



PM, ministers panel peruse Kuwait-Saudi railroad, T2, GCC railway network Page 2



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Kuwait weekend in haze as winds stir up heat

Clouds, dust and a crackle of thunder



Kuwait City drifts behind a curtain of haze on Thursday, edges smudged by wind and heat.

— Photo by Samer Shiqr

KUWAIT CITY, May 7, (KUNA): The Meteorological Department has forecast relatively hot weather throughout the country, with active winds raising dust and a chance of light, scattered rain that may become thundery at times, until Friday evening. Overall, the weather during the weekend is expected to be warm to hot during the day and mild at night.

The acting Director of the department, Dhirar Al-Ali, explained in a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the country is currently under the influence of an extension of a low-pressure system accompanied by a relatively hot air mass. This is associated with light to moderate north-easterly to north-westerly winds that may become active at times, raising dust in exposed areas. The conditions will also be accompanied by low and medium clouds, interspersed with thunderclouds, with a chance of light scattered rainfall that may become thundery at night.

Continued on Page 4

Kuwait moves to rewire public transport system

Traffic blitz leads to 26 arrests

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Major General Abdullah Al-Wuhaib presided

over the expanded meeting of the Supreme Traffic Committee for 2026.

Representatives of leading public transport companies attended the

Continued on Page 5



A dilapidated building crumbles under controlled demolition, marking another step in Kuwait's safety drive in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh. Kuwait Municipality photo

Kuwait tears into unsafe Jleeb buildings, 42 razed

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: Kuwait Municipality announced on Thursday the commencement of demolition works on 42 dilapidated buildings in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, citing the risks they pose to residents, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Director of the Engineering Audit and Follow-up Department at Farwaniya Municipality, Saeed Al-Azmi, stated in a press release that demolition order No. 616/2026 was issued by the Director General of Kuwait Municipality Manal Al-Asfour.

He explained that the municipal

team implemented part of the order on Thursday. Kuwait Municipality had taken all necessary precautionary measures, including evacuation, disconnection of electricity, and fencing off the area to ensure pedestrian safety and prevent vehicle parking nearby. The demolition of the remaining buildings, located in Blocks 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, and 13, will be carried out later.

Al-Azmi revealed that violation reports had previously been issued against these buildings, and evacuation notices had been posted due to their unsafe condition.



Left: Apostolic Nuncio to Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar Archbishop Eugene Martin Nugent and Deputy Foreign Minister for European Affairs Sadiq Marafi take part in the ceremonial cake cutting. Right: Officials, diplomats and guests gather during a Vatican Embassy ceremony in Kuwait marking the first anniversary of the election of Pope Leo XIV.



Vatican Nuncio commends Kuwait leadership and frontliners

Peace at forefront of Pope's anniversary event in Kuwait

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: Apostolic Nuncio to Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar Archbishop Eugene Martin Nugent said the celebration held recently on the occasion of the first anniversary of the election of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV on May 8, 2025, served as an opportunity to reaffirm the values championed by the Vatican, foremost of which are peace, dialogue and understanding among peoples.

The Vatican Embassy organized

Continued on Page 4



Some officials, diplomats and guests attend the Vatican Embassy ceremony in Kuwait marking the first anniversary of the election of Pope Leo XIV.



Photos by Rezk Tawfiq

316 stripped as Kuwait tightens citizenship grip

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: Five decrees and two decisions were published in the supplement of the official gazette "Kuwait Al-Youm", revoking the Kuwaiti citizenship of 316 individuals, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Decree No. 72/2026 stipulates the revocation of citizenship from 288 individuals, as well as those

who acquired it through dependency.

Decree No. 73/2026 stipulates the revocation of citizenship certificates from five individuals, as well as those who acquired them through dependency.

Decree No. 74/2026 stipulates

Continued on Page 4

NewsWatch

ISTANBUL: Kuwaiti Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and Turkish Minister of National Defense Yasar Guler on Wednesday discussed joint military and defensive cooperation.

The discussion came during the meeting held during the Kuwaiti minister's official visit to Türkiye, said the Kuwaiti Defense Ministry in a press release.

They also reviewed historical relations between the State of Kuwait and the Republic of Türkiye, along with ways to deepen bilateral bonds between both friendly countries. (KUNA)



2 Some forms of injustice are painfully quiet

8 NBK, MoE strengthen partnership on financial literacy

Business cools, vehicle recalls heat up in March MoCI data

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: Data from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for the month of March showed an exceptional increase in the number of vehicles recalled due to manufacturing defects, reaching 303 vehicles, a significant rise compared to four recalls in the previous month, representing an increase of

over 7,000 percent.

The advertising department witnessed a decline in most promotional activities, with notable decreases in sales, discounts, and seasonal offers.

Business licenses issued to individuals fell to 59, reflecting a 32 percent decrease.

Craft licenses declined to 19, marking a 49 percent drop.

Continued on Page 5

War hangs as Iran weighs deal

DUBAI, May 7, (AP): Iran said it was reviewing the latest American proposals on ending the war, as U.S. President Donald Trump threatened the country with a new wave of bombing unless a deal is reached that includes reopening the crucial Strait of Hormuz to interna-



Trump

tional shipping. Hope that the two-month conflict could soon end buoyed international markets on Thursday, even as the U.S. military fired on an Iranian oil tanker attempting to breach an American blockade of Iran's ports hours earlier. The developments followed days of mixed messaging from the Trump administration over its strategy to end the war.

Trump posted on social media that the two-month war could soon

Continued on Page 5



Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:33 Asr 15:20
 Sunrise .. 05:01 Maghrib .. 18:28
 Zohr 11:44 Isha 19:54

PM, ministers panel peruse Kuwait-Saudi railroad, T2, GCC railway network

KUWAIT CITY, May 7, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chaired on Wednesday the 50th meeting of the ministerial committee tasked with following up on major development projects across the country.

The meeting touched on the implementation status of several key national development projects, including the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port project, the electricity and renewable energy system, low-carbon green waste recycling initiatives, housing development projects, and environmental infrastructure related to wastewater treatment plants.

Discussions also covered environmental and afforestation projects, railway links between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, the GCC railway network, and the latest developments regarding the new passenger Terminal (T2) project at Kuwait International Airport.

His Highness directed to intensify efforts within a government approach based on strategic planning to ensure efficient government performance, overcome challenges, and accelerate implementation of major

development projects in line with international quality standards and approved timelines.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdulatif Al-Mashari, Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem, Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Abdulaziz Al-Marzouq, and Minister of Finance Dr. Yaqoub Al-Rifaei.

Advisor at the Diwan of the Prime Minister Dr. Khaled Al-Fadhel, Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority Sheikh Dr. Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Acting Head of the Diwan of the Prime Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, Head of the Fatwa and Legislation Department Counselor Salah Al-Majed, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs and Member and Rapporteur of the Ministerial Committee Ambassador Sameeh Jawhar Hayat also attended the meeting.



PM Diwan photo
His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the 50th meeting of the ministerial committee.



KUNA photo
Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (right) receives the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi.

FM, GCC Chief discuss ways to enhance Gulf integration

KUWAIT CITY, May 7, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi on Thursday.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated in a press release that during the

meeting, both sides discussed ways to strengthen joint Gulf action, enhance solidarity and integration among GCC countries, as well as reviewed upcoming commitments within the Gulf system, and exchanged views on the latest regional and international developments.

FM heads Kuwait team

MED9, Balkans to pool efforts for energy, food supply links

KUWAIT CITY, May 7, (KUNA): Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah headed the State of Kuwait's delegation on Thursday, to the ministerial meeting on supporting food security and access to fertilizers.

The meeting was co-chaired by the Republic of Italy and the Republic of Croatia, with the participation of member states of the League of Arab States, the MED9 group, and Balkan countries via video-conference.

In a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Jarrah Al-Sabah commended the initiative of the Republic of Italy and the Republic of Croatia in organizing the meeting, emphasizing the importance of developing a practical and effective mechanism

to enhance joint coordination regarding energy, food, and fertilizer supply chains.

He affirmed the State of Kuwait's steadfast position regarding the status of the Strait of Hormuz as a natural international waterway, as established by the rules of international law and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which guarantees the right of transit passage.

He noted the rejection of any unilateral measures or attempts to create, impose, or entrench a new status quo that contravenes international legal frameworks. The Kuwaiti top diplomat stressed the necessity of Iran's full compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 2817 in this regard.

Deputy FM, UK official discuss ties, regional, int'l happenings

KUWAIT CITY, May 7, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Hamad Al-Mashaan received Wednesday a call from Hamish Falconer, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan at the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

During the phone conversation, both sides discussed bilateral relations between both friendly countries and several issues of mutual interest, said the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry in a press release.

They also tackled the current regional and international developments, according to the release.



Hamad Al-Mashaan

Gulf citizen gets 7 years in jail, huge fine in nationality forgery

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: The Court of Cassation, presided over by Judge Abdullah Jassim Al-Abdullah, has upheld the Court of Appeals' ruling sentencing a Gulf national to seven years in prison and imposing a fine of KD 616,000 for forging Kuwaiti citizenship, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Investigations by the General Department of Nationality Affairs revealed that the defendant had impersonated a Kuwaiti citizen and obtained official documents under a false identity, enabling him to benefit from the privileges of Kuwaiti citizenship between 2010 and 2024.

Authorities arrested the defendant after uncovering that he had been using his original Gulf identity in certain proced-

dures to circumvent a travel ban imposed under his Kuwaiti identity.

Meanwhile, the First Circuit of the Court of Appeals, presided over by Judge Hani Al-Hamdan, upheld a lower court ruling which sentenced a Syrian resident to seven years in prison and fining him KD 1,624,000, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The defendant was convicted of forging Kuwaiti citizenship and unlawfully benefiting from its privileges.

He was also found to have joined the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), where he reached the rank of First Sergeant upon retirement, by exploiting the forged citizenship and the resulting financial and professional advantages.

Other Voices

Some forms of injustice are painfully quiet

By Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri

The hardest part of injustice is not always the suffering itself, but the expectation that those who endure it must remain calm, patient, and composed while living through it.

Speaking about pa-



Al-Anjeri

ience becomes complicated. The wounded do not want empty moral lectures. They want to understand why justice can feel so distant for so long.

In Islam, patience was never meant to mean surrender. It was not designed to normalize humiliation or teach people to accept oppression quietly. True patience is something far more difficult: refusing to let injustice transform you into a crueler version of yourself.

Perhaps that is why the reward for pa-

ience was described in the Holy Quran as beyond measure. Because pain itself cannot always be measured.

To continue carrying dignity while feeling abandoned is not weakness. To resist hatred while living through loss is not passivity. It is one of the hardest emotional and moral disciplines a human being can endure.

And yet, despite everything, people continue to hold on to hope, because deep inside, they still believe that injustice cannot remain permanent forever.

Kuwaitis quality of life, needs on top: minister

MoSA inks contract to erect six new wedding halls

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: The Ministry of Social Affairs signed a contract recently for the design, construction, and maintenance of six wedding halls.

The signing ceremony was attended by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Chairman of the National Cooperative Projects Committee, Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi, the acting Assistant Undersecretary for Financial and Administrative Affairs and Cooperative Affairs, Dr. Sayed Issa, as well as representatives from the engineering consultancy firm.

The Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila stated in a press release that the project reflects the State's commitment to completing the infrastructure of new residential areas to en-



Dr. Al-Huwaila



Dr. Al-Ajmi

hance the quality of life, and meet citizens' needs and aspirations.

She pointed out that the tender process was conducted in accordance with the highest standards of transparency and within the approved legal frameworks, ensuring procedural integrity, fair competition, and the selection of the best technical proposals capable of achieving quality, efficiency, and timely completion.

Dr. Al-Huwaila emphasized that the designs will adhere to the latest engineering standards,

the building code, and humanitarian requirements, ensuring that the facilities are fully accessible to persons with disabilities.

Meanwhile, Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi stated that the project represents an important pillar in the development of community services.

He stressed that it was awarded through a public tender characterized by integrity, transparency, and compliance with all technical and administrative requirements.

Al-Ajmi affirmed that the ministry is proceeding with its development projects according to a clear vision based on quality of execution and efficient implementation.

He emphasized that the wedding hall project represents a model of projects that reflect the State's commitment to strengthening the social fabric, in line with the directives of the political leadership and Cabinet instructions in this regard.

Al-Ajmi revealed that the six halls are distributed as follows - one hall in Sabah Al-Ahmad, one in West Abdullah Al-Mubarak, one in South Abdullah Al-Mubarak, one in Jaber Al-Ahmad, and two in Al-Mutlaa.

MoCI intensifies raids to control prices before Eid

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi/Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: Director of the Commercial Control and Consumer Protection Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Faisal Al-Ansari recently met with officials of regulatory departments in the governorates to follow up the preparations of the local market for Eid Al-Adha.

In a press statement, Al-Ansari revealed that the ministry instructed the inspectors to intensify field campaigns in the next three weeks to maintain market stability and ensure the availability of goods for consumers.

He stated that these campaigns cover a number of commercial activities like supermarkets, clothing stores and women's salons, in addition to conducting daily field visits to monitor market activity, track price levels, and submit periodic reports on the situation in the local market.

He added that the inspection teams are working according to a comprehensive monitoring plan aimed at thwarting attempts to raise prices without justification, emphasizing that the monitoring teams will continue to perform their duties throughout the coming period.

He pointed out that the ministry is closely following up the complaints and comments of consumers, urging them to report violations through the official communication channels to make sure that the necessary measures are taken immediately.

He affirmed that the ministry continues to exert tremendous efforts to enhance market oversight, protect the rights of consumers, maintain price stability, and meet the needs of citizens and residents during the blessed Eid Al-Adha season.

Capital expenses higher: The 2026/2027 General Budget Report revealed that total capital expenditures for purchasing non-current assets increased to KD2.574 billion, which is KD748 million higher from the KD1.826 billion allocated in the previous budget cycle.

This covers the acquisition of non-current assets, additions to current assets and maintenance of existing holdings.

Budgetary records indicate that under the non-current asset category, KD624.482 million was allotted for asset purchases, and KD1.949 billion for construction and maintenance initiatives.

This increase entails tremendous efforts to bolster development projects and realize the vision of transforming the country into a commercial and financial center to foster private sector leadership in economic activities, improve production efficiency, and encourage healthy competition within a strong institutional framework.



Farwaniya Governorate photo
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah receives Undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Works Eid Al-Nassafi in his office.

Joint efforts 'vital' to improve infrastructure, public service

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: Governor of Farwaniya Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah warmly welcomed Undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Works Eid Al-Nassafi at his office on Thursday.

The meeting was aimed at strengthening cooperation between the governorate and the ministry.

During the meeting, the two sides talked about several files related to the infrastructure development projects and improvement of services provided to the citizens and residents in the governorate.

Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser emphasized the importance of maintaining continuous coordination with the relevant government agencies and praised the ministry for its vital role in implementing development and service projects throughout the governorate. He also stressed the need to complete these projects within the approved timelines.

Meanwhile, Al-Nassafi expressed his appreciation to the Governor for his commitment to follow up the needs of the governorate. He affirmed that the ministry is keen on implementing development projects and plans that better serve the residents in the governorate.

Governor of Jahra Hamad Al-Habashi held a meeting with Director of Jahra Governorate Mosques Department Abdul Hamid Al-Mutairi to follow up mosque affairs throughout the governorate and discuss the needs of existing and newly developed residential areas.

Discussions focused on the condition and status of mosques in various parts of the governorate, as well as the need of Al-Mutlaa City for mosques and support facilities, in view of the urban growth and rising population in the city.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Job offers scarce, Kuwaitis must go for bold decisions

"THIS is the third article in which I address the Civil Service Commission's (CSC) inability to employ all unemployed Kuwaitis and to find suitable jobs for each category," Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The unemployed registered with the CSC are divided into categories, including holders of bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and doctorates, in addition to those without university qualifications. Many of these individuals refuse any job that does not match their qualifications, while the CSC is limited to a small number of available positions, largely determined by the needs of ministries and government departments.

"The majority of these positions are administrative, while there is already a surplus of employees in the ministries to the point that offices are overcrowded. How can the CSC reconcile thousands of unemployed individuals with the thousands of underemployed individuals already working in the ministries? These are employees, but in reality, they have no real job responsibilities.

"The government has assigned the difficult task of employment to the CSC, which does not have a complete solution, while the ministries do not need additional unemployed individuals.

"There is no solution to the employment problem as long as the government does not openly acknowledge that unemployment is a serious issue requiring bold decisions, akin to swift and effective surgery.

"Universities and institutes, at the end of each academic year, produce thousands of graduates of both genders, while many specializations are no longer needed.

"There are three solutions, but they require a bold decision and placing full responsibility on the citizen. The first is to seek employment abroad, the second is to join the military, and the third is to work in the private sector, adhering to the same working hours as expatriate employees.

"Frankly, the government should not turn a blind eye or pretend there are no problems.

"In every Kuwaiti household, there are one or two unemployed graduates.

"Over time, the employment problem will become even greater and more complex. It requires finding unconventional alternatives, such as encouraging citizens to pursue self-employment and innovation. Kuwaitis are no less capable or intelligent than expatriates."

Also:

"On an ordinary evening, they sat at the same table, yet a quiet distance separated them. She was absorbed in her phone while he scrolled in silence, and the words that once filled the room were no longer there," writer on family and psychological matters **Fahad Al-Rifai** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"There was no major disagreement between them, no betrayal or insurmountable crisis... Only a buildup of small grievances - a harsh word, a dismissive glance, a quick reaction, and a silence that lingered too long.

"This is where the story begins, a story that repeats itself in many homes. Not every separation starts with a catastrophe; often, it begins with simple things that go unnoticed.

"In social psychology, this is referred to as "emotional erosion," where a relationship does not collapse suddenly but gradually weakens until it fades away. The danger lies not in the existence of problems, but in how they are handled.

"When dialogue turns into argument, differences of opinion into conflict, and silence into a form of punishment, the relationship begins to deteriorate. The wife does not ask for much, except to be understood. And the husband does not ask for the impossible, other than to feel appreciated.

"When understanding fades and appreciation weakens, hearts begin to drift apart, even while living under the same roof.

"God Almighty says, addressing husbands: "And live with them in kindness." The phrase "in kindness" is not restricted, as it encompasses everything that benefits the relationship, including kind speech, respect, understanding, and patience. He, the Exalted, also says regarding the relationship between spouses, "And He placed between you affection and mercy." Affection is a feeling, while mercy is an action. When action is absent, feelings alone are not sufficient.

"In the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH), we find a profound example of marital conduct. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "The best of you are those who are best to their fami-

lies, and I am the best of you to my family."

"Superiority is not measured by worship alone, but also by how a man treats his family. The Prophet (PBUH) would joke, listen, and comfort his wives, even during moments of disagreement.

"We often see couples separating after years together, not because love has ended, but because respect has eroded. One woman said, "I didn't leave my husband because he made a mistake, but because he stopped trying to correct it." A man confessed, "I thought I was right until I lost everything." The problem is not the mistake itself, but the insistence upon it.

"Psychological studies indicate that tone of voice often matters more than content. Many disagreements escalate not because of the issue itself, but because of how it is expressed.

"A calm word can mend a rift, while the same word spoken harshly can deepen it. Not everything is worth winning. Some situations are best handled with restraint, and not every argument needs to end in victory. Sometimes, losing an argument means preserving a relationship.

"A marriage does not require someone who is always right, but two people who know how to reconcile. No one regrets remaining silent in a moment of anger, but many regret words that cannot be taken back. So choose your words carefully, choose your composure, and protect your home.

"Relationships are not preserved through pride, but through awareness. And every time you choose calm over reaction, you do not lose yourself but you preserve your home."

□ □ □

"Article 169 of the Kuwaiti Constitution stipulates that the law shall regulate the organization of the administrative judiciary and the adjudication of administrative disputes through a specialized chamber empowered to annul final individual administrative decisions that violate the law," Kuwaiti writer **Mijbil Al-Shuraika** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Article 170 of the Constitution affirms the role of the body responsible for providing legal advice to ministries, drafting legislation, and representing the State. This role is currently carried out by the Fatwa and Legislation Department.

"In light of the above, I propose the activation of Article 171, which provides that, "A State Council may be established by law to undertake the functions of administrative adjudication, issuing fatwas, and drafting legislation, as stipulated in the two preceding articles."

"Establishing a State Council, as provided for in the aforementioned article, would strengthen specialized judicial oversight over the actions of administrative bodies, protect the rights of employees, and safeguard citizens in their dealings with government entities.

"This proposal would also contribute to the protection of public funds and open the door for appointments within the organizational and technical structure of the State Council, thereby supporting the recruitment of a new generation of young professionals.

"Therefore, the establishment of a State Council Court and an Administrative Prosecution Authority would bring several positive benefits, most notably the creation of specialized judicial and technical career opportunities, particularly given the State Council's need for a large number of advisors, administrative judges, and members of the State Commissioners Authority.

"The proposal would expand the administrative staff through the establishment of an Administrative Prosecution Authority as an independent investigative body, while opening the door to the employment of hundreds of legal investigators, researchers, and administrative oversight specialists. This would provide stable career paths for Kuwaiti law school graduates.

"The proposal would also contribute to expediting the resolution of disputes related to appointments and promotions, enabling the State Council to support the fair distribution of employment opportunities across government agencies.

"The establishment of these bodies would bring about a fundamental transformation in the concept of accountability within the administrative apparatus. The proposed Administrative Prosecution Authority would serve as a neutral investigative body operating independently from ministries, thereby reducing favoritism and limiting administrative pressure in the investigation of violations."

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— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



Hassan Ali Karam



Al-Shuraika

Woman gets 7 years in fake pregnancy blame

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: The Criminal Court acquitted a man of charges of engaging in consensual sexual relations with a woman in her twenties and causing her pregnancy, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The court, however, sentenced the woman to seven years' imprisonment on the charges brought against her.

During the court session, Lawyer Jas-



Al-Tuwaitan

sim Al-Tuwaitan, who represented the defendant, insisted that no act of sexual intercourse had taken place and that there was no evidence to support the allegation. He further stated that the case file lacked any credible proof of guilt.

Lawyer Al-Tuwaitan maintained that the incident was implausible and that the accusation was malicious and fabricated by the woman.

He emphasized his client's continued denial of the charges and requested his acquittal.

Custody battle brews

Mother exploiting kids in 'marital clash' fined

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: The Domestic Violence Section of the Misdemeanor Court of First Instance imposed a fine of KD 2,000 on a woman after convicting her of psychologically abusing her two children and exploiting them in disputes with her ex-husband in an attempt to strip the father's custody rights.

The father was represented by lawyer Abdulmohsen Al-Qattan, who requested temporary compensation for the psychological and moral harm suffered by his client and the children.

The defendant had filed repeated complaints against the children's father, accusing him of neglect, which resulted in the children being drawn into ongoing family disputes that negatively impacted their mental health.

The court based its conviction on investigations conducted by the Criminal Investigation Department, witness testimonies, and a report issued by the Child Protection Office, which confirmed that the children had not been subjected to abuse by their father.

The report documented psychological effects resulting from the mother's conduct, including psychological pressure and exaggeration, which constituted psychological abuse under the Child Protection Law.

The court affirmed that the elements of the offense were fully established and proven against the defendant, noting that her denial did not affect the validity of the evidence and circumstantial proof relied upon by the court.

With regard to the civil aspect, the court referred the case to the competent civil court for adjudication of the compensation claims, while reserving its decision on expenses.

Liquor & cash seized as peddlers flee bid foiled

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: Hawally Security Command, represented by the Operations and Patrols Department, arrested two individuals on charges of possessing suspected alcoholic beverages with intent to sell, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

During a routine patrol, officers became suspicious of a vehicle parked without its lights on. As the patrol approached, the driver attempted to flee and refused to comply with orders to stop, prompting a pursuit and subsequent forced interception of the vehicle.

The driver and passenger resisted arrest. A search of the vehicle uncovered 85 bottles suspected to contain alcoholic beverages, in addition to KD 4,710.

The two suspects confessed to possessing the alcohol with the intent to sell it. It was also discovered that the driver was wanted under an outstanding arrest warrant.

The suspects were referred with the seized items to the competent authorities for further legal action.

The Ministry of Interior affirmed its commitment to continuing its security campaigns and maintaining a strong field presence to apprehend violators and those involved in the distribution of drugs and contraband.

It stressed the strict application of the law to all individuals in order to safeguard the security and safety of the community.



File photo: Firemen tackle the fire in a Shuwaikh warehouse some time back.

No casualties as fire hits Khaldiya eatery

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: Fire broke out in the kitchen of a restaurant in Khaldiya on Wednesday evening, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) stated in a post on its X account that firefighters from the Shuwaikh Industrial and Al-Shaheed fire stations rushed to the location and extinguished the fire before it spread further. No casualties were reported. The site was subsequently handed over to the relevant authorities.

Three arrested in theft of power cables & iron

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: The Security Directorates Affairs Sector at the Ministry of Interior apprehended three individuals in two separate cases of electrical cables and iron theft, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

In a press statement, the ministry disclosed that security officers got suspicious of two individuals inside an electrical transformer during a routine patrol.

The two were apprehended as they left the site. Electrical cables and cutting tools used in the theft were found in their possession.

In another case, the Operations Unit at the ministry received a report about the stealing of iron from an asphalt plant.

A support patrol was immediately dispatched to the location, where the officers found the vehicle used in the crime and signaled for the driver to pull over. The stolen items were found inside the vehicle.

'Teach children road etiquette'

Traffic Week ends Saturday

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: Director General of the General Traffic Department at the Ministry of Interior Brigadier General **Omar Al-Sari** affirmed that the **Gulf Traffic Week**, with the slogan "Cross Safely", is a valuable opportunity to solidify traffic safety concepts and raise awareness on its role in protecting lives and properties.



Omar Al-Sari

Al-Sari pointed out that the event, which started on Sunday and will end on Saturday, is significant as it is being held under the exceptional circumstances that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are currently facing. He said

this necessitates intensified efforts and focus on road safety, adding that this occasion coincided with the World Traffic Day on May 4.

He stated that heightened awareness is reflected in the commitment of motorists -- citizens and residents -- to abide by the traffic regulations, adherence to instructions and civilized driving behavior. He considers this a positive development in terms of road safety and smooth traffic flow. He indicated that the high level of traffic awareness in society is a manifestation of the progressive and civilized image of the country.

He emphasized the crucial role played by families in instilling traffic discipline in children, thus, contributing to raising a responsible generation that fully abides by traffic rules.

He confirmed that the department continues to implement its awareness and training initiatives for various groups, in cooperation with the entire society.

He added that the department is currently focusing on facility safety and the need to adhere to the designated crossing locations and traffic lights due to their impact in preventing accidents, as well as promoting a safer traffic environment.

Court upholds jail, fines and job dismissal in salaries scam

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: The Court of Appeals, presided over by Judge Nasr Salem Al-Haid, and with Judge Mutaib Al-Arathi and Judge Saud Al-Sanea as members, upheld the prison sentences, fines, and dismissal from employment imposed on Ministry of Health employees convicted of misappropriating salaries.

The Public Prosecution charged the first defendant, in his capacity as a public employee and head of the Engineering Affairs Office in a health zone, with facilitating the misappropriation of KD 259,663.245 belonging to the Ministry of Health by the second, third, and fourth defendants.

The first defendant exempted the second defendant from clocking in and out, and reporting to work, falsely recorded the fourth defendant's attendance, and failed to document the third defendant's absence. These actions enabled the unlawful appropriation of public funds by the other defendants.

The second defendant, an engineer, was charged with misappropriating KD 101,545 through the falsification of attendance records.

The third defendant, also an engineer, was accused of embezzling KD 77,561 through forgery, while the fourth defendant, also an engineer, was charged with embezzling KD 80,556.



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PAAET honors nursing faculty for ACEN international accreditation

Advancing global academic standards

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: The Director General of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), Hassan Mohammed Al-Fajjam, honored the academic accreditation team of the Faculty of Nursing by presenting them with certificates of appreciation for their efforts in obtaining international academic accreditation from ACEN for the college's Bachelor's and Diploma programs, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, Al-Fajjam affirmed that this achievement represents a qualitative addition to PAAET's progress and reflects its commitment to applying the highest standards of academic quality.

He emphasized the importance of continuing to develop educational programs in line with the needs of the labor market, particularly in the health sector.

Al-Fajjam said the international accreditation enhances PAAET's standing at both the regional and in-



Public Authority for Applied Education and Training Director General Hassan Al-Fajjam poses with members of the Faculty of Nursing's academic accreditation team after honoring them for securing international ACEN accreditation for the college's Bachelor's and Diploma programs.

ternational levels and increases the competitiveness of its graduates.

He affirmed PAAET's commitment to supporting national talent and honoring outstanding performers.

Meanwhile, the Dean of the Faculty of Nursing, Laila Al-Shatti, expressed her pride in this recognition, highlighting that the achievement is

the result of collective work and continuous efforts, during which the college adhered to international quality standards.

In addition, Nizar Al-Khatib, Director of Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation, explained that obtaining the accreditation was the result of integrated efforts in various

sectors of PAAET. It was carried out according to a methodology based on continuous improvement and compliance with international accreditation requirements.

He emphasized the ongoing efforts to strengthen the culture of quality and expand the scope of academic accreditations.

Calls for stronger coordination

KRCS backs unified Arab stance at IFRC assembly

KUWAIT CITY, May 7, (KUNA): Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society Khaled AlMughamis called for unified efforts and enhanced coordination among Arab and international organizations in humanitarian work.

In remarks to KUNA, following his participation via video conference in a preparatory meeting organized by the Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Organization, Al-Mughamis said discussions focused on preparations for the 25th General Assembly of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

He noted that the meeting addressed the framework for the upcoming electoral process and underscored the importance of early coordination to strengthen Arab representation and influence, with the aim of reaching a unified Arab position that reflects the aspirations of national societies.

Al-Mughamis added that the next phase requires aligning visions to ensure balanced representation that reflects the Arab region's weight in humanitarian work, while building more effective partnerships to serve regional priorities and enhance



Khaled AlMughamis, Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society.

coordination among national societies.

He also highlighted discussions on practical steps ahead of the assembly, emphasizing the need to preserve the unity, independence, and neutrality of the humanitarian movement, and to improve efficiency and response capabilities to meet growing humanitarian needs worldwide.

He praised the role of the Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Organization in coordinating Arab positions and strengthening joint action to support humanitarian causes and enhance integration among national societies.

System outlines structured timelines

KNPC formalizes promotion system

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: Deputy CEO for Administrative and Commercial Affairs at Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) Bandar Al-Qahtani sent a letter to the Secretary of the KNPC Workers' Union regarding the adoption of the company's promotion and advancement system.

According to the letter, the effective date for promotions is set as the first working day following approval of the final results of the unified promotion system for positions at grades 17 and above, or 16 and below, unless the authorized official responsible for approving the results and submitting rec-

ommendations provides justifications related to the company's interests.

The effective date for promotion or transitional advancement is set as the beginning of the month following the promotion request (transitional grade), provided the candidate has met the conditions and requirements stipulated in the unified promotion system for the oil sector.

A grade may not be granted retroactively, except in cases of delays in job evaluation procedures and with the approval of the relevant authorized official, in accordance with the applicable powers.

The above provisions have been in effect since April 1 of last year.

Continued from Page 1

Clouds, dust

The daytime weather on Friday will be warm with cloudy to partly cloudy skies. North-westerly to northerly winds will be light to moderate and occasionally active, ranging between 15 and 40 km/h, with a chance of scattered rain that may become thundery at times, along with dust over exposed areas. Maximum temperatures are expected to range between 34 and 36°C, while sea conditions will be light to moderate, occasionally reaching two to six feet.

Weather on Friday evening will be mild and partly cloudy, with north-westerly winds light to moderate at speeds of 12-35 km/h, and a chance of light scattered rain. Minimum temperatures are expected to range between 25 and 27°C, with sea conditions remaining light to moderate at two to four feet.

On Saturday, the daytime weather will be hot and partly cloudy, with north-westerly to northerly winds light to moderate at speeds of 8-32 km/h. Maximum temperatures are expected to range between 36 and 38°C, and sea conditions will be light to moderate at two to four feet.

Weather at night will be mild and partly cloudy, with north-westerly to northerly winds light to moderate at 12-32 km/h. Minimum temperatures are expected to range between 25 and 27°C, while sea conditions will remain light to moderate at two to four feet.

Peace at

the ceremony, with Deputy Foreign Minister for European Affairs Sadiq Marafi, along with a number of ambassadors and diplomats in attendance.

Speaking at the event, Archbishop Nugent pointed out that the first year of the papacy of Pope Leo XIV is enough to define the approach of the Pope. He said the initial messages of the Pope after his election included a clear call for peace and he stressed that dialogue is a source of strength rather than weakness.

He disclosed that throughout his first year, the Pope focused on encouraging dialogue between religions and cultures, particularly in conflict areas, in addition to the call for prioritization negotiation and understanding among peoples amid the challenges that the whole world is facing today.

He stressed that the occasion was also a chance to meet with friends and representatives of diplomatic missions in the country after almost two months without diplomatic gatherings. He stated that the event is vital in boosting communication and exchanging perspectives.

On the possibility of a papal visit to Kuwait, he disclosed there are no details about such visit at the moment, hoping it will happen soon.

He pointed out that the visit of Vatican's

Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin to Kuwait earlier this year was an important step in strengthening the presence of the Catholic Church, especially after the Our Lady of Arabia Church was elevated to the status of a minor basilica.

He confirmed the solidarity of the Holy See with Kuwait during the recent circumstances, praising the wisdom of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah.

He also commended the performance and efforts exerted by various government entities, particularly the frontliners in the Kuwait Army, police and medical teams.

On the relationship of the Vatican with Islamic countries, he asserted that Pope Leo XIV demonstrated openness toward the Islamic world through visits to several countries, including Algeria, which he described as a historic milestone that reinforced interfaith dialogue, fraternity and mutual respect.

He emphasized that these initiatives reflect the commitment of the Vatican to promote peaceful coexistence and build bridges of communication among different religions, asserting that faith, when practiced sincerely, serves as a force for unity rather than division.

He said Kuwait is a model of interfaith coexistence, where hundreds of thousands of Catholics live and work in an atmosphere of mutual respect, contributing to various sectors like healthcare, education and services in support of the development of the country.

He then expressed the appreciation of the Holy See for the leadership and people of Kuwait, wishing continuous security, stability and prosperity for the country.

He added that the occasion extends beyond a symbolic celebration to embody the message of international peace and fraternity.

316 stripped

the revocation of citizenship from two individuals, and those who acquired it through dependency.

Decree No. 75/2026 stipulates the revocation of citizenship from one individual, as well as those who acquired it through dependency.

Decree No. 78/2026 stipulates the revocation of citizenship certificates from three individuals, and those who acquired them through dependency.

Decision No. 84/2026 stipulates the withdrawal of citizenship certificates from 11 individuals, as well as those who acquired citizenship through them.

Decision No. 125/2026 stipulates the withdrawal of citizenship certificates from six individuals, as well as those who acquired citizenship through them.

MoH extends Jahra dental clinic hours

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: The Ministry of Health announced the extension of operating hours for dental clinics in Jahra Governorate, effective Friday, May 15, until midnight on Fridays, Saturdays, and official holidays, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The decision includes the Jahra Health Center (Complex) and the South Sulaibiya Health Center.

Under this extension, dental clinics will operate until midnight on Fri-

days, Saturdays, and official holidays at the following health centers:

- Taima Dental Health Center
- Saad Al-Abdullah Health Center (Block 2)
- Qasr Health Center
- Al-Mutlaa Health Center (N11)
- Jahra Health Center (Complex)
- South Sulaibiya Health Center

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Continued from Page 1

Kuwait moves

meeting, with the aim of strengthening cooperation to improve traffic services and the public transportation system in the country.

Also present at the meeting were Head of the Traffic and Operations Sector Brigadier General Abdullah Al-Otaibi and security officials in charge of traffic affairs.

They deliberated on mechanisms for developing joint work and intensifying concerted efforts among the concerned authorities to overcome traffic challenges and improve traffic flow on various roads.

They also discussed ways to modernize the public transportation system to keep pace with the urban development of the country and encourage the people to use public transport in order to alleviate traffic congestion.

They reviewed bus routes and operational protocols, presented solutions for current operational hurdles, and explored future plans to make public transport a safer and more appealing option for commuters.

Towards the end of the meeting, Al-Wuhaib stressed the need for continuous cooperation between the ministry and public transport companies.

He called for proper use of available resources to implement development strategies and adopt the best practices to guarantee road safety and public security.

Meanwhile, the General Traffic Department at the Interior Ministry continues its nationwide traffic campaigns, the most recent of which led to the arrest of 26 people -- some of whom are wanted by law, while others were found to have violated the Residency Law.

A security official disclosed that within 24 hours two days ago, the security officers nabbed several lawbreakers. He emphasized that these enforcement efforts are continuous and aimed at arresting all those proven to have violated the laws of the country.

One of these campaigns focused on healthcare facilities, during which the department recorded 244 traffic violations, including improper parking near hospitals.

The official added that the department is efficiently managing traffic flow around the medical centers, issuing citations to those who obstruct traffic movement like those who are parking in prohibited areas.

Business cools,

License renewal transactions totaled 341, representing a 12 percent decrease.

License cancellations declined sharply to 87, which is a 59 percent decrease.

At the corporate level, activity remained limited, with only three new licenses issued.

Ten licenses were renewed, representing a 55 percent decrease, and seven licenses were canceled, reflecting a 79 percent decrease and indicating a clear sense of caution among major commercial entities.

General trade and services topped the list with 48 licenses, followed by accommodation and food services with 15, and maintenance services with 12.

Textile-related industries accounted for 8 licenses, while contracting activities recorded 6 licenses.

New partnership licenses decreased to 1,335, a 26 percent drop.

However, renewal transactions rose to 1,511, an increase of 21 percent, indicating that existing companies are committed to continuing their operations despite limited expansion.

Company dissolution and liquidation transactions increased to 274, reflecting a two percent rise.

Sole proprietorships accounted for the largest share with 1,144 transactions, despite a 27 percent decrease.

Limited liability companies ranked second with 421 transactions, representing a 28 percent decrease.

General partnerships and limited partnerships declined sharply, reflecting a shift in investor preferences toward lower-risk entities.

Only one transaction was recorded for the establishment of a joint-stock company.

Meanwhile, the number of certified auditor signatures increased to 310 transactions.

Fees collected from precious metals testing decreased to approximately KD 85,000, an 85 percent drop, despite the continuation of testing operations involving large quantities of gold, silver, and precious stones.

Inspection operations resulted in 1,131 violation reports, reflecting an 11 percent decrease, while licensing violations declined by 77 percent.

The number of shop closures decreased significantly, whereas complaints submitted through digi-

tal channels rose sharply, reaching 7,654 complaints, an increase of 56 percent.

Real estate services transactions fell to 47, a decrease of 41 percent.

The cumulative number of Kuwaiti brokers reached 1,812, compared to 134 real estate appraisers.

The Anti-Money Laundering Department did not conduct any inspections during March due to exceptional working conditions, while continuing to apply limited penalties, including fines totaling KD 13,500.

The value of certificates of origin reached approximately KD 172 million, with a significant increase in exports to Gulf countries of 145 percent.

Trade fair licenses also witnessed a sharp decline, falling to just 13 compared to 93 in February.

War hangs

end and that oil and natural gas shipments disrupted by the conflict could restart. But he said that depends on Iran accepting a reported agreement that he did not detail.

"If they don't agree, the bombing starts," Trump wrote.

A fragile ceasefire between the U.S. and Iran has largely held since April 8. But in-person talks between the two countries hosted by Pakistan last month failed to reach an agreement. The war began Feb. 28, when the U.S. and Israel launched strikes against Iran.

"We expect an agreement sooner rather than later," Pakistan's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said Thursday. "We hope the parties will reach a peaceful and sustainable solution that will contribute not only to peace in our region but to international peace as well."

But he declined to give a timeline, saying Pakistan would not disclose details of the ongoing diplomatic efforts. "What I can tell you and this is what I have stated before that we remain positive, we remain optimistic, and we hope the settlement will be soon rather than later," he said.

Asked whether Pakistan was expecting any response from Iran later Thursday, Andrabi said: "I will not comment on specifics or the movement of the messages."

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, speaking in televised remarks Thursday, said Islamabad remained in "continuous contact with Iran and the United States, day and night, to stop the war and extend the ceasefire."

The Trump administration's messaging throughout the Iran war has

been shifting and often contradictory. This week, the president and his aides presented a dizzying narrative over the U.S. strategy to unblock the Strait of Hormuz and wrap up the war that drastically changed over the course of mere hours.

Iran has effectively shut the strait, a vital waterway for the shipment of supplies of oil, gas, fertilizer and other petroleum products, while the U.S. is blockading Iranian ports.

On Wednesday, a U.S. fighter jet shot out the rudder of an Iranian oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman as it tried to breach the American blockade, U.S. Central Command said in a social media post.

Trump insisted Wednesday that Iranian officials want to end the war.

"We're dealing with people that want to make a deal very much, and we'll see whether or not they can make a deal that's satisfactory to us," the president said.

He suggested the U.S. could ultimately force a settlement.

"If they don't agree, the bombing starts," Trump said on social media, "and it will be, sadly, at a much higher level and intensity than it was before."

The White House believes it is near an agreement with Iran on a one-page memorandum to end the war, according to reporting by the news outlet Axios. Provisions include a moratorium on Iranian uranium enrichment, lifting of U.S. sanctions, distribution of frozen Iranian funds and opening the strait for ships.

The White House did not immediately respond to questions about the possible agreement.

A spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, Esmail Baghaei, told state TV that Tehran had "strongly rejected" U.S. proposals reported by Axios, but that it was still examining the latest U.S. proposal.

Trump has sought to increase pressure on Tehran after suspending on Tuesday a short-lived U.S. effort, dubbed Project Freedom, to force open a safe passage for commercial ships through the Strait of Hormuz.

Only two American-flagged merchant ships are known to have passed through the U.S.-guarded route after it opened Monday. The U.S. military said it sank six Iranian small boats threatening civilian ships.

Hundreds of merchant ships remain bottled up in the Arabian Gulf, unable to reach the open sea without passing through the Strait of Hormuz. The strait's closure has sent fuel prices skyrocketing, rattled the global economy and put enormous economic pressure on countries, including major powers such as China.



MoSA photo
Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, during her meeting with the Director of the World Bank office in the State of Kuwait, Azher Iqbal.

Women top Social Affairs posts

MoSA and World Bank official discuss boosting cooperation

KUWAIT CITY, May 7. (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah discussed with World Bank Country Manager for Kuwait Azher Iqbal on Thursday ways to enhance cooperation in areas related to the ministry's responsibilities and social development programs.

Al-Huwailah said the talks covered social and family-oriented initiatives, including matters concerning the Public Authority for Disability Affairs and the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, according to a press statement issued following the meeting.

She reviewed developments in women's empowerment within the ministry, noting that women now occupy 50 percent of leadership positions and 55 percent of supervisory roles across the ministry's various sectors.

The minister also highlighted the appointment of a woman to head

the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies for the first time, saying the step reflects strong support for Kuwaiti women in leadership and decision-making roles.

Al-Huwailah referred to the "Partners to Hire Them" campaign aimed at empowering persons with disabilities and integrating them into the labor market to ensure equal opportunities and strengthen their participation in society.

She added that a comprehensive government family protection program was prepared to enhance social protection systems and had been submitted to the Council of Ministers after receiving approval from the Legal Committee.

For his part, Iqbal affirmed the World Bank's readiness to cooperate and provide technical expertise, stressing the bank's commitment to exchanging experiences and developing competencies to support development strategies and objectives.

Namaa Charity distributes vegetable baskets to displaced families in Gaza

GAZA, May 7. (KUNA): Namaa Charity, affiliated with the Social Reform Society, distributed 220 vegetable baskets to displaced families in northern Gaza, benefiting more than 1,200 Palestinians as part of Kuwait's ongoing humanitarian support for the Palestinian people.

Head of the Development and Relief Sector Khaled Al-Shameri said in a statement that the aid was delivered to the most vulnerable families, ensuring assistance reached those most in need amid current humanitarian conditions.

He said the project comes within urgent humanitarian response efforts to address the deteriorating living conditions in Gaza.

Many families in northern Gaza, he added, are suffering due to limited resources and lack of food, making vegetable baskets an important source of support, especially for children and elderly.

He noted that UN reports have confirmed the deteriorating crisis in Gaza, with thousands of families facing extremely difficult living conditions due to rising food insecurity.



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Mail voting already underway

California gov candidates clash on taxes, Trump and healthcare in lively debate

SACRAMENTO, Calif., May 7, (AP): The leading candidates for California governor clashed in a lively debate on everything from a proposed tax on billionaires to state-funded healthcare for immigrants in the country illegally.

The debate, broadcast on CNN, was one of their last chances to pitch themselves to voters and stand out from the pack in their primary election bids to succeed Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom, who terms out in January. Mail voting is already underway, and voters have until June 2 to cast their ballots. The top-two vote getters will advance to the general election in November, regardless of party.

Though California hasn't had a Republican governor in more than a decade, the specter hangs over the race as the field is still crowded with less than a month to go.

Candidates who took part in the debate include Democrats Xavier Becerra, a former health secretary for the Biden administration; Katie Porter, a former congresswoman; Tom Steyer, a billionaire climate

activist; Matt Mahan, the mayor of San Jose; and Antonio Villaraigosa, the former mayor of Los Angeles; as well as Republicans Steve Hilton, a conservative commentator; and Chad Bianco, the Riverside County sheriff.

Here's how they responded on some of the key issues:

The candidates sparred over whether they'd eliminate private health insurance in favor of a state-run system, an idea that has failed repeatedly in Sacramento.

Porter, who backs a government-run healthcare system, pressed Becerra on his stance since he's wavered on the issue recently.

"Do you support CalCare - California having its own state-run, single-payer system, yes or no?" Porter asked.

Becerra gave a vague answer. "The most important thing about having a Medicare for All plan is that it includes everyone," he said. "What we have to do is get to the point where we are covering everyone with something like Medicare for All."



Antonio Villaraigosa, (right), and Matt Mahan speak during a California gubernatorial debate hosted by CBS LA at Pomona College in Claremont, Calif on April 28. (AP)

Mahan, who opposes a state-run system, later chimed in and said Becerra "was unable to clearly answer the most important question on healthcare."

Becerra contested: "I did answer that question."

Steyer joined Porter in saying he'd support it, while Bianco, Hilton, and Villaraigosa said it wasn't practical or would cost too much.

When the debate turned to healthcare access for immigrants, the candidates were divided.

Steyer, Porter and Becerra said they supported state-funded healthcare coverage for low-income immigrants without legal status, which Newsom passed then pared back. Bianco called the policy "ridiculous."

Other arguments about immigration fell largely along party lines.

The Democrats sharply rebuked the Trump administration's immigration raids.

Steyer said the state should prosecute federal agents and immigration enforcement leaders who racially profile or use violence against Californians. Mahan said business owners in San Jose have lost customers because many immigrants are afraid to leave their house.

But Bianco said he supported Immigration and Customs Enforcement actions, saying agents were enforcing the law and working to deport people he referred to as "criminals" in the country illegally.

Hilton, who's from England, pointed out that he was the only immigrant on stage. The candidates shouldn't conflate legal and illegal immigration, he said.

"Although it is the federal government's responsibility to determine and implement immigration policy, I think it's important that all the laws are peacefully enforced," Hilton said. "As governor, I would make sure that we work with the federal government to enforce our laws."

The Democrats each emphasized they would fight Trump on immigration policy in particular.

Neither Hilton, whom Trump has endorsed, nor Bianco, invoked him much except to say that Democrats unfairly blame him for the state's woes.

Becerra mentioned Trump the most, noting he sued the administration many times while serving as state attorney general from 2017 to 2021, when he was appointed health secretary under then-President Joe Biden.

"I'm going to repeat Donald Trump as often as I have because he's the menace," Becerra declared.

When Villaraigosa pressed Hilton to acknowledge Trump lost the 2020 presidential election, Hilton refused to answer.

America

Federal authorities arrest 18 in LA: Federal authorities said they arrested 18 people Wednesday on charges related to selling illicit drugs including fentanyl and methamphetamine around a Los Angeles park.



Essayli

The area, called MacArthur Park, is a densely populated immigrant neighborhood west of downtown LA where federal immigration authorities and the National Guard made a brief but mighty show of force last summer.

"We're here today because California policy has failed," First Assistant US Attorney Bill Essayli said during a news conference announcing the arrests. "MacArthur Park should be for families, should be for residents of Los Angeles, not for drug dealers and gangsters." (AP)

US judge releases Epstein suicide note: A US federal judge on Wednesday released a suicide note purportedly written by convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein prior to his death in a New York jail cell.

Epstein's cellmate stated that he discovered the note in a book after the financier's failed suicide attempt, several weeks before his eventual death in August 2019.

"They investigated me for month -- Found NOTHING!!!" the note reads. "It is a treat to be able to choose one's time to say goodbye." (Xinhua)

Hundreds of homes damaged in Mississippi storms: Powerful storms that included at least one confirmed tornado tore through parts of Mississippi, collapsing hundreds of homes, tearing up trees and downing power lines, authorities said Thursday.

There were no immediate reports of deaths or severe injuries from the storms that struck several counties Wednesday night.

A mobile home park in the small community of Bogue Chitto in Lincoln County was severely damaged. (AP)

Justice Department targets slow immigration judges as Trump pushes faster deportations

PHOENIX, May 7, (AP): The Justice Department is aiming to weed out immigration judges who it feels are ruling too slowly or aren't following the law, acting Attorney General Todd Blanche said Wednesday, as the Trump administration seeks to remake the courts and cut down on the backlog of 3.7 million cases to ease its mass deportation push.

Blanche was in Phoenix to address the Border Security Expo, a yearly gathering that draws top immigration officials, local and state law enforcement officers and representatives from companies doing business with the federal government. Blanche's appearance at the gathering reflects the way immigration enforcement and border security have become priorities throughout the Trump administration.

Blanche, who has led the Justice Department since Pam Bondi was ousted last month, spoke to The Associated Press after his appearance at the conference. His comments were some of the most detailed on the changes to immigration courts since he took over the role.



Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche looks at weapons and drugs that were seized by federal officers, with Drug Enforcement Administration special agent in charge Apolonio Ruiz, Jr, at a warehouse in Phoenix on May 6. (AP)

"You take an oath and you're not allowed to make decisions based upon what appear to be just sympathy or your whim," Blanche said.

"If there's judges that are just not applying the law in the way that it

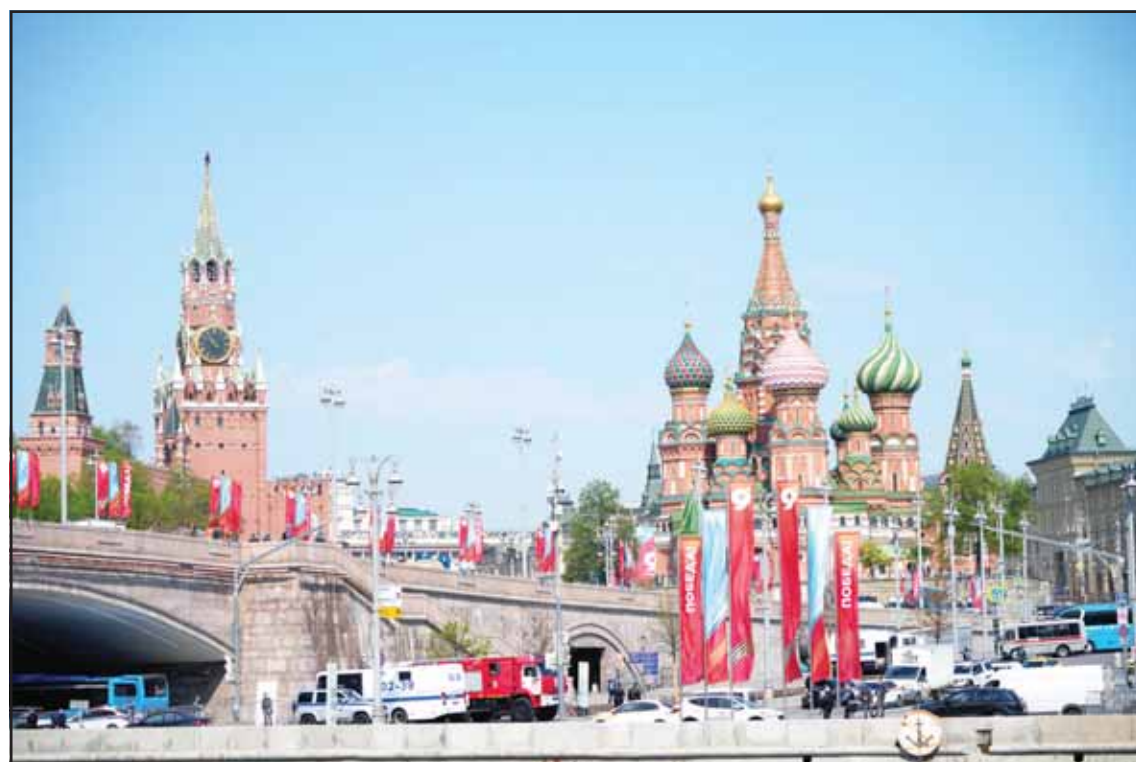
needs to be applied, delaying inappropriately, have backlogs that are just unacceptable, they're the folks that we're going to try to find somebody different to fill that spot."

The second Trump administra-

tion has made mass deportations a central priority and has launched an all-of-government effort to reach its lofty goals. To do so, it has cracked down on migrants in American cities, scaled up detention facilities and increased hiring of immigration officers.

While the Department of Homeland Security is the Cabinet agency most directly responsible for carrying out President Donald Trump's mass deportation agenda, immigration courts, a key aspect of the immigration system, fall under the Justice Department.

Dozens of immigration judges have been removed from their jobs during Trump's second term, with critics saying they were targeted because they were approving too many asylum cases. The administration has also directed masked officers to handcuff migrants at closed asylum hearings and sent memos instructing judges to fall into line. Many migrants and their advocates say that immigration courts have increasingly become traps - they show up for routine hearings only to face arrest.



Special service vehicles are parked near Red Square decorated for the celebrations of the 81st anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany at World War II during the Victory Day military parade rehearsal in Moscow, Russia on May 7, backdropped by the Spasskaya Tower, left, and the St. Basil's Cathedral, right. (AP)

Drones from Russia crash in Latvia: army

'Ukraine launches major drone attack'

MOSCOW, May 7, (Agencies) Russian air defenses shot down 347 Ukrainian drones overnight, Russia's Defense Ministry said Thursday, in what appeared to be a major attack after Moscow spurned Kyiv's ceasefire earlier in the week and tension mounted over Russia's upcoming Victory Day celebrations.

Incoming drones were destroyed over 20 Russian regions, including Moscow, according to the Defense Ministry, in Ukraine's second-biggest aerial attack since Russia's all-out invasion more than four years ago. The largest was last March when it launched 389 drones.

The attack came ahead of Russia's most important secular holiday, when it marks the anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II. Russian authorities have declared a unilateral ceasefire in Ukraine for Friday and Saturday.

Ukraine had responded to that with its own suspension of hostilities from midnight Tuesday. But Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Moscow disregarded the goodwill gesture and launched fresh attacks.

"Russia has not stopped any type of its military activity. Unfortunately, it has not stopped. Ukraine will act symmetrically," Zelenskyy said in his regular evening video address



This photo provided by Ukraine's 93rd Kholodnyi Yar Separate Mechanized Brigade press service, shows the site of an aerial guided bomb strike after Russia's air attack in Kramatorsk, Donetsk region, Ukraine on May 5. (AP)

Wednesday.

Tension has grown as Russia's Victory Day celebrations approach and U.S.-led peace efforts gain no traction.

All mobile internet access and text messaging services will be shut down in the Russian capital on May 9, state media reported Thursday, citing the country's Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and

Mass Media.

Also, a traditional parade in Moscow won't feature the usual tanks, missiles and other military equipment for the first time in nearly two decades.

Russian authorities say they are concerned about possible Ukrainian attacks, as Kyiv has expanded its long-range drone and missile capabilities.

Also:

RIGA: Several drones entered Latvian airspace from Russia early Thursday, with two crashing in the eastern region of Latgale, the National Armed Forces (NAF) reported.

Mobile alerts were issued to residents in the Ludza, Balvi, and Rezekne districts during the early hours, said the NAF, adding that the air alert was later lifted and that additional air defense units have been deployed along the eastern border.

All schools in Rezekne were closed, where at least one drone crashed into an oil storage facility, the Latvian news agency LETA reported. Students in Ludza and Balvi switched to remote learning. Following the incident, the Saeima's (parliament's) national security commission will hold an emergency meeting on Thursday.

Rubio's Vatican talks included discussing efforts to achieve 'durable peace' in ME

VATICAN CITY, May 7, (AP): US Secretary of State Marco Rubio discussed "efforts to achieve a durable peace in the Middle East" in talks at the Vatican on Thursday aimed at easing tensions following US President Donald Trump's criticisms of Pope Leo XIV.

Rubio met with Leo and then Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin in a visit that lasted 2½ hours.

US State Department spokesman Tommy Pigott said that Rubio and Leo discussed the situation in the Middle East "and topics of mutual interest in the Western Hemisphere. The meeting underscored the strong relationship between the United States and the Holy See and their shared commitment to promoting peace and human dignity," he said.

In a separate statement about the Parolin meeting, Pigott said that the two diplomats discussed "ongoing humanitarian efforts in the Western Hemisphere and efforts to achieve a durable peace in the Middle East. The discussion reflected the enduring partnership between the United States and the Holy See in advancing religious freedom," the statement said.



In this handout photo, provided by Vatican Media Pope Leo XIV greets US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, (right), upon his arrival for talks in the pope's private library at the Vatican on May 7. (AP)

Rubio also has meetings Friday with Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani. Those meetings might not be much easier for Washington's top diplomat, given both have strongly defended Leo against Trump's attacks and have criticized the Iran war as illegal - drawing the president's ire.

Rubio insisted this week that the

visit had been in the works for a while, but that "obviously we had some stuff that happened."

The tensions began when Trump lashed out at Leo on social media last month, saying the pope was soft on crime and terrorism for comments about the administration's immigration policies and deportations as well as the Iran war.

Europe

British voters cast ballots in local elections: British voters cast ballots Thursday in local and regional elections that could shake up the country's politics and deliver a heavy blow to embattled Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

Starmer's center-left Labour Party is bracing for big losses in polls that will choose about 5,000 local councilors and a handful of mayors across England, as well as semiautonomous parliaments in Scotland and Wales. They are the biggest set of elections since Labour swept to power in a landslide in July 2024, and Starmer's opponents have painted them as a midterm referendum on the prime minister.

Polls opened at 7 am and will close at 10 pm (2100 GMT). Some local authorities will count ballots overnight, but the bulk of the results are likely to be declared on Friday afternoon.

A rout could trigger moves by restive Labour lawmakers to oust a leader who led them to power less than two years ago. Even if Starmer survives for now, many analysts doubt he will lead the party into the next national election, which must be held by 2029. (AP)



Starmer

Sweden detains sanctioned oil tanker: Sweden is investigating a sanctioned tanker that is suspected of being part of the sanctioned Russian "shadow fleet," according to the Scandinavian country's civil defense minister.

The Swedish Coast Guard said it boarded and detained the Jin Hui on Sunday on suspicion of flying a false flag while transiting Swedish waters.

The vessel was sailing through the Baltic Sea under a Syrian flag, the coast guard said in a statement. There are also concerns about the vessel's seaworthiness.

The Jin Hui - which remained anchored off Trelleborg on Monday - is currently on European Union, UK and Ukraine sanctions lists, Sweden's Civil Defense Minister Carl-Oskar Bohlin wrote on X. (AP)

Hungary returns seized cash to Ukraine: A shipment of Ukrainian cash and gold worth around \$82 million that Hungary seized earlier this year has been returned to Ukraine's state Oschadbank, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Wednesday.

The seizure of the valuables, which were being transported through Hungary by two armored cars when Hungarian counter-terrorism authorities detained them on March 5, caused outrage in Ukraine, where officials accused Hungary's pro-Russian government of acting illegally, and of using the seizure as a tool in Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's anti-Ukraine election campaign. (AP)

Asia

China, Bangladesh FMs hold talks: China is willing to carry forward traditional friendship with Bangladesh, enhance political mutual trust, deepen practical cooperation, and be the most reliable partner in Bangladesh's national development process, said Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Wednesday.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks during talks with Bangladeshi Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman in Beijing.

Noting that China supports Bangladesh's new government in maintaining unity and stability, revitalizing economic development, and improving people's well-being, Wang said China is willing to continue providing Bangladesh with support and assistance to the best of its ability.

He said China is ready to promote the alignment of the high-quality Belt and Road cooperation with Bangladesh's national development strategies, deepen cooperation in traditional areas like economy, trade, investment, infrastructure, water conservancy and people-to-people exchanges, expand cooperation in emerging industries such as green development and digital economy, and support Chinese enterprises to invest in Bangladesh. (Xinhua)



Wang

Paraguay's president visits Taiwan: Paraguay's President Santiago Peña arrived in Taiwan on Thursday for his first visit to the self-ruled island that Beijing claims as its own territory.

Paraguay is the only remaining country in South America and one of 12 worldwide to recognize Tai-

wan. China, which has not ruled out force in annexing Taiwan, has ramped up a campaign over the past few years to lure Taiwan's diplomatic allies.

Paraguay maintains a solid trade relationship with China but has nevertheless reaffirmed its commitment to Taipei as its diplomatic partner.

Peña is leading a business delegation from areas such as agriculture and finance to Taiwan from Thursday until Sunday, according to Taiwan's Foreign Ministry. He met with Taiwan's Foreign Minister Lin Chia-lung upon his arrival on Thursday.

Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te is set to receive Peña with military honors on Friday. (AP)

S.Korea court cuts prison sentence for ex-PM: A South Korean appeals court has reduced the prison sentence of a former prime minister convicted of rebellion for his role in then President Yoon Suk Yeol's ill-fated imposition of martial law in December 2024.

Ex-Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, a Yoon appointee, was sentenced to 23 years by a Seoul court in January. Yoon was sentenced to life in prison for rebellion the next month.

On Thursday, the Seoul High Court upheld most of Han's convictions, but reduced his sentence to 15 years.

It upheld charges including that Han tried to create the appearance of legitimacy for Yoon's illegal decree by getting it endorsed at a Cabinet meeting and discussing plans to cut off of water and electricity to critical media agencies. The court also affirmed convictions for falsifying the martial law proclamation, for destroying it and for lying under oath.

The Seoul High Court said that Han's "criminal liabilities are very grave" because he "abandoned his immense responsibilities" as the No.2 official in the Yoon administration and participated in the rebellion. (AP)



In this photo released by South Sumatra Regional Police, a rescuer tries to extinguish fire after a passenger bus collided with a fuel truck in North Muli Rawas regency of South Sumatra province, Indonesia on May 6. (AP)

Bus and oil tanker collision kills 16 in Indonesia

A passenger bus collided head-on with a fuel tanker truck on a highway on Indonesia's Sumatra island on Wednesday, killing at least 16 people and injuring four others, officials said.

The crash occurred around midday on the Trans-Sumatra Highway in North Muli Rawas regency of South Sumatra province, when an intercity

bus carrying at least 20 people struck a tanker truck traveling in the opposite direction, said Mugono, a local disaster management agency official.

Mugono, who uses a single name like many Indonesians, said preliminary findings indicate the bus - which was traveling from South Sumatra's Lubuklinggau city to Jambi, an-

other city - may have emitted sparks shortly before the collision. This may have prompted the driver to steer the vehicle toward the right side of the road in an attempt to avoid a more serious incident. However, an oil tanker truck was approaching at high speed, leaving little time to avoid a direct impact. (AP)

'We emphasized importance of upholding international law'

Southeast Asian leaders to reaffirm core values in veiled Middle East war rebuke

MANILA, Philippines, May 7, (AP): Southeast Asian leaders plan to issue a contingency plan that upholds international law, sovereignty and freedom of navigation in what could be seen as a veiled rebuke to the United States, Israel and Iran over the Middle East war which has impacted their region, according to a draft declaration seen Thursday by The Associated Press.

The declaration is set to be issued by the leaders from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations when they meet in an annual summit on Friday in the central Philippine island province of Cebu.

It also outlines a crisis plan to deal with the energy shortages and other global problems caused by the war.

This year's host, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., has said the summit with 10 other national leaders and a lower-level representative from Myanmar will focus on the region's energy secu-

urity, food supply and the protection of its people, including more than a million Southeast Asian workers and seafarers in the Middle East.

Marcos has ordered the gathering to be stripped of its traditional pomp in recognition of economic headwinds worldwide.

A volatile but economically fast-growing region of about 680 million people, Southeast Asia has its share of major flash points, including decades-long territorial disputes involving China, a five-year civil war in Myanmar and a recent border conflict between Thailand and Cambodia.

But its leaders have expressed serious concern over a war that has caused global economic fallout and endangered many citizens of their nations.

Several workers in the Middle East, including two from the Philippines, have been killed in the current fighting, and thousands of workers from Southeast Asia have either flown home or were evacuated by their governments from the



From left: Myanmar's Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Hau Khan Sum, Malaysia's Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan, Thailand's Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuangketkeow, East Timor's Foreign Minister Benedito dos Santos Freitas, Vietnam's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Dang Hoang Giang, Philippines' Foreign Secretary Theresa Lazarus, Singapore's Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan, Brunei's Second Foreign Minister Erywan Pehin Yusof, Cambodia's Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn, Indonesia's Foreign Minister Sugiono, Laos' Foreign Minister Thongsavanh Phomvihane, and ASEAN Secretary General Kao Kim Hourn hold hands during a group photo session at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting at the Mactan Expo in Cebu province, central Philippines on May 7. (AP)

troubled region.

The Asian Development Bank warned in March, about a month after the hostilities in the Middle East broke out, that prolonged disruptions from the war could choke growth and spur inflation in Asia and the Pacific region, which are heavily dependent on oil and gas from the Middle East.

"We emphasized the importance of upholding international law and ensuring that regional cooperation remains anchored in dialogue, trust and respect for sovereignty," the draft statement says.

Southeast Asia will "maintain open, transparent and predictable markets as well as secure and open sea lanes, and ensure freedom of navigation, the safe, unimpeded and continuous transit passage of vessels and aircraft in straits used for international navigation," it says.

That will "preserve the unimpeded flow of essential goods, including food, energy and key inputs, in accordance with inter-

national law, particularly the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea," it says.

The ASEAN leaders will affirm "shared resolve" to fortify regional resilience.

The contingency plan calls for actions including the ratification possibly this year of an agreement that will pave the way for coordinated emergency fuel sharing, planning a regional power grid, diversifying the region's sources of crude oil, promoting the use of electric vehicles and studying the use of new technologies, including civilian nuclear energy.

They are also seeking "a possible ASEAN crisis communication and coordination protocol to ensure a coherent, timely and coordinated regional response to crises."

Aside from the Philippines, ASEAN consists of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam. East Timor was accepted as a full member in October last year.



US President Donald Trump meets with Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Oct 26, 2025. (AP)

'Goal is to protect Brazil's population'

Lula to discuss fighting organized crime in Trump meeting

RIO DE JANEIRO, May 7, (AP): Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will discuss cooperation in the fight against organized crime and tariffs with US President Donald Trump, Brazil's finance minister Dario Durigan said Wednesday, one day ahead of the scheduled meeting between the presidents.

"The goal is to protect Brazil's population, prioritize the country and maintain constructive dialogue," Durigan told state broadcaster EBC. "Expectations for the trip are very positive."

The encounter at the White House follows a crisis in bilateral relations last year, after the Trump administration imposed a 50% tariff on Brazilian goods and tied the measure to the prosecution of former President Jair Bolsonaro for his involvement in a coup plot.

Lula sharply defended Brazil's sovereignty and Trump later loosened tariffs on Brazil as part of his effort to lower consumer costs for Americans.

Trump and Lula started mending fences at the United Nations General Assembly in September, which was

followed by their first private meeting in Malaysia in October and subsequent phone conversations.

The Brazilian government's handling of the 50% tariff likely raised the country's leverage with the Trump administration, said Ana Garcia, an international relations professor at the Rural Federal University of Rio de Janeiro.

"The Trump administration likely sees Brazil as a partner that must be taken somewhat seriously, but will continue to pressure it to make concessions," Garcia said.

An ongoing point of contention

between the two governments is the Trump administration's reported consideration of designating Brazil's largest criminal factions - Red Command, or CV, and the First Capital Command, or PCC - foreign terrorist organizations.

The designations would give the US more power "to act as a political or economic actor in Brazil," said Leonardo Paz Neves, an international relations professor at the Getulio Vargas Foundation, a think-tank and university. "It's a defensive issue for Brazil that doesn't serve Brazil's interests at all."

Africa

Kenya politicians trade accusations: Kenya's political word of the moment is "goonism," frequently uttered by national leaders to convey annoyance at the gangs that intimidate those whose political activities they oppose.

Supporters of President William Ruto, who is seeking a second term in elections next year, use the phrase to describe the political violence that authorities will not tolerate. Opposition figures use it to condemn what they see as Ruto's aggressive - and underhanded - campaign tactics.

At times it can seem as if goonism is up against goonism, an unwelcome turn of events in this East African nation where the contest for political power is becoming ever more vigorous and tinged with a sense of danger.

Many Kenyans doubt Ruto's commitment to the religious values he espoused before taking power in 2022.

But as president, he appears to have benefited from the lawlessness that is now a national scourge as religious and political leaders warn that political violence threatens democratic gains. His critics charge that such chaos rises in part from Ruto's uncompromising style of leadership.

He added: "You can't use goons and you are telling us that you are taking us into a better place. You are a liar and the truth is not in you."

Although Lai, the pastor of a megachurch in the coastal city of Mombasa, didn't mention Ruto by name, many Kenyans suspect he had the president in mind when he gave that sermon, parts of which were shared online.

Lai is among evangelical preachers who embraced Ruto when he was vice president and seeking to replace President Uhuru Kenyatta, whose backing he didn't have. At the time, Ruto was widely seen as a pious politician. (AP)



Ruto

African Republic's former prime minister and major opposition figure, Anicet Georges Dologuélé, criticized the confiscation of his diplomatic passport as an abuse of power on Wednesday.

Dologuélé, who served as prime minister between 1999 and 2001, said he was not allowed to board a flight to an African Union meeting in Addis Ababa on Wednesday.

"It was at the airport that I learned I was forbidden from leaving the country after being declared stateless in my own country," he told a news conference in capital Bangui.

He is on the board of directors for the African Union Peace Fund, a role he has held since 2018.

Dologuélé renounced his French citizenship last year in line with the country's constitution to contest President Faustin-Archange Touadéra, who ran for a third term last year.

Dologuélé denounced last year's election as "very far from the truth" and has regularly criticized Touadéra. He won 13.1% of the votes according to the country's electoral body.

He has since used his diplomatic passport accorded to him as a former prime minister, claiming the government has refused to issue him a new passport. (AP)

ADF rebels kill 22 civilians in DRC: At least 22 civilians were killed in an overnight attack blamed on the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebels in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), local sources told Xinhua on Wednesday.

The attack occurred between Tuesday night and Wednesday morning in Beu Manyama, a town in the Beni territory of North Kivu Province. Assaultants reportedly used machetes and other bladed weapons, leaving over 22 victims dead, most of whom were found decapitated.

The ADF, an affiliate of the Islamic State in Central Africa, is a Ugandan rebel group operating in eastern DRC. Its continued activity has prompted joint military operations by Congolese and Ugandan forces since November 2021 to track and neutralize the group. (Xinhua)

Pakistan warns of strong response to any attack on anniversary of clash with India

ISLAMABAD, May 7, (AP): Pakistan's military warned Thursday it would respond strongly against any attack as it marked the anniversary of last year's four-day conflict with neighboring India that brought the nuclear-armed rivals to the brink of war before a US-brokered ceasefire halted the fighting.

The military said that any "hostile design" against Pakistan would be countered with "greater strength, precision and resolve" than what India witnessed during the May 2025 conflict, which Islamabad named "Marka-e-Haq," or "Battle of Truth."

Pakistan and India had exchanged tit-for-tat strikes following an attack by gunmen in the Indian-controlled part of the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir that killed 26 people, most of them Hindu tourists. India blamed Pakistan-backed militants for the massacre in the town of Pahalgam, an allegation Islamabad denied while calling for an independent investigation.

India launched strikes inside Pakistan on May 7, triggering retaliatory attacks by Pakistan that included drone incursions, missile strikes and artillery fire. Dozens of people were killed on both sides before a ceasefire was reached on May 10 following US mediation.

Pakistan at the time claimed it shot down at least seven Indian military aircraft, including a French-made Rafale fighter jet. India acknowledged suffering some losses but did not provide details.



A journalist takes photo with his mobile phone to ambulances carrying the bodies of police officers who were killed in a militants attack, outside a hospital in Quetta, Pakistan on Jan 31. (AP)

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly taken the credit for helping avert a wider war.

Speaking at a televised news conference, army spokesperson Lt. Gen. Ahmad Sharif Chaudhry said India had blamed Pakistan for the attack on tourists in Kashmir within minutes of the shooting without presenting evidence.

"It has been one year since the Pahalgam incident, yet the questions Pakistan raised remain unanswered," he said. Chaudhry said Pakistan did not underestimate India's military capability but was fully prepared to respond to any "misadventure."

"We are prepared; if anyone wishes to test us, they are more than

welcome," he said alongside Deputy Chief of Naval Staff Rear Adm. Shifaat Ali and Deputy Chief of Air Staff (Projects) Air Vice Marshal Tariq Ghazi. However, Chaudhry added: "We are not seeking conflict, we are not seeking war. But we know how to defend ourselves with honor and dignity."

Ali said the Indian navy had attempted to deploy vessels in the northern Arabian Sea during the fighting in an effort to target Pakistan's naval assets and disrupt maritime trade routes. "But due to the effective strategy of the Pakistan Navy, maritime traffic in all our waterways remained uninterrupted," he said.

CAR ex-PM denounces passport seizure: Central

Kuwait oil price down to \$120.47

KUWAIT CITY, May 7, (KUNA): Kuwaiti oil prices dropped by USD 2.91 to reach 120.47 per barrel (pb) in Wednesday's trading, compared with USD 123.38 pb the previous day, according to the Kuwait Pe-

roleum Corporation (KPC) on Thursday. In global markets, Brent crude declined by USD 8.60 to reach USD 101.27 pb, and US West Texas Intermediate fell by USD 7.19 to reach USD 95.08 pb.

Business

Al-Tabtabaei and Al-Sager highlight the success of the 'Bankee' program and outline its future strategic direction

NBK, MoE strengthen partnership on financial literacy



NBK expands 'Bankee' program in collaboration with Education Ministry.

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: Mr. Isam Al-Sager, Vice Chairman and Group Chief Executive Officer of National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) paid an official visit to the Ministry of Education, where he met with His Excellency Engineer Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei. The meeting focused on exploring avenues to further strengthen the strategic partnership between NBK and the Ministry, as well as expanding areas of collaboration, particularly across educational and awareness initiatives.

During the meeting, both parties reviewed the achievements of the "Bankee" financial literacy program, the first national initiative of its kind in Kuwait aimed at enhancing financial literacy among youth. The program, delivered by NBK in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), has been successfully implemented over the past four years, reinforcing its impact in promoting financial awareness among younger generations.

The program has successfully reached more than 50,000 students across over 104 schools in various regions of Kuwait, with the active participation of more than 12,000 teachers, reflecting its expanding reach and growing impact within the educational ecosystem.

The meeting also highlighted the educational role of the "Bankee" pro-

■ "Bankee" stands as a benchmark model for effective public-private partnership in education and financial awareness

gram in instilling core financial literacy concepts among primary school students, including earning, spending, saving, and financial obligations. This is delivered through a comprehensive curriculum built on interactive learning methods that bridge theory and practical application, contributing to the development of early financial awareness and sound financial behaviors among students from a young age.

The discussion also addressed the program's broader educational impact in instilling key ethical and social values among students, including integrity, responsibility, accountability, respect for public funds, teamwork, and adherence to the law. These outcomes have translated into positive behavioral changes both within and beyond the school environment, contributing to stronger financial and societal awareness over the long term.

Both parties further explored the program's future direction, including opportunities to enhance its educational content to better align with the needs of different academic stages and evolving financial concepts. This would strengthen its integration within the broader education system while supporting teachers in effectively delivering and reinforcing these concepts among students.

During the meeting, Al-Sager commended the pivotal role of the Ministry of Education in supporting the "Bankee" program, as well as the strong collaboration demonstrated by school administrations and teaching staff. He noted that this partnership has been instrumental to the program's success and continuity over four consecutive academic years, positioning it as a leading model for Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in education and awareness.

The "Bankee" program forms part of the community initiatives led by NBK in support of the education sector, reflecting the Bank's commitment to social responsibility. It underscores NBK's belief that investing in people, by nurturing a financially aware and capable generation grounded in responsible behaviors and strong national values, remains fundamental to advancing sustainable development in the State of Kuwait.

KGOC announces major organizational changes

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: The Chief Executive Officer of Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGOC), Bader Al-Munaiif, issued organizational changes effective Thursday, which covers the General Administration and three directorates.

The decision included the appointment of Abdulaziz Sulaiman Al-Humaidi as Head of the Quality Assurance Team, reporting to the Director of the Management Support Group.

Fawaz Khalid Al-Hajri was appointed Head of the Personnel and Training Team in the Joint Operations Directorate (Al-Wafra Joint Operations).

Suhaib Al-Sumait was appointed Head of the Power Supply and Distribution Team, reporting to the Di-

rector of the Operations Group.

Saud Al-Rashed was appointed Head of the Workforce and Recruitment Team in the Finance and Administration Directorate.

Sara Al-Ayoub was appointed Head of the Personnel and Industrial Relations Team.

Within the Comprehensive Planning Group, Ghazi Al-Shammari was appointed Head of the Operations Planning and Capital Budgeting Team. Salem Al-Juaidi was appointed Head of the Performance Management Team, and Aisha Abdullah was appointed Head of the Strategic Planning Team.

In the Directorate of Technical and Commercial Affairs, Nasser Bader Al-Abd Al-Jader was appointed Head of the Commercial Affairs Team for Joint Operations, reporting to the Director of the Commercial Affairs Group.

ATM withdrawals ease

Kuwait sees shift toward digital payments in Q1 '26

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: Data from the Central Bank of Kuwait revealed a huge disparity between the electronic payment transactions in the first quarter of 2026 compared to the fourth quarter of 2025.

This indicates a shift in user behavior and trends among different channels, as consumers increasingly prefer digital channels, while reliance on traditional point-of-sale (POS) terminals decreased, along with changes in cash withdrawal patterns.

The figures showed that POS terminals using plastic cards recorded around 224.8 million transactions worth KD4.427 billion in the first quarter of 2026, compared to 252.8 million transactions worth KD4.587 billion in the fourth quarter of 2025

— about 11.1 percent decline in the number of transactions and 3.5 percent in value, indicating a slowdown in the use of traditional methods despite their continuous prominence as a key payment tool.

In contrast, ATMs recorded about 15.57 million transactions worth KD2.242 billion during the first quarter of 2026, compared to 16.53 million transactions worth KD2.205 billion in the previous quarter — 5.8 percent decrease in the number of transactions, while the value increased slightly by 1.7 percent, reflecting a trend towards fewer withdrawals but with larger amount per transaction.

As for online payments, the number of transactions increased to 76.76 million during the first quarter of 2026, compared to 72.76 million transactions in the fourth quarter of 2025 — a growth rate of 5.5 percent.

Trading value hits KD 126.5 mln

Boursa Kuwait ends slightly lower

KUWAIT CITY, May 7, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Thursday's trading session marginally lower, with the All Share Index declining by 2.01 points, or 0.02 percent, to settle at 8,904.52 points. Trading activity remained strong, with approximately 565 million shares exchanged across 30,829 transactions, generating a total value of KD 126.5 million (around USD 387 million).

The Main Market Index recorded gains, rising by 11.16 points, or 0.13 percent, to reach 8,613.18 points. The segment saw trading of 330.3 million shares through 16,975 transactions, valued at KD 48 million (approximately USD 146.8 million).

In contrast, the Premier Market Index edged lower by 4.93 points, or 0.05 percent, closing at 9,428.58 points. A total of 234.7 million

shares were traded in 13,854 transactions, with a value of KD 78.5 million (around USD 240.2 million).

Meanwhile, the Main 50 Index slipped by 3.40 points, or 0.04 percent, to end the session at 9,474.43 points. Trading volume reached 257.4 million shares across 12,318 transactions, with a total value of KD 36.8 million (approximately USD 112.6 million).

Hawally tops Kuwait property transactions in April

Kuwait real estate trades hit KD 331 mln in April

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: Statistics released on Monday by the Real Estate Registration and Documentation Department of the Ministry of Justice showed that 433 properties were traded in April 2026, with a total value of approximately KD 331.3 million (around US\$1 billion), reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to the statistics published on the ministry's website, private property transactions topped the list with 308 deals valued at KD 131.2 million (about US\$432.9 million).

Investment properties ranked second with 99 transactions worth KD 112.1 million (around US\$369.9 million). Commercial real estate transactions accounted for 15 properties, with a total value of KD 34.9 million (approx-

mately US\$115 million).

Six warehouse contracts were also registered, valued at KD 22.6 million (approximately US\$74.5 million), along with one coastal property contract worth KD 680,000 (about US\$2.2 million), two shop contracts valued at KD 780,000 (approximately US\$2.5 million), and two nursery contracts totaling KD 29 million (around US\$95.7 million).

The statistics further showed that Hawally Governorate ranked first with 143 contracts, followed by Ahmadi Governorate with 120, Farwaniya with 47, the Capital Governorate with 45, Jahra Governorate with 41, and Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate with 37 contracts.

Oman, GCC show resilience in World Bank forecast

World Bank sees 4.5% GCC growth in 2026

MUSCAT, May 7, (KUNA): The World Bank forecast on Thursday Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) economies to grow by 4.5 percent by the end of 2026, with average inflation expected to remain relatively stable at 2.1 percent despite regional and global challenges.

The forecast was presented during a meeting hosted by the Omani Ministry of Finance in Muscat, where the World Bank Group reviewed the findings and outlook of its GCC economic report and discussed regional and global economic developments and policy recommendations.

The bank said GCC economies recorded growth of 3.2 percent in 2025 with average inflation standing at 2.2 percent, noting that Gulf economies demonstrated "relative resilience" despite ongoing regional and international challenges.

It attributed improved economic performance indicators to growth in non-oil sectors, accelerat-

ing economic diversification, expansion of government revenues and exports, as well as rising investments in infrastructure projects.

The report expected the GCC's positive medium-term economic performance to continue, supported by relatively strong growth and varying external surpluses despite risks linked to oil price volatility, global uncertainty and geopolitical tensions.

Regarding Oman, the bank said the Sultanate achieved positive financial and economic results in 2025, recording 3.1 percent growth due to government measures aimed at improving fiscal performance and spending efficiency, while posting a limited budget deficit of 1.2 percent of GDP.

The bank forecast Oman's economy to maintain positive performance this year with growth estimated at 2.4 percent, a stable fiscal deficit, a current account surplus supported by higher oil

prices and non-oil export growth, and public debt remaining at 35 percent of GDP.

Omani Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance Abdullah Al-Harhi stressed during the meeting the importance of enhancing cooperation and exchange of expertise with international financial institutions to support Oman's economic efforts and align with global economic trends.

Meanwhile, Secretary-General of the Omani Ministry of Finance Mahmoud Al-Awini said the World Bank report reflected the resilience of GCC economies and their ability to adapt to regional and global economic changes.

For her part, World Bank Group Country Manager for Oman Wendy Werner said the group aims to support the implementation of Oman Vision 2040 and contribute to sustainable economic growth, particularly in economic diversification and non-oil sectors.

GCC underperforms global rally as blockade blunts recovery

By KAMCO Invest

Global equity markets witnessed sharp recovery during April-2026 more than offsetting the YTD declines during Q1-2026. The MSCI World index scaled 10.0% during the month, the biggest monthly gain in more than five years, backed by almost 14.5% gain in shares of emerging markets index that further supported by 9.5% gain for the global advanced markets index. The S&P index surged 10.4% during the month while the tech heavy Nasdaq index was up by 15.3%. European markets witnessed much smaller returns in low single-digits led by economic headwinds due to the Middle East war, while Asian markets outperformed with double-digit returns of around 13%. Japan was one of the best performing markets during the month with a return of 16.1% led by rally in AI stocks and strong corporate earnings. In the commodities market, crude oil prices surged to highest level in four years by the end of the month as reports of military operations threatened already curtailed supplies.

On the other hand, GCC equity markets underperformed the global rally during April-2026, although the index registered gains after two consecutive months of declines. The MSCI GCC index witnessed a marginal gain of 0.4% during the month reflecting broad-based gains in the region, with only TASI closing the month in the red with a marginal decline of 0.6% mainly as investors booked profits. In terms of YTD-2026 performance, Saudi Arabia remained the second-best performing market in the region, after Oman, with a gain of 6.6% while Oman's benchmark surged 42.7% by the end of the month. The rest of the GCC benchmarks remained in the red with mid to low single-digit declines.

The monthly sector performance chart of the GCC showed broad-based gains across sectors with only the Healthcare, F&B and Retailing indices in the red with low single digit, while the Transportation and Diversified Financials indices showed gains of over 9%.

Boursa Kuwait

Boursa Kuwait surged in April-2026, with all four benchmark indices posting gains during the month. The All-Share Index advanced 5.3% during the month, positioning Boursa Kuwait as the second best-performing market in the GCC for the month. The gains were primarily driven by mid-cap and small-cap stocks, while expectations of strong Q1-2026 corporate earnings particularly from Kuwaiti banks further supported investor sentiment during the month. This was reflected in the Main 50 Index, which delivered a return of 17.2%, its highest level since inception followed by the Main Market Index, which advanced 11.5%, marking its second-highest level since inception during the month. In contrast, the Premier Market Index posted a more moderate gain of 4.1%. In terms of YTD-2026 performance, the Premier Market Index recorded a decline of 1.2%, and the All-Share Index edged down by 0.5%. Conversely, the Main 50 Index and Main Market Index delivered gains of 7.7% and 3.2%, respectively.

The monthly sector performance chart favored gainers, with the Technology Index topping the list, recording an increase of 150.9%. It was followed by the Real Estate and Consumer Staples indices, which posted gains of 12.7% and 12.2%, respectively. The gains in the Technology index were led by an equivalent gain in the sole constituent stock in the index, Automated Systems Co. Gains in the Real Estate index was led by a sector-wide gains with only a few mid cap stocks seeing declines during the month as the economy inched towards gradual restoration of normalcy following the Iran conflict. Both the stocks in the Consumer Staples sector reported gains, with the shares of Live-stock Transport & Trading Co. posted a monthly gain of 12.7%. Within the Telecom sector, most of the constituent stocks posted gains supported by solid earnings. In the Banking sector, majority of the listed banks reported gains during the month resulting in the sector gaining 3.1% during the month supported by strong Q1-2026 earnings.

In terms of monthly stock performance, Automated Systems Co. topped the chart with a gain of 150.9% followed by Digitus Group for Digital Infrastructure, Data Centers & Communications. And National International Holding Co. with gains of 71.9% and 60.0%, respectively. On the decliners side, Kuwait Foundry Co. topped with a fall of 13.2% followed by Kuwait Reinsurance Co. and Warba Capital Holding Co. with the declines of 12.3% and 7.5%, respectively. In terms of trading activity, volume traded during the month surged by 158.9% to reach 9.0 Bn shares in April-2026 as compared to 3.5 Bn shares in March-2026. The aggregate value of shares traded also increased by 84.2% to reach KWD 2.1 Bn as compared to KWD 1.1 Bn during March-2026.

Saudi Arabia (Tadawul)

Saudi Arabia's TASI benchmark reported a marginal decline during April-2026 and was the only market in the GCC that declined during the month reflecting profit booking by investors benefitting from previous gains. The performance was also capped by geopolitical strife in the region which weighed on investor sentiments. The benchmark peaked at a closing high of 11589.1 points in the middle of the month but mostly trended downward during the rest of the month to close with a decline of 0.6% at 11,187.7 points. The slide towards the end of the month was due to market speculations surrounding the U.S.-Iran negotiations. Despite the decline, the index remained the second best performing market in the GCC since the start of the year with a gain of 6.6%.

The monthly sector performance chart favored gainers and was topped by the Software & Services index with a gain of 9.4% followed by Pharma, Biotech & Life Science and Capital Goods indices with gains of 5.9% and 5.7%, respectively. On the decliner's side, the Media index witnessed the biggest decline of 11.0% during the month followed by Health Care Equipment & Svc and Food & Beverages indices with declines of 4.7% and 4.1%, respectively. Gains for the Energy sector was led by 1.3% gain in shares of Aramco and 15.5% gains in shares of Bahri. Geopolitical conflict with Iran pushed Brent futures prices to the highest level in four years towards the end of April-2026 but prices remained volatile as the economic impact of the war weighed on demand growth. Bahri reported 4x growth in profits that reached SAR 2.15 Bn for Q1-2026, driven by higher freight rates, a larger fleet, and increased charter activity. Large-cap banks like Al Rajhi Bank declined by 3.5%, followed by the shares of Saudi National Bank and Riyad Bank dropped by 6.1% and 29.6%, respectively. Within the Telecom sector, most of the constituent stocks posted gains supported by solid earnings. Saudi Telecom Company reported a net profit of SAR 3.7 Bn in Q1-2026, compared to SAR 3.65 Bn in Q1-2025, representing a 1.3% increase, driven by a 3.8% rise in revenue to SAR 19.9 Bn. Growth was supported by a 5.2% increase in commercial unit revenues and a 6.2% rise in carriers and wholesale revenues.

The monthly gainer's chart was topped by Rabigh Refining and Petrochemical Co. with a gain of 40.8% followed by Middle East Specialized Cables Co. and Saudi Steel Pipe Co. with gains of 35.6% and 30.4%, respectively. On the decliner's side, Riyad Bank topped with a decline of 29.6% followed by National Medical Care Co. and Saudi Research and Marketing Group with declines of 13.9% and 12.6%, respectively.

Trading activity on the exchange strengthened in April-2026 with total value traded surging by 20.5% to reach a seven-month high level of SAR 125.1 Bn compared to 103.8 Bn in March-2026. The total volume improved 38.4% to reach 6.7 Bn shares compared to 4.8 Bn in March-2026. Americana Restaurants topped the monthly volume chart with 738.0 Mn shares followed by Saudi Kayan Petrochemical Co. and Saudi Arabian Oil Co. at 316.6 Mn shares and 305.8 Mn shares, respectively. On the monthly value traded chart, Al Rajhi Bank topped with SAR 9.6 Bn worth of shares traded during the month followed by Saudi Arabian Oil Co. and Saudi National Bank at SAR 8.4 Bn and SAR 4.1 Bn, respectively.

Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange

The FTSE ADX increased 2.7% in April-2026, bouncing back from the 8.9% decline in March-2026, the largest decline in six years since March-2020, due to the instability caused by the regional war. The FTSE ADX Index closed

GCC Equity Markets	Index Closing	MTD Chg%	YTD Chg%	M-Cap (USD Bn)	Val Traded - (USD Bn)	P/E (x) TTM	P/B (x) TTM	Div. Yield
Kuwait - Premier Market Index	9,381.8	4.1%	(1.2%)	174.0	6.9	14.1	1.3	2.3%
Kuwait - Main 50 Index	9,361.2	17.2%	7.7%					
Kuwait - Main Market Index	8,570.6	11.5%	3.2%					
Kuwait - All Share Index	8,860.4	5.3%	(0.5%)					
Saudi Arabia	11,187.7	(0.6%)	6.6%	2,652.7	33.3	18.0	2.2	3.5%
Abu Dhabi	9,778.8	2.7%	(2.1%)	755.5	7.0	19.0	2.4	2.5%
Dubai	5,766.1	6.1%	(4.6%)	251.4	5.6	9.2	1.6	5.5%
Qatar	10,487.9	2.9%	(2.6%)	171.5	2.9	11.9	1.3	4.8%
Bahrain	1,972.1	3.8%	(4.6%)	72.6	0.05	17.1	1.3	4.5%
Oman	8,369.5	2.5%	42.7%	57.0	4.0	16.6	1.8	3.7%
Total GCC				4,134.8	59.8	16.8	2.1	3.5%



Source: GCC Stock Exchanges, Kamco Invest Research

the month at 9,778.76 points. Sectoral performance during April-2026 was heavily skewed towards gainers, with eight out of the ten sector indices on the exchange recording gains. The Industrial Index experienced the largest uptick, increasing by 11.2% to close the month at 2,372.44 points, after five out of the thirteen companies that comprised the sector witnessed monthly double-digit gains, led by Orascom Construction which recorded a 38.1% gain. The Consumer Staples Index recorded the second-largest monthly gain, rising by 6.1% to close at 6,944.93 points, after heavily weighted companies in the sector witnessed moderate gains during the month, including Agathia (+5.1%) and Mair Group (+7.1%). In contrast, the Utilities Index recorded the largest decline among all other sectors, posting a 4.9% decline during April-2026, after Abu Dhabi National Energy Company, the only company in the sector, reported a 4.9% share price decline during the month.

In terms of individual stock performance, Abu Dhabi National Company for Building Materials (BILDCO) topped the monthly gainers chart, with its share price surging by 53.0%. It was followed by Orascom Construction Co. and GFH Financial Group, which recorded gains of 38.1% and 30.4%, respectively. Recently, BILDCO announced its approval of the offer submitted by WUJOD Real Estate Development Company to develop an integrated, sustainable city project in Abu Dhabi, spanning an initial area of 10 million square meters (equivalent to 107 million square feet), with an estimated initial investment value for the first phase of approximately AED 2 Bn, and has authorized the executive management to complete the necessary procedures. On the decliners' side, ARAM Group registered the largest drop, with its share price declining by 21.6%. It was followed by Insurance House and Phoenix Group, which posted decreases of 19.9% and 13.2%, respectively.

Trading activity on the exchange declined during April-2026, following a mixed performance in the previous month. The total volume of shares fell by 14.1% to 6.1 Bn shares, compared to 7.1 Bn shares in March-2026. Concurrently, the total value of shares traded decreased by 11.0% to AED 25.8 Bn, down from AED 28.9 Bn in the prior month. Abu Dhabi National Hotels was the most active stock by volume, with 636.2 Mn shares traded, followed by ADNOC Gas Co. and Aldar Properties, which recorded 521.2 Mn and 433.3 Mn shares, respectively. In terms of value traded during the month, Al Dar Properties Co. led the market with AED 3.6 Bn worth of shares exchanged, followed closely by Alpha Dhabi Holding and Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank with AED 2.6 Bn and USD 2.1 Bn, respectively.

On the economic front, the UAE economy's performance during the first few months of 2026 has been robustly supported by its financial sector. According to the Central Bank of the UAE, total banking assets increased by 1.1% in February-2026, surpassing AED 5.472 trillion compared to AED 5.414 trillion in January-2026. Moreover, total credit grew by 1.2% to AED 2.63 trillion, bolstered by an increase of AED 20.6 Bn in domestic credit. Bank deposits rose by 1.9% to AED 3.4 trillion, with resident deposits witnessing 1.7% growth to AED 3.098 trillion.

Dubai Financial Market

The DFM General Index witnessed the biggest monthly gain in the GCC recording a 6.1% gain in April-2026, partially recovering from a fall of 16.4% during March-2026 due to the geopolitical situation in the region. The DFM General Index closed the month at 5,766.05 points. Sectoral performance during March-2026 was moderately positive, with five out of the eight sector indices on the exchange recording gains during April-2026. The Industrial Index recorded the largest gain during April-2026. Six out of the eight companies that comprise the Industrial sector index reported gains during the month, led by Gulf Navigation Holding which reported a 60.4% share price jump during the month. Moreover, the Consumer Discretionary Index experienced the second-largest gain, increasing by 14.0% to close the month at 1,007.00 points, after all constituent companies that comprise the sector recorded gains during the month, led by the 17.3% share price increase of Talabat Holding. On the other hand, the Material index reported the largest decline during the month at 5.1%.

In terms of monthly stock performance data from Bloomberg, Gulf Navigation Holding topped the gainers' table in April-2026, with its share price rising by 60.4%. It was followed by National International Holding and Gulf Finance House, which recorded gains of 31.4% and 28.2%, respectively. Gulf Navigation Holding Company recently approved a share buyback of up to 5%, subject to regulatory approval, among other key strategic decisions, including changing its name to Etihad Energy Holding. On the decliners' side, Dubai National Insurance led with a share price decline of 6.2%, followed by Dubai Taxi Company and National General Insurance, each posting share price declines of 5.1% during April-2026.

In terms of monthly trading activity, total volume increased by 5.4% to 5.4 Bn shares in April-2026, compared to 5.1 Bn shares in March-2026. Conversely, the total value of shares traded declined at a relatively faster pace of 17.3%, reaching AED 20.4 Bn in April-2026, down from AED 24.7 Bn. Talabat Holding Company topped the monthly volume chart with 0.84 Bn shares traded, followed by Emaar Properties and Drake & Scull International, which recorded 783.4 Mn and 511.7 Mn shares changing hands, respectively. In terms of value traded, Emaar Properties led the market with AED 9.6 Bn worth of shares exchanged during the month, followed by Emirates NBD and Emaar Development with AED 1.7 Bn and AED 1.4 Bn, respectively.

On the economic front, despite the adverse impact and instability caused by the war in the region, the overall picture of Dubai's real estate sector remained strong during Q1-2026. The sector registered total transactions reaching AED 252 Bn during the quarter, marking a 31% year-on-year gain in value and a 6% growth in volume, reflecting resilient momentum and investor confidence in the market. Moreover, according to data from the Dubai Land Department, a total of 718,160 real estate procedures were recorded during Q1-2026, of which 60,303 were real estate transactions, representing a 6% uptick compared to the corresponding period in 2025. Investment in luxury real estate increased by 26% during Q1-2026 to reach AED 87.7 Bn. Overall, Dubai's total value of real estate investment increased by 22% y-o-y to AED 173 Bn

during Q1-2026.

Qatar Exchange

After reporting declines in March-2026, the Qatar Stock Exchange witnessed gains during April-2026. The QE 20 index closed the month at 10,487.9 points registering a monthly gain of 2.9% while the Qatar All Share Index witnessed slightly better performance and registered a monthly gain of 3.1% during April-2026 indicating investor interest across the broader market segments. The performance between the two indices diverged in terms of YTD performance with the QE 20 index showing a decline of 2.6%, while the QE All Share index recorded a gain of 0.5%. The monthly sector performance chart reflected gains for all the sectors. The Telecoms index topped during the month with a gain of 10.9%, followed by Industrials and Insurance indices with gains of 10.3% and 5.0%, respectively.

Gains for the Industrial index were mainly led by shares of Estithmar Holding QPSC and Man-nai Corp QSC which were up by 27.1% and 19.1%, respectively, during the month, while shares of Aamal Co. declined by 3.5%. During the month, both the constituents in Telecoms sector, Vodafone Qatar and Ooredoo, reported gains of 10.3% and 12.9%, respectively. In the Banks & Financial Services sector, most of the listed Qatari banks witnessed gains during the month with Qatar National Bank reporting a gain of 1.8% followed by Commercial Bank of Qatar and Dukhan Bank with gains of 0.9% and 0.1%, respectively. Gains in the insurance sector were primarily driven by shares of Qatar General Insurance & Reinsurance Co. and Doha Insurance Co QSC, which rose by 46.3% and 9.3%, respectively. In the Transportation sector, all the constituent stocks reported gains with shares of Gulf Warehousing Co. leading with a gain of 4.2% during April-2026. Within the Consumer & Goods sector, shares of Qatar German Co for Medical reported a gain of 12.0% followed by Medicare Group with 8.5%.

respectively, whereas the Mekdam Holding Group reported a decline of 13.0%.

The monthly stock performance chart was topped with Qatar General Insurance & Reinsurance Co. with a gain of 46.3% followed by Estithmar Holding QPSC and Dlala Brokerage & Investments with gains of 27.1% and 26.4%, respectively. On the decliners side, Doha Bank QPSC topped with a decline of 16.7% followed by Mekdam Holding Group and Qatar Cinema & Film Distribution Co. with declines of 13.0% and 4.6%, respectively.

In terms of the trading activity, total volume of shares traded during the month increased by 22.0% to 4.3 Bn shares during April-2026 as compared to 3.5 Bn shares in March-2026. Value traded also increased by 1.7% to reach QAR 10.6 Bn during April-2026 compared to QAR 10.4 Bn shares in March-2026. Baladna topped the monthly volume traded chart with 628.5 Mn traded shares followed by Qatar Aluminum Manufacturing Co. and Maseaied Petrochemical Holding at 397.7 Mn shares and 332.5 Mn shares, respectively. On the value traded chart, Estithmar Holding QPSC topped with QAR 903.3 Mn worth of trades during the month followed by Qatar National Bank QPSC and Baladna at QAR 878.3 Mn and QAR 842.1 Mn, respectively.

In the Q1-2026 earnings releases, the overall trend was largely negative, with total net profits for the quarter declining by 1.9%. Within the banking sector, four out of nine banks reported a drop in earnings, resulting in a 1.6% y-o-y decline in aggregate net profits during the quarter.

Bahrain Bourse

The Bahrain Bourse All Share Index recorded the third-biggest growth in the GCC in April-2026 with a 3.8% gain, closing the month at 1,972.1 points. The monthly gain partially reversed a sharp monthly decline of 7.8% during March-2026. In terms of monthly sectoral performance, the trend was predominantly negative, as four out of the seven sectors recorded declines during April-2026. However, a gain in heavy-weight indices such as the Real Estate and Financial sectors supported the overall gain of the bourse during the month. The Real Estate Sector recorded the largest gain among the sectors during the month at 22.7%, closing at 2,779.7 points, followed by the Financial Sector (+6.3%) and the Materials Sector (+0.1%). On the other hand, the Industrial Sector posted the largest decline during April-2026, registering a 10.3% decline to close the month at 2,523.4 points.

In terms of share price performance, according to Bloomberg data, Seef Properties topped the gainers' list with a 38.1% increase during the month, followed by GFH Financial Group and Inovest BSC, which recorded gains of 27.4% and 9.7%, respectively. On the decliners' side, APM Terminal Bahrain led the list with a 12.3% share price decline during the month, followed by Gulf Hotels Group and Bahrain Islamic Bank, which posted decreases of 6.7% and 5.1%, respectively.

Trading activity on the exchange witnessed sharp gains during April-2026. The total volume of shares traded during the month jumped by 224% to 61.7 Mn shares, compared to 19.0 Mn shares in March-2026. In contrast, the total value traded on the exchange also experienced a similar surge, rising 165.6% to reach BHD 18.4 Mn in April-2026, up from BHD 6.9 Mn during the previous month. Al Salam Bank-Bahrain BSC topped the monthly volumes chart with 15.6 Mn shares traded, followed by GFH Financial Group and Seef Properties with 14.2 Mn and 10.3 Mn shares exchanged, respectively. On the monthly value traded chart, GFH Financial Group led with BHD 7.9 Mn worth of shares exchanged, followed by Kuwait Finance House - Bahrain and National Bank of Bahrain, which recorded BHD 4.3 Mn and BHD 3.9 Mn in value traded, respectively.

On the economic front, Bahrain tackled war impact with a USD 18.6 Bn liquidity support package, according to reports. The package includes, among other measures, provisions allowing retail lenders and financing companies to permit both individuals and corporates to defer loan installments and credit card payments for three months, covering both principal and interest. Moreover, the Bahraini Central Bank has extended its repo facility to three months and lowered reserve requirements from 5% to 3.5%, thereby releasing additional funds to support lending. Furthermore, the central bank has reduced the minimum liquidity coverage ratio and net stable funding ratio from 100% to 80%, a measure intended to inject more cash into the banking system and bolster economic activity. Additionally, the measures include flexibility afforded to banks in how they classify affected loans, reducing pressure on balance sheets during a period of increasing instability and uncertainty. Another measure being implemented by the government to support the economy is, according to reports, the rollout of a private sector wage support scheme. This initiative, valued at approximately BHD 100 Mn, is expected to cover wages up to the insured salary ceiling.

Muscat Stock Exchange

The MSX 30 Index recorded a 2.5% increase in April-2026 to close the month at 8,369.48 points. The Index consistently maintained its upward trajectory in 2026, recording its tenth consecutive monthly gain despite the instability caused by the war in the region. For the second month in a row, sectoral performance was entirely positive, with all three sector indices on the exchange recording gains. The Industrial Index registered the largest monthly gain with 3.2% to close the month at 10,190.9 points, after significant share price gains were registered by heavy-weighted companies in the sector such as Raysut Cement (+47.7%) and Muscat City Desalination (+18.5%). The Services Index followed with a 3.1% gain during April-2026 to close the month at 3,267.8 points, while the Financial Index reported a 3.0% gain to close the month at 13,238.6 points during the same period.

In terms of company performance, The Financial Corporation topped the gainers list with a share price gain of 143.1%, followed by Oman & Emirates Investment Holding Co. and Raysut Cement Co., which recorded monthly share gains of 53% and 47.7%, respectively. On the decliners' side, Salalah Mills led the chart with a 16.7% share price decline, followed by SMN Power Holding and Al Omaniya Financial Services Co., which witnessed share price drops of 13% and 12.6%, respectively.

During a meeting with bank officials

KFH supports public-private sector collaboration to advance sustainability

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: Minister of State for Development and Sustainability, Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij, emphasized her commitment to strengthening policies and initiatives that support the transition toward sustainable development. She highlighted efforts to enhance integration among relevant entities and to develop frameworks that respond to environmental and economic changes, ensuring a balance between economic growth and the preservation of resources.

Dr. Al-Fulaij highlighted that private sector contributions are a vital complement to national efforts. She commended KFH's proactive initiatives in environmental protection and the adoption of sustainable practices, underscoring the importance of strong partnerships between government entities and financial institutions to achieve national sustainability objectives and maximize their positive impact on society and the business environment.

This was stated during a meeting with a delegation from KFH, including Group Head of Compliance and Governance, Meshal AlShaya, Head of Public Relations and Media, Yousef Al-Ruwaieh, and Executive Manager of Governance and Sustainability, Mohammad Alarbeed.

The meeting addressed key sustainability topics, focusing on ways to coordinate efforts and strengthen joint cooperation. Discussions also reviewed KFH's sustainability milestones, its strategic alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035, and its commitment to advancing sustainable and social development in accordance with the highest international standards.

Dr. Al-Fulaij stressed the need to strengthen the sustainable development and environmental protection framework. She called for seamless coordination between the public and private sectors to address



Minister Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij with the Kuwait Finance House delegation, Meshal AlShaya, Yousef Al-Ruwaieh and Mohammad Alarbeed.

- KFH's sustainability achievements support Kuwait Vision 2035 and sustainable development pathways
- Minister Reem Al-Fulaij lauded the Bank's leading role in advancing sustainability and development

environmental challenges, optimize natural resource management, adopt modern technologies, and invest in national talent, all in line with the State's strategic vision for sustainability.

Meanwhile, the KFH delegation emphasized institutionalizing sustainability across all operations and services, reaffirming its readiness to support government efforts and lead national sustainability initiatives.

The delegation highlighted KFH as a leading model in environmental protection initiatives, climate change resilience, financial inclusion, community support, women empowerment, youth support, entrepreneurship, and the promotion of transparency and governance principles. The bank also continues integrating sustainability into its overall strategy and adopting Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards in alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs).

The delegation noted that KFH is committed to issuing its annual Sustainability Report and Carbon Footprint Report to provide transparent and comprehensive assessments of the environmental impact of its operations. This commitment is reflected in the Bank's achievement of an 'A' rating in the MSCI ESG Index and its inclusion in the global FTSE4Good Index, reinforcing its strong performance in sustainable finance.

The bank also recently secured the "Best Bank for Sustaining Communities in the Middle East" and "World's Best Islamic Bank for Corporate Social Responsibility 2026" awards from Global Finance magazine. Such recognition underscores KFH's proven track record in green finance, the strategic reach of its community programs, and its leadership in sustainability and EESG standards.

Kuwait partakes in OAPEC's 116th meeting

KUWAIT CITY, May 7, (KUNA): The Council of Ministers of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) held its 116th meeting Thursday, at the level of delegates from the Ministers of Energy and Oil of the member states, via video-conference.

The meeting was chaired by Al-Amari Mohammad Al-Amari of Libya on the organization's Executive Bureau, whose country holds the current presidency for 2026.

In a statement, OAPEC said that Al-Amari opened the meeting by welcoming the new Secretary General of the organization, Khalid Al-Otaibi, congratulating him on assuming his new post.

Al-Amari commended the efforts of the former Secretary General of the organization, Jamal Al-Loghani, for his service, expressing gratitude to the General Secretariat for its excellent preparation for the meeting and efforts in completing the organization's development project, which aims to fulfill the aspirations of the member states and strengthen the organization's role on both the regional and interna-

tional levels.

He thanked the Government of the State of Kuwait for its continued support of the organization and expressed gratitude to its representative on the Executive Bureau, Sheikh Dr. Nimer Fahad Al-Malik Al-Sabah, for his efforts in supporting the organization's activities during his chairmanship of the previous session.

He emphasized that the organization's ultimate goal is cooperation among member states in all aspects of energy-related activities, for the benefit of the organization and its people.

For his part, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Oil and the State of Kuwait's representative on the Executive Bureau of OAPEC, Sheikh Dr. Nimer Al-Sabah, affirmed commitment to supporting the development efforts currently underway within the organization. This support aims to strengthen its joint Arab role and solidify its position as a specialized regional platform for energy and petroleum issues.

Sheikh Nimer Al-Sabah explained that the meeting reflected the significant efforts undertaken by the OAPEC General Secretariat in implementing the

project to develop and restructure the organization's operations to keep pace with the rapid changes in the global energy sector. He noted that the State of Kuwait, as the host country, fully supports the institutional modernization path adopted by the organization, whether in terms of developing administrative and financial systems and regulations, updating organizational structures, strengthening corporate governance, or developing research, media, and corporate communication strategies, as these are essential elements for enhancing performance efficiency and increasing integration among member states.

The statement explained that the meeting supports the transition to launching a new identity under the name "Arab Energy Organization" to keep pace with the rapid transformations in the energy sector and solidify its position as an active Arab organization in energy issues.

The Council recommended that the General Secretariat intensify efforts to complete the development project according to the established timeline.

Why gasoline costs 52% more in US than it did before Iran war?

NEW YORK, May 7, (AP): The price of a gallon of regular gasoline in the U.S. climbed 31 cents in the past week, spiking to an average of \$4.54 per gallon Wednesday, a price 52% higher than before the war with Iran began, according to AAA data.

The main reason drivers are paying more at the pump is because the war has stranded oil tankers near the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow passage through which a fifth of the world's crude oil normally passes. The price of crude oil, which is the main ingredient in gasoline, climbed for most of the past two months because Iran has effectively shut the waterway located off its coast.

In mid-April, U.S. gasoline prices fell daily for almost two weeks amid signs the conflict could be winding down.

"After the announcement of the initial ceasefire, there was kind of optimism that this really could be the beginning of the end of the conflict," said Rob Smith, director of global fuel retail at S&P Global Energy. "And so crude prices came down correspondingly, gasoline spot prices followed, and so on and ... the retailers lowered prices as well."

But gasoline prices reversed course and began increasing again as deepening hostilities over the strait between the U.S. and Iran kept oil supplies constrained.

"There's a fundamental shortfall that will exist globally or fundamental struggle to meet that demand that will drive up price," Smith said. "No matter what a government says or what any market person thinks, there is a true kind of upward pressure that's being exerted on prices every day the Strait of Hormuz is constrained. And it is still severely constrained."

Gas station owners set prices at the pump, but a lot of factors go into what they decide to charge.

The main ingredient in gasoline cost is the price of a barrel of crude oil. In the U.S., oil prices represented about 51% of the price of a gallon of gasoline in 2025, according to the Energy Information Administration.

That means when crude oil prices rise, gasoline prices generally follow. Less oil on the market means higher prices for oil and gasoline.

Iran's effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz during the war triggered the largest supply disruption in the history of oil markets, according to the International Energy Agency, pushing oil prices as high as \$112 a barrel in early April.

Oil prices fell below \$100 a barrel Wednesday after the U.S. and Iran appeared to be moving closer to an initial agreement to end the war. That could pull gasoline prices down as well, if the trend continues.

Bob Kleinberg, adjunct senior research scholar at the Columbia University Center on Global Energy Policy, compared the average price of a gallon of gasoline in the U.S. with the price for a barrel of WTI, the U.S. benchmark oil, over the past few weeks, and said their price changes generally matched up.

"Not much of a mystery here," Kleinberg said. "It's not exactly proportional but the shape of the curves follows the same pattern, and really with very little delay."

Federal and state taxes contributed about 17% of the oil price,

refining costs and profits contributed 14% and distribution and marketing contributed 17%, the EIA said. In some states, such as California, higher taxes and refining costs push the price of gasoline well above the national average.

One event that could have changed the trajectory of gasoline prices occurred in April, when the U.S. blocked Iranian ports to stop the country from exporting oil.

"Iran had been moving an unusually high amount of oil to global markets, so that was helping moderate prices," said Jim Krane, energy research fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute. "The Trump administration decides they're going to punish Iran, and try to put more pressure on Iran by blocking their exports, so of course that does put pressure on Iran, but also puts pressure on global oil prices and forces them up. That was probably a big factor."

What refineries and traders are willing to pay for oil swings wildly after news breaks about attacks on ships in the Persian Gulf or diplomacy talks stalling. "The oil market is exquisitely sensitive to what's coming out of the White House," Kleinberg said.

Back in early March, at the beginning of the Iran war, the price of gasoline jumped 48 cents in a week. The highest weekly jump was in March 2022, when the price jumped 60 cents in a week after Russia invaded Ukraine, AAA said.

No one can predict how high gasoline prices will climb. A gallon of regular in the U.S. costs more now than it did in early May of 2022, and back then, the price kept climbing through Memorial Day, AAA said.

The longer the flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz is hindered, the higher prices will go and the longer it will take to get back to normal, Smith said.

"Even if there was a true and lasting resolution of the conflict, both sides agree to play nice and truly do commit to keeping Hormuz open, it will still take months to get back to what it was pre-war, if not even longer," Smith said. "There will still be within the industry a risk premium associated with going through that region. Not that it was ever a perfectly safe journey, but the past few months have shown that it'll be hard to convince shippers and insurance companies that the risk level will be similar to what it was in February. It'll be a long time before anyone can be convinced of that."

The U.S. exports more oil than it imports, and oil is the main ingredient in gasoline. But oil is traded on a global market, so events happening in other parts of the world impact prices for everyone. Also, nearly 70% of U.S. refineries are set up to process heavy, sour crude, according to the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers (AFPM), a trade association. And much of the oil produced in the U.S. is light, sweet crude, which was unlocked during the shale revolution.

As a result, just 60% of the oil processed in U.S. refineries comes from domestic oil fields, according to the AFPM. Retooling domestic refineries would cost billions of dollars, the group said, and would require shutting down those refineries temporarily, which generally raises gasoline prices.

Weekly jobless claims edge up to 200,000

US jobless claims rise but stay near historic lows

WASHINGTON, May 7, (AP): U.S. jobless claim applications rose last week but remain at historically low levels despite elevated inflation and other economic headwinds.

The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits in the week ending May 2 rose by 10,000 to 200,000, the Labor Department reported Thursday. That's fewer than the 205,000 new applications analysts surveyed by the data firm FactSet were expecting. The previous week's new claims figure, which was the fewest since 1969, was revised up by 1,000 to 190,000.

Weekly filings for unemployment benefits are considered a proxy for U.S. layoffs and are close to a real-time indicator of the health of the job market.

Despite dwindling layoffs shown in government data, the Iran war, now in its third month, has injected a large degree of uncertainty about how it will affect the U.S. and global economies even as Iran and the U.S. remain under a ceasefire agreement with growing optimism that an end to the war is near.

U.S. financial markets have rebounded near record levels and prices for a barrel of U.S. crude oil remain elevated around \$90 per barrel. That's down from highs of \$112 last month, but still 36% higher than before the war began. Gas prices also much higher since the war began - AAA says the national average Thursday was at \$4.56 a gallon - saddling businesses and consumers with higher costs.

Last week, the government reported that a key inflation measure jumped in March as gas prices soared, the latest sign that the Iran war is driving the cost of living sharply higher.

An inflation gauge monitored by the Federal Reserve rose 0.7% in March from February, up sharply from the previous month, the Commerce Department said. Compared with a year ago, prices rose 3.5%, the biggest increase in almost three years.

Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, core inflation was also up in March.

This comes at a time when U.S. inflation is already above the Federal Reserve's 2% target. Last week, the Fed opted to leave its benchmark rate alone, citing economic uncertainty caused by instability in the Middle East and still-elevated inflation.

Lower interest rates can boost the economy and hiring, but also tend to fuel inflation. Fed officials voted to cut rates three times to close 2025 out of concern for a weakening job market.

The Labor Department reported last month that U.S. employers added an unexpectedly strong 178,000 new jobs in March, nudging the unemployment rate back down to 4.3%. That followed a surprisingly large loss of 92,000 jobs in February. Revisions also have trimmed 69,000 jobs from December and January payrolls, a sign that the labor market remains under strain.

The government issues its monthly jobs report for

April on Friday.

A number of high-profile companies have cut jobs recently, including Morgan Stanley, Block, UPS, Amazon and Disney.

Weekly jobless aid applications have stabilized in a range mostly between 200,000 and 250,000 since the U.S. economy emerged from the pandemic recession. However, hiring began slowing about two years ago and tapered further in 2025 due to President Donald Trump's erratic tariff rollouts, his purge of the federal workforce and the lingering effects of high interest rates meant to control inflation.

Employers added fewer than 200,000 jobs last year, compared with about 1.5 million in 2024, according to the data firm FactSet.

Economists say the American labor market appears stuck in a "low-hire, low-fire" state that has kept the unemployment rate historically low, but has left those out of work struggling to find a new job. The recent artificial intelligence boom and the investment required to develop it is also making companies reluctant to hire.

The Labor Department's report Thursday showed that the four-week moving average of jobless claims, which evens out some of the weekly ups and downs, fell to 203,250, down 4,500 from the previous week.

The total number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits for the previous week ending April 25 declined by 10,000 to 1.77 million.

Trial highlights AI risks and control fight

Worries about AI's risks to humanity loom over the trial pitting Musk against OpenAI's leaders

OAKLAND, May 7, (AP): At the heart of the trial pitting Elon Musk against OpenAI CEO Sam Altman is a moment when they found common cause on an ever more pressing question: how to protect humanity from the risks of artificial intelligence.

It turned sour, and the jury is charged with settling the ensuing legal dispute between the two Silicon Valley titans.

But the unresolved questions about the dangers of AI have been looming over the federal courthouse in Oakland, California, since the trial began last week. The technology itself is not on trial - the judge has warned lawyers not to get "sidetracked" by questions about its dangers - but witness testimony has touched on concerns around workforce disruptions and the prospect raised by Musk that superhuman AI might one day kill us all.

Musk, the world's richest person, filed the case accusing his fellow OpenAI co-founder of betraying promises to keep the company as a nonprofit. Altman, in turn, accuses Musk of trying to hobble the ChatGPT maker for the benefit of his own AI company.

One witness, AI pioneer Stuart Russell, said that the "winner take all" power struggle over AI's future is itself threatening humanity.

Musk's lawyers brought Russell to the

stand as an expert witness, at the rate of \$5,000 an hour. The University of California, Berkeley computer scientist listed a host of AI dangers, from racial and gender discrimination to jobs displacement, misinformation and emotional attachments that take some AI chatbot users down a spiral of psychosis.

"Whoever company develops AGI first would have a very big advantage" and an increasingly big lead over everyone else, Russell told the court, using the initials for artificial general intelligence, a term for advanced AI technology that surpasses humans at many tasks.

The trial centers on the 2015 birth of OpenAI as a nonprofit startup primarily funded by Musk.

Both Musk and Altman, who has not yet testified in the trial, have said they wanted OpenAI to safely develop AGI for the benefit of humanity and not for any one person's gain or under any one person's control. And both camps allege it's the other guy who was trying to control it.

A jury of nine people selected from the San Francisco Bay Area will get to say which one of them is telling the truth.

Early on, Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers warned lawyers, particularly Musk's, not to delve into broader

AI concerns that go beyond Musk's claims that OpenAI violated its charitable mission.

"This is not a trial on the safety risks of artificial intelligence. This is not a trial on whether or not AI has damaged humanity," Gonzalez Rogers told lawyers before jurors arrived at the federal courthouse.

Still, Musk managed to skirt that guidance in his testimony last week. Asked to describe artificial general intelligence, Musk said it is when AI becomes "as smart as any human," and added that "we are getting close to that point," and AI will be smarter than any human as soon as next year.

Musk said he has "extreme concerns" about AI and has had them for a long time. Musk said he wanted a "counterpoint" to Google, which at the time had "all the money, all the computers and all the talent" for AI, with no counterbalance.

"I was concerned AI would be a double-edged sword," he said.

During his testimony, Musk repeatedly said that he could have founded OpenAI as a for-profit company, just like the other companies he started or took over. "I deliberately chose this," he said, "for the public good."

The judge expressed some skepticism. In comments to lawyers last

Murder mystery wrapped in wool

'The Sheep Detectives' more bleat than bite

Maybe out of fear of putting filmgoers to sleep, the sheep has not been much of a mainstay at the movies.

There's Charles Burnett's lyrical classic "Killer of Sheep." You could get creative and cite Chris Farley's "Black Sheep." But, really, this is the domain of "Shaun the Sheep," the uber-charming Aardman Animation about the wordless but wise guardian of Mossy Bottom Farm.

Joining this small flock of films now is "The Sheep Detectives," which, like "Shaun the Sheep," takes place in the verdant English

countryside and concerns barnyard animals with higher-than-usual IQs. Every night, shepherd George Hardy (Hugh Jackman) reads murder mysteries as bedtime stories for his hillside of grass grazers. They listen intently and bleat the bad guys. Only while talking amongst themselves afterward do they reveal their hidden powers of deduction.

So when George turns up dead, the sheep are on the case. Led by the particularly keen Lily (voiced by Julia Louis-Dreyfus), they prove remarkably adept private eyes despite the wool over their eyes.

But

if such an ewe-dunit premise has you expecting a lightly funny caper, "The Sheep Detectives" is too gentle and strenuously poignant to turn its silly tale into all that much fun. As devoid as I was previously of opinions on sheep detective movies, I do think they ought to be funny. There are undoubtedly a few decent gags here - the cleverest trick is to make the MGM lion baa, not roar, at the start - but "The Sheep Detectives" is too mild to stand out from the herd of mysteries, even as a strictly family-friendly variety.

"Shears Out," we could call it. "The Sheep Detectives" is adapted from Leonie Swann's 2005 book, "Three Bags Full," and it has tried to find some middle ground between

novel and "Babe." While such a tone might have been catnip from someone like "Paddington" don Paul King, it's a little elusive for director Kyle Balda ("Despicable Me 3") and screenwriter Craig Mazin, creator of "Chernobyl" and "The Last of Us." Neither of those, the last time I checked, feature anything like cute little lambs.

Still, that unlikely genesis also gives "The Sheep Detectives" a sweet backdrop. Who wouldn't want to take refuge for a little while from mushroom zombies and nuclear disaster, plus everything else in the world, with some gumshoes in hooves?

But "The Sheep Detectives" makes a rickety ark. The sheep are strictly CGI - inevitable, perhaps and technically unblemished, but still limiting considering they're really the movie's real main characters. Aside from Lily, there's

Mopple (Chris O'Dowd), the sole sheep with a sharp memory; an elderly ram named Sir Richfield (Patrick Stewart); Sebastian (Bryan Cranston); the fluffy Cloud (Regina King); and a pair of rams named Reggie and Ronnie (both Brett Goldstein).

After the murder, the dimwitted local police officer Derry (an endearingly dopey Nicholas Braun, in his best post-"Succession" role yet) bumbles his way through clues that lead him to the arrest of George's daughter, Rebecca (Molly Gordon). Hong Chau is here as a local innkeeper. And Emma Thompson, queen of heartrending rural British tales, drops in as George's lawyer. Her reading of the will sets off new suspicions.

The sheep stealthily surround the human characters, nudging them along in the case. But "The Sheep Detectives" largely esch-

This image released by Amazon MGM Studios shows sheep character Lily, voiced by Julia-Louis Dreyfus, left, with Hugh Jackman as George Hardy, in a scene from 'The Sheep Detectives.' (AP)

ewes anthropomorphized hijinks for more tender lessons. All but Mopple in the flock have the ability to sweep anything from their memory. That willful refusal of any uncomfortable thought has led them to believe sheep don't die, they turn into clouds.

That a movie called "The Sheep Detectives" tries to impart lessons of morality and mindfulness is, of course, laudable. A wide swath of entertainment aimed at children makes no such attempt. But "The Sheep Detectives" could have used more slapstick and less CGI sincerity. In the end, it's not even close. Shaun the Sheep still rules the roost.

"The Sheep Detectives," an Amazon MGM release in theaters Friday, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association for thematic material, some violent content and brief language. Running time: 110 minutes. Two stars out of four. (AP)

Variety

YEREVAN: French President Emmanuel Macron stole some of the spotlight from other world leaders in Armenia's capital this week when he crooned classic ballads, including "La Bohème," at a glitzy state dinner.

Macron was joined by Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on drums and celebrated jazz musician Vahagn Hayrapetyan on piano on Monday night in Yerevan. In addition to "La Bohème," which was recorded by Armenian-French musician Charles Aznavour in 1965. Macron also sang "Les Feuilles Mortes" by Yves Montand.

The event at Armenia's presidential residence on Monday night was held in Macron's honor. The French leader was in town for a state visit that coincided with a gathering of the European Political Community and a historic European Union summit. (AP)

NEW YORK: The long-running Broadway hit "The Book of Mormon" will close its doors through May 17 as its theater undergoes repairs after a fire shut down the musical.

Performances are canceled through Sunday, May 17. Ticket holders for impacted performances will be notified via their point of purchase to receive refunds or reschedule.

"ATG Entertainment and 'The Book of Mormon' are currently working with a team of industry professionals to begin repairs needed to the building," according to a statement by both groups issued Wednesday. They extended "their deepest thanks to the firefighters and emergency responders for their bravery and speedy response." (AP)

LOS ANGELES: "Friends" memorabilia, artwork and other valuables from the estate of Matthew Perry are being put up for sale at an auction to benefit the charitable foundation established in the actor's name soon after his 2023 death.

The June 5 event put on by Heritage Auctions will benefit the Matthew Perry Foundation, which works to destigmatize addiction and aid in recovery from substance abuse.

"Matthew believed addiction should be met with compassion and science, not stigma and silence," the foundation's CEO Lisa Kasterler Calio said in a statement. (AP)

Music

Sobriety, survival and a new sound

Ashley McBryde finds freedom in 'Wild'

A few years ago, Ashley McBryde fell off the horse.

"That's not a figure of speech, sadly," the country star told The Associated Press. "I was really, really badly hurt, and it was a bad enough injury that there was a chance that I wouldn't have been able to perform ever again."

It was 2021. She was riding in Montana, and fell, landing on her head. The accident - so severe that she ended up in an emergency room - resulted in a concussion and stitches to her scalp. At the time, she couldn't walk without assistance.

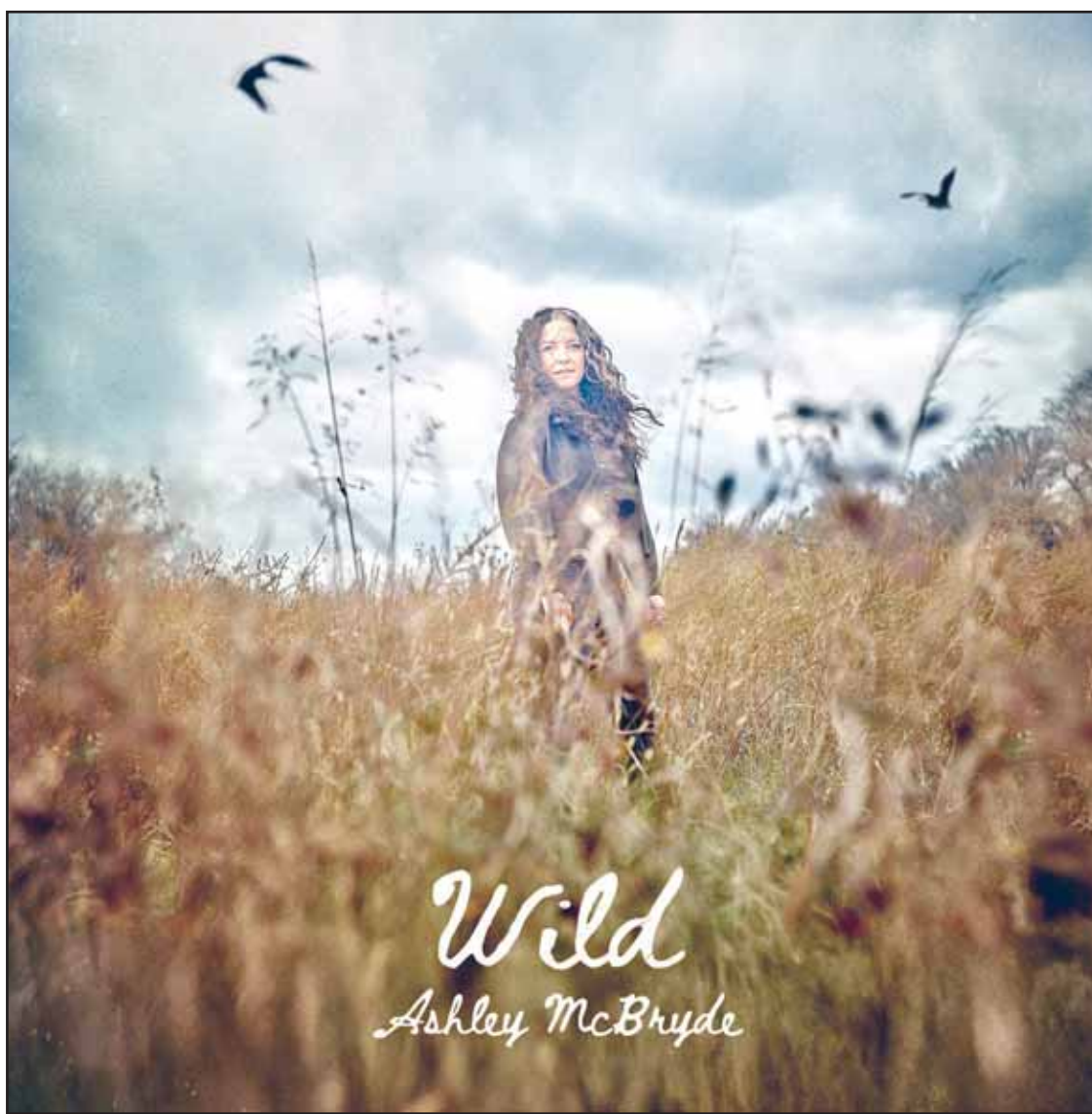
In the years since, McBryde thought about all of the songs she and her band rip through on stage but hadn't yet committed to record. "What if I keep letting them not be on records? What if something had happened and now somebody never hears 'Water in the River'?" Somebody never hears "Rattlesnake Preacher." Somebody never hears "Creosote" because I let myself be discouraged in this way or that way from putting those on the record?"

And so "Wild" - her new album out Friday, produced by John Osborne and recorded with her live band Deadhorse - became their home.

The live tracks that gave birth to "Wild" are barn burners, a rowdy good time. So, McBryde knew she needed to find a way to strike some balance. She pursued divination practices like reading runes, going to a tarot reader, doing anything and everything she could to have her fifth album reveal itself to her. The answer was in the experimentation, a "playful, curious" writing process with her band.

"The more we looked at the songs that we had felt like playing - and doing a good job of delivering - (we found they) were true stories about my life," she recognized. "It's terrifying to be known."

But it's also cathartic - as is the realization that "whatever it was



This album cover image released by Warner Records Nashville shows 'Wild' by Ashley McBryde. (AP)

that I was going through, I'm not unique. There's nothing I've been through that most of us haven't been through or are going to go through," McBryde explains. "It's not about me, it's about us."

McBryde's last album, 2023's "The Devil I Know," had a rebel-

lious streak to it - as does "Wild" and the bulk of her discography. When critics said something "was too rock, we turned that up. They said something that was too country, then we put a toothpick in its mouth. And I think by the time we got to 'Wild,' I didn't care

anymore. It was that level of defiance," she said. "It's none of my business. My job is to make sure these songs get heard."

She calls this album her most rock 'n' roll - sonically, like what is found on the first four tracks - and emotionally, embodying her fiery

spirit on the cutting treatise on domesticity, "Lines in the Carpet," the heartfelt mission statement of the title track and everywhere in-between.

"Does the wild call out to you from a distance?" she starts her first chorus on "Wild." Then, the revelation: "Do you miss the fire and the freedom? / When there wasn't anything keeping / You from being wild."

"There are people out there with natural ability and there are people that dedicate every waking hour to honing their craft. Ashley is both," Osborne said in a press statement. "Never settling. Always reaching. The perfect combination of vulnerable and fearless."

That combination is also evident on the songs that appear to detail her struggles with addiction. McBryde got sober in 2022, the specter of past indiscretions heard on the beery ballad "Bottle Tells Me So" and the gut-wrenching "Behind Bars."

"I was terrified that I was gonna suck," she says about songwriting after getting sober. "It's not like I'd get hammered to write a song, but I would have drinks while writing songs." And maybe a couple did suck, she guesses, "because they were just from such angry or unsatisfied places." But she's worked on herself, and now, "these songs are just grown. And I'm glad. I got out of my way."

It's good advice for anyone, and a central theme of the album. She wants "Wild" to shake something loose, to inspire her listeners to take a chance on themselves.

"Let's say that someone doesn't get to be what they wanted to be when they grow up. I will shoulder that for you," McBryde says.

She wants to access that dreamer. "I want that to wake up in you when you hear this record," she says.

Call it catharsis, call it enthusiasm, call it whatever you want. McBryde has her own word for it: "It's a recognition." (AP)

'Foreign Tongues' gives Rolling Stones a fresh voice

NEW YORK, May 7, (AP): Sometimes, you can always get what you want: On Tuesday, The Rolling Stones confirmed that they will release a new album, titled "Foreign Tongues," on July 10.

They also released a new single, titled "In The Stars." To celebrate, Mick Jagger, Keith Richards and Ronnie Wood will attend an album announcement event in Brooklyn Tuesday afternoon.

The Stones' last album was 2023's "Hackney Diamonds." It was their first album of original material in 18 years - since 2005's "A Bigger Bang." It was also their first full-length release since the death of drummer Charlie Watts in 2021. He appeared posthumously on two of that album's 12 tracks.

According to press materials for the album, "Foreign Tongues" will also include a special appearance from Watts from one of his final recording sessions before his death, as well as contributions from Steve Winwood, Paul McCartney, The Cure's Robert Smith and The Red Hot Chili Peppers'

Chad Smith.

"I love doing these recording sessions in London at Metropolis. It was a very intense few weeks recording Foreign Tongues," Mick Jagger said in a statement. "We had 14 great tracks and we went as fast as we could. I like the room there as it's not too big so you can feel the passion in the room from everyone."

The Stones worked closely with Oscar-winning pop producer Andrew Watt (known for his work with Post Malone and Justin Bieber, to name a few) on "Hackney Diamonds," and that continues with "Foreign Tongues."

Speculation surrounding a new Stones album has been going around for weeks. First, posters appeared around London with the band name "The Cockroaches," a pseudonym the Stones have used in the past, along with a QR code. The code led to 'thecockroaches.com' and a sign-up page. Once a user had signed up, they received a confirmation message from Universal Music - the Stones' label. Representatives did not provide The Associated Press with comment or con-

firmation at the time.

Eventually it led to a white label, vinyl-only release of the track "Rough and Twisted" using The Cockroaches name - the first true tease of "Foreign Tongues" decipherable only by their most dedicated fans.

Then, in the week leading up to their announcement, billboards with the band's iconic mouth and tongue logo began appearing in major cities around the world with the words "Foreign Tongues" in various languages: "Fremmede Sprog," "Vreemde Tongen," "Dayuhang Dila," and "Langues Etrangères" among them. Around the same time, the Rolling Stones' official website was updated to feature video clips stylized to look like surveillance footage of them in the studio.

On Sunday, the band shared a slide puzzle graphic fans believed to be the album artwork, depicting a cartoonish collage of the members' faces. (They were correct; it was the official album cover). There was also a short video clip, just 10-seconds long, that appeared to tease a new song.

Obituary

CNN founder dies, industry reflects on his impact

Turner, the man who never let news sleep

NEW YORK, May 7, (AP): When the Space Shuttle Challenger exploded in 1986, Beth Knobel, a future TV news correspondent, was in graduate school. Emerging from class, she saw TV sets had been set up in the lobby. They were tuned to CNN, the 24/7 news channel that Ted Turner had launched about five years earlier, which was carrying the launch live.

"Shuttle launches were just kind of routine and the broadcast networks weren't even covering them anymore," says Knobel, who worked for CBS News in the 1990s and now teaches journalism at Fordham University. "CNN did. So when things went so tragically wrong, there they were on top of the story like no one else."

That, says Knobel, who now teaches a class on TV's biggest innovators, is just one example of why Turner was the biggest of them all - huge steps ahead of anyone else in his understanding of how news needed to be delivered.

Turner's death Wednesday comes at a fraught time for cable news, which has struggled to retain viewership in an era of countless media choices and abundant streaming video. CNN has not been immune; changes in the media ecosystem, the company's financial picture and multiple editorial resets over the years have left it a markedly different entity than the one Turner built.

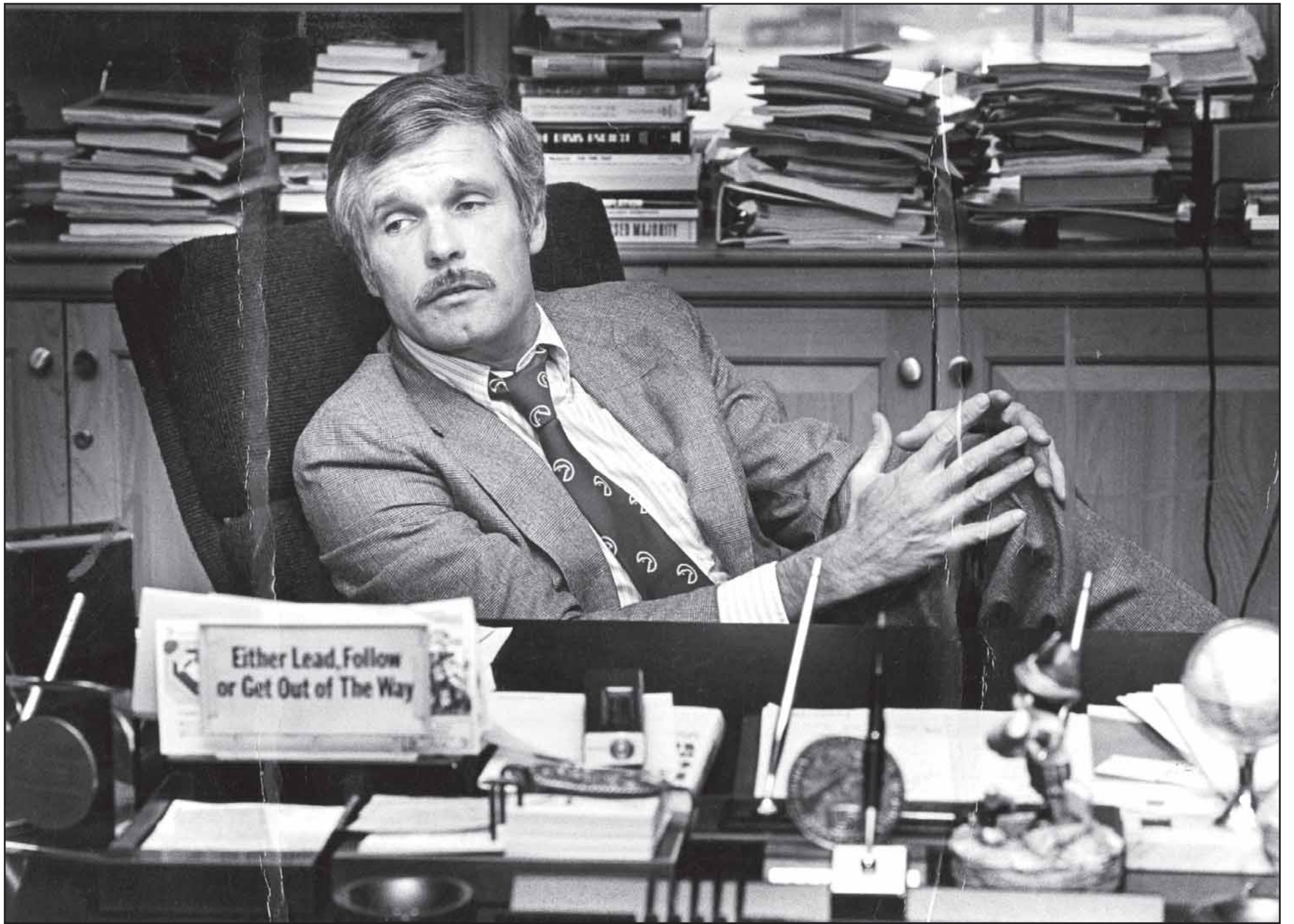
But that misses an important point: He built it.

"We use the word giant sometimes to describe people that really aren't giant," Knobel says. "Ted Turner truly is a giant. He invented around-the-clock news."

Many in and around the news industry struggled Wednesday for big enough words to describe Turner's impact on how we consume news. Longtime TV analyst Robert Thompson said the issue was hyperbole-proof.

"Death and hyperbole often go together," said Thompson, director of Syracuse University's Bleier Center for Television and Popular Culture. "But there is no hyperbole here. I can think of very few other things in the 20th century that so dramatically changed American politics, journalism and civic engagement than the invention of 24-hour cable news."

He does add a caveat: The real impact would not be truly felt until others started doing it. Which, of course, they did. But for a long time, and certainly well into the 90s, "CNN became almost generic for breaking news," Thompson says. "I like Kleenex for facial tissues and Xerox for photocopying."



Ted Turner is seen at his desk inside the CNN Center in 1982. (AP)

But it isn't just the 24-hour cycle that defines Turner's legacy in news. A number of analysts cited, too, how he conceived of news as a global commodity.

Knobel recalls that when she was Moscow bureau chief for CBS beginning in the early 1990s, she would walk into the Kremlin and see CNN on televisions.

"That was the way in which they came to understand what the world was thinking about Russia," Knobel says. The same was true in other seats of power across the world.

"Global programming didn't exist before Ted Turner came along and said, 'Not only am I going to build a new channel for America, but there are a lot of people around the world that will probably want to watch this news channel.'"

All of this has become so ingrained by now that it's hard to convey to younger people that it once didn't exist. Back in the '70s when Turner - an insomniac - was first dreaming of 24/7 news, in many places you'd turn on your TV late at night and would see only static, a test pattern

or an American flag until about 6 a.m.

Former CNN White House bureau chief Frank Sesno, now a media and public affairs professor at George Washington University, tells his students about the "Walter Cronkite era" - when news was delivered at an appointed time, by a voice from on high, in a 30-minute broadcast (which actually doubled the 15-minute broadcasts there once were.)

"I teach these young people and they have no idea who Ted Turner is," Sesno said. "I remind them this was, in fact, the world of Walter

Cronkite. Ted Turner came in and CNN was seen as an upstart, as something that wasn't going to succeed." Thus the derisive moniker "Chicken Noodle News," which was echoing across the industry when Sesno joined the network in 1984.

"When they hired me, I had zero television experience," he says.

But CNN wasn't looking for star anchors at the time. The news was supposed to be the star. The stable of stars came later.

For CNN, a moment of particular success came in October 1987, the

year after the Challenger explosion, when 18-month-old Jessica McClure was rescued from a well in Texas after a two-day ordeal. CNN covered not only the outcome but the incremental developments - standard fare today but certainly not so then for TV.

Brooke Erin Duffy, an associate professor of communication at Cornell University, points to public appetite for that story as a key moment for CNN, which covered the "hours and hours of waiting" and allowed audiences to regularly tune in for updates.

Robots interpret traditions

New wave of smart tourism gains traction during May Day holiday

BEIJING, May 7, (Xinhua): Over the recent May Day holiday -- one of China's busiest travel periods each year -- artificial intelligence (AI), robots and digital technologies accelerated their integration into the country's tourism sector.

The Yungang Grottoes, a UNESCO World Heritage site featuring over 50,000 Buddhist stone sculptures in north China's Shanxi Province, hosted robot performances twice a day at its open square on the first two days of the holiday.

The 20-minute performance drew inspiration from the iconic statues of the Yungang Grottoes, and all movements were derived from the paired Buddhist guardian figures in Cave No. 9.



Tourists visit the Fuzi (Confucius) Temple scenic area in Nanjing, east China's Jiangsu Province. (Xinhua)

Tian Qing, chief director of the performance, said, "We aim to tell Chinese stories through the integration of technology and art. Having robots interpret

traditions is a tribute to the heritage while embracing the future."

According to the project team, the performance marks a successful trial of

integrated technology, cultural and tourism development. In the future, regular robot performances will be introduced to more cultural heritage sites, continuously advancing the revitalization of cultural heritage and public education.

Beyond performances, museums and archaeological sites across multiple regions have introduced intelligent robots, serving as "cultural relic guardians" and commentators.

In the capital city of Henan Province, the Zhengzhou Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology hosted a public open day during the holiday. There, Unitree robots dressed in red costumes answered questions related to archaeology from the visitors.

Arts & Culture



Palestinian children practice breakdancing in a dance studio in Nuseirat, central Gaza Strip. (AP)

Youth shift from frustration to joy

Breakdancing offers Gaza kids a moment of relief

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip, May 7, (AP): As the music comes on in a Gaza refugee camp, a group of boys and girls start showing off their breakdancing moves, kicking and spinning with intense focus on their fast footwork. Two young girls grin at each other as they nailed a tricky part of the routine.

It's a rare moment of respite and catharsis amid the harsh realities of life in the Gaza Strip. The children, some wearing sliders on their feet, dance next to mangled metal rods jutting out from a mound of rubble and shattered concrete. The school that trains them is in the Nuseirat refugee camp, a crowded, built-up camp in central Gaza dating back to the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

"I come to this center because I discovered that I have a talent for breakdancing, and I also come here to release the negative energy inside

me and to enjoy," said Habiba Abu Khater, one of the children from around five to 14 years old who train at the school. She said she's been attending for four years and is happy about her progress after starting from scratch.

Instructor Fayeza Saraj said the school, established in the camp in 2004, helps children build their self confidence and improve their mental health through break dance, gymnastics, and contemporary dance.

The movements "help the child with psychological release, especially from the difficult situations we experienced during the years of war," he said. "We have a significant role in ... moving them from an atmosphere of depression and frustration to one of joy."

Israel's military offensive in Gaza has killed more than 72,600 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health

Ministry, caused widespread destruction and displaced most of the territory's residents.

The ministry, part of the Hamas-led government, maintains detailed casualty records that are seen as generally reliable by U.N. agencies and independent experts. It does not give a breakdown of civilians and militants.

Israel launched the offensive after Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took another 251 hostage in their attack on Oct. 7, 2023.

While the heaviest fighting has mostly subsided since a fragile ceasefire took effect on Oct. 10, deadly Israeli strikes have repeatedly disrupted the truce. Hamas and Israel have accused each other of violating the ceasefire. Palestinians in Gaza are still contending with myriad daily struggles.

Books

Lauded by judges

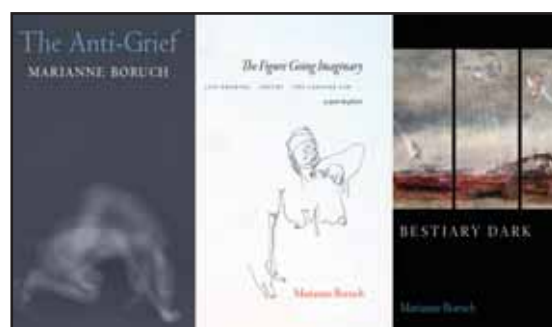
Boruch wins Jackson Poetry Prize

NEW YORK, May 7, (AP): A poet renowned for her insights into the natural world and our inner lives has received a \$100,000 award. Marianne Boruch is this year's winner of the Jackson Poetry Prize for "exceptional talent."

Judges praised Boruch's work, including such collections as "Bestiary Dark" and "The Anti-Grief" as affirmations of human genius amid the rise of AI. The prize is overseen by the nonprofit organization Poets & Writers.

"Marianne Boruch renders luminous the expanse and reach of human thought," the prize citation, released Wednesday by Poets & Writers, reads in part. "In an age of simulated intelligence, Boruch sets to tremble the whole of our collective knowledge where the soul, as she suggests in several poems, is a vastness of wanting and boundless curiosity."

Boruch, 75, is a resident of West Lafayette, Indiana, who taught for decades at Purdue University, where she founded the school's MFA creative writing program.



This combination of book cover images released by Copper Canyon Press shows poetry books by Marianne Boruch, from left, 'The Anti-Grief,' 'The Figure Going Imaginary: Life Drawing, Poetry, The Cadaver Lab; A Year in Pieces,' and 'Bestiary Dark.' (AP)

Dozens of passengers leave MV Hondius after first fatality

Hantavirus on the rise in Argentina, where stricken cruise ship began its journey

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, May 7, (AP): Officials and experts in Argentina are scrambling to determine if their country is the source of a deadly hantavirus outbreak that has gripped an Atlantic cruise.

The health emergency aboard the ship that's moored across the ocean comes as Argentina sees a surge of hantavirus cases that many local public health researchers attribute to the recently accelerating effects of climate change. Argentina, where the cruise to Antarctica departed, is consistently ranked by the World Health Organization as having the highest incidence of the rare, rodent-borne disease in Latin America.

Higher temperatures expand the virus' range because, in part, as it gets warmer and ecosystems change, rodents that carry the hantavirus can thrive in more places, experts say. People typically contract the virus from exposure to rodent droppings, urine or saliva.

"Argentina has become more tropical because of climate change, and that has brought disruptions, like dengue and yellow fever, but also new tropical plants that produce seeds for mice to proliferate," said Hugo Pizzi, a prominent Argentine infectious disease specialist. "There is no doubt that as time goes by, the hantavirus is spreading more and more."

The Argentine Health Ministry on Tuesday reported 101 hantavirus infections since June 2025, roughly double the caseload recorded over

the same period the previous year.

A hantavirus found in South America, called the Andes virus, can cause a severe and often fatal lung disease called hantavirus pulmonary syndrome. The disease led to death in nearly a third of cases in the last year, Argentina's Health Ministry said, up from an average mortality rate of 15 in the five years before that.

Hantavirus usually spreads by inhaling contaminated rodent droppings and can spread person-to-person, though that is rare, according to the WHO, whose top epidemic expert said the risk to the public is low. The Andes strain only hantavirus known to spread from human to human.

Authorities said passengers on the MV Hondius ship tested positive for the Andes virus. Argentina on Wednesday said it was sending genetic material from the Andes virus and testing equipment to help Spain, Senegal, South Africa, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom detect it.

Argentine officials say they're trying to pin down where infected passengers traveled in the country before boarding the Dutch-flagged cruise liner in Ushuaia, a city in southern Argentina known as the end of the world. Once they know the itineraries, they plan to trace contacts, isolate close contacts and actively monitor to prevent further spread.

The UN health agency, or WHO, says that the first death on board, a



An ambulance arrives at the Infection Center of Düsseldorf University Hospital in a convoy of ambulances Wednesday, May 6, 2026, in Duesseldorf, Germany. (AP)

70-year-old Dutch man, happened on April 11. His 69-year-old wife, also Dutch, died on April 26. The third passenger, a German woman, died on May 2.

The virus can incubate for between one and eight weeks. That makes it hard to know whether the passengers contracted the virus before leaving Argentina for Antarctica on April 1; during a scheduled stop to a remote South Atlantic island; or aboard the ship.

The province of Tierra del Fuego, where the vessel docked for weeks before departing, has never seen a case of hantavirus. Before boarding,

the Dutch couple went sightseeing in Ushuaia, and traveled elsewhere in Argentina and Chile, WHO said.

The Argentine government's leading hypothesis is that the couple contracted the virus during a bird-watching outing in Ushuaia, according to two investigators who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the media, with the investigation ongoing. Authorities are also tracing the Dutch tourists' footsteps through the forested hillsides of Patagonia in southern Argentina where some infections are clustered.

Because early symptoms resemble

the fever and chills of a flu, "tourists might think they just have a cold and not take it seriously. That makes it particularly dangerous," Raul González Ittig, genetics professor at the National University of Córdoba and a researcher at state science body CONICET, said.

Argentina in recent years endured a historic drought. But it also had bouts of unexpectedly intense rainfall, part of a broader pattern of wild weather that scientists attribute to climate change.

Some of this variability has created conditions that have allowed hantavirus to flourish, experts say. Dry spells drive animals out of their usual habitats in search of food and water. Huge amounts of rain lead to vegetation growth, scattering seeds that attract leaf-munching rodents.

"When precipitation increases, food availability increases, rodent populations grow, and if there are infected rodents, the chance of transmission between rodents - and eventually to humans - also increases," Ittig said.

Although hantavirus cases once were limited to the southern reaches of Patagonia, now 83% of cases are found in Argentina's far north, according to the Health Ministry.

The ministry issued an alert in January about several fatal outbreaks, including in the most populous province of Buenos Aires.

With rural hospitals under-equipped, residents had no clue what hit them.

Daisy Morinigo and David Del-

gado said they initially thought their 14-year-old son had the flu when he came down with a fever and body aches. Doctors who first saw Rodrigo in the town of San Andrés de Giles sent him home with ibuprofen and orders to rest.

But the feisty fourth grader's breathing worsened. On Jan. 1, they rushed Rodrigo to intensive care. He died just two hours after a hantavirus test came back positive.

Meanwhile, dozens of passengers left a cruise ship hit by a deadly hantavirus outbreak on April 24 without contact tracing, nearly two weeks after the first passenger died on board, the ship operator and Dutch officials said Thursday.

The company said Thursday 29 passengers left the vessel, while the Dutch Foreign Ministry put the number at about 40. The company had not previously acknowledged that dozens more people left the ship at that time.

The people who left the ship to return to their home countries were of at least 12 different nationalities, Oceanwide Expeditions said. It said there were also two people whose nationalities were unknown.

Authorities in South Africa and Europe are trying to trace contacts of any passengers who got off the ship. It emerged Wednesday that a man tested positive for hantavirus in Switzerland after he also disembarked at St. Helena and flew home, though his precise movements aren't clear.

Discovery

Study uncovers deep-Earth origins of world's largest diamonds

CAPE TOWN, May 7, (Xinhua): A new study led by South Africa's University of Cape Town (UCT) has uncovered fresh clues about the origin of some of the world's largest and most valuable diamonds, linking their formation to unusual iron-rich regions deep within the Earth's mantle.

According to a statement released by the UCT on Monday, the research, conducted by the Kimberlite Research Group in the Department of Geological Sciences at the university, was published in the esteemed journal Nature Communications in April 2026.

It focused on a rare category of gem-quality diamonds known as CLIPPERS -- Cullinan-like, large, inclusion-poor, pure, irregular, resorbed diamonds -- whose formation conditions had long remained poorly understood.

According to the study, kimberlite rocks that transported these diamonds to the surface consistently sampled anomalous iron-rich domains located more than 150 km beneath the Earth's surface at the base of the lithosphere.

The team found that these domains carried distinctive isotopic signatures pointing to ancient oceanic crust that was subducted and later incorporated into the deep mantle.

The study was conducted in collaboration with researchers from the Carnegie Institution for Science in

Washington and the China University of Geosciences in Beijing.

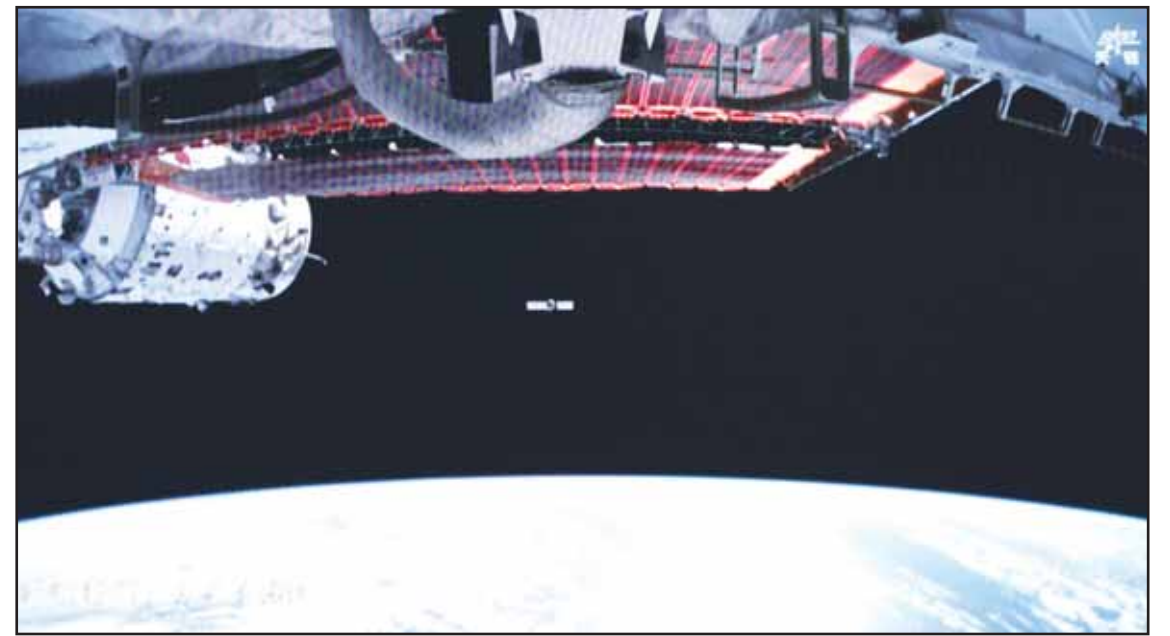
Associate Professor Geoffrey Howarth, lead author of the study, said interactions between rising kimberlitic melts and these deep iron-rich regions produced the large mineral crystals characteristic of CLIPPERS-bearing rocks.

"These extraordinary diamonds -- some of the largest and most valuable gems on Earth -- have long been a mystery. Our study shows that they grew in an unusual iron-rich environment deep beneath the continents, formed from ancient oceanic crust that was dragged down by subduction and then accreted at the base of the lithosphere," said Howarth.

The findings also indicate that such iron-rich, isotopically anomalous domains are a widespread and important source of geochemical heterogeneity in volcanic rocks erupted across the planet.

"By reading the chemical fingerprints preserved in the mineral olivine brought up by kimberlite eruptions, we can now trace where these exceptional diamonds come from and how to find more of them," Howarth added.

The Cullinan Diamond is the largest diamond ever found, weighing 3,106 carats when discovered in 1905 near Pretoria, South Africa.



This image captured at the Beijing Aerospace Control Center on May 6, 2026 shows China's Tianzhou-9 cargo craft undocking from the station combination. (Xinhua)

China's Tianzhou-9 undocks from space station combination

The Tianzhou-9 cargo craft, tasked with carrying supplies for China's space station, undocked from the station combination at 4:34 pm Wednesday (Beijing Time) and switched to independent flight, according to the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA).

The cargo craft will re-enter the atmosphere in a controlled manner at an appropriate time. During the process, a small amount of debris that

survives the ablation will fall into the designated safe waters, the CMSA said.

Tianzhou-9 was launched on July 15, 2025 from the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site in the southern island province of Hainan, and then docked with the orbiting Tiangong space station. It carried supplies including astronaut consumables for in-orbit stay, propellant and application experiment equipment. (Xinhua)

Health

US infant formula supply safe after testing for potential contaminants: FDA analysis

WASHINGTON, May 7, (Agencies): A new analysis of chemicals in US infant formula found reassuringly low levels of heavy metals, pesticides and other potential contaminants, federal health officials said Wednesday.

The review was conducted as part of the Food and Drug Administration's Operation Stork Speed project -- billed as the "largest and most rigorous" to date. It found that the infant formula supply is safe, agency officials and outside experts said.

"There's no reason not to use any available formula" in the US, said Dr Steven Abrams, a pediatrics professor at the University of Texas at Austin who reviewed the findings.

FDA officials tested more than 300 samples of commercial infant formula between 2023 and 2025 for heavy metals, including lead, arsenic, cadmium and mercury. They also tested for pesticides, chemicals found in plastics known as phthalates, and PFAS, also known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, sometimes called "forever chemicals."

Levels of all the contaminants were undetectable or very low, the agency reported. The heavy metals detected were well below US Environmental Protection Agency limits for drinking water, the agency reported. No pesticides were detected in 99% of samples. The FDA found no detections for 25 of the 30 PFAS compounds tested.

Outside experts generally agreed with the government's assessment, noting that small amounts of substances such as heavy metals are naturally occurring in the environment. But others, such as phthalates and PFAS, are not.

"These chemicals are completely synthetic," said Dr Sheela Sathyanarayana, a pediatrics professor at UW Medicine and the Seattle Children's Research Institute. "The detection of some of these compounds at all is concerning."

It points to the need for further monitoring of formula -- and of the larger US food supply, she added.



Canisters of infant formula are priced as high as \$31.75 per 12.4-ounces at a market serving the Central American immigrant community in the Westlake/Pico Union area of Los Angeles on April 7. (AP)

The Trump administration launched Operation Stork Speed in March 2025, promising to review safety and quality standards for infant formula in the US for the first time in decades.

It built on previous FDA efforts to review substances like heavy metals in infant foods, which can cause problems with brain development, learning and behavior in children, Abrams said.

To date, the FDA does not have enforceable limits for heavy metals in infant formulas, unlike the European Union, Canada and Australia.

Some consumer advocacy groups have called on the FDA for years to establish firm limits for contaminants. Last year, Consumer Reports published an analysis of 41 US infant formulas with results suggesting that many had worrisome levels of heavy metals and other contaminants.

However, that analysis used its own level of concern, setting it far below European Union standards. That report garnered wide public attention and prompted some parents to stop using commercial formula, even when it was necessary, Abrams

noted.

Maternity: Chinese lawmakers recently reviewed a draft law that proposes improving the maternity insurance system and expanding its coverage.

The draft healthcare security law is now under a second deliberation at a session of the National People's Congress Standing Committee that began last Monday.

The move comes as China has stepped up efforts in recent years to extend maternity insurance to people in flexible employment, with some parts of the country already implementing the reform. Currently, 255 million people in China are enrolled in the maternity insurance system.

Thanks to the rapid development of information technology, a large number of people in China are now working on their own terms -- as delivery riders, ride-hailing drivers, or freelancers -- bringing the total number of flexible workers to more than 200 million. Officials say flexible work is creating new job opportunities and giving fresh momentum to economic growth.

Climate

NZ urged to act early on climate risks to save on disaster recovery

WELLINGTON, May 7, (Xinhua): Acting early on major climate risks could significantly reduce New Zealand's rising disaster recovery costs, the country's Climate Change Commission said on Thursday.

The commission's 2026 National Climate Change Risk Assessment identifies priority risk areas where targeted planning and investment would make the biggest difference, including infrastructure, communities and safety, nature and the bio-economy, and decisions and funding.

New Zealand is already experiencing more frequent extreme weather, with damaging storms now occurring weekly compared with monthly 15 years ago, Climate Change Commission Chief Executive Jo Hendy said in a statement.

"In the first few months of this year alone, we've seen just how devastating these hazards can be for people's lives," Hendy was quoted as saying.

These hazards are placing increasing pressure on housing, transport networks, water systems, ecosystems and emergency services, according to the assessment report.

More than 500,000 buildings are currently exposed to inland flooding in New Zealand, with at least 235 billion NZ dollars (about 140 billion US dollars) in assets at risk, Hendy noted. The commission warned that delayed action could push the costs into billions and "affect every part of people's lives."

The report highlighted an imbalance in government spending, with around 97 percent allocated to disaster response and only 3 percent to resilience building.

The commission called for stronger national policy settings to support local adaptation efforts and shift focus from recovery to long-term resilience, while keeping contributing to global emissions reduction efforts.

"The release of this climate risk report highlights a serious discon-



Some parts of Wellington, New Zealand's capital, flooded on April 20 after heavy rain overwhelmed the stormwater drainage system. (AP)

nect between the threats that New Zealanders are already experiencing and our highly partisan responses by political leaders," said Professor Bronwyn Hayward from New Zealand's University of Canterbury.

Professor of Environmental Health Alex Macmillan from the University of Otago said people were already seeing the health impacts of an increasingly unstable climate, putting further pressure on already stretched health systems.

Air pollutant emissions: Finland has significantly reduced air pollutant emissions in recent decades and now meets all its obligations under European Union (EU) legislation and international agreements, the Finnish Environment Institute (Syke) said on Wednesday.

In a press release, Syke said the progress was driven mainly by the country's energy transition, EU regulation, cleaner industrial technologies and stricter emissions controls.

Between 2005 and 2024, emissions of all key air pollutants declined in Finland. Sulfur dioxide emissions dropped by 75 percent and nitrogen oxide emissions by 56 per-

cent. Emissions of volatile organic compounds fell by 51 percent, while fine particulate matter emissions were cut by 52 percent.

Ammonia emissions also declined, but more slowly, falling by 26 percent over the same period, according to Syke.

"Most of the emission reductions are due to flue gas cleaning in power plants and industry. In recent years, development has been accelerated by changes in the energy system, as the use of fossil fuels has decreased and wind power and other low-emission energy production have increased," said Tommi Forsberg, a specialist at Syke, adding that transport emissions had also fallen as engine technology improved.

However, reducing agricultural emissions remains a challenge for Finland and the rest of Europe, Syke said.

Agricultural ammonia emissions have declined in Finland since the 1980s, but at a slower pace than other air pollutant emissions. Ammonia is released especially from animal manure in livestock buildings, storage facilities and during spreading on fields.

'Ready to lead and shape the future of global sport'

From cricket's capital to Olympic ambitions, India's next play on the world sports stage

NEW DELHI, May 7, (AP) - With a massive population, a rapidly growing economy and already the global powerbroker in cricket, India is preparing to expand its influence in international sport.

The 2030 Commonwealth Games are already locked in for Ahmedabad, and there's high expectations for India's bid to host the 2036 Olympics.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has envisioned a developed India by 2047, and the government is focused on improving living standards, transport infrastructure, education and becoming a global hub for tech and innovation.

And that's the bedrock of India's aspirations for the Olympics and beyond.

"India today reflects a confident and aspirational mindset, ready to lead and shape the future of global sport," Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, said in an interview with The Associated Press. "Our growing capability to host major international sporting events is a testament to how far we've progressed."

"At the same time, our athletes continue to make the nation proud, signaling the steady rise of India as a formidable sporting force."



In this file photo, from left, Olympic Bronze medallist in wrestling Bajrang Punia, Olympic Bronze medallist in boxing, Lovlina Borgohain, Olympic Gold medallist in javelin throw Neeraj Chopra, Olympic Silver medallist in wrestling Ravi Dahiya and captain of Indian men's hockey team who won bronze medal, Manpreet Singh at Tokyo Olympic Games, stand for a photograph during a felicitation function in New Delhi, India. (AP)

On Thursday, Mandaviya presided over a national sports conclave in Delhi, where India's preparedness for the 2026 Asian Games and Commonwealth Games, as well as the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles, was measured.

Discussion topics also included compliance to the National Sports

Governance Act that was introduced last year, pertaining to transparency of national sports federations, and the hosting of and participation in international events.

So far in 2026, India has hosted three high-profile cricket events - the men's Twenty20 World Cup, the Women's Premier League and currently the In-

dian Premier League, one of the richest and most followed franchise leagues in international sport.

New Delhi is hosting the badminton world championships, Bhubaneswar is slated to host a World Athletics Continental Tour meet and Ahmedabad is set to host the Asian weightlifting championships.

Indian authorities are also considering ways of bringing Formula 1 back to the country for the first time since 2013. Influential sports officials have already helped get cricket back into the Olympics for Los Angeles in 2028.

Outside of cricket, the Commonwealth Games are the biggest barometer for India's developing sport story.

New Delhi hosted the Asian Games in 1982 and 1951, and also the 2010 Commonwealth Games that was fraught with logistics problems. Long delays in getting facilities ready and a list of scandals overshadowed the event.

Indian officials expect Ahmedabad to put those problems into the distant past. The Sardar Patel Sports Enclave is marked as a key hub for the 2030 Games, which bring together thousands of athletes from 74 Commonwealth nations and territories.

Hyderabad moves atop IPL



Sunrisers Hyderabad's Travis Head plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Sunrisers Hyderabad and Punjab Kings in Hyderabad, India. (AP)

Connolly's century goes in vain

HYDERABAD, India, May 7, (AP): Sunrisers Hyderabad recorded their eighth 200-plus score of the season to beat Punjab Kings by 33 runs and replace them atop the Indian Premier League.

Cooper Connolly struck his maiden T20 century but the Australian all-rounder's unbeaten 107 off 59 balls went in vain for Punjab, which finished at 202-7 and lost their third straight game.

Leading run-getter Heinrich Klaasen (69) and Ishan Kishan (55) had earlier capitalized on sloppy Punjab fielding and led Hyderabad to 235-4 as both batters notched aggressive half-centuries after getting early reprieves.

"Punjab are a really good side," Hyderabad captain Pat Cummins said. "No matter what the score is, bowling second against that side was clinical. We're pretty good at playing it at our pace, it's just trying to max out."

Punjab had a terrific start to the season when it stayed unbeaten in the first seven games that included a successful run chase of 265 against Delhi Capitals.

But Hyderabad ensured its record of not losing an IPL game after scoring 220-plus stayed intact as Punjab got derailed inside the first four overs when they slipped to 23-3 and Connolly, who hit eight sixes and seven fours, got little support from



Sunrisers Hyderabad's Abhishek Sharma takes the catch to get Punjab Kings' Suryansh Shedge during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Sunrisers Hyderabad and Punjab Kings in Hyderabad, India. (AP)

the other end in a steep chase.

Cummins (2-34) stifled the chase early when he first had Priyansh Arya caught at deep mid-wicket in the first over and then took smart catches of Prabhsimran Singh and skipper Shreyas Iyer.

After losing top-order batters quickly, Connolly raised his half-century off 34 balls and Marcus Stoinis showed some brief spark with a knock of 28 off 14 balls before spinner Shivang Kumar (2-45) found the thick outside edge of his bat soon after the power play.

Hyderabad was also sloppy in the field when Connolly got dropped twice after his half-century

before he raised his hundred in the final over and ensured Punjab played out the full 20 overs by sharing a 68-run seventh wicket stand with Jansen (19).

Earlier, Hyderabad's aggressive opening pair of Abhishek Sharma (35 off 13 balls) and Travis Head (38 off 19 balls) provided a rollicking start of 54 off 21 balls with Sharma smashing four sixes and two boundaries and Head hitting three sixes and three boundaries.

Both batters came down hard on left-arm fast bowler Marco Jansen (0-61), who conceded five sixes and four boundaries in his two expensive spells as first Sharma and Head smashed big hits and then Klaasen clobbered two sixes against his fellow-South African in the death overs.

Punjab's scratchy fielding allowed Klaasen and Kishan to share an attacking 88-run stand off 48 balls as both batters were dropped before reaching the double figures.

Kishan got dismissed in the 15th over when he holed out at deep mid-wicket, but Nitish Kumar Reddy's breezy 29 off 13 balls and Klaasen's clean striking in the death overs lifted the home team's total.

"It was a bit too much because we dropped catches at the start," Iyer said. "We got a fairytale start in the tournament, and everyone was in a great space, (but) if we are going to continue with the same form, that's not going to help us."

Hyderabad's seventh win in 11 games moved them into first place on 14 points, one more than Punjab, which got bumped out of the top spot.

Vonn nominated to US ski team for next season

WASHINGTON, May 7, (AP) - It's easy to read something into this: Lindsey Vonn was among the 48 athletes nominated to the U.S. Alpine ski team for the upcoming season.

For the moment, that's just a formality based on results. The 41-year-old Vonn is still at least a year and a half - along with an ACL surgery - away from even thinking about returning to the World Cup circuit.

She may also retire. She's still sorting all of that out.

Vonn has already undergone eight surgeries since her crash in the women's downhill race on Feb. 8 at the Milan Cortina Games. She suffered a complex tibia fracture that nearly led to amputating her left leg. Vonn was competing in the race on a torn left ACL, which she injured in a crash leading into the Winter Olympics.

The nomination process is the first phase of making the U.S. Ski & Snowboard team. Those ski racers who accept the nomination, and meet the requirements, will be officially announced to the team in October. The opening World Cup races take place with a giant slalom in Soelden, Austria, in late October.

Other athletes who were nominated include Mikaela Shiffrin, the reigning World Cup overall champion and three-time Olympic gold medalist, along with Olympic downhill champion Breezy Johnson. On the men's side, Ryan Cochran-Siegle, who captured his second Olympic super-G silver medal in the slalom, was selected.

Paula Moliz and Jacqueline Wiles also earned a nomination to the A-team after combining to take an Olympic bronze in the women's team combined. John-

son and Shiffrin finished fourth in that event. Lauren Macuga is on the nomination list, too. She missed the Milan Cortina Games after tearing her ACL.

Vonn, a three-time Olympic medalist, came out of retirement in November 2024 after nearly six years away. She was feeling healthy and strong again following a partial titanium implant in her right knee.

She found her speed, too, winning two World Cup races during the 2025-26 season and recording three other podium finishes in five races. She was leading the World Cup downhill standings before her crash at the Olympics. She wound up fifth.

Vonn, who's won 84 World Cup races, has maintained she's not ready to decide her future. Instead, she's focused on healing. Vonn recently attended the Met Gala, using only a cane.

Heavyweight fireworks expected

Wardley, Dubois ready for slugfest



In this file photo, Ukraine's Oleksandr Usyk, right, and Britain's Daniel Dubois battle during an undisputed world heavyweight boxing title fight in London. (AP)

MANCHESTER, May 7, (AP) - Fabio Wardley wants the biggest fights. Daniel Dubois wants redemption.

The British heavyweights square off Saturday in Manchester with Wardley's WBO title on the line in a risky bout for both men.

Wardley (20-0-1, 19 KOs) inherited the belt when Oleksandr Usyk vacated it last November. The 31-year-old Ipswich native had options for easier opponents in his first title defense but chose Dubois.

Dubois (22-3, 21 KOs) is trying to become a two-time world champion. He lost his IBF belt to Usyk via a fifth-round knockout at Wembley Stadium last July. Dubois hasn't fought since then and could lose some relevance with another defeat. The upside, of course, is winning another belt.

Both men have serious power, and their respective fights rarely go the distance.

Wardley broke Frazer Clarke's left cheekbone in a first-round knockout in October 2024. That was a few weeks after Dubois stunned everyone by knocking out former two-time champion Anthony Joshua.

Wardley caused a minor stir - and some brief reflection about the value of working-class jobs - last week when he was asked as part of a social media promotion what job the 28-year-old Dubois would have if he weren't a boxer.

Wardley responded that Dubois might be a "bin man or something like that," using the British phrase for garbage collector. It was a light-hearted segment in which he also said Tyson Fury's job would be a summer holiday children's entertainer.

"Disrespect. We'll address that in the ring," Dubois responded. His trainer, Don Charles, said the comment was "quite condescending."

Asked about the fallout, Wardley told his promoter Queensberry's in-house media: "I didn't say it was a bad job, or it was something bad for him. ... I didn't say a word negative about it."

Dubois and Wardley made their pro debuts on the same day: April 8, 2017 - Dubois in Manchester, Wardley in London.

Dubois came up through the traditional amateur ranks before turning pro. Wardley got his start in "white collar boxing" - legal but largely unregulated events - and not until age 20.

London native Dubois has faced higher-caliber opponents: Two of his three losses were to Usyk. His first pro loss was in 2020 when he took a knee in the 10th round against Joe Joyce because of a fractured eye socket.

Wardley, who has sparred with Usyk, last fought in October when he stopped former champion Joseph Parker in the 11th round. That victory followed a 10th-round knockout of Australia's Justis Huni, who was well ahead on points at Portman Road - home of Wardley's beloved Ipswich soccer club.

Odds makers have Wardley as the slight favorite. Few observers see the bout going the full 12 rounds.

Shane McGuigan, Dubois' former trainer, told Sky Sports that Dubois is the technically superior boxer, but "he will not listen" to instructions. If Dubois is patient and relies on his powerful jab, he wins the fight "comfortably."

"But he will not - and he will go straight for him. That will mean he'll either knock him out or get knocked out," said McGuigan, who trains Dubois' younger sister Caroline - herself a champion boxer.

Others note that Wardley's habit of keeping his left hand low exposes him defensively. They are similar in height and weight: both 6-foot-5 and around 240 lbs (1.96 meters and 110 kilos).

The main event at the Co-op Live indoor arena is expected to start by 11 p.m. local time (2200 GMT, 6 p.m. ET) on DAZN pay-per-view. Saturday's winner could be on a collision course with rising star Moses Itauma.

WBO president Gustavo Olivieri said after Itauma demolishes Jermaine Franklin, he'll recommend the 21-year-old British southpaw become the WBO mandatory challenger.

That would pose a problem for Wardley and Itauma, however, as both are trained by Ben Davison.

Champs League winner Süle retiring at 30 after injuries

DUESSELDORF, Germany, May 7, (AP) - Champions League winner and five-time Bundesliga champion Niklas Süle has announced his retirement at the age of 30 after an injury scare led him to reconsider his future.

The Borussia Dortmund and Germany defender is leaving soccer at the end of the season, when his contract at the club was already due to expire.

"I'm very, very clear about my decision," Süle said on the Spielmaacher podcast in an episode released Thursday. "Despite that, football has given me a huge amount and I had such a great, cool time that there's pain in saying this."

Süle has missed 22 games with various injuries this season and said a moment of clarity came after he hurt his knee in a game against Hoffenheim last month.

Süle said he "cried for 10 minutes" in the showers after the club doctor examined his knee and shook his head, leaving Süle to fear he'd sustained a third career ACL tear, meaning months of recovery.

The injury turned out not to be that

severe but Süle said it left him considering the health impact of continuing to play soccer and how injury rehab would affect his ability to play with his children.

Süle also discussed struggles managing his weight throughout his career and being perceived as lacking fitness. At one stage, he said, he resorted to fasting and wearing a raincoat in the sauna to sweat out water and be lighter for weekly weighing sessions.

Süle won the Champions League with Bayern Munich in 2020 and the German title five times before a move to Dortmund in 2022. Süle narrowly missed out on another title when Dortmund lost the Bundesliga title to Bayern in the final minutes of the 2022-23 season.

He reached the Champions League final with Dortmund the following year, losing to Real Madrid, but achieving a memorable moment with his goal-line clearance to deny Kylian Mbappé a goal for Paris Saint-Germain in the semifinals. Süle has played 49 times for Germany, including at two World Cups, but not since 2023.



In this file photo, Monterrey's Gorman Berterame and Borussia Dortmund's Niklas Süle battle during the Club World Cup round of 16 soccer match between Borussia Dortmund and CF Monterrey in Atlanta. (AP)

SPORTS

Wolves suffer record playoff defeat as Spurs bounce back

Knicks outlast 76ers to extend series lead

SAN ANTONIO, May 7, (AP): Victor Wembanyama had 19 points and 15 rebounds, and the San Antonio Spurs handed Minnesota its worst postseason loss in franchise history, beating the Timberwolves 133-95 on Wednesday night to even their Western Conference semifinal series at one game apiece.

"I just told them we got punked," Minnesota coach Chris Finch said. Stephon Castle had 21 points and De'Aaron Fox added 16 points for San Antonio, which shot 50% from the field and 41% on 3-pointers. It was the highest-scoring playoff game for the Spurs since a series-clinching 145-105 win over Denver on May 4, 1983.

Anthony Edwards, Julius Randle, Jaden McDaniels and Terrence Shannon Jr. each scored 12 points for Minnesota.

Edwards came off the bench again as Minnesota continued to restrict

his minutes in his second game back from a hyperextended left knee.

Games 3 and 4 are Friday and Sunday in Minneapolis.

With Wembanyama playing more aggressively on offense from the outset, the Spurs put the series-opening loss behind them quickly.

Minnesota's previous largest postseason defeat was by 30 points to the Los Angeles Lakers on April 29, 2003.

Only the margin of victory was in doubt Monday as both teams sent their starters to the bench with 10 minutes remaining and the Spurs leading 104-66.

After combining to score 21 points on 10-for-31 shooting in Game 1, Wembanyama and Fox combined to go 12 of 25 from the field Wednesday.

The All-Star duo scored the Spurs' first 11 points as they raced to a 29-point lead in the first half.

Fox finished 2 for 2 on 3-pointers after missing on four attempts in Game 1.

The Spurs missed their first three shots, but Wembanyama followed the third attempt by flying through the lane and throwing down a right-

handed dunk to open the scoring.

Minnesota was held to 35 points in the first half. The Timberwolves shot 29.8% from the field before halftime and were 2 for 15 on 3-pointers as they fell behind by 25 points.

Meanwhile, Jalen Brunson scored 26 points and helped New York seize control of a close game after a run of blowouts, leading the Knicks to a 108-102 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers on Wednesday night for a 2-0 lead in the Eastern Conference semifinals.

Playing without the injured Joel Embiid, the 76ers put up a far better fight than in the Knicks' 137-98 romp in Game 1. The game featured 25 lead changes - the most in a playoff game in 11 years - and 14 ties. Neither team led by more than seven points.

Those kinds of situations are made for Brunson, who made the tiebreaking basket with 5:06 remaining and added another jumper for a 103-99 advantage with 3:45 to play before Mikal Bridges' basket made it a six-point game.

OG Anunoby added 24 points for New York, though he left late in the game, went to the locker room and

didn't return to the bench. Brown said after the game he didn't have an update on the forward's status.

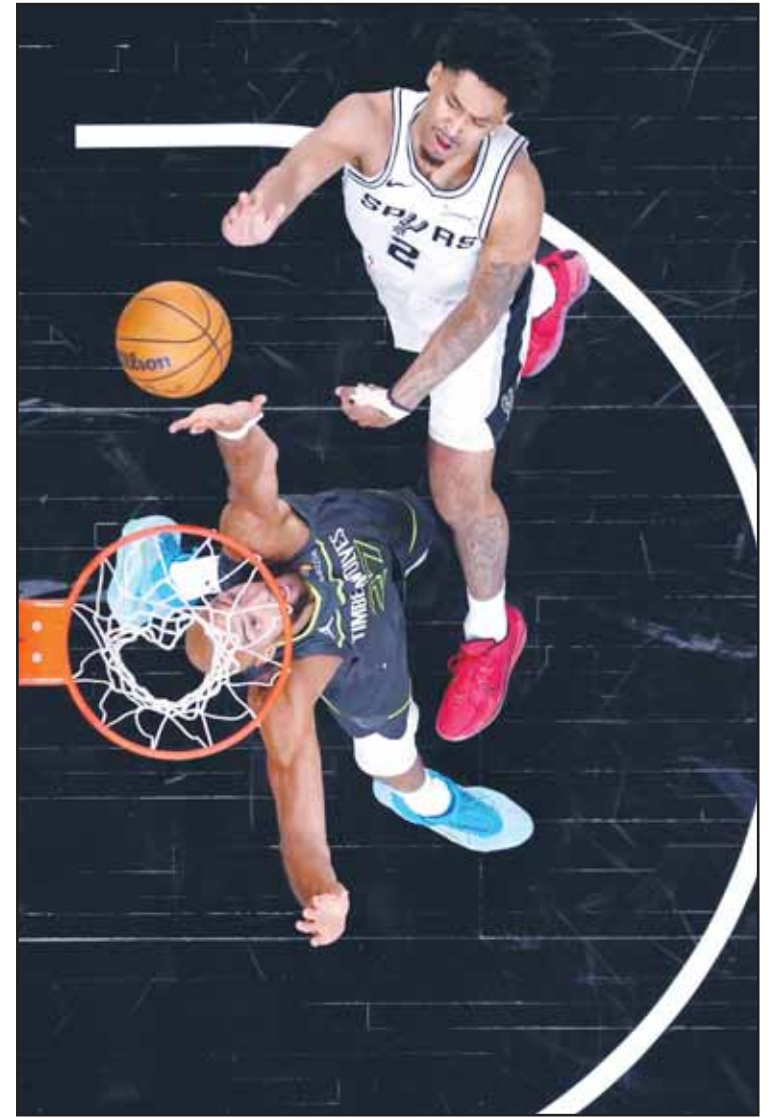
Karl-Anthony Towns had 20 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists for the Knicks, whose Game 1 victory made them the first team to win three straight postseason games by at least 25 points.

Tyrese Maxey scored 26 points for the 76ers, who face another big climb after falling behind 3-1 against Boston in the first round.

The series moves to Philadelphia for Game 3 on Friday and Game 4 on Sunday, where Embiid will find out if gets his wish for the arena to be filled with Sixers fans or if New Yorkers made their way in.

Embiid was ruled out with right hip and ankle injuries after waking up with soreness and being unable to go through the 76ers' morning shootaround.

But the 76ers, who won Game 2 in Boston without him while he was still recovering from a late-season appendectomy, got 19 points each from Paul George and Kelly Oubre Jr. and 17 from VJ Edgecombe to nearly overcome their big man's absence.



San Antonio Spurs guard Dylan Harper (2) drives to the basket against Minnesota Timberwolves center Rudy Gobert (27) during the first half in Game 2 of a second-round NBA playoffs basketball series in San Antonio, Wednesday, May 6, 2026. (AP)

Mbappé, Yamal & Salah injury concerns

World Cup set to miss key stars as injury list grows before kickoff

NEW YORK, May 7, (AP): Kylian Mbappé is sidelined with a hamstring injury.

Lamine Yamal is out for the rest of the season and so is Brazil star Estêvão.

There was also a scare when Mohamed Salah hurt his hamstring recently.

Injuries to some of soccer's biggest names are mounting ahead of the World Cup which starts in five weeks.

Mbappé is expected to play again for Real Madrid this month and there is no suggestion his issue will rule him out of the World Cup. But every setback to France's best player will be of concern to the national team.

Barcelona's teenage sensation Yamal - recuperating from a leg muscle injury - is also expected to be part of Spain's squad and appear at his first World Cup.

And initial fears about Salah have been dispelled.

Others, however, have not been so fortunate. France's Hugo Ekitike sustained an Achilles injury in April that could take more than six months to fully recover, ruling him out of the tournament co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico and possibly the start of next season.

Brazil stars Rodrygo and Éder Militão are definitely out. So is Bayern Munich and Germany forward Serge Gnabry after injuring his adductor in training.

Meanwhile, the absence of Spain and Manchester City midfielder Rodri in recent weeks because of a groin injury is also worrying after he missed the majority of last season due to ACL damage. City manager Pep Guardiola has given positive updates about Rodri's recovery in recent days and the former Ballon d'Or winner should play again this season.

Players and coaches have increasingly warned about the impact of an ever-packed playing schedule, and the expanded World Cup comes a year after the relaunched, supersized Club World Cup.

The Champions League has also been expanded in recent years.



In this file photo, Liverpool's Hugo Ekitike reacts after getting injured during the Champions League quarterfinal second leg soccer match between Liverpool and Paris Saint-Germain in Liverpool, England. (AP)

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta describes the demand on players as "an accident waiting to happen."

Argentina: Joaquín Panichelli (ACL)
Brazil: Éder Militão (hamstring), Rodrygo (ACL)

France: Hugo Ekitike (Achilles)
Germany: Serge Gnabry (adductor)
Netherlands: Xavi Simons (ACL)

United States: Cameron Carter-Vickers (Achilles), Patrick Agyemang (Achilles)
Algeria: Goalkeeper Luca Zidane, the son of France icon Zinedine Zidane, is a doubt after a facial injury during an on-field collision last month.

Argentina: Cristian Romero has been ruled out for the season with a knee injury. It has not

yet been confirmed if he is out of the World Cup, with Tottenham not giving a timeframe for his recovery.

Brazil: Teenage sensation Estêvão will not play again for Chelsea this month after a hamstring injury. There are conflicting reports as to whether he will recover in time for the World Cup.

Croatia: Veteran midfielder Luka Modrić broke his cheekbone last month but is expected to be available for the World Cup.

Morocco: Paris Saint-Germain defender Achraf Hakimi has been sidelined with a right thigh injury.

United States: Defender Miles Robinson hasn't played since April 18 because of a leg injury.

Five clubs battle against the drop

Bundesliga survival race heats up

BERLIN, May 7, (AP): Five teams are fighting for Bundesliga survival with two rounds remaining while Stuttgart and Bayer Leverkusen are level before their high stakes Champions League qualification duel.

Hoffenheim also is making it a three-team race for fourth place and the last guaranteed qualification spot for the Champions League.

Germany may yet get five Champions League qualification spots depending on Freiburg's international success. Freiburg faced a 2-1 deficit to Braga before the second leg of their Europa League semifinal on Thursday.

Bundesliga champion Bayern Munich was

knocked out of the Champions League by defending champion Paris Saint-Germain in the semifinals on Wednesday.

Leverkusen visits Stuttgart on Saturday knowing a defeat or even a draw could allow Hoffenheim to take advantage with a win over relegation-threatened Werder Bremen at the same time.

Bremen is just above the relegation zone, one of the five teams still in danger.

Wolfsburg moved into the relegation playoff spot last weekend but next faces a visit from Bayern, which will hope to bounce back from its disappointment against PSG. Last-placed Heidenheim held Bayern to 3-3 between its two

meetings with PSG, meaning the Bavarian powerhouse is on a three-game winless streak.

Second-from-bottom St. Pauli, which is winless in eight games, faces a daunting trip to third-placed Leipzig on Saturday. Leipzig can clinch Champions League qualification with a win.

Heidenheim will be hoping Wolfsburg and St. Pauli lose - preferably heavily - so it could potentially move into the relegation playoff spot with a win in Cologne on Sunday. But Cologne is not safe yet either.

Union Berlin fought back for its first point under new coach Marie-Louise Eta against Cologne last weekend. Union has a reunion with Mainz coach Urs Fischer on Sunday as Eta goes for her first win. Both teams are safe from relegation.

Bayern's Lennart Karl made his return from a hamstring injury in the final minutes against PSG on Wednesday. The 18-year-old Karl should get more playing time in Wolfsburg to prove his fitness for Germany at the World Cup.

Patrik Schick is hitting form at just the right time for Leverkusen with his hat trick against Leipzig last weekend taking his tally to six goals in three games.

Harry Kane has 55 across all competitions including the German Supercup.

Heidenheim's Budu Zivzivadze and Eren Dinkci scored at Bayern last weekend. If Frank Schmidt's side does somehow pull off a great escape, it will be down in large part to his two forwards.

St. Pauli's survival hopes have been dealt a blow by injuries to defenders Jannik Robatsch, Karol Mets und Manolis Saliakas likely ruling them out for the rest of the season.



St. Pauli's Arkadiusz Pyrkas, left, and Mainz's Philipp Mwene battle for the ball during the German Bundesliga soccer match between FC St. Pauli and FSV Mainz 05 in Hamburg, Germany. (AP)

Prize money war hits Grand Slams

Italian Open backs player boycott threat

ROME, May 7, (AP): Italian Open organizers are supporting tennis players who are urging a boycott unless the Grand Slam tournaments improve their prize money.

Angelo Binaghi, the president of the Italian Tennis and Padel Federation, is taking advantage of the move as part of a campaign to turn their event into a fifth Grand Slam.

The players have targeted the coming French Open for reducing players' share of revenue to an alleged 14.3% - compared to the 22% at ATP and WTA events like the Italian Open this week.

Top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka and Coco Gauff were among players this week threatening a boycott of the Slams if they don't start receiving more compensation.

"The players have our full support," Binaghi said. "It's scandalous that we're required by the ATP to share a bigger cut of the revenues with the players and the four Grand Slams hand out a smaller cut."

"It's shameful and creates competitive disparities, too, because the four nations (that organize the Slams) have a huge amount of money to invest in their technical sectors that other nations don't have," Binaghi added. "I want to blow apart this monopoly."

It should be noted that the Italian Open has offered less prize money for women than men for years. The total men's prize money this year in Rome is \$9.6 million while the women's prize money is \$8.3 million.

But next week the women's champion in Rome will earn 1,055 million euros - slightly more than the 1,007 million euros handed out to the men's winner.

For more than a year, Binaghi has been campaigning to turn the Italian Open into a fifth Grand Slam alongside the Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon and U.S. Open - upending a century of tennis history.

With Jannik Sinner dominating at No. 1 and three other Italians in the men's top 20 rankings - No. 10 Lorenzo Musetti; No. 12 Flavio Cobolli and No. 20 Luciano Darderi - Italian tennis is booming.

Italy has won the Davis Cup for three



Jannik Sinner, of Italy, answers a reporter's question during a press conference at the Italian Open at the Foro Italico in Rome. (AP)

straight years and the Billie Jean King Cup - the women's team event - for the last two years.

So Binaghi, who took over the federation a quarter century ago when it was nearly bankrupt, wants to take advantage of the boom for his Grand Slam dream.

"We're experiencing a stretch of tennis in Italy that will be tough to repeat, because it also needs to be considered in comparison with the Italian soccer debacle," Binaghi said, referring to how Italy failed to qualify for a third consecutive World Cup.

Besides tradition and scheduling issues, Binaghi faces another major obstacle toward making the Italian Open bigger: There's little room for expansion at the Foro Italico.

"We're open to organizing a (fifth Grand Slam) anywhere in Italy - on any surface," Binaghi said.

Work on a retractable roof for Campo Centrale is slated to start immediately after this year's Italian Open and be ready for the 2028 edition.

Capacity for the revised stadium will increase from 10,500 to 12,400.

The Italian Open is hoping to pass 400,000 ticket sales this year, while the French Open last year had a total attendance of nearly 700,000.

"If we're going to aim big, we shouldn't focus exclusively on the Foro Italico, because there are a lot of issues here in terms of transport and temporary venues," Binaghi said.

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The president of Kuwait Football Association, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Yousef Al-Sabah

Sports

KFA confirms May 14 restart for the Zain Premier League

KUWAIT CITY, May 7: The Kuwait Football Association led by Sheikh Ahmed Al-Yousef Al-Sabah has announced the resumption of the 2025-2026 football season, with the remaining four rounds of the second division of the Zain Premier League set to restart on May 14.

Sports activities in Kuwait were suspended on February 28 due to exceptional circumstances in the country and the region, a decision taken to ensure the safety of players, fans, and sports personnel.

In a statement, the KFA confirmed that the decision to restart competitions followed approval from a special committee earlier in the day, which also allowed fans to return to stadiums for matches.

The association added that the Zain League (First Division) will resume at the beginning of the next season.

Earlier, the joint committee responsible for reviewing the return of sporting activity in Kuwait also approved the full resumption of domestic competitions across all sports federations.

Kuwait in Pot 4 as Asian Cup draw looms in Diriyah

By Khaled Al-Enezi and Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

RIYADH, May 7: The draw for the 2027 AFC Asian Cup will take place tomorrow in the city of Diriyah, Saudi Arabia, which is hosting the tournament with the participation of 24 national teams representing the Asian continent.

23 teams have already secured qualification for the finals of "Saudi Arabia 2027," while the final spot will be decided on June 4 between Lebanon and Yemen.

The teams have been divided into four pots, and they will be drawn into six groups, each consisting of four teams. The pots are as follows:

Pot 1: Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, Iran, Japan, South Korea, Australia

Pot 2: Iraq, Qatar, UAE, Oman, Jordan, Syria

Pot 3: Thailand, Bahrain, China, Palestine, Tajikistan, Vietnam

Pot 4: North Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Indonesia, Kuwait, Singapore, plus Lebanon or Yemen



AFC Asian Cup trophy

Meanwhile, Kuwait head coach Portuguese Helio Sousa began training sessions with the team on the 9th of this month. The team will enter an overseas training camp in Thailand from June 1 to June 10, during which it will play two friendly matches against Thailand and Oman on June 5 and June 9.

Sousa is expected to expand the squad list in the upcoming call-up, especially after the suspension of local sports activity since February 28, which affected the physical readiness of several players.

The team has not gathered since participating in the Arab Cup held in Doha last November, where they exited from the group stage. Its planned participation in the Kazakhstan tournament in March was also cancelled due to regional circumstances.

This camp is part of preparations for the Gulf Cup 27, which will be hosted by Saudi Arabia from September 23 to October 6, as well as the West Asian Championship scheduled in Kuwait in November. If the tournament is not held, Kuwait will instead play matches during FIFA international windows.

Kvara dazzles as PSG returns to Champions League final

Arsenal awaits on May 30

LONDON, May 7, (AP): Whether scoring or creating, Khvicha Kvaratskhelia makes the difference for Paris Saint-Germain.

His team-leading 10 goals have played a huge part in helping titleholder PSG reach a second straight Champions League final.

His superb assist put PSG ahead early in a 1-1 draw at Bayern Munich for a 6-5 aggregate win against the six-time champions. That came after the 25-year-old Georgia star's two goals helped PSG win the first leg 5-4.

Kvaratskhelia was irreplaceable in the semifinals, as he was against Monaco, Chelsea and Liverpool earlier in the Champions League campaign.

His awareness led to PSG's goal three minutes into the return leg and put Bayern on the back foot immediately, when many observers expected PSG to struggle early on.

Kvaratskhelia even started the move that led to PSG's goal. Catching Bayern's midfield napping by dropping deep, he then released Fabián Ruiz with a brilliant flick with the outside of his right foot.

He then spun around to collect Ruiz's excellent first-time pass before springing down the left and picking out Dembélé with a fine pass across the penalty area. Dembélé shot powerfully into the roof of the net for his seventh goal of the competition.

Bayern had some spells of possession but never recovered from the early blow and, at the end, Kvaratskhelia's boundless energy and runs almost led to another PSG goal.

"We have a magnificent team, a young team, we fight together," PSG president Nasser Al-Khelaifi said. "We have stars but everyone fights. Look at the last minute, Kvara is cooked (but) kept fighting."

Dembélé was PSG's key player last season, and now it could be Kvaratskhelia's turn to shine when PSG faces Arsenal in the final on May 30.

"We're very happy, we know it will be very difficult against Arsenal," Kvaratskhelia said. "I'm working every day and getting back with assists or goals. I will do everything for the team."

Real Madrid won three straight times from 2016-18. PSG coach Luis Enrique has shown remarkable flexibility with his team selections, astutely coping with injuries and juggling positional changes without disrupting the efficiency of his team.

He was in the mood to celebrate, in moderation. "It's incredible," Luis Enrique said. "We have to make the most of this night, but we have to think about the final."

Although he is on the verge of winning the Champions League for the third time as a coach - having triumphed with Barcelona in 2015 - the former box-to-box midfielder typically deflected praise away from himself.

"It shows the kind of players we have and what kind of team we are. I think we showed a level of maturity today," he said. "Knowing when to defend, when to attack. As a coach it's a real pleasure to see this kind of performance."

He had no hesitation picking Ruiz, who recently returned from a knee injury sustained against Sporting on Jan. 22. Ruiz took the place of Warren Zaire-Emery, who in turn dropped down to right back to replace the injured



PSG players celebrate after the Champions League semifinal second leg soccer match between Bayern Munich and Paris Saint Germain in Munich, Germany. (AP)

Achraf Hakimi.

It made little difference to PSG's rhythm.

Zaire-Emery had a solid game and largely contained the runs of winger Luis Díaz, who scored a brilliant goal in the first leg and netted twice against PSG in a group-stage win in November.

Kvaratskhelia's ability to defend or attack with equal commitment and aplomb is symbolic of this PSG team and a far cry from the days of chasing big names and falling short on Europe's biggest stage.

"What characterizes us is our mentality," PSG defender William Pacheco said. "Our forwards help us a lot and we help them to attack."

King's Cup crown on the line as Al Hilal faces Al Kholood

RIYADH, May 7: Al Hilal meets Al Kholood Club in today's King's Cup final, with the giant chasing silverware and the underdog dreaming of a historic upset.

Al Hilal, led by Italian coach Simone Inzaghi, is targeting a long-awaited trophy as he approaches a year in charge since replacing Jorge Jesus. Despite exiting the AFC Champions League Elite, it remains firmly in contention for domestic honours and now stands one step away from lifting the King's Cup.

Al Kholood, currently 14th in the Saudi Pro League, has been the surprise package of the tournament. It stunned defending champion Al Ittihad in the semifinals on penalties, mirroring Al Hilal SFC's own shootout win over Al Ahli.

Al Hilal is looking to bounce back after last season's quarter-final exit to Al Ittihad, with its last King's Cup triumph coming



Al Hilal players led by Karim Benzema preparing for the final.

two seasons ago against Al Nassr - its record-extending 11th title.

For Al Kholood Club, English coach Des Buckingham knows the unpredictability of cup football offers a rare chance to make history, with just one match standing between them and a landmark achievement.

Best of the Rest

Man City clinches WSL title: Manchester City clinched the Women's Super League title to end Chelsea's six-year dominance of the competition.

Third-place Arsenal's 1-1 draw with Brighton meant City, which has one match remaining, could not be caught in first place.

City, which didn't qualify for this season's Women's Champions League, has been top of the standings since Nov. 9.

Swedish coach Andree Jeggertz led City to the title in his first season at the club after joining from Denmark's national team.

It is City's second WSL title, the other coming in 2016. (AP)

Catalans one step from La Liga glory

Barcelona aims to finish the job against Madrid

BARCELONA, Spain, May 7, (AP): It would be a day to remember at Camp Nou if Barcelona can beat Real Madrid and clinch the Spanish league in one swoop.

Barcelona hosts Madrid on Sunday savoring the opportunity to celebrate a second straight La Liga crown with a victory or even a draw when it plays its fiercest rival.

Hansi Flick's team leads Madrid by 11 points with four rounds left, so it can afford the slip, while Madrid is mostly playing for pride and to avoid the humiliation of watching Barcelona celebrate at its expense.

Only a Madrid victory at Barcelona's stadium can avoid the title going to the host.

"We're fully switched on and we want the win because it would be the best way to clinch the league title," Barcelona defender Jules Koundé said.

The clasico will be the first in over three years at Camp Nou, which was closed for refurbishment until midway through this season.

The clasico could be Robert Lewandowski's last in a Barcelona



Barcelona's Robert Lewandowski celebrates after scoring his side's opening goal during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Barcelona in Pamplona, Spain. (AP)

shirt, so all eyes will be on his performance. The 37-year-old Poland striker has lost his first-choice status for Flick, and his contract is expiring this summer.

Raphinha could see some playing time after the forward returned



Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior celebrates after scoring during a La Liga soccer match between Real Betis and Real Madrid in Seville, Spain. (AP)

to the team's squad in the last round after having missed several games with an injury. It is still likely that he will start on the bench, with Marcus Rashford and Fermín López poised to make the starting frontline along with Lewandowski

or Ferran Torres.

Madrid's hopes of delaying Barcelona's title - and keeping alive its own fragile title bid - will likely rest on Vinicius Junior. The Brazil forward is finishing the campaign in top form. He has four goals in his last three league games and has 15 goals in the competition.

The mood of Madrid's squad as a whole will be scrutinized after reports in local media of arguments and even scuffles by players during practice this week as the team faces a second straight season without a major trophy.

Barcelona will be without Lamine Yamal after the teenage star injured a leg muscle that ruled him out of the rest of the season.

Kylian Mbappé remains doubtful after being sidelined with a hamstring issue. The Madrid striker was back to training with his teammates on Thursday, although he participated for only some of the session.

Madrid will also be without injured defenders Éder Militão and Ferland Mendy and midfielder Arda Güler.

Haslam wants Antetokounmpo's future settled before draft

MILWAUKEE, May 7, (AP): Milwaukee Bucks co-owner Jimmy Haslam says he would like to have Giannis Antetokounmpo's future sorted out before next month's NBA draft.

Haslam spoke Wednesday alongside general manager Jon Horst at a news conference introducing Taylor Jenkins as the Bucks' coach. An-

tetokounmpo has spent his entire 13-year career with the Bucks, but it's possible he could leave Milwaukee after a frustrating, injury-marred season.

"I just think before the draft is a natural time," Haslam said. "Because if Giannis does play somewhere else, we've got to have a lot of assets. That's

Jon's job to do. And if he's here, then you build the team differently."

Antetokounmpo has said repeatedly that he likes playing in Milwaukee but wants to play for a franchise committed to competing for championships. The Bucks went 32-50 this season to snap a string of nine straight playoff appearances.