurt, with five points from Rui Hachimura, to make it 81-58 with about seven minutes left.

Hachimura added 21 points with five 3-pointers.

Redick raved about what James meant to his team not only Friday night but throughout the season.

Amen Thompson had 18 points and Alperen Sengun added 17 for Houston, which is heading home after a first-round playoff loss for a second straight season after losing to the Warriors in seven games last year.

The fifth-seeded Rockets had won two straight after falling into an 0-3 hole. They forced Game 6 despite missing superstar Kevin Durant for all but one game of this series because of a knee injury followed by an ankle issue.

Pistons 93, Magic 79

In Orlando, Cade Cunningham scored 32 points and the top-seeded Detroit Pistons pulled off an incredible rally, erasing a 24-point deficit and beating the Orlando Magic to force a Game 7 in their Eastern Conference first-round series.

Detroit trailed by 22 at the half and Orlando's lead went to 62-38 early in the third quarter. The Magic looked absolutely poised to become the seventh No. 8 seed to eliminate a No. 1 seed in the first round.

And then everything went



Houston Rockets forward Jabari Smith Jr. (10) defends against Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James (23) during the second half of Game 6 of a first-round NBA playoffs basketball series in Houston. (AP)

wrong for Orlando. Everything.

That number, and a whole lot of others, were just baffling. The Magic missed 23 consecutive shots from the field, Detroit went on a 35-5 run and just like that, the story of the game - and quite possibly the series - changed wildly.

Tobias Harris scored 22 points for Detroit, which will host Game 7 on Sunday. Paolo Banchero and Desmond Bane each scored 17 for Orlando, which is now 0-2 in close-out opportunities in this series and was again without injured forward Franz Wagner.

The first quarter was back and

forth, Detroit leading 26-25 after those opening 12 minutes.

The second quarter: Magic 35, Pistons 12.

Raptors 112 Cavaliers 110, OT

In Toronto, RJ Barrett hit a 3-pointer with 1.2 seconds remaining in overtime and the Toronto Raptors pushed their Eastern Conference first-round playoff series to a seventh game by beating the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Evan Mobley had a chance to win it for Cleveland but his 3-pointer bounced off the front of the rim as time expired.

Scottie Barnes had 25 points and 14 assists, Barrett and Ja'Kobe Walter both scored 24 points and Collin Murray-Boyles added 17 as Toronto held on after blowing an 11-point lead in the fourth quarter.

Game 7 is in Cleveland on Sunday. The home team has won all six games so far in the series.

The Raptors have yet to win in 10 playoff games in Cleveland, including three this series.

Mobley had 26 points and 14 rebounds, Donovan Mitchell scored 24 points and James Harden had 16 for the Cavaliers. Jarrett Allen scored 14 points and Dean Wade had 10.

Harden shot 5 for 14 and went 1 for 4 from 3-point range. He finished with nine rebounds and nine assists, but also made four turnovers.

Barrett's decisive basket hit off the back rim and bounced high above the backboard before falling through as the sellout crowd of 19,919 roared.

The high bounce on Barrett's winning basket kept Raptors coach Darko Rajakovic on edge.

Barnes had 14 points and 10 assists by halftime, making him the eighth NBA player since 1997 with 14 or more points and 10 or more assists in one half of a playoff game.

Cleveland finished with 18 turnovers, leading to 25 points for Toronto.



Toronto Raptors' Jamal Sheard (23) leaps as Cleveland Cavaliers' Jarrett Allen (31) defends during overtime of Game 6 in the first round of an NBA basketball playoffs series in Toronto. (AP)

Trump confirms support for the team

Iranian officials to meet FIFA over WC plans

GENEVA, May 2, (AP): Iranian soccer officials are set to meet soon with FIFA in Zurich about their World Cup games in the United States in June.

Iran's top soccer official Mehdi Taj said on Friday "we have many issues to discuss" on his return home from Canada where he failed to attend FIFA's annual congress held on Thursday in Vancouver.

FIFA secretary general Mattias Grafstrom has invited an Iranian delegation to its headquarters by a May 20 deadline, a person familiar with the proposal told The Associated Press on Friday. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because of the ongoing sensitivity of the issue.

