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Opinion

Harshness towards the Tehran regime is a mercy for its people, the region, and the world

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

SOME argue for the necessity of coexistence with Iran due to geographical factors, and for finding a formula to deal with it on this basis. This perspective is valid, but it depends on the existence of a stable political and economic system, which is currently lacking in Iran.

The foundation upon which the Iranian regime is built contradicts with the principles of states that respect the choices of their people, uphold good neighborly relations, and do not seek to export their revolution or expand their influence.

For 47 years, the region, particularly the Gulf states, underwent continuous Iranian interference in internal affairs and persistent acts of terrorism, especially during the last war. These experiences left no room for establishing relations based on trust and good neighborliness.

Tehran has undermined every foundation that could lead these countries to reconsider their relationship with it, as the saying goes, "Once bitten, twice shy."

For 47 years, the Gulf states have not received a unified message from the pillars of the Iranian regime.

Every hour, contradictory statements emerge from Tehran, whether from the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic, the President, the Speaker of Parliament, the Revolutionary Guard, the Khatam al-

Anbiya Construction Headquarters, or the Foreign Minister.

A careful reading of these statements reveals an implicit, unspoken language that could be termed

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Justice Ministry ends expat roles in experts department

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait has unveiled a comprehensive plan to develop the Experts General Department in view of the Kuwaitization of the judiciary.

In a press statement, Al-Sumait disclosed that the main component of the plan is the total Kuwaitization of the department effective Aug 1, by terminating the services of all non-Kuwaiti employees in the engineering, accounting and legal research fields.



Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait

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Court takes tough line

Abdalli Cell convict accused of undermining social peace

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: The State Security Court, in rulings issued recently, affirmed that the actions of a defendant previously convicted in the Abdalli Cell case constituted a flagrant violation of the law, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The court emphasized that the convicted individual showed contempt for societal and national values, and that the crime involved inflammatory rhetoric that threatened social peace and security, as well as a clear transgression of the limits of freedom of expression as defined by law.

The court explained that the defendant's support for a designated terrorist organization posed a serious threat to the security and stability of society. Insulting and defaming the state and attacking the Amiri self cannot be tolerated, especially

since the defendant had previously benefited from an Amiri pardon following his conviction in the Abdalli Cell case.

Meanwhile, a court released six defendants in the agricultural land subsidies case on bail of KD 500 each, while former officials and employees remain in custody on charges of bribery, deliberate damage to state property, facilitating the embezzlement of public funds, forgery, and money laundering, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The case dates back to the period between 2017 and 2020 and involves the processing of transactions and the disbursement of subsidies in violation of the law through facilitating the sale of agricultural plots.

According to the investigations,

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Unsafe crossing leads to fines

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: The General Traffic Department (GTD) at the Ministry of Interior warned that improper crossing of the road endangers lives, as part of the activities of the Unified Gulf Traffic Week with the slogan, "Cross Safely."

The department revealed that the

fine for pedestrians crossing the road outside the designated areas is KD20 if settled amicably. If the settlement is rejected and the violation is referred to the court, the fine ranges from KD45 to KD75.

It urged pedestrians not to use their mobile phones while crossing the road, obey traffic signs, ensure vehicles have stopped, look both ways before crossing and use the pedestrian lanes.

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Kuwait reinforces worker protection

NEW YORK, May 9, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait has reiterated its steadfast commitment to protecting the rights and upholding the dignity of migrant workers, underscoring a proactive national approach to labor migration management.



Al-Mulla

Speaking before the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) 2026 at the United Nations Headquarters evening, Wafiqah Al-Mulla, Second Secretary of Kuwait's Permanent Mission to the UN, detailed a suite of legislative and executive measures enacted to bolster worker protections.

These include the strict prohibition of forced labor, the criminalization of withholding migrant documents, and the implementation of

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8 Markaz announces key leadership appointments



9 KIPCO remains focused on resilience, disciplined execution and long-term value creation



9 Action Energy Co. holds FY25 Annual General Meeting



BAHRAIN SECURITY OPERATION WINS PRAISE

Kuwait backs Bahrain after 'IRGC cell' bust

41 held over alleged Iran ties

KUWAIT CITY, May 9, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed on Saturday the country's full support for the sovereign measures taken by Bahrain to safeguard its security against any threats.

A ministry statement commended efficiency of Bahraini security bodies in uncovering a group linked to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

(IRGC) earlier today, reiterating the State of Kuwait's full backing for all measures undertaken by the Kingdom of Bahrain to preserve its security and stability.

First Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah reaffirmed on Saturday Kuwait's full support for the sovereign

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Georgian Ambassador Noshrevan Lomtadize joins KCCI officials and Georgian companies during talks aimed at strengthening Kuwait-Georgia trade relations.

Kuwait eyes stronger Georgia food links

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: The Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) on Thursday organized a virtual meeting with a delegation from the Georgian food sector and Georgian Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Noshrevan Lomtadize.

At the beginning of the meeting, the chamber welcomed the Georgian delegation, affirming the shared interest in strengthening trade relations between Kuwait and Georgia, particularly in the food security sector.

The chamber pointed out the importance of the meeting due to growing global focus on food security issues, supply chain resilience, and diver-

sification of import sources.

It disclosed that trade between the State of Kuwait and Georgia increased remarkably over the past decade, thus, presenting valuable opportunities for expanding cooperation.

It added that Georgia is a promising partner due to its growing capabilities in agricultural production, livestock, meat processing, dairy products and fresh produce, which cover the increasing needs of the Kuwaiti market.

They discussed several issues of mutual interest like the trade in live animals, 'halal' meat, dairy products and fresh agricultural produce.

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Joint Kuwait-UAE op nets fugitive embezzler

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: Officers from the Criminal Security Sector at the Interior Ministry apprehended an individual wanted by law for the embezzlement of public funds and forgery of official documents.

This arrest was made possible through the joint security operations between the State of Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), specifically the concerted efforts of the Arab and International Criminal Police General Department (Kuwaiti Interpol) and its counterpart in the UAE.

In a press statement, the ministry disclosed that the fugitive is involved in a case lodged at the Public Funds Prosecution and he was sentenced in absentia to seven years in prison with hard labor for forging official documents and embezzling public funds.

The ministry added that the accused exploited his previous position as a general representative and legal advisor at a cooperative society. From 2012 to 2018, he forged advertising permits purportedly issued by the Kuwait Municipality by manipulating the amounts stated in the official documents after the actual fees were paid electronically. He then submitted these forged permits to his employer to illegally obtain funds.

According to the ministry, the arrest happened after intensive security monitoring, investigations, and information exchange between the Kuwaiti and Emirati authorities. This

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Kuwait rolls out e-tracking for dietary supplements

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: The Ministry of Health announced the launch of an electronic dietary supplement dispensing system via the "Salem" application in most hospitals, re-



Dr. Al-Sanad

ports Al-Seyassah daily.

Activation will be carried out gradually in the remaining health-care facilities through a direct link between hospital clinical nutrition departments and the electronic system for dispensing dietary supplements.

The ministry's spokesman, Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad, stated in a press

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Leisure boats cleared to sail

KUWAIT CITY, May 9, (KUNA): The Ministry of Interior (MoI), represented by the General Directorate of Coast Guard (GDCCG), announced on Friday that recreational fishing boats and leisure boats will be permitted to sail as of Sunday, from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m.

In a press release, Director General of GDCCG Brigadier General Sheikh Mubarak Ali Yousef Al-Sabah said that the decision came after assessing the "current situation" in a way that

makes balance between allowing sea enthusiasts to practice their activities and maintaining the security and safety of maritime navigation in the country.

Sheikh Mubarak underlined the necessity for sea-goers to remain within the designated areas in line with the approved map and avoid approaching or sailing near oil facilities and other vital sites, in order to preserve public

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Relations enter new phase

Kuwait Embassy in Tajikistan nearing official inauguration

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador

of Tajikistan to Kuwait Dr. Zubaydullo Zubaydov expressed his happiness over the upcoming opening of the Kuwaiti Embassy in Dushanbe.

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Tajikistan Ambassador Dr. Zubaydullo Zubaydov speaks during a press conference in Kuwait announcing the upcoming Fourth High-Level International Conference on Water in Dushanbe.



Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:31 Asr 15:20
 Sunrise .. 04:59 Maghrib .. 18:30
 Zohr 11:44 Isha 19:55



KUNA photo
 Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah and Chairman of the Turkish Defense Industries Dr. Haluk Gorgun at the signing ceremony.

Kuwait, Turkiye sign letter of intent to enhance cooperation in defense

ISTANBUL, May 9, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ministry of Defense signed on Thursday a letter of intent with the Turkish Defense Industries aimed at enhancing cooperation in the field of defense and logistics systems, supporting joint technical and techno-

logical coordination. The letter was signed on the sidelines of the visit by Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah, to the country while on the Turkish side it was signed by Chairman of the Turkish Defense In-

dustries Dr. Haluk Gorgun, said the Defense Ministry. It added that the letter of intent also aims to explore defense development capabilities, contributing to the mutual expansion of the military.

Court issues 12 verdicts on spreading false news, terrorism and stirring strife

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: The State Security Court, presided over by Judge Nasser Al-Badr, issued verdicts in 12 cases of spreading false news, joining a banned group, inciting sectarian strife, State Security crimes, and violation of the law.

In the spreading of false news cases, the court acquitted two defendants and sentenced another to three years in prison.

In the joining a banned group cases, the court sentenced four defendants to prison terms ranging from

three to 10 years.

The court also reviewed three cases of inciting sectarian strife, sentencing two defendants to three and five years in prison respectively, while suspending the implementation of the sentence imposed on another defendant who was allowed to post bail.

It acquitted the accused in a State security case.

In the law violation case, the court refrained from punishing the accused, but obliged him to pay a financial guarantee.

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Labor office opens 12 hours: Public

Authority for Manpower (PAM) announced that the Labor Needs Assessment Department and its branches in Jahra and Ahmadi will be open to the public and employers from Sunday to Wednesday, from 1:00 am to 1:00 pm, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

PAM explained that these hours are dedicated to inquiries, follow-ups, and the electronic submission of transactions, as part of its efforts to streamline procedures and improve the level of services provided to the public. Transactions will be submitted entirely through the electronic system, while in-person visits will be limited to inquiries and follow-ups only.

Car registration documents forged

Gang led by GTD officer jailed for fraud

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: The Court of Appeals, presided over by Judge Naser Salem Al-Hayd, with Judges Mutaib Al-Arathi and Saud Al-Sanea as members, imposed prison terms ranging from three to five years with hard labor on a gang - led by an employee at the Capital Governorate Traffic Department and including a citizen who owns a car rental company and three illegal residents.

They defendants were convicted of forging vehicle registration documents for vehicles with outstanding installments, misappropriating funds, and selling the vehicles.

The Public Prosecution charged the traffic department employee

with forging 54 vehicle registration documents by manipulating the computer system at the department to remove the phrase 'with outstanding payments.' He then enabled the other defendants to sell the vehicles, thereby, fraudulently obtaining the funds.

The employee denied the charges, asserting that he was referred to an administrative investigation at the Ministry of Interior regarding the transactions in question. He stated that he received a letter from a client confirming the termination of vehicle installments.

Another defendant, a Kuwaiti citizen, asserted that he is just a nominal owner of the car rental company, as the actual owners are the two other defendants, who are residing illegal-

ly in Kuwait. He claimed they managed the company and bought and sold cars for a monthly fee, indicating he is a retiree and merely wanted to supplement his income. He added that he found out about the forgery and the sale of the vehicles to be paid in installments from the defendant who owns a car dealership.

The plaintiff company confirmed that the value of the vehicles reached KD437,400.

While the criminal court sentenced all defendants to five years in prison, the Court of Appeals upheld the five-year sentence only for three of the defendants, and the other two were sentenced to three years in prison for fraudulently appropriating the value of the vehicles and acquitted them of involvement in the forgery.



Jahra Governorate photo
 Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi meets a delegation of farmers in his office.

Jahra Gov., farmers devise plan to boost Abdally agricultural output

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi had a meeting with Chairman of Kuwaiti Farmers Union Ahmad Musallat Al-Adwani at the headquarters of the governorate.

They discussed several topics related to Al-Abdally and its agricultural affairs, including ways to strengthen coordination for the benefit of productive farmers, support the agricultural sector in Jahra Governorate, cover the needs of Al-Abdally and develop its agricultural

environment.

Al-Habashi affirmed that the Jahra Governorate Council focuses on the agricultural sector and supports the efforts of the union to address issues related to productive farmers, thereby, strengthening the agricultural and productive positions of Abdally.

Towards the end of the meeting, Al-Habashi honored the chairman and members of the union in appreciation of their efforts in serving productive farmers and solving agri-

cultural issues.

Also present at the meeting were Secretary of the union Ahmed Al-Shabak, Advisor at the Governorate Office Major General Fahad Al-Miyah, representative of the Ministry of Public Works and Chairman of the Complaints and Proposals Committee in the council Eng. Ahmed Eid Al-Mutairi, and representative of the Kuwait Municipality and Chairman of the Public Services Committee in the council Eng. Yousef Al-Badhali.

Charity mainstay of cohesion & stability

Kuwait known for helping world since decades

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: Participants in the Charitable Work and National Unity symposium affirmed that charitable work is vital in strengthening social cohesion and maintaining national stability.

Sayyida Nafisa Charitable Foundation organized the symposium at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Farwaniya recently, with Director of the Charitable Societies Department at the Ministry of Social Affairs Abdulmohsen Al-Makhial in attendance.

During the event, the participants stressed that organized humanitarian work is now crucial in supporting State institutions, overcoming challenges and addressing crises. They pointed out that Kuwait has a deep-rooted legacy of charitable work and social solidarity, stating that such legacy has contributed to strengthening national unity and embodying the values of cooperation and shared responsibility among members of society for decades.

Murtada Al-Jedi - Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Sayyida Nafisa Charitable Foundation, underscored the importance of promoting national unity through charitable work. He explained that national unity is not just a slogan, but a daily practice based on solidarity, awareness and prioritizing the common good.

He said the role of charitable societies and foundations is not limited to providing material assistance, as it extends to promoting the values of cooperation and solidarity and building bridges of trust among members of society.

He added that when charitable work is managed with a fully aware nation, it becomes an effective tool for consolidating national unity and dealing with challenges.



Al-Makhial

Dr. Abdulmohsen Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al-Aal and Al-Ashab Charitable Foundation, cited charitable work as one of the most important factors behind the unity of the Kuwaiti society.

He said the people of Kuwait have been known for their charitable work since ancient times, even before the discovery of oil, through building mosques, distributing zakat (obligatory alms), establishing Quranic study centers and supporting those in need.

He indicated that during difficult times, Kuwaitis compete in opening guest houses and providing the needs of impoverished families, thereby, proving the solidarity and national unity that characterize the Kuwaiti society.

He added that endowments ('waqf') are considered an example of solidarity and mutual trust between society and State institutions.

He confirmed that charitable organizations efficiently play their national and social roles by launching unified platforms and campaigns to help those affected by the crises, without sectarian or religious discrimination.

Dr. Saad Al-Otaibi, Chairman of the Union of Kuwaiti Charitable Societies and Foundations, stated that charitable work is a pillar in consolidating national unity and maintaining the stability of Kuwaiti society.

He asserted that throughout its history, Kuwait has succeeded in transforming charity work from individual initiatives into an integrated institutional system with humanitarian and developmental impact.

He said the current stage entails focusing on the quality of humanitarian impact, not just the volume of spending.

He revealed that charitable societies and foundations have become a vital artery in supporting society and strengthening its cohesion, emphasizing that national unity is not built on slogans, adding that crises proved the ability of the charitable sector to support the State and quickly cover societal needs.

He indicated that the launching of the national charitable platform, 'KuwaitAid', strengthened coordination between governmental and charitable entities, and raised the efficiency and transparency of fieldwork.



Mol photo

Consumer items, foodstuff sold at makeshift stalls in Mahboula, south of Kuwait City.

10 persons arrested at makeshift stalls for illegal sale of food, consumer items

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: The Fintas Investigation Office of the Ahmadi Criminal Investigation Department carried out a field security campaign in Mahboula on Friday, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The campaign led to the arrest of three makeshift stalls used for

the illegal sale of food and consumer goods in three separate locations. Ten individuals operating these stalls were apprehended, and it was found that two of them were wanted on outstanding arrest warrants.

Necessary legal procedures were

taken and the violators were referred to the concerned authorities.

The Ministry of Interior affirmed its commitment to continuing its security and inspection campaigns throughout the country to apprehend violators and enforce the law.

Other Voices

Humanity, humanity, humanity!

By Ahmad alsarraf

THERE is no higher or more important objective, whether in peace or in war, for any government, authority, state, or corporation than respecting the human right to life, ensuring the enjoyment of all human rights, and making life safer, more just, more comfortable, and more dignified.

Therefore, it is unfair to ask the naive question of why some individuals deviate or betray their homelands, which provided them with food, drink, and shelter. As Jesus Christ said, "Man shall not live by bread alone."

At a cultural event, Qatari media figure Tayseer Abdullah recited the following verses of colloquial poetry: Every time I visit Kuwait, images come to mind, I am not concerned with heritage, nor with the sea. I am not referring to buildings; I only focus on people, the land, identity, creativity, and magic.

This is the land of creative people whose art is immortal.

But when "Darb Al-Zalaq" or "Bisat Al-Faqr" (iconic Kuwaiti TV series) comes on, Abdulhussain Abdulredha and Al-Nafisi come to my mind, as well as Suad Abdullah and Hayat Al-Fahad... how many more can I list?

Ruwaished's voice reaches my ears, the builder writes poetry, and here Bouresli stands alone, speaking to the moon.

I see Ghannam sitting behind singer Shadi Al-Khaleej, holding the oud.



alsarraf

I hear Al-Muhanna singing in Kuwait, "Allah Amar" (God has commanded)

Public opinion and Al-Qabas play a creative role in dissemination

I read a world of thought

It continues through radio, newspapers, and sports. I see Kuwait in Jassim, in Fadhi, in Al-Dakhil, and in the sheikhs

Those who ruled it wrote a just and wise chapter And the sheikhs who governed it wrote a just and wise chapter

Ah, how many names have passed through Kuwait I ask your forgiveness, as I may forget some names.

In the simple verses above, journalist Tayseer summarized what he and his fellow citizens in the Gulf feel about Kuwait, and what it represents to them in terms of cultural, artistic, literary, historical, and political richness, as well as its remarkable pioneering role in numerous vital fields, activities, and domains too many to enumerate.

The former Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Planning Eng. Khaled Mahdi once said, "Kuwait is different," but only a few fully grasped the meaning of his words.

Upon reflection, it becomes clear that Kuwait is indeed different, not in its buildings, airports, services, or financial reserves, but in its people. I know very well what it means to be Kuwaiti, especially when interacting with other Gulf nationals, Arabs, or foreigners.

One discovers that Kuwait is perceived as different in their eyes and minds, with love and respect for everyone.

Indeed, man does not live by bread alone, and all we wish for Kuwait is that it continues to remain as it has been under its wise leadership.

□ □ □

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diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Despots' tyranny, larceny end in deep pit of refuse

"THREE hundred years ago, famine ravaged the French peasantry, who stormed the king's palace. They were astonished by the crystal chandeliers and silk-covered walls inside the palace," columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"During the Russian Revolution of 1917, revolutionaries entered the ruler's palace and looted its rare treasures. In Africa, Jean-Bédél Bokassa, Emperor of the Central African Republic, wore a diamond-encrusted crown estimated to be worth five million US dollars. However, this wealth and injustice did not last long, as his rule was overthrown in 1979.



Ahmad Al-Dawas

"Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos and his wife Imelda fled the country in 1986 following a popular uprising against them. In the presidential palace, protesters discovered luxurious clothing, one thousand women's handbags, and 1,060 pairs of shoes belonging to Imelda, which later became part of a shoe museum.

"The people of Romania also revolted against the communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, who plundered the country's wealth while his people suffered in poverty. In late 1989, demonstrations supported by the army strengthened public morale, and crowds surrounded the presidential palace. Terrified, Ceausescu fled through secret passages, and he and his wife escaped the city by helicopter.

"However, some villagers captured them and handed them over to the authorities, who conducted a swift two-hour trial broadcast on television. Ceausescu was sentenced to death for crimes against the state, genocide, and the destruction of the Romanian economy.

"Before his death, Ceausescu built a palace containing one thousand rooms. To construct it, entire districts of the capital, Bucharest, were demolished.

"In Central Asia, unpopular regimes emerged in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. After the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq in 2003, US forces discovered suitcases filled with millions of dollars, along with boxes of fine Cuban cigars, in the palaces of Saddam and his sons, Uday and Qusay. They also found crystal chandeliers, artificial lakes spread across fifty palaces built by Saddam, private cinemas, and pools for bathing dolphins.

"After the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, Libyans entered and looted his palace. They discovered that Gaddafi owned gold-plated pistols and gold-plated furniture, including a sofa on which he often sat.

"In 2016, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe's regime was overthrown in a military coup after years of economic collapse and declining living conditions. Although Zimbabwe is rich in precious minerals, the country suffered severe hyperinflation, causing its currency to lose nearly all value to the point that even a beggar might refuse a billion Zimbabwean dollars.

"This economic devastation forced many university graduates to work as street vendors.

"Omar al-Bashir ruled Sudan for thirty years until he was overthrown in 2019. His rule was marked by oppression, and the Darfur genocide resulted in the deaths of 300,000 people. During his presidency, oil-rich South Sudan seceded, and widespread protests erupted over rising food prices, especially bread.

"For half a century under Ba'ath Party rule, Syrians endured hardship and harsh living conditions. On December 8, 2024, the rule of Bashar al-Assad came to an end, and many Syrians took to the streets in celebration after years of suffering.

"People entered his palaces and found luxury cars and expensive collections of women's clothing belonging to his wife from international brands such as Louis Vuitton, while ordinary citizens struggled with difficult living conditions.

"Iranians today face difficult circumstances, including inflation, unemployment, a weakening national currency, and widespread poverty. Many long for political and economic change and believe the current regime has deprived them of dignity, freedom, and the basic necessities of a decent life. Will the Iranian regime fall as previous regimes have?"

Also:

"Today, I am speaking about the management of Khums, which is the one-fifth religious tax collected from observant Shi'a Muslims. I wonder which government authority oversees it and whether it is managed by a single entity or by multiple bodies," columnist **Muhammad Ali Al-Naqi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Shi'a Muslims who follow the Ja'fari school are divided into groups, each with a different religious authority and each with its own interpretations. Every follower is obligated to pay one-fifth of their annual surplus

income to the religious authority they follow.

"Each religious authority appoints representatives to collect and manage these funds at the city, regional, or national level. In the past, this responsibility was often entrusted to respected and reputable individuals. However, with the introduction of democracy, elections, and the National Assembly, significant manipulation began to emerge.

"During the post-liberation period, I was involved in this turmoil. Fortunately, an official in the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs established the Ja'fari Waqf Administration, and a committee was formed to oversee the management of the endowments.

"After the Khums Administration Committee was established, several subcommittees emerged from it. The problem was that one of these committees came under the control of an individual who managed the revenues and spent them on elections, families, and individuals he supported.

"Therefore, I hope this matter will be thoroughly and rigorously investigated to ensure a complete understanding of the issue. A new administration should then be formed, operating according to Islamic principles, free from personal interests, and ensuring that no funds are transferred abroad.

"The same conditions should also apply to donation boxes in mosques and Shi'a religious centers, placing them under government oversight.

"Finally, I request that the roles of imam in mosques and reciter in Shi'a religious centers (Hussainiyas) be restricted to Kuwaiti citizens only."

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"Reputation is not what is said about us in our presence, but what is said about us in our absence. It is the subtle impression our names leave behind before we even enter a place. It is that silent trace that either opens hearts to us or closes them without warning," Kuwaiti writer **Fatima Nasser Al-Muzayel** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Reputation is not a garment we put on as we please and remove when we tire of it. It is rather a second skin shaped over time by our daily actions, fleeting glances, and words spoken carelessly, yet remembered by others for a long time.

"From the very beginning of human history, people have been accustomed to judging others by appearances, since the inner self is not visible. This is not necessarily cruelty or indifference, but rather a form of clarity shaped by human perception and the logic of understanding.

"In a fast-paced world, judgments are often no longer formed carefully, but arise in an instant like a spark of first impression that gradually solidifies into a lasting opinion.

"Therefore, ancient wisdom warned, "Do not place yourself in a position of suspicion and then blame those who think ill of you." This does not mean living in constant worry about how others perceive us, but rather calls for awareness and vigilance. Every message, even if unintended, will eventually reach an audience.



Al-Muzayel

"The problem begins when a person with a transparent soul finds themselves walking paths filled with ambiguity, treading routes shrouded in uncertainty, or entering discussions that may give others a distorted impression of their true nature. As a result, they are surprised by the suspicion of others. True integrity is only complete when accompanied by clarity of conduct. It is not enough to simply be pure of heart.

"Purity alone does not protect you unless you surround your clarity with a barrier that wards off others' suspicions.

"A wise person guards not only their inner self but also their public image, understanding that reputation is a mirror reflecting how others perceive them. Honesty alone is not the sole measure of integrity; there is a subtle distinction between truthful speech, a pure heart, and sound intentions.

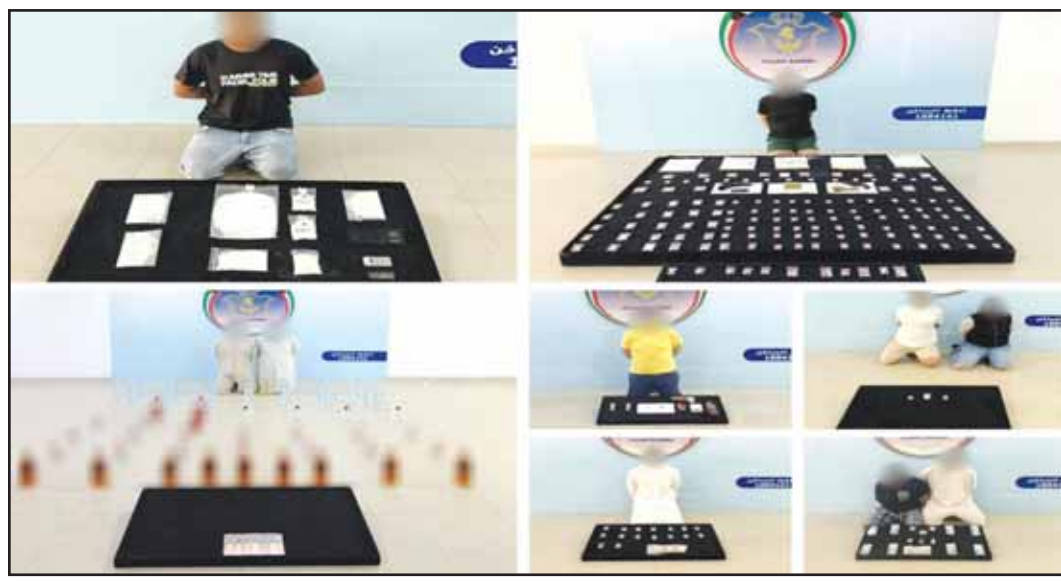
"Wisdom lies in understanding that freedom is not the ability to say or do whatever one wishes, but the ability to choose what preserves one's dignity. A good reputation cannot be bought or created through fleeting appearances; rather, it grows like a towering tree, slowly and quietly, its roots firmly planted in the soil of honest deeds. It is the result of being the same person in public and in private, whether seen or unseen.

"Yes, you may not be able to silence everyone, but you can reduce what may give others reason to speak ill of you.

"Let your concern for your image reflect your inner integrity and your commitment to the values and principles you hold.

"When a person dies, they leave behind no title, name, position, or appearance, but only the legacy of what they truly were."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



A combo picture of various suspects and the contraband seized.

Mol photos

10 people held with drugs, liquor and guns

KUWAIT CITY, May 9, (KUNA): Ten suspects in various cases have been arrested in possession of various quantities of drugs, alcoholic beverages, firearms and cash, "with a view to trafficking and consumption," said the Ministry of Interior (Mol).

The arrest is part of the efforts of the Mol's Criminal Security Sector in fighting the scourge of drugs and psychotropic substances and cutting off their sources, the ministry added in a press release on Thursday.

One kilogram and 10 grams of methamphetamine, 2,218 capsules of Lyrica, 2 kilograms of Lyrica powder, and 5 grams of hashish were also seized during the police operation, it added.

Four Captagon pills, 60 bottles of alcohol, three firearms, two sensitive scales, eight mind-altering pills and KD 8,179 in cash as trafficking proceeds, were also seized, the ministry explained.

All the suspects and their seized items were taken to relevant investigations agencies to take the necessary legal action against them, it noted.

Lawyer acquitted in libel suit

Power to bachelor homes cut

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: The State Security Court of Appeals, presided over by Judge Abdullah Al-Sanea with Judges Saud Al-Mutairi and Meshal Al-Mutawa as members, acquitted a lawyer of charges of contempt of a segment of society, insulting religious figures, and inciting sectarian strife, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The court overturned the KD 5,000 fine that had been imposed on him by the lower

court.

In another case, the court sentenced Fadel Al-Dabbous to six months in prison, suspended for three years on the condition of good conduct. The court also imposed a bail of KD 3,000 in two separate cases related to the dissemination of false news and insulting officials of the Central System for Remediating the Status of Illegal Residents (CSRSIR).

The court acquitted him of the charge of disseminating false news but convicted him of insulting officials at CSRSIR.

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Bachelors' homes power cut: Kuwait Mu-

nicipality announced on Thursday that it disconnected electricity supply to five properties in Omariya due to violations, and issued 15 warnings in various areas of Farwaniya Governorate, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This comes as part of ongoing monitoring campaigns to deal with violations related to bachelor housing and ensure compliance with regulations.

The Public Relations Department of Kuwait Municipality stated that the Engineering Audit and Follow-up Department in Farwaniya Governorate conducted a field inspection in cooperation with relevant authorities to identify violations and take legal action against offenders.

Mol nabs man in fake arbitration certs fraud

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: The Ministry of Interior announced on Thursday that the Criminal Security Sector, represented by the Financial Crimes Department of the General Department of Criminal Investigation, apprehended an individual accused of fraud by promoting international arbitration courses under the false pretense of affiliation with the Ministry of Justice, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a statement, the ministry explained that the case originated from a complaint filed by the Ministry of Justice against a company that falsely claimed authorization to organize international arbitration courses and promoted its services using the ministry's name without any official approval.

Investigations revealed that the suspect fabricated forged certificates (arbitrator registration certificates) using a computer and falsely attributed them to the Ministry of Justice after altering

their content. This was done to deceive victims and secure contracts with them. The suspect also issued clients identification cards bearing the title "International Arbitrator," a designation not recognized in Kuwait, in an attempt to give credibility to the fraudulent activity.

The suspect confessed to the charges, and the necessary legal procedures were taken against him before he was referred to the competent authorities.

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KFF opens registration: Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) announced the opening of registration for its reinstatement course for former KFF personnel whose service ended due to explicit or implicit resignation, or discharge for medical reasons, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Applications will be accepted from May 10 to May 19. Registration will take place at the

KFF headquarters in the KFF Affairs Department on the third floor.

Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) announced the opening of registration for its reinstatement course for former KFF personnel whose service ended due to resignation (explicit or implicit) or medical discharge.

The course requirements include:

- Kuwaiti citizenship
- Good conduct and character
- At least six months must have passed since termination of service
- Medical fitness and passing a physical fitness test
- Previous service must not have ended due to conduct incompatible with military discipline
- No prior convictions for crimes involving moral turpitude or dishonesty, unless legally rehabilitated



A fireman in the midst of smoke.

KFF photo

One hurt as KFF tackles Al-Dhafer, Nuzha fires

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: One person was injured in a fire that broke out on Thursday in a house in Al-Dhafer area, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) stated in a post on its X account that firefighters from Al-Bairaq and Al-Qurain stations rushed to the location, evacuated the house, and extinguished the fire. The injured individual was handed over to paramedics. Investigations were launched to determine the cause of the fire.

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Nuzha house on fire: Fire broke out in the basement of a house in Nuzha but no casualties were recorded, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) stated on its X account that firefighters from the Shuhada and Al-Madina fire stations rushed to the location, evacuated the house, and brought the fire under control. Investigations were launched to determine the cause of the fire.

Man perishes in accident near 'Farwaniya' hospital

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: An Asian man died when a vehicle hit him in front of Farwaniya Hospital.

According to a security source, the Operations Unit at the Ministry of Interior received a report regarding a run-over accident on the road opposite Farwaniya Hospital. Security personnel and paramedics were immediately dispatched to the scene.



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'Don't invade gov't's space'

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: Kuwait Municipality launched a large-scale field inspection campaign on Thursday to uncover violations related to the unauthorized use of space in front of shops and commercial complexes in all governorates, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Fawaz Al-Mutairi, head of the Capital inspection team, explained that the campaign aims to ensure compliance with permits for outdoor spaces and public cleanliness, and to deter violators of municipal laws and regulations.

A total of 15 violations related to road occupancy were detected in Shuwaikh Industrial Area, including the unauthorized use of space in front of shops, in addition to a public cleanliness violation.

Al-Mutairi emphasized that the inspection teams will not hesitate to take regulatory measures and ensure adherence to the relevant regulations and procedures, noting that inspection teams are present in all governorates.

April water use surges

CAPT reviews 8 MPW bids

By **Mohammad Ghanem**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: The Ministry of Public Works announced that the total amount of water consumed (tertiary and quaternary treatment) in April reached 7,541,781 cubic meters -- 6,785,000 cubic meters of quaternary treated water and 757,781,000 cubic meters of tertiary treated water.

In another development, the newspaper obtained information that the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) is currently processing eight tenders of the ministry.

The agency set the dates for opening the bids in accordance with the regulations. These bids will be referred to the ministry for review and

preparation of technical recommendations, which will be submitted to the State Audit Bureau (SAB) for review, audit and approval. The ministry will then award the contract to the best bid that meets the technical specifications and requirements.

These tenders are for the removal of sand from the highways in the southern and northern parts of the country, construction of roads, bridges and rainwater drainage in new residential areas like Sabah Al-Ahmad, Khairan and Wafra, and development of the treated water system in the North and South to bring about the desired agricultural growth.

Meanwhile, acting Undersecretary of the ministry Eid Al-Rashidi held a meeting with Director of Fujairah Natural Resources Corporation Ali Qasim on the sidelines of the Fifth Made in the UAE Exhibition, during which they discussed supply chain issues.



MPW photo

Acting Undersecretary of the ministry Eid Al-Rashidi hold a meeting with Director of Fujairah Natural Resources Corporation Ali Qasim on the sidelines of the Fifth Made in the UAE Exhibition.

Sec-Gen briefed on IP, emergency response systems

Al-Budaiwi reviews efforts on boosting GCC IPTC, EMC

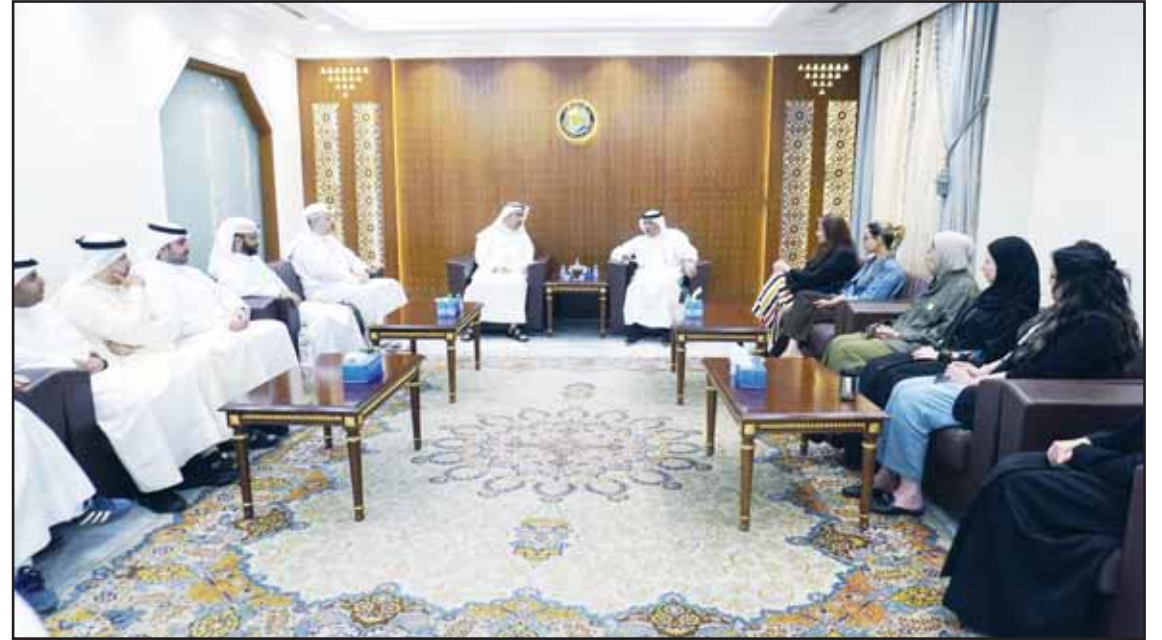
KUWAIT CITY, May 9. (KUNA): GCC Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi paid on Thursday a visit to the GCC Intellectual Property Training Centre (IPTC) and Emergency Management Center (EMC) in Kuwait to review action and efforts.

In a press release, GCC Secretariat said that Al-Budaiwi was briefed on the mechanisms of action and efforts exerted to enhance intellectual property system in a way that contributes to backing innovation and knowledge economy as well as an environment backing research and development in GCC member states.

He also listened to the EMC plans and the mechanisms of coordination and integration among GCC specialized authorities in all emergencies and crises, it added.

The visits came as part of eagerness to pursue workflow and review efforts and programs carried out by authorities affiliated to the GCC Secretariat, it noted.

Al-Budaiwi pointed out that the Secretariat is paying much attention



The Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jassem Al-Budaiwi, visits the GCC Intellectual Property Training Center and the GCC Emergency Management Center in Kuwait.

to back relevant centers and apparatuses and enable them to perform

efficiently their duties in a way that boosts GCC joint action, lauding ef-

forts in this regard, according to the statement.

Ministry addresses KD18.4m audit queries

MEWRE forms team for SAB tender review

By **Mohammad Ghanem**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. **Adel Al-Zamel** formed a team tasked to respond to the questions of the State Audit Bureau (SAB) about the KD18.437 million tender for upgrading the data collection and analysis equipment for power generation plants and main substations.

The ministry returned the ten-

der to SAB for oversight, audit, review and approval in order to commence work aimed at upgrading the equipment used for collecting data from production and transmission stations.

In another development, the ministry is establishing electric-

ity substations in Omariya, Hadiya, Adan, Farwaniya and Qurain in light of the expansion of high and extra-high voltage electricity networks and the need for continuous power supply to meet the increasing demand for electricity in these areas, taking into consideration their population density.

Another objective is to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply to accommodate the increasing quantity of power generated by power plants, since substations serve as the link between secondary substa-

tions and production plants.

Moreover, the Electricity Transmission Networks Sector at the ministry will install underground cables for the substations in these areas.

Two tenders will be issued for this project -- one for the substations and the other for the cables. The ministry included these tenders in its contracts for the current fiscal year, which the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) will offer to eligible companies registered under it and wish to participate in the bidding.



Dr. Al-Zamel



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Continued from Page 1

Abdalli Cell

the charges include obtaining illicit financial gains and harming public funds by exploiting subsidies allocated to agricultural plots.

The Public Prosecution also charged several defendants with laundering proceeds from the sale of farms and the illegal use of government subsidies, in addition to forgery in official documents and transactions related to agricultural land. The case remains under judicial review pending trial proceedings.

Joint Kuwait-UAE

led to the identification of the suspect's location in Dubai, where he was apprehended and the necessary legal procedures were taken against him, paving the way for his extradition to Kuwait to execute the court ruling against him.

The ministry commended the level of security cooperation with its counterpart in the UAE, emphasizing that this achievement proves the effectiveness of the Arab security partnership in pursuing wanted individuals and those involved in corruption and misappropriation of public funds.

It also confirmed that the security authorities continue to perform their duties to protect the national resources and uphold the rule of law.

Leisure boats

security and the safety of all.

He also stressed the need to operate the AIS in the sea as it plays a key role in enhancing maritime surveillance and facilitating monitoring operations and rapid response if needed.

Sheikh Mubarak Al-Ali further urged those wishing to sail in Joan Al Kuwait to get (QR) from the Kuwait Environment Public Authority through "Sahel" App.

Kuwait eyes

Participants stressed the need to abide by quality standards and certifications, as well as ensure the continuity of the supply chain, competitive pricing and timely delivery.

The KCCI confirmed its readiness to support companies in both countries by facilitating direct communication, strengthening partnerships between the business sectors, and transforming the outcomes of the virtual meeting into long-term trade cooperation agreements.

On the other hand, Ambassador Lomtadize expressed his happiness over the meeting, and commended the efforts of the State of Kuwait in general and the KCCI in particular.

He called for more communication and information exchange and reaffirmed the readiness of the Georgian Embassy to provide support.

The meeting included a presen-

tation of Georgian exports by the Georgian Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, highlighting the status of Georgia as a reliable source of food products, such as fruits, nuts, beverages and more, while pointing out the strategic geographic location of Georgia -- in the midst of important countries and vast markets.

Several Georgian companies in various sectors like livestock, animal feed, chilled lamb, processed fruits and vegetables, organic fruits and vegetables, apples, and blueberries conducted presentations.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the chamber voiced optimism over the outputs of the meeting, indicating that this is a progressive step towards stronger and more sustainable economic relations between Kuwait and Georgia, serving the interests of the two countries.

Both sides expressed their gratitude to all those who attended the virtual meeting.

Kuwait rolls

release that the activation of this service will help reduce time and effort, improve the accuracy of information, and facilitate the tracking of requests, all within the framework of the application's digital services.

Dr. Al-Sanad explained that use of the service begins with a visit to the clinical nutrition clinic to determine the type of dietary supplement required based on the medical report. The reports are then submitted to the clinical nutrition department for electronic processing of the request. The status of the request can be tracked via the Salem application until a notification of readiness and collection is issued.

Requests for dietary supplements can be renewed electronically through the "Salem" application by selecting "Services - Dietary Supplement Dispensing System."

The nutritional supplements included in the system comprise several specialized therapeutic products, including liquid nutritional formulas administered orally or via enteral feeding, and specialized milk for infants with certain metabolic disorders or food allergies, in addition to certain types of specialized milk for the elderly or for medical conditions requiring therapeutic nutritional support, as determined by an approved medical assessment.

Meanwhile, Dr. Al-Jazi Al-Ajmi, Head of the Therapeutic Nutrition Department at the ministry's Food and Nutrition Administration, confirmed in the statement that providing this electronic service is part of the ministry's efforts to enhance the efficiency of healthcare services and facilitate patients' access to their therapeutic nutritional needs in a safe and convenient manner.

He pointed out that the service enables patients to track their requests electronically and ensures the highest levels of accuracy and privacy.

Continued from Page 1

Harshness towards

“political dissimulation,” which even contradicts the well-known diplomatic principle of “yes ... but.”

This is why US President Donald Trump was right when he said, in the context of negotiations with Iran, “We are dealing with lunatics.” He was stating a fact because the wide range of opinions reflects a flawed vision and decision-making process.

This situation also applies to the internal situation in Iran, but with even greater severity. This is evident in the regime’s treatment of the people, who have been struggling for five decades to meet their basic needs. Around 85 percent of Iranians are reported to be at risk of poverty, while the regime offers nothing but further repression.

A US official expressed this sentiment by stating, “The Iranian regime has been severely damaged and has no option left but to further repress the people.”

This regime reminds us of Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge leader, who committed massacres against his own people in Cambodia just because he wanted to. The Khmer Rouge regime, driven by extremist ideology, was responsible for genocide and the displacement of millions, which is widely regarded as one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century.

The mullahs’ regime is not different from the Khmer Rouge. During every uprising, the Iranian regime killed tens of thousands of innocent people who were only seeking to live with dignity and escape from hardship.

Unfortunately, since 1979, this regime has always found those willing to accommodate it, particularly the United States, which has appeased it since the era of former US President Jimmy Carter, continuing through Joe Biden. This appeasement also occurred during the first administration of current President Donald Trump. This approach has allowed the Iranian regime to extend its influence into several Arab capitals, contributing to the destruction of Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Lebanon, in addition to the Gaza Strip, which it has ruled for decades.

Undoubtedly, this has weakened the political and economic resilience of Arab states, as they are constantly preoccupied with combating Iranian influence and Tehran’s proxies in the region.

To this day, this situation remains unchanged, and instability continues in several parts of the Arab region with the escalation of destruction

and genocide.

This means that any attempt at reconciliation with the Iranian regime could lead to further crises because the regime cannot survive in a stable situation. Hence, the proposed solution is a major popular revolution. The mullahs’ regime is well aware of this, and is therefore seeking to prolong crises, as it serves as a source of continuity for it.

Based on this, the Iranian regime is seen as stalling in responding to American messages, to the point that the Pakistani negotiator has repeatedly expressed frustration over these delays.

All of this leads to one conclusion - appeasement of Tehran is nothing but a waste of time, increasing the suffering of the Iranian people and further straining the global economy. Therefore, a firm stance against this regime is a mercy for its people, for the region, and for the world.

Kuwait backs

measures taken by Bahrain to safeguard its security and stability.

A ministry statement said this came during a phone call between Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef and his Bahraini counterpart Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al-Khalifa, where Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef commended efficiency of Bahraini security bodies in dealing with various security challenges.

The statement said both sides stressed the need for continued coordination and cooperation between the two sisterly countries in a manner that contributes to the area’s safety and security.

Bahrain’s Interior Ministry announced Saturday that security authorities uncovered a group linked to Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and arrested 41 suspects.

The ministry said in a statement that investigations and security reports, along with previous prosecutions related to contacts with foreign entities and support for Iranian attacks, led to uncovering the group linked to the Revolutionary Guards.

It added that 41 members of the main group were arrested and legal measures are being taken against them.

The ministry said search and investigation operations are continuing to take legal action against anyone found involved in the group’s unlawful activities.

Meanwhile, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) affirmed full solidarity with Bahrain and its measures in uncovering group linked to Iran’s

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and ideology of “Wilayat Al-Faqih” in cases involving espionage for foreign entities and sympathy with Iran’s hostile actions.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, in a statement carried by the Emirates News Agency (WAM) on Saturday, reiterated full backing of all measures taken by Bahrain to safeguard its security and sovereignty and to preserve its stability and the safety of its society.

He also praised the efficiency and vigilance of Bahraini security agencies and their success in uncovering the group and taking legal action against its members.

Furthermore, he firmly rejected of all forms of terrorism and organizations linked to foreign agendas, underscoring the importance of enhancing regional and international cooperation to counter such threats.

He reaffirmed that Bahrain’s security is an integral part of the security of the UAE and the Gulf states, renewing the UAE’s full support for all measures taken by Bahrain to maintain its security and stability and protect its national gains.

Elsewhere, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi commended the significant efforts undertaken by Bahrain’s security authorities, which led to the uncovering of group linked to Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the ideology of “Wilayat Al-Faqih.”

In a statement issued on Saturday, Al-Budaiwi said the security achievement reflects the high level of vigilance and continuous monitoring by Bahrain’s security agencies to protect the Kingdom’s capabilities and safeguard the security of its people.

He affirmed the GCC states’ full support for all measures taken by Bahrain to preserve its security and stability, uphold its sovereignty, and confront any attempts to undermine its safety or threaten the well-being of its citizens and residents.

Furthermore, Al-Budaiwi stressed that GCC countries will remain united in confronting terrorism, moving forward in strengthening the collective security system and reinforcing stability across the region.

Kuwait Embassy

Speaking at a press conference organized by the Embassy of Tajikistan to announce that the Fourth High-Level International Conference on Water will be held in Dushanbe on

May 25-28, Ambassador Zubaydov disclosed that the Kuwaiti Embassy staff will arrive soon to start official operations. He is hoping that Kuwaiti Foreign Affairs Minister Sheikh Jarrah Al-Jaber will attend the inauguration ceremony.

Asked about the Kuwaiti participation in the conference, he said Secretary General of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue Ambassador Nasser Al-Mutairi confirmed his attendance. He added that the undersecretary of the Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy might attend as well, along with the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He said the fifth session of the joint committee will be held in Dushanbe after the opening of the Kuwaiti Embassy, proving the development of relations and expansion of cooperation between the two countries in various sectors.

On cooperation in the water sector, he affirmed the continuous cooperation between Kuwait and Tajikistan, emphasizing that water issues are critical global concerns requiring stronger international cooperation and the exchange of expertise.

He added that his country will host the Fourth High-Level International Conference on Water within the framework of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028,” in cooperation with the United Nations through the “Dushanbe Water Process.”

He stated that the conference will be held amid the escalating global water challenges, stressing that water is no longer an environmental or technical issue, as it has evolved into a humanitarian, developmental, security and climate issue affecting multiple aspects of life like food security, energy, public health and urban planning.

He indicated that Tajikistan, under the leadership of President Emomali Rahmon, put water at the center of international diplomacy by promoting multilateral dialogue and building partnerships that bring together governments, international organizations, financial institutions, private sector and civil society.

He added that the 2026 conference is considered a milestone in the “Dushanbe Water Process” and lays the groundwork for the United Nations Water Conference, which will be hosted by Senegal and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

He explained that the primary objective is to transform international commitments into practical action and accelerate progress toward

achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal Six on clean water and sanitation.

He stated that the conference will serve as an international platform to discuss issues related to water resource management, climate security, transboundary cooperation, and innovation in the water sector, in addition to facilitating the exchange of experiences and practical solutions through high-level sessions and multilateral events.

On the other hand, Dr. Amira Al-Hassan, head of the United Nations Habitat mission in Kuwait and the Gulf states, said the Fourth High-Level International Conference on Water comes at a time when there is growing recognition that water is no longer an environmental or technical issue, as it is now an urban, developmental and humanitarian issue that impacts the future of cities and communities.

Kuwait reinforces

transparent protocols for resolving labor grievances in a manner that preserves their human dignity.

The forum, convened from May 5-8, serves as the primary global platform for Member States to assess progress on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM).

Al-Mulla emphasized that Kuwait has adopted a holistic strategy to combat human trafficking. This framework is anchored in the criminalization of all forms of exploitation, the enforcement of a robust National Referral Mechanism, and the treatment of victims as individuals entitled to full protection under international human rights standards.

Furthermore, she highlighted a comprehensive overhaul of Kuwait’s legislative landscape. This includes modernized statutes governing anti-trafficking efforts, domestic worker protections, and foreign residency regulations.

Central to these reforms is the National Strategy (2025-2028) to combat trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, which aims to enhance governance and the efficacy of protective measures.

The diplomat noted that Kuwait’s balanced migration policy aligns labor market requirements with human rights obligations, consistent with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Kuwait Vision 2035.

To foster a “decent work” environment, the state is standardizing contractual relationships, adopting

ethical recruitment practices, and refining labor inspection systems in collaboration with international organizations.

Al-Mulla also underscored the state’s commitment to providing essential social safety nets, including universal healthcare, legal aid, and specialized shelters for workers in distress.

On the technological front, she announced that Kuwait has transitioned to an integrated digital labor management system. This infrastructure supports evidence-based policymaking while enhancing transparency and administrative efficiency.

Al-Mulla noted that Kuwait has submitted its second Voluntary National Review (VNR), a testament to the country’s ongoing evolution in migration management.

She further cited the strengthening of bilateral partnerships to regulate recruitment, alongside a humanitarian shift that views detention as a last resort, prioritizing humane alternatives.

The Second Secretary concluded by affirming Kuwait’s resolve to continue working alongside the international community to ensure migration remains safe, orderly, and humane.

Justice Ministry

He pointed out that this move puts national expertise at the heart of the technical support system for the judiciary, thus, transferring all expert responsibilities in various specializations to Kuwaiti experts, while improving the quality of technical reports and boosting public confidence in their outcomes.

He indicated that the plan includes activating the fingerprint attendance system starting June 1 to instill discipline at the workplace.

He added the plan includes the weekly open days for acting Director of the department Dr. Fawaz Jassim Boudi and his deputies for governorate affairs to address the concerns of individuals and lawyers.

He revealed that the next phase will witness the development of the electronic services of the department, redistribution of work among experts through the implementation of a more equitable and efficient mechanism, and periodic rotation of experts to guarantee transparency and improve performance. He stressed that the development of the department is vital in modernizing the justice system in the country.



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People take photos near a John Harvard statue, (left), on the Harvard University campus on Jan 2, 2024, in Cambridge, Mass. (AP)

Canvas system online after cyberattack disrupted thousands of schools

WASHINGTON, May 9, (AP) — Tens of thousands of students studying for final exams around the world Friday regained access to a key online learning system after a cyberattack had earlier knocked it offline, throwing schools and universities into turmoil.

Elizabeth Polo was in a creative writing class at the University of Maryland late Thursday afternoon when a classmate shouted, "Canvas got hacked." A message from a hacking collective flashed on her computer screen.

"Our whole class just like was like freaking out about it," said Polo, a junior. "Our poor professor was trying to get everyone to calm down but it was just kind of chaos."

Across academia, the outage set off panic and confusion as students and faculty members found themselves locked out of a platform they rely on to manage grades and access course notes and assignments. Colleges scrambled to reschedule final exams as students lost any way to access materials they needed to study.

Instructure, the company behind Canvas, said in an update late Thurs-

day that the system was available for most users.

"Instructure discovered the unauthorized actor involved in our ongoing security incident made changes to the pages that appeared when some students and teachers were logged in," Instructure said Friday in a statement. "Out of an abundance of caution, we immediately took Canvas offline to contain access and further investigate."

Instructure also said it confirmed that the unauthorized actor exploited an issue related to its Free-For-Teacher accounts. The company has temporarily shut down those accounts.

Instructure did not say whether it paid a ransom nor has it said what happened with the compromised data.

Rich in digitized data, the nation's schools are prime targets for far-flung criminal hackers, who are assiduously locating and scooping up sensitive files that not long ago were committed to paper in locked cabinets. Past attacks have hit Minneapolis Public Schools and the Los

Angeles Unified School District.

A hacking group called Shiny-Hunters claimed responsibility for the breach at Canvas, said Luke Connolly, a threat analyst at the cybersecurity firm Emsisoft. The hacking group posted online that nearly 9,000 schools worldwide were affected, with billions of private messages and other records accessed, Connolly said.

The message that flashed on Polo's computer screen urged individual schools to reach out directly to the hacking group to negotiate a settlement and threatened to leak data if they didn't. She said that Canvas later took that message down, replacing it with a message saying the site was undergoing scheduled maintenance.

Just before 1 a.m. Friday, Polo was able to submit an assignment on Canvas, but she now worries personal data has been compromised.

The outage happened just as a deadline arrived for semester-long projects in one of Gwyneth Doland's journalism classes at the University of New Mexico.

Chaotic scene erupts in Statehouse

Alabama lawmakers pass plan for House primary if courts allow different districts

MONTGOMERY, Ala., May 9, (AP) — A national redistricting battle over US House seats swung toward Republicans on Friday, as a Virginia court invalidated a Democratic gerrymandering effort and Republicans in Alabama approved plans for new primary elections if courts allow GOP-drawn House districts to be used in the November midterm elections.

The Alabama legislation, which was signed quickly into law by Republican Gov. Kay Ivey, is part of an effort by Republicans in Southern states to capitalize on a recent US Supreme Court ruling that significantly weakened Voting Rights Act protections for minorities.

At the Alabama Statehouse, a chaotic scene erupted as one protester was dragged from the packed House gallery by security officers. Republican lawmakers in Louisiana and South Carolina also faced staunch opposition from civil rights activists and Democrats as they presented plans Friday to redraw their congressional districts.

The action came just a day after Tennessee enacted new congressional districts that carve up a Democratic-held, Black-majority district in Memphis. The state Democratic Party sued on Friday, seeking to prevent the districts from being used until after this year's elections because of the tight time frame.

Even before last week's Supreme Court ruling in a Louisiana case, Republicans and Democrats already were engaged in a fierce redistricting battle, each seeking an edge in the midterm elections that will determine control of the closely divided House. That battle tilted further toward Republicans when the Virginia Supreme Court ruled Friday that Democratic lawmakers had violated constitutional requirements when placing a redistricting amendment on the ballot.

Since President Donald Trump prodded Texas to redraw its congressional districts last summer, Republicans think they could gain as many as 14 seats from new districts in several states while Democrats think they could gain up to six seats. But the parties may not get everything they sought, because the gerrymandering could backfire in some highly competitive districts.

Demonstrators outside the Alabama Statehouse on Friday shouted "fight for democracy" and "down with white supremacy."

"I was out there in 1965 marching for the right to vote, and now we are back here in 2026 doing the same thing," Betty White Boynton said.

During debate inside the statehouse, Black lawmakers said the Republican legislation harks back to the state's shameful Jim Crow history. The new law would ignore the May 19 primary results for some congressional seats and direct the governor to schedule a new primary under revised districts, if a court allows it. Lawmakers also approved a similar bill related to state Senate districts.



US Rep Justin J. Pearson, D-Memphis, speaks during a rally after a special session of the state legislature to redraw US Congressional voting maps on May 7 in Nashville, Tenn. (AP)

"What happened here today is that we were set back as a people to the days of Reconstruction," Democratic state Sen. Roger Smitherman said after the vote.

Senate Democrats shouted "hell no" and "stop the steal" as senators voted. The special primary would happen only if the courts agree to lift an injunction that put a court-selected map in place until after the 2030 census. That order required a second district where Black voters are the majority or close to it, resulting in the 2024 election of Democratic Rep. Shomari Figures, who is Black. If a court lifts the injunction, Republican officials want to put in place a map lawmakers drew in 2023 - which was rejected by a federal court - that could allow them to reclaim Figures' district.

"With this special session successfully behind us, Alabama now stands ready to quickly act, should the courts issue favorable rulings in our ongoing redistricting cases," Ivey said in a statement.

On Friday evening, however, a three-judge panel rejected Alabama's re-

quest to lift their injunction and pave the way for changing maps. The request remains pending before the US Supreme Court.

Democrats had hoped to gain as many as four additional US House seats under new districts narrowly approved by voters in April. But the state Supreme Court invalidated the measure because it said the Democratic-led legislature violated procedural requirements.

To place a constitutional amendment before voters, the Virginia Constitution requires lawmakers to approve it in two separate legislative sessions, with a state election sandwiched in between. The legislature's initial approval of the redistricting amendment occurred last October - while early voting was underway but before it concluded for the general election. The legislature's second vote on the amendment occurred after a new legislative session began in January.

The state Supreme Court said the initial legislative approval came too late, noting that more than 1.3 million ballots already had been cast, about 40% of the total votes ultimately cast.

A Louisiana Senate committee considered several redistricting options Friday from Republican state Sen. John "Jay" Morris that would eliminate either both or one of the current Black-majority U.S. House districts.

"Every one of these maps reduces Black voting power in every one of the districts. And I think that's a problem," Democratic state Sen. Sam Jenkins told Morris.

Morris denied that the proposed redistricting maps were racially discriminatory. He said his goal was to be "respectful of the traditional boundaries" of the state's six congressional districts.

"I don't think we should care that much about race," Morris said.

The only four Black congressmen who have represented Louisiana since the end of the Reconstruction era appealed to state senators to keep two majority-Black districts in a state where one-third of voters are Black.

Leona Tate said she was escorted as a 6-year-old girl by federal marshals through a racist white mob trying to prevent her from desegregating a New Orleans elementary school. She told lawmakers she felt they were taking a step backward in time by reducing Black political power.

"You have a choice in front of you: You can draw a map that reflects what Louisiana actually is -- a state where Black voices belong in the halls of Congress," said Tate, 71. "Or you can draw a map that tells my grandchildren that their votes don't count, that their faces don't matter and that the progress I helped build with my own two feet as a 6-year-old can be erased at will."

Moscow marks Victory Day with parade

Russia and Ukraine agree to 3-day ceasefire

MOSCOW, May 9, (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday voiced confidence of victory in Ukraine as he oversaw a military parade on Red Square commemorating the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II.

Security was tight in Moscow as Putin and several foreign leaders attended the parade, even as a US-brokered three-day ceasefire eased concerns about possible Ukrainian attempts to disrupt the festivities.

Putin, in power for more than a quarter-century, has used Victory Day, Russia's most important secular holiday, to showcase the country's military might and rally support for his military action in Ukraine, now in its fifth year.

Speaking at the parade, Putin hailed Russian troops fighting in Ukraine, declaring that they "face an aggressive force that is armed and supported by the entire bloc of NATO."

"Victory has always been and will be ours," Putin said as columns of troops lined up on Red Square. "The key to success is our moral strength, courage and valor, our unity and ability to endure anything and overcome any challenge."

But this year, for the first time in nearly two decades, the parade took place without tanks, missiles and



Russian S-400 anti-aircraft missile system launchers roll during the Victory Day military parade in Moscow, Russia, on May 9, 2025, during celebrations of the 80th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany during the World War II. (AP)

other heavy weapons, aside from a traditional flyover of combat jets.

Officials said the sudden change of format was due to the "current operational situation" and pointed to the threat of Ukrainian attacks. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the authorities have taken "additional security measures."

Russia declared a unilateral ceasefire for Friday and Saturday, while Ukrainian President Volodymyr

Zelenskyy announced a truce which was supposed to begin on May 6, but neither of them held as the parties traded blame for continuing attacks.

U.S. President Donald Trump announced Friday that Russia and Ukraine have bowed to his request for a ceasefire running Saturday through Monday and an exchange of prisoners, declaring that the break in fighting could be the "beginning of the end" of the war.

UK's Starmer won't quit after local elections deliver losses for Labour

LONDON, May 9, (AP) — British Prime Minister Keir Starmer insisted Friday that he will not resign after bruising elections that saw his governing Labour Party suffer big losses and the hard-right Reform UK make major gains.

The local and regional elections were widely seen as an unofficial referendum on Starmer, whose popularity has plummeted since he led the center-left Labour Party to power less than two years ago.

Voters have grown impatient for economic growth and dramatic change after 14 years of Conservative government, and many Labour lawmakers have become despairing at the government's failure to deliver. Starmer said he took responsibility for the "very tough" results but would not quit.

"The voters have sent a message about the pace of change, how they want their lives improved," he said. "I was elected to meet those challenges, and I'm not going to walk away from those challenges and plunge the country into chaos."

Reform UK, led by the veteran nationalist politician Nigel Farage, won hundreds of local council seats in working-class areas in England's north, such as Sunderland, that were solid Labour turf for decades, and also made gains from the Conserva-



Britain's Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer and James Murray, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, (background, left), meet Labour Party members at Kingsdown Methodist Church Hall, in Ealing, west London on May 8, a day after the local elections. (AP)

tives in areas like the county of Essex, east of London. Reform, which ran on an anti-establishment and anti-immigration message, did particularly well in areas that backed the U.K. to leave the European Union in the historic Brexit vote in 2016.

Farage said the results in England, as well as those in Scotland and Wales, where elections to their semiautonomous parliaments were held, marked

a "historic change in British politics."

Labour also lost ground to the Green Party, whose popularity has risen under self-described "eco populist" leader Zack Polanski. The Greens beat Labour to win the mayoral race in London's Hackney borough and gained hundreds of council seats in urban centers, including in London and Manchester, as well as university towns, such as Cambridge.

America

Deadly bear attack in Glacier National Park:

The body of a missing hiker has been found in Glacier National Park in what authorities say appears to be the first deadly bear attack at the iconic Montana park since 1998.

"His injuries are consistent with those sustained by a bear encounter," the National Park Service said in a written statement Thursday. "Wildlife and law enforcement personnel are currently assessing the area for bear activity and any ongoing public safety concerns." (AP)

No injuries reported after refinery blast:

No injuries were reported after an explosion and a fire at a refinery in the New Orleans area on Friday, officials said.

Residents near Chalmette Refining said they heard an explosion at around 1 p.m. The refinery is in Chalmette, located about 10 miles (16 kilometers) east of New Orleans. (AP)

Europe

Bomb explodes at Dutch PM's party HQs:

A bomb that was pushed through a letter slot exploded at the party headquarters of Dutch Prime Minister Rob Jetten but didn't injure anyone, and the centrist leader vowed Friday not to be intimidated by the attack.

Police said they had arrested a 37-year-old suspect in the bombing late Thursday at the headquarters of the centrist D66 party in The Hague, but declined to release any further details including any suspected motive. (AP)

Greece probes mystery military sea drone:

Authorities in Greece are investigating an armed unmanned surface vessel that washed ashore on an island off the country's western coast.

A fisherman on the island of Lefkada found the craft inside a coastal cave Thursday and towed it to a nearby harbor. It was moved Friday to a naval base on the mainland for inspection, according to Greece's public broadcaster, ERT. (AP)



Hungarian Prime Minister-elect Peter Magyar gestures before the inauguration ceremony at the Parliament in Budapest, Hungary on May 9. (AP)

Hungary's Magyar set to be sworn in as prime minister

BUDAPEST, Hungary, May 9, (AP) — Hungary's incoming prime minister, Péter Magyar, arrived Saturday at the Parliament building to be sworn into office, ending Viktor Orbán's autocratic 16-year rule.

Magyar's center-right Fidesz party defeated Orbán's nationalist-populist Fidesz in a stunning blow last month, gaining more votes and seats in Parliament than any other party in Hungary's post-Communist history.

The win, which gave Tisza a two-thirds parliamentary majority, will allow it to roll back many of the policies that gave Orbán a reputation among many of his critics as a far-right authoritarian, clamp down on alleged corruption and transform political dynamics within the European Union, where the former prime minister had upended the bloc by frequently vetoing key decisions.

On Saturday, Magyar entered the sprawling neo-Gothic parliament building alongside 140 of his party representatives, controlling 141 seats in Hungary's 199-seat parliament.

Southeast Asia will remain in this limbo situation until the Iran war ends: Marcos

Alarmed ASEAN leaders adopt crisis plan to mitigate backlash from Middle East war

CEBU, Philippines, May 9, (AP): Southeast Asian leaders adopted a contingency plan Friday to mitigate the impact of the Iran war on their people and economies but acknowledged it will be difficult to enforce complex steps like establishing a regional fuel reserve to ensure a steady supply.

The Philippines, among the worst affected by fuel price spikes caused by the Iran war, hosted the group's annual summit on the central island province of Cebu. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ordered the summit stripped of the traditional pomp and pageantry in keeping with the economic headwinds worldwide.

ASEAN's 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 and fuel stockpile and 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, were also part of the crisis plan.

The contingency steps will be implemented immediately but the establishment of a regional fuel stockpile and power grid is a complex matter and may take a long time, Marcos said.

"Let's talk about the fuel reserve. Is it going to be in one single place? Is it going to be scattered through the whole of ASEAN?" he asked.

A regional power grid that allows countries to trade electricity has been considered for years but has only been realized "at a fairly small level," Marcos said, but added the leaders were unfazed.

"They are committed to making this succeed because everyone is suffering and everyone wants to get out of this situation," he said.

A key dilemma of the ASEAN leaders was how to carry out large-scale evacuations from the Middle East, where more than a million of their citizens work and live, if widespread hostilities flared up again.

Several Southeast Asian citizens



From left: Myanmar's Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Hau Khan Sum, Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, Thailand's Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, East Timor's Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao, Vietnam's Prime Minister Le Minh Hung, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., Singapore's Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, Brunei's Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, Indonesia's President Prabowo Subianto, Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Manet, and Laos' Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone stand on the stage for a group photo during the opening ceremony of the 48th ASEAN Summit and Related Meetings in Cebu, Philippines on May 8. (AP)

have been killed since the United States and Israel launched military strikes on Feb. 28 against Iran. The hostilities have continued sporadically despite a month-old ceasefire, especially in the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

A joint declaration issued by the leaders called on the regional bloc's 11 state members to share information and strengthen coordination with international organizations "to ensure the safety and welfare of ASEAN nationals in affected areas."

Marcos told fellow leaders during their summit that the Iran war exposed the weaknesses of Southeast Asian nations to external shocks and warned that recovery could take years even if the war ends now.

"Even if the tensions de-escalate in time, the damage to critical infrastructure, to vital systems and trust in general will continue to be felt for years to come," Marcos said.

Known for their conservative and careful rhetoric, top delegates to the ASEAN summit avoided blunt expressions of their disappoint-

ment over the continuing hostilities. Thailand's Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuangketkeow was more emphatic, calling for the current ceasefire between the US and Iran to be extended and assurances for the safe passage of ships through the Strait of Hormuz.

"This war should not have occurred in the first place," Sihasak told AP in a brief interview and added that all ASEAN states were alarmed. "We don't know what the objectives are right?"

Southeast Asia will remain "in this limbo situation" until the Iran war ends, Marcos said.

"Until the fighting ends, until the bombing ends, then it is very difficult to put together any kind of solution," he said.

Despite the focus on the Middle East, the leaders took up major regional flash points, including the South China Sea territorial disputes involving Beijing, a five-year civil war in Myanmar and a recent border conflict between Thailand and Cambodia.

Paraguay, Taiwan reaffirm ties

TAIPEI, Taiwan, May 9, (AP): Paraguay's President Santiago Peña said Friday that his country deeply values its ties with Taiwan, in a show of solidarity with the island democracy a day after Beijing asked the South American nation to sever diplomatic relations with Taipei.

Paraguay is the only country in South America to recognize Taiwan and one of just 12 worldwide. Beijing considers Taiwan its own territory and has ramped up a campaign over the past few years to lure Taiwan's diplomatic allies, in addition to increasing



Peña

military pressure around the island.

At a military honors event, Peña said the ceremony symbolizes the unwavering determination between both sides to continuously deepen their ties and partnership, according to an interpreter. He said based on the foundation of shared values such as democracy, freedom and human rights, it will continue to support Taiwan and promote bilateral strategic partnership.

"Paraguay highly values the relationship," the interpreter quoted him as saying outside the Taiwan's presidential office.

Taiwan's President Lai Ching-te thanked his counterpart and Paraguay's government for speaking out for Taiwan and firmly supporting Taiwan's international participation.

"I believe the friendship between Taiwan and Paraguay will further deepen and their cooperation will become closer through the visit of President Peña," Lai said.

The reaffirmation of ties came after Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian on Thursday urged Paraguayan authorities to "come to the right side of the history as soon as possible" and sever diplomatic ties with Taiwan. He said the one-China principle is a basic norm in international relations and 183 countries have formed diplomatic relations with China.

On Friday, Lin made similar comments at a press briefing in Beijing, again urging Paraguayan authorities to sever ties with Taiwan.

In their bilateral meeting at the presidential office Friday, Peña said his country solemnly called on the international community to recognize that the people of Taiwan should have the right to make their own decisions based on the principles of democracy and fairness.

"I want to stress that excluding Taiwan from the important United Nations system is not only unfair, but also undermines the legitimacy of the United Nations as the most representative organization of democratic countries in the world," he said.

Lai and Peña presided over the signing of bilateral agreements, including one memorandum of understanding about artificial intelligence computing center investment.

In an interview with Taiwan's Central News Agency, Peña said he met Honduran President Nasry Asfura on the sidelines of an event before arriving Thursday for the four-day trip.



In this photo released by the Badan Geologi, the geological agency of Indonesia's Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Mount Dukono releases volcanic materials during an eruption in North Halmahera, Indonesia on May 8. (AP)

Volcanic eruption on remote Indonesian island kills 3 hikers

JAKARTA, Indonesia, May 9, (AP): An explosive eruption Friday of Mount Dukono on the remote Indonesian island Halmahera killed three hikers and injured five who were climbing in a restricted area around the active volcano, authorities said.

About 20 climbers had set out Thursday to ascend the nearly 1,355-meter (4,445-foot) volcano in defiance of safety restrictions, said North Halmahera police chief Erlichson Pasaribu.

They became stranded when Dukono erupted at 7:41 am local time, spewing a thick ash column that rose about 10 kilometers (6 miles) above the summit. The eruption was recorded on seismographs for more than 16 minutes, Indonesia's Geological Agency said.

"They were aware that climbing was prohibited as the mountain is a restricted zone due to its high alert status, but insisted on going ahead," Pasaribu said in a television interview.

Rescue teams were deployed after receiving an emergency signal from the mountain area. Two Singaporean men and one Indonesian woman died at the scene, Pasaribu said.

As of Friday afternoon, 17 climbers had been safely evacuated, including seven Singaporean nationals and two Indonesians who joined the rescue operation and provided information on climbing routes of the victims before the eruption, National Disaster Management Agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari said. Five of those evacuated were reported injured.

The bodies had not yet been recov-

ered because continued eruptions and dangerous conditions prevented rescue teams from reaching the location.

Muhari said the search and rescue operation was halted late Friday due to darkness, and would resume early Saturday.

The Center for Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation has long banned activities within a 4-kilometer (2.5-mile) danger zone radius of Dukono's crater, citing hazards such as volcanic explosions, ashfall and toxic gases. Officials believe the hikers were inside the restricted zone at the time of the eruption.

Despite warnings on social media and signs at the site, "many people remain determined to climb, driven by the desire to create online content," Pasaribu said.

Mount Dukono is one of Indonesia's most active volcanoes and has been erupting almost continuously since 1933. Indonesia sits along the Pacific "Ring of Fire," an area of intense seismic and volcanic activity, and is home to more than 120 active volcanoes.

Authorities also have warned of possible secondary hazards, including volcanic mudflows, especially during heavy rain, which could travel along rivers flowing from the volcano's slopes.

Volcanic activity at Dukono remains high, and authorities said it was at the second highest alert level. Authorities said the volcano has shown an increase in explosive magmatic eruptions since late March, with an average of about 95 eruptions a day.

'Verdict could pave the way for impeachment'

S.Africa court revives president cash scandal

JOHANNESBURG, May 9, (AP): South Africa's highest court has set aside a vote by lawmakers to reject a report that found credible evidence of wrongdoing by President Cyril Ramaphosa related to a long-running cash scandal. The court verdict Friday could pave the way for impeachment proceedings against him.

Ramaphosa had survived a motion to face impeachment proceedings in 2022, when lawmakers from his African National Congress party voted to reject a scathing report that recommended a full investigation into why he had \$580,000 in cash stashed in a couch, which he reported missing in a theft at his Phala Phala game farm.

The Constitutional Court ruling means the report must now be referred to an impeachment committee for a full investigation, which may decide to vote on impeaching Ramaphosa.

"In the event that the panel (of inquiry) concludes that sufficient evidence exists, the matter must be referred to the impeachment committee," Chief Justice Mandisa Maya



A supporter of Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) carries a placard outside the Constitutional Court, in Johannesburg, South Africa on May 8. (AP)

said.

Julius Malema, the leader of the opposition Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), has called for Rama-

phosa to immediately resign and for impeachment proceedings against him to begin.

His party was one of the opposition parties that took the matter to court, accusing ANC lawmakers of using their parliamentary majority to shield Ramaphosa from accountability.

"Ramaphosa is going to jail. With the amount of shenanigans and evidence that will come out of that impeachment process, there is no way that Ramaphosa is not going to jail," Malema told a crowd of supporters after the ruling was delivered.

Ramaphosa has denied any wrongdoing, claiming that the cash was proceeds from the sale of buffalos at his farm.

He said he had reported the theft to the head of his security, but a parliamentary inquiry that probed the incident rejected his version and recommended a full investigation by an impeachment committee.

The long-running scandal has been a political problem for Ramaphosa, with opposition parties calling for his resignation.

GAESA targeted

Rubio defends US sanctions on Cuba

HAVANA, May 9, (AP): US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Friday defended the Trump administration's decision to slap new sanctions on Cuba, the largest of which is against Grupo de Administración Empresarial S.A., a business conglomerate operated by the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces.

In addition to GAESA and its leader, the sanctions announced Thursday include Moa Nickel, a Cuban joint venture with Canada's Sherritt International, which immediately announced it would withdraw from the business, ending a 32-year presence on the island.

The May 1 executive order and the new designations announced May 7 significantly expand the legal authority through which the US government can levy sanctions on third-country nationals and firms, explained Lee Schlenker, a research associate at the Quincy Institute's Global South program, a Washington think tank.

"Not only are they subject to having their assets frozen but their U.S. accounts as well as their travel to the



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio speaks during a press conference at the US Embassy in Rome on May 8. (AP)

US, that of their shareholders, investors or employees," said Schlenker. "This is bound to have an extremely significant impact of the presence of foreign companies" in Cuba.

Economist Pavel Vidal, a Cuba expert at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Colombia, told The Associated Press that the measures are

"very concerning" for an economy already "practically paralyzed." The U.S. has blocked fuel shipments to Cuba since January, further escalating the island's yearslong economic crisis. Vidal noted that the new sanctions would likely deter GAESA's remaining partners, saying that "very few will risk defying them."

Fernández sworn in as Costa Rica president

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, May 9, (AP): Laura Fernández was sworn in Friday as president of Costa Rica alongside her predecessor, outgoing President Rodrigo Chaves, an ally of US President Donald Trump who will serve dual roles as her minister of the presidency and minister of finance.

Fernández, a political scientist who is the second woman to lead the Central American country, promises a seamless continuation of the political movement established by Chaves. His appointments in the new administration grant him an additional four years of legal immunity, shielding him from several investigations into alleged corruption led by the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Supreme Electoral Tribunal.

One of the primary responsibilities of Costa Rica's minister of the presidency is to mediate between the executive branch and the Legislative Assembly.

The move to keep Chaves in the administration is unprecedented in Costa Rican politics and will offer the outgoing leader incredible sway over the next government. It marks another bold move by Chaves' political movement, which has tested the Central American nation's democratic norms.



Presidential candidate Laura Fernández addresses supporters after polls closed in San Jose, Costa Rica on Feb 1. (AP)

Probe on Air India crash that killed 260 enters final stage – aviation minister

NEW DELHI, May 9, (Xinhua): India's federal civil aviation minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu said on Friday the probe into the Air India airplane crash that killed 260 people last year has reached the final stage, and the final report will be released within one month.

"As per the information we have received, the investigation is in its final stages. However, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) is conducting the probe independently, and we have provided them with all the resources they require. We expect the process may take around another month," Kinjarapu said.

The minister made the remarks on the sidelines of an event in the western state of Gujarat.



Officials inspect the site of Air India plane crash on the roof of a building in Ahmedabad, India, June 13, 2025. (AP)

Kuwait oil price surges to \$114.23 pb

KUWAIT CITY, May 9, (KUNA): Kuwait crude oil price rose by 11 cents to reach USD 114.23 per barrel (pb) in Friday's trading, compared to USD 114.12 pb Thursday, Kuwait Petroleum Corpora-

tion (KPC) said Saturday.

In global markets, Brent crude increased by USD 1.23 to settle at USD 101.29 pb, while West Texas Intermediate rose by 61 cents to USD 95.42 pb.

Business

Survey shows improved customer vigilance but gaps in password, OTP, and fraud reporting awareness

Gulf Bank releases findings of financial awareness survey conducted as part of the 'Diraya' campaign

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: Gulf Bank has announced the findings of a comprehensive financial awareness survey conducted among its customers as part of the nationwide "Diraya" (Let's Be Aware) campaign led by the Central Bank of Kuwait. Conducted over one month, the study surveyed 189 customers who voluntarily participated through the bank's Contact Center. The aim was to measure customer awareness of financial risks and digital fraud, while guiding the future direction of the bank's awareness initiatives.

On this occasion, Najla Aleisa, Chief Marketing Officer, Gulf Bank said: "Continuous communication is at the heart of everything we do through 'Diraya.' These results show that when awareness messages are delivered consistently, clearly, and through the right channels, people respond positively."

Gulf Bank reaffirmed its commitment to protecting the financial security and digital well-being of its customers, emphasizing that the "Diraya" campaign remains a core part of that commitment and will continue evolving to address emerging risks effectively.

The "Diraya" campaign reflects Gulf Bank's commitment to strengthening financial literacy and digital security in Kuwait. As fraudsters increasingly use artificial intelligence to create convincing scams, deepfake communications, and automated attacks, customer awareness has become more important than ever. With digital banking now part of everyday life, Gulf Bank considers informed customers a key line of defense against financial crime. The study provides measurable insight into customer behavior and identifies areas requiring stronger awareness efforts.

The survey examined customer behavior across several areas of digital financial safety, including phishing attempts, public Wi-Fi usage, OTP security, password management, fraud reporting awareness, and sources of financial information.

Study Findings

1. Progress in Recognizing and Ignoring Suspicious Communications

One of the most encouraging findings was that 82% of respondents reported ignoring suspicious messages and links. This reflects a positive behavioral shift and demonstrates the impact of Gulf Bank's awareness campaigns in helping customers recognize phishing attempts and fraudulent communications.

Phishing remains one of the most widespread forms of digital fraud globally, making this level of customer vigilance an important achievement.

2. Safer Behavior on Public Networks

The study found that 72% of participants avoid using public Wi-Fi networks for banking transactions. This indicates increasing awareness of the risks associated with unsecured networks and the importance of protecting personal financial data.

The result also suggests that awareness messaging around secure digital banking practices has been effective.

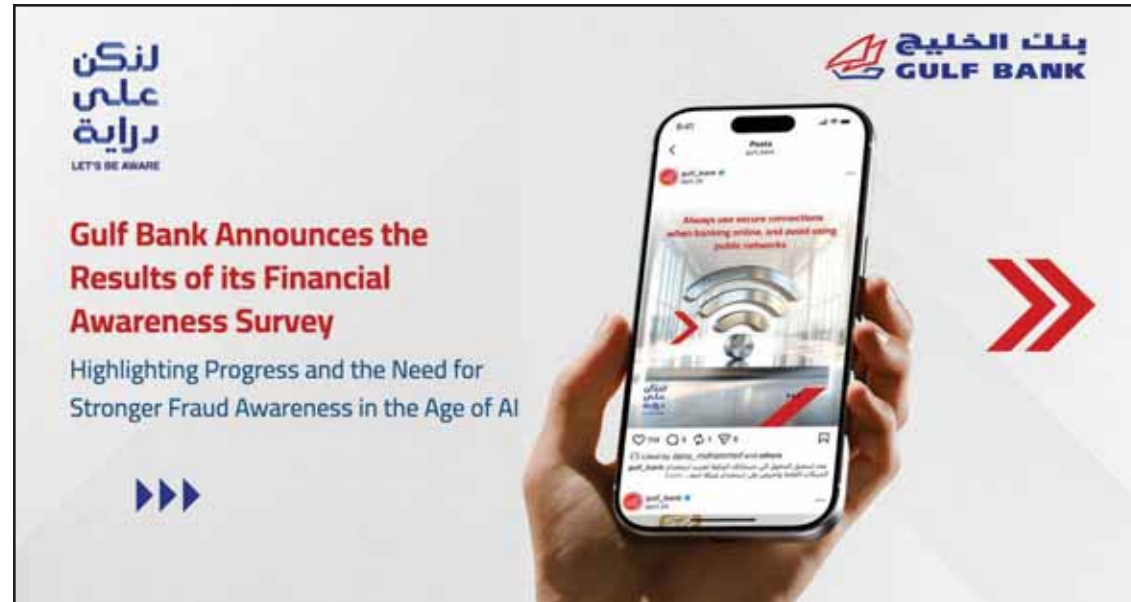
3. OTP Sharing: A Persistent and Serious Risk

Despite the positive findings, the study highlighted several concerns requiring immediate attention. Most



■ "These results tell us that when you speak consistently, clearly, and through the right channels, people listen and they act. We are genuinely encouraged to see our community not only receiving the message but embracing it and passing it on."

Najla Aleisa: Chief Marketing Officer, Gulf Bank



Key Findings at a Glance

- 82% of customers now disregard suspicious messages and links
- 72% avoid conducting banking transactions over public Wi-Fi networks
- 16% of respondents admitted to sharing their one-time password (OTP) with third parties
- 52% do not use the correct channel for reporting fraudulent activity
- 54% rely on social media to regularly update their passwords or PINs
- 50% were unaware of social media as their primary source of financial awareness information

notably, 16% of respondents admitted sharing their one-time password (OTP) with another person.

Although the percentage may appear limited, OTP sharing presents a serious security threat because OTPs are designed as a final verification layer intended only

for the account holder. Sharing them can lead to unauthorized account access and financial fraud. The findings underline the need for stronger and more frequent awareness messaging on OTP security.

4. Password Hygiene: A Significant Gap

The study also revealed that 52% of respondents do not regularly update their passwords or PINs. Maintaining static credentials significantly increases vulnerability to unauthorized access, especially following data breaches or credential theft.

The findings emphasize the need for focused campaigns encouraging customers to adopt stronger password habits and regularly update their login information.

5. Fraud Reporting Awareness: Room for Improvement

Another important finding showed that 50% of participants were unaware of the correct channel for reporting suspected fraud. This gap may delay fraud reporting and reduce the bank's ability to respond quickly to emerging threats.

In response, Gulf Bank has increased the visibility of fraud reporting information across "Diraya" campaign materials, including SMS messages, in-app notifications, and ATM screens.

6. Social Media as the Dominant Awareness Channel

When asked where they receive financial awareness information, 54% of respondents identified social media as their primary source, ahead of traditional media, SMS, and in-branch communication.

This confirms the importance of Gulf Bank's social media platforms as a key channel for delivering awareness content. The bank plans to continue investing in engaging and reliable digital communication to maximize customer reach.

Gulf Bank's Response and Next Steps

Gulf Bank confirmed that the findings will shape the next phase of the "Diraya" campaign. Rather than applying a broad approach, the bank will focus on the highest-risk behaviors identified in the study, particularly OTP security, password management, and fraud reporting awareness.

The bank will develop targeted awareness content tailored to different customer segments and distributed mainly through social media, while also maintaining visibility across SMS, mobile applications, ATM screens, and Contact Center interactions.

Gulf Bank also emphasized its commitment to continuous evaluation and improvement. Future studies will measure progress against the current findings to ensure awareness efforts remain effective and evidence-based.

The Evolving Threat Landscape: AI-Powered Fraud

The importance of the "Diraya" campaign is reinforced by the rapidly evolving fraud landscape. Cybercriminals increasingly use artificial intelligence to launch sophisticated and difficult-to-detect attacks.

AI-generated phishing messages now closely resemble legitimate communications, while deepfake voice technology allows fraudsters to impersonate trusted individuals such as bank employees or government officials. Automated systems can also test stolen credentials rapidly, exploiting weak or unchanged passwords within seconds.

These developments make risky behaviors such as OTP sharing, weak passwords, and using unsecured public networks even more dangerous. Gulf Bank recognizes that awareness campaigns must continue evolving to keep pace with emerging threats and increasingly sophisticated fraud tactics.

Other Voices

Petroleum products caught between gasoline & jet fuel

By **Kamel Al-Harami**
Independent Oil Analyst

CONSUMERS in the United States are facing two challenges - high motor gasoline prices and high jet fuel costs. Both products are essential for the summer travel season, yet both are currently recording high prices with little relief in sight.

Meanwhile, the Arabian Gulf is closed, with no crude oil, refined products, or gas exports, leading to a shortage of important energy supplies during this critical time of year. This situation is contributing to flight cancellations and disruptions that could potentially create chaos in the global travel industry during its peak season.

Asia and Europe are also losing refining capacity, estimated at around 2.2 million barrels in March and 4 million barrels in April. At the same time, reduced output of refined products in the Middle East, including jet fuel and gasoline, is causing panic during peak travel demand.

With no way of replacing them while the Arabian Gulf remains closed and almost all Gulf refineries are shut down, product prices continue to rise to higher levels. Consumers are searching for any available supply, regardless of source.

We do not know when the oil market will return to normal or how long oil-producing countries will remain without income and cash flow. As we enter the third month without revenue, losses are estimated at around \$2 billion per day.

Fortunately, most Gulf countries have sufficient funds

and cash reserves available. Alternatively, they can resort to borrowing from international banks or engaging in cash swaps, which means borrowing money today and repaying it after a set period, such as three months, usually with a premium or interest depending on the duration and terms of the agreement.

These arrangements are often backed by underground oil reserves, as well as domestic refineries that can generate higher value than crude oil alone. In some cases, refining can add more than \$10 per barrel in value, depending on the refinery type and configuration, particularly those optimized for lighter products such as gas oil, diesel, and jet kerosene, which can yield higher profit margins.

Such types of refineries exist in Kuwait, particularly the modernized Al-Zour refinery, with a capacity of 615,000 barrels per day. It provides some of the world's most advanced petroleum products. Of course, Kuwait had to build a highly advanced unit to produce refined products that meet global standards from heavy, high-sulfur crude oil. This reflects the challenge and what is required in today's petroleum industry.

Kuwait is well known in the oil industry for its refining sector, which is a core part of its operations. It owns six refineries - three domestic and three through joint ventures in Oman, Vietnam, and Italy. Its refining history dates back to the early 1960s, making it one of the first in the Arab Gulf region.

Kuwait is also the only OPEC member with investments in and ownership of three refineries abroad, supplying gasoil and jet fuel worldwide to meet consumer and airline demand.

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Al-Harami

Strengthening leadership amid growth plans

Markaz announces key leadership appointments

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" announced a number of new leadership appointments approved by its Board of Directors during the Board meeting held on 7 May 2026.

■ **Abdullatif Al-Nusif** is appointed as Deputy Chief Executive Officer.

■ **Deena AlRefai**, Executive Vice President, is appointed as Head of Wealth Management and Business Development Department.

■ **Ghazi Al-Osaimi**, Executive Vice President, is appointed as Head of the MENA Equities Department.

The Board of Directors also approved the resignation of Amani Al-Omani, Managing Director - MENA Equities Department, following her decision to retire after a distinguished career spanning more than



Abdullatif Al-Nusif

24 years at Markaz.

The Board of Directors and executive management expressed their sincere appreciation to Amani Al-Omani for her valuable contributions



Deena AlRefai

and dedicated efforts throughout her tenure, wishing her continued success in the next chapter of her career.

These appointments reflect Markaz's continued commitment to developing



Ghazi Al-Osaimi

its leadership talent, strengthening institutional readiness, and advancing its strategic growth and expansion plans across the various markets and sectors in which it operates.

Group continues to advance operational efficiency and financial discipline

ACICO reports strong revenue growth in Q1

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: ACICO Group announced its financial results for the first quarter ended 31 March 2026. During the first quarter of 2026, operating revenues increased by 23% to KD 22.00 million, compared to KD 17.93 million in the corresponding period of 2025, reflecting solid growth despite geopolitical disruptions during March.

Market conditions during the first quarter of 2026 witnessed increasing economic and geopolitical pressures, particularly toward the end of the quarter. These included higher prices of certain building materials as a result of duties associated with anti-dumping measures, in addition to regional political tensions that led to limited availability of certain raw materials. While these factors affected the Group's first-quarter performance, ACICO demonstrated operational resilience in managing these developments and maintained its focus on efficiency and cost discipline. General and administrative expenses declined by 13% year-on-year, reflecting the effectiveness of ongoing efforts to optimize the cost structure and enhance the Group's ability to adapt to evolving market conditions.

Finance costs decreased by approximately 50% to KD 1.64 million, compared to KD 3.31 million in the corresponding period of the previous year, reflecting the impact of the Group's debt restructuring program. The profit for the first quarter was



Emad Al-Essa

KD 174 thousand, demonstrating the underlying strength and adaptability of the Group's operations in navigating a challenging environment.

In terms of the financial position level, total assets stood at approximately KD 242.96 million as of 31 March 2026, compared to KD 240.87 million as of 31 December 2025. Total equity reached KD 30.29 million, while total liabilities stood at KD 212.67 million, reflecting the Group's ongoing efforts to strengthen its financial position.

Commenting on the results, Mr. Emad Abdullah Al-Essa, Chairman of ACICO Group, said: "The first quarter results of 2026 reflect the Group's continued efforts to build on the progress achieved during the previous period, through a more flexible management and operational approach that is capable of respond-

ing to factors beyond the company's control. Despite the geopolitical conditions affecting the region and the resulting operational and market challenges, in addition to regulatory developments related to the anti-dumping law and its impact on the industrial building materials sector, the Group continued to focus on reinforcing financial discipline, enhancing operational efficiency, and mitigating the impact of these challenges to the greatest extent possible, in support of its direction toward more sustainable profitability. The Group continues to move forward with the implementation of its strategic priorities, with a focus on strengthening its financial position, improving operational efficiency, and developing a more resilient business model that is capable of withstanding and adapting to market changes, thereby enhancing its ability to deliver sustainable performance across its core sectors."

He added: "We remain focused on improving working capital efficiency and strengthening operational performance across manufacturing, logistics, and construction activities, while further developing our execution capabilities in line with market needs. At the same time, we continue to pursue viable opportunities in local and regional markets, reinforcing ACICO's position as a trusted industrial and construction partner in housing, development, and infrastructure projects."

On the operational front, the

Group continued to execute its activities across manufacturing, contracting, and construction, during the first quarter of 2026, supported by its integrated business model that combines building materials manufacturing, construction expertise, and internal logistics coordination within a unified operating platform. The Group also maintained its focus on improving productivity levels, enhancing asset efficiency, and strengthening execution quality in line with market requirements.

As part of its ongoing efforts to enhance the customer experience and support homeowners, ACICO continued to expand its network of partnerships with local banks, with the addition of Commercial Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait International Bank. These partnerships aim to provide financing solutions and supporting benefits that facilitate the homebuilding journey, from planning through to execution and handover, reflecting the company's commitment to delivering a more integrated and seamless experience for its customers.

ACICO Group affirmed that its priorities for the coming period will remain focused on reinforcing financial discipline, improving operational efficiency, strengthening the balance sheet, and pursuing measured expansion into viable opportunities. These priorities are aimed at supporting sustainable and balanced growth, while maximizing long-term value for shareholders.

New Board of Directors elected for three-year tenure

KIPCO remains focused on resilience, disciplined execution and long-term value creation



Sheikh Abdullah Naser Al Sabah



KIPCO – AGM



Sheikha Dana Naser Al Sabah

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: KIPCO – Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) – held its Annual General Assembly, chaired by the company's Vice Chairman, Sheikh Abdullah Naser Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah. The AGM approved all items on the agenda, including a 3% stock dividend for 2025 using existing treasury shares.

The AGM elected a new Board of Directors for a three-year tenure. The elected directors are Sheikh Hamad Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, Sheikh Abdullah Naser Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, Sheikha Dana Naser Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, Sheikha Bibi Naser Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah and H.E. Abdullah Yacoub Bishara.

KIPCO's Group Chief Executive Officer, Sheikha Dana Naser Al Sabah, gave a presentation following the AGM in which she highlighted the achievements of 2025 and spoke of the company's outlook for the coming period.

Focused discipline

In her opening remarks, Sheikha Dana Naser Al Sabah noted that the year 2025 was marked by ongoing economic and financial challenges and volatility at both the regional and global levels. Despite this, KIPCO, through its disciplined institutional approach, once again demonstrated the strength of its business model, the resilience of its financial position, and its ability to adapt to changing conditions while safeguarding shareholder interests.

Sheikha Dana Naser Al Sabah said: "The strategic decisions taken by the Board of Directors over the past few years – particularly the emphasis on financial prudence and prioritizing sustainability over short-term gains – have played a key role in strengthening the company and enhancing its readiness to navigate the current environment, which we believe to be temporary."

She added: "The decision not to distribute dividends over the past

three years was driven by a commitment to preserving shareholder value and reinforcing the company's financial strength. This has enabled us this year to reward our shareholders through a treasury share distribution, reaffirming our commitment to delivering sustainable value."

KIPCO's 2025 results

In 2025, KIPCO delivered steady financial and operational performance, supported by the resilient perfor-

mance of its portfolio companies. Net profit for the year increased 4.4% compared to the previous year, while total revenue and total assets were up 3.1% and 6.5% respectively. Shareholders' equity registered a 1.7% increase, and book value went up 2.2%.

KIPCO's Group CEO said: "Our portfolio companies maintained steady performance and recorded positive indicators of growth across several key sectors, including financial services, educa-

tion, logistics and oil services. We also see promising opportunities in our regional banking investments, which we believe hold strong medium to long-term growth potential as emerging markets regain stability."

Enhanced credit rating

KIPCO's Group CEO noted that KIPCO's strategic journey involved efforts to proactively manage liabilities to strengthen the company's capital structure. In September 2025, KIPCO successfully reduced its debt by US\$ 304.1 million after offering a cash tender to purchase in cash, any and all, of the US\$500 million notes due in October 2026 and US\$500 million notes due in February 2027, an aggregate principal amount of US\$1.0 billion. The buyback was 1 to 1.5 years ahead of the notes' maturities and resulted in positive rating actions by Fitch and Capital Intelligence, an endorsement of KIPCO's proactive liabilities management.

Looking ahead

Concluding her presentation, Sheikha Dana Naser Al Sabah noted that in a changing environment, KIPCO remained focused on resilience, disciplined execution and long-term value creation across its diversified portfolio.

She added: "We look to the future with confidence and optimism, supported by a diversified asset base, disciplined management, and a clear strategy that balances risk management with the pursuit of opportunities. We firmly believe that the coming years will positively reflect on the Group's performance and shareholder returns."

She thanked the company's shareholders for their continued trust and support, and reaffirmed KIPCO's commitment to working diligently and responsibly to enhance the company's value and serve the best interests of all shareholders.



Group photo

World Bank approves \$1 bln to support Egypt's economy

WASHINGTON, May 9, (KUNA): The World Bank Group has approved USD one billion in financing to support Egypt's efforts to boost private sector-led job creation, strengthen macro-economic and fiscal resilience, and advance its transition to a greener economy.

The financing includes a USD 200 million credit guarantee from the United Kingdom, the bank said in a statement.

After two years of successive external shocks, Egypt has undertaken a series of reforms that have helped the country move into a stabilization phase, it added. Measures such as exchange-rate unification, a stronger commitment to fiscal discipline, and significant tax policy and administration reforms have contributed to rebuilding external buffers, moderating inflation, improving market sentiment, and gradually supporting a recovery in growth. However, the ongoing conflict in the Middle East has added new uncertainty and pressures, making it even more urgent to sustain reform momentum.

Building on these efforts, the "Generating Resilience, Opportunities, and Welfare for a Thriving Egypt II" (GROWTH II) Development Policy Financing (DPF) supports a set of policies to help Egypt's economy create more and better jobs, manage public finances more sustainably, and move towards a greener growth path.

"Egypt is advancing an ambitious reform agenda to unlock private investment, create jobs, and protect households in a very challenging context," said Stephane Guimbert, World Bank Division Director for Egypt, Yemen and Djibouti. "This operation supports critical steps in that journey - helping Egypt build a more competitive, resilient and sustainable economy that can better withstand current and future shocks."

"This financing reflects the

strong partnership between Egypt, the World Bank Group and the United Kingdom," said Samar Al Ahdal, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for International Cooperation.

"The reforms supported under this project will generate more and better jobs for Egyptians, protect our citizens in vulnerable situations, and ensure that growth is both sustainable and inclusive."

Mark Bryson-Richardson, the UK's Ambassador to Egypt said "The United Kingdom is proud to support Egypt's reform programme through this guarantee, in partnership with the World Bank Group. This operation will help unlock investment, strengthen economic stability, and support sustainable growth, for the benefit of all Egyptians."

The new financing backs measures to strengthen the governance of state-owned enterprises and reduce barriers to private investment and growth, including by enforcing fair competition rules. It also supports reforms to increase domestic revenue mobilization, improve the efficiency of domestic debt markets, and reduce the cost of government funding.

At the same time, the operation helps protect more economically vulnerable Egyptians by ensuring that beneficiaries of the Takaful and Karama social safety net programs are automatically enrolled in the Universal Health Insurance System, so they can access basic services and better cope with rising prices and economic uncertainty.

Finally, it also supports the transition to a greener economy by improving how Egypt monitors greenhouse gas emissions, developing carbon credit markets, encouraging a demand driven market for clean energy, and strengthening the financial sustainability of the electricity and water sectors.

Oman real estate trades reach \$8.6 bln amid investment surge

MUSCAT, May 9, (KUNA): The Gulf real estate investment in Oman grew by 95.3 percent between 2024 and 2025, while foreign real estate investment increased by 39.4 percent, Oman's Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning announced Thursday.

The value traded in Oman's real estate rose to 3.3 billion Omani ri-

yals (about USD 8.6 billion) during 2024 and 2025, an accumulated growth of 37.5 percent compared with 2020, the ministry added in a media dialogue.

This shows Oman's success in building a more competitive investment environment focusing on a clear vision and legislations and integrated efforts between the public and private sectors, it noted.

Shareholders approve 3-fils cash dividend distribution Action Energy Co. holds FY25 Annual General Meeting

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: Action Energy Company K.S.C.P (KSE Symbol: ALFTAQA), Kuwait's leading local partner for integrated upstream services, owner and operator of one of the youngest