That target date in Zurich is three weeks before the Iran squad is due in the U.S., staying at a training base in Tucson, Arizona, to prepare for three group games in Inglewood, California and Seattle.

"Our position is that we will soon have a meeting with FIFA," Taj told Iranian media on Friday.

Iran is an Asian soccer power but its ability and willingness to come to the World Cup has been questioned since the U.S. and Israel launched military attacks on Feb. 28. The tournament is being co-hosted by Canada and Mexico.

On Thursday, FIFA President Gianni Infantino opened his keynote speech to global soccer leaders - with only Iran missing of the 211 member federations - insisting again that Iran will come and play as scheduled in the U.S.

At the White House later Thursday, U.S. Pres-



In this file photo, Iran players pose for a team photo prior to a friendly soccer match between Iran and Costa Rica, in Antalya, southern Turkey. (AP)

ident Donald Trump confirmed his support for Iran's team, adding: "If Gianni said it, I'm OK."

Trump and Infantino have closely allied over the World Cup preparations which has challenges, beyond Iran with fans from several African countries, over granting entry visas and security concerns.

Taj and two more Iran officials had issues this week on landing in Toronto en route to Vancouver where they were expected at the FIFA annual meeting.

Taj, who is also a vice president of Asia's soccer body, detailed on Friday the problems with Canadian authorities though he said he was not deported.

"In Canada they asked us, 'Are you members

of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps?' We told them, 'In Iran, 90 million of us are IRGC,'" Taj was reported as saying in Iranian media.

After being detained for two hours at Toronto airport, the Iran soccer delegation which had arrived from Istanbul was told it could continue the journey.

"There was some discussion and he said, 'It's up to you,' and then we decided as a group to go back" to Istanbul, Taj said. "They did not officially deport us, there is nothing labeled as deportation in our file, but in practice it was like that."

Taj had a valid visa to enter Canada after he was denied one by the U.S. to attend the World Cup draw in Washington, D.C., on Dec. 5. At that event, Infantino presented Trump with the first FIFA Peace Prize.

Iran has World Cup group games against New Zealand, Belgium and Egypt, respectively, from June 15-26. The first two games are at the NFL stadium of the Los Angeles Rams and the third is at the Seattle Seahawks' stadium.

If Iran advances as runner-up in its group, the team could face the United States in the round of 32 at the Dallas Cowboys' stadium on July 3.

The Iranian soccer league shut down after the war started and is not due to resume before the World Cup. The squad played two warmup games in March at a training camp in Antalya, Turkey, where it could return this month to prepare for the World Cup that opens on June 11.

Jeddah to host 27th Gulf Cup draw ceremony

DOHA, May 2, (KUNA): The Arab Gulf Cup Football Federation announced that Jeddah will host the draw ceremony for the 27th Arabian Gulf Cup on May 19, at the Red Sea International Film Festival.

In a statement, the federation confirmed that the tournament will take place in Jeddah from September 23 to October 6, with matches staged at King Abdullah Sports City Stadium and Prince Abdullah Al-Faisal Sports City Stadium.

The competition will feature all GCC nations - United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, and Kuwait - along with Iraq and Yemen.



Gulf Cup trophy shines on display.

The draw will determine the group-stage composition, with organizers emphasizing their commitment to delivering a standout edition of the tournament that reflects the continued growth and development of Gulf football.

Equestrian league set to resume on May 8

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: The Kuwait Equestrian Federation has confirmed the resumption of the 2025-2026 season with the return of its domestic league competitions. Action will restart on Friday, May 8, with the fourth round, continuing through Saturday at the Police Sports Union venue in Subhan.

The decision follows approval from a joint committee formed to assess the impact of the country's exceptional circumstances. The committee, chaired by Minister of State for Youth and Sports Affairs Dr. Tareq Al-Jalahma, authorized the restart of training and sporting activities, while tasking the Kuwait Olympic Committee with coordinating with federations to finalize competition schedules.

A local championship is set for May 15, with the fifth round of the league scheduled for May 22 and 23.

In earlier results, Al-Joon Equestrian Center's Yousef Al-Nuaimi claimed the opening round title. British rider Nick Channing topped the second round, while Kuwait Club's rising talent Ali Ahmed Al-Kharafi secured victory in the third round.

The current edition marks the fifth



Ali Al-Kharafi showcasing his skills in action.

since the federation's establishment. Notably, Kuwait Club rider Ali Jassim Al-Kharafi has dominated the competition, winning all four previous league titles to complete an impressive "super hat-trick."

Pisa and Verona relegated by Lecce win, Venezia promoted from Serie B

PISA, Italy, May 2, (AP): Lecce beat Pisa 2-1 and sent the Tuscan club into the Italian second division.

Pisa was promoted from Serie B a year ago but goes down after a woeful season in Serie A in which it won only two of its 35 games so far.

The result also meant relegation for second-from-bottom Verona. It has 19 points, one more than Pisa, but it cannot catch Lecce, which is fourth-to-last in the table with 32.

Lameck Banda put Pisa 1-0 up in the 52nd minute but Mehdi Lérís equal-

ized for the home side four minutes later.

However, Walid Cheddira scored a 65th-minute winner for visiting Lecce to lift it four points above the relegation zone with three matches left to play.

Serie B's Venezia also got the point it needed to secure promotion thanks to a 2-2 draw with Spezia.

Giovanni Stroppa's team tops the Serie B table, one point ahead of Frosinone, which can join Venezia in the top tier with a win or draw against Mantova in its final match next Friday.

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Naoya Inoue of Japan, right, raises his arms as he beats Junto Nakatani of Japan in a boxing match for the WBA, WBC, IBF and WBO super bantamweight world title in Tokyo. (AP) - See Page 15

Sports

Kuwait Club cancels overseas camp ahead of final

By Hassan Mosa
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KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Kuwait Club has decided to cancel its planned overseas training camp, opting instead for daily training sessions and one or two friendly matches as part of its preparations for the AFC Challenge League final against Svay Rieng of Cambodia on May 13. The final will be held at Jaber Al-Mubarak Stadium.

As part of its buildup, Kuwait Club is set to face Al-Nasr in a friendly match next Thursday, before entering a short domestic training camp at the start of next week.

The team continues its preparations at Jaber Al-Mubarak Stadium with a full squad under Montenegrin coach Nebojša Jovović, who is focused on maximizing readiness ahead of the decisive clash and targeting a fourth continental title for the club.

Club officials are working intensively to complete all organizational arrangements for the final,



Kuwait Club continues its daily training sessions at Jaber Al-Mubarak Stadium.

including logistical and technical preparations. They are also preparing to host the delegation of the Asian Football Confederation, match officials, and the Svay Rieng team, which is expected to arrive on Sunday.

Svay Rieng will be appearing in a continental final for the first time in its history. The Cambodian side topped Group D in the East region with seven points, eliminated Phnom Penh Crown 6-2 on aggregate in the quarterfinals, and overcame Manila Digger of the Philippines 4-1 over two legs in the semifinals.

Following the restructuring of Asian club competitions for the 2024-2025 season, the AFC has increased the prize money for the AFC Challenge League champion to \$1 million, the highest in the tournament's history. Additional incentives include \$20,000 per group-stage win and a \$50,000 travel subsidy for away teams in the knockout rounds.

The champion will also secure direct qualification to the group stage of the following season's AFC Champions League 2, unless already qualified through domestic performance, bypassing preliminary rounds and earning automatic entry into Asia's second-tier club competition.

Jamali heads Kuwaiti refereeing crew for Champs League 2 final

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: The Asian Football Confederation has selected a Kuwaiti refereeing team, led by Abdullah Jamali to officiate the AFC Champions League 2 final. Jamali will serve as the main referee, with Saud Al-Shammari and Ali Jarrah as assistant referees, while Abdulhadi Al-Enezi has been appointed as fourth official. The VAR duties will be handled by Ammar Ashkanani and Abdullah Al-Kandari.

The final is set to take place on May 16 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, featuring a highly anticipated clash between Al-Nassr and Gamba Osaka.

President of the Kuwait Football Association, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef, congratulated Jamali and his team on their appointment to oversee the final. He also extended his congratula-



Abdullah Jamali

tions to referee Saud Al-Samhan and assistant referee Talal Al-Shammari following their nomination to officiate at the AFC U-17 Asian Cup finals, which will kick off next week in Jeddah.

Hammers lose ground in fight for Premier League survival



Wolverhampton Wanderers' Yerson Mosquera, left, and Sunderland's Brian Brobbey battle for the ball during their English Premier League soccer match in Wolverhampton, England. (AP)

Wrexham's dream on hold, Ipswich secures promotion

LONDON, May 2, (AP): West Ham's survival bid in the Premier League was damaged by a 3-0 loss at Brentford on Saturday, a result that will give Tottenham renewed hope of escaping relegation.

Brazil striker Igor Thiago - with a penalty for his 22nd goal of the season - was among the scorers for Brentford as West Ham stayed two points above Tottenham, which is in third-to-last place - the final relegation spot.

Spurs, who played in the Champions League this season and have been in the top flight since the late 1970s, visit Aston Villa on Sunday and then there are three more rounds remaining.

Brentford climbed to sixth place, seven points behind fifth-place Aston Villa. The top five qualify automatically for the Champions League.

Brighton is a point behind Brentford in seventh after losing 3-1 at Newcastle, which ended a four-match losing run in the league that has piled the pressure on manager Eddie Howe.

William Osula and Dan Burn were Newcastle's scorers in the first half before Jack Hinshelwood replied for Brighton after the break. Harvey Barnes scored Newcastle's third in stoppage time.

Sunderland had defender Dan Ballard sent off for pulling an opponent's hair in the team's 1-1 draw at already-relegated Wolverhampton, the league's last-place club.

Leeds United took a massive

step towards confirming its Premier League status after a comfortable 3-1 victory over Burnley on Friday.

The win almost certainly guarantees top tier football at Elland Road next season. Leeds moved nine points clear of Tottenham Hotspur, the team occupying the third and last relegation spot.

The Leeds players celebrated in front of a delirious home crowd at the final whistle and although they were not taking their survival for granted yet the win was clearly a relief.

Wrexham's dream of reaching the Premier League is over, for this season anyway.

The Welsh club owned by Hollywood celebrities Ryan Reynolds and Rob Mac missed out on a place

in the playoffs in the second-tier Championship after drawing 2-2 with Middlesbrough in a dramatic final round of the regular season on Saturday.

That allowed Hull to jump ahead of Wrexham and into sixth place - the fourth and final spot in the playoffs - courtesy of a 2-1 win over Norwich in a match played at the same time. The winning goal for Hull, by Oli McBurnie in the 67th, appeared to be scored from an offside position but there are no video reviews in the English Football League.

It ends Wrexham's unprecedented run of three straight promotions under its famous owners - a streak that began by getting out of the fifth tier in the 2022-23 season and has been documented in the globally popular,

Emmy Award-winning "Welcome to Wrexham" series.

Elsewhere, Ipswich secured the second automatic promotion spot behind champion Coventry - and an immediate return to the Premier League - by beating Queens Park Rangers 3-0.

Ipswich is owned by U.S. investment group Gamechanger 20 Limited and counts pop star Ed Sheeran as a minority shareholder.

Joining Hull in the playoffs, which begin next week and are over two legs, are Millwall, Southampton and Middlesbrough.

Millwall will face Hull, and Southampton will meet Middlesbrough.

Despite the last-day disappointment, it was still a memorable campaign by Wrexham in its first season in the second tier since the 1980s.

Seventh place marked the club's highest finish in its 162-year history, bettering 15th position in the second tier in the 1978-79 season.

Still, the short-term pain will be acute, and Wrexham's players sat on the ground and looked disconsolate after the final whistle - even though the Hull-Norwich match hadn't finished.

Wrexham started the day in sixth place, ahead of Hull on goal difference, and conceded in the fourth minute to Middlesbrough, only to score through Josh Windass and Sam Smith for a 2-1 lead by the 41st.

Middlesbrough hit back immediately with a 43rd-minute equalizer but Wrexham finished the stronger, squandering a string of great late chances for a winner that would have secured a playoff place on goal difference.



Newcastle United's Jacob Murphy, left, and Brighton and Hove Albion's Kaoru Mitoma battle for the ball during their English Premier League soccer match in Newcastle, England. (AP)

Bayern avoids surprise loss

BERLIN, May 2, (AP): Bayern Munich scored with the last kick of the game to salvage a 3-3 draw with last-place Heidenheim in the Bundesliga before it welcomes Paris Saint-Germain for the second leg of their Champions League semifinal.

Michael Olise struck the post for Bayern and the ball bounced off Heidenheim goalkeeper Di-ant Ramaj's back into the net for the equalizer in the 10th minute of stoppage time on Saturday.

It was the third straight game that Bayern trailed at halftime, including its 5-4 loss to PSG in the first leg of their semifinal on Tuesday, and last weekend's 4-3 win in Mainz, where the already crowned Bundesliga champion faced a three-goal deficit.

Bayern coach Vincent Kompany made seven changes to the team that started against PSG with Manuel Neuer, Dayot Upamecano, Alphonso Davies, Joshua Kimmich, Michael Olise, Luis Diaz and Harry Kane all on the substitutes' bench.

Heidenheim's Budu Zivzivadze and Eren Dinkci scored before Leon Goretzka pulled one back with a free kick before the break, and Kompany sent on Kane, Diaz, Olise and Kimmich for the second half.

Goretzka leveled with his second goal in the 57th, Zivzivadze scored again to restore Heidenheim's lead in the 76th, only for Olise to force the equalizer.

The draw leaves Heidenheim on the verge of relegation.

Union Berlin fought back to draw 2-2 with Cologne for its



Heidenheim's Arijon Ibrahimović, left, in action against Bayern's Josip Stanišić during a German Bundesliga soccer match between Bayern Munich and 1. FC Heidenheim in Munich, Germany. (AP)

first point under new coach Marie-Louise Eta, the first female head coach in the league.

Tom Rothe pulled one back after a corner in the 73rd and substitute Livan Burcu let fly for what seemed for the home fans like a winner in the 89th, after Marius Bülter and Said El Mala had scored for Cologne.

The draw kept Union a point above Cologne and will probably be enough for survival.

Hoffenheim drew with Stuttgart 3-3 in their duel for Champions League qualification, and Hamburger SV won 2-1 at Eintracht Frankfurt to move a point above Union.

Augsburg won 3-1 at Werder Bremen.

Brand scores late goal

Lyonnes beat Arsenal 3-1 to reach women's Champions League final



Arsenal's Emily Fox, right, vies for the ball with Lyonnes' Vicki Becho during the Women's Champions League semifinal, second leg, soccer match between OL Lyonnes and Arsenal, in Decines, outside Lyon, France. (AP)

LYON, France, May 2, (AP): Forward Jule Brand scored the decisive goal in the 86th minute as OL Lyonnes beat titleholder Arsenal 3-1 to reach the Women's Champions League final on Saturday.

Goals from captain Wendie Renard and striker Kadidiatou Diani put Lyon 2-0 up at halftime, but Alessia Russo's competition-leading ninth goal looked to have sent the game into extra time.

But Brand latched onto Melchie Dumornay's pass to make it 4-3 on aggregate for record eight-time champion Lyon, which lost the first leg 2-1.

Lyon will face either Bayern Munich or three-time champion Barcelona. They play on Sunday and are locked at 1-1 after the first leg in Germany, when Bayern goalscorer Franziska Kett was sent off for pulling the hair of an opponent.

The final will be in Oslo on May 23.

"It's a little bit emotional making it to the final. I'm so proud of the team, there were so many ebbs and flows in this game," Lyon midfielder Lindsey Heaps told broadcaster Disney Plus. "Keeping the discipline to put in a performance like that, and finish it, was so important."

A frantic opening at Groupama Stadium saw a header from Heaps ruled out following a video review.

But VAR went Lyon's way midway through the first half when a penalty was awarded after defender Lotte Wubben-Moy fouled Dumornay from behind.

Renard scored the penalty on her second attempt.

Arsenal goalkeeper Daphne van Domselaar saved the first one but the kick was re-taken for encroachment in the area, and the 35-year-old Renard sent her the wrong way with her second effort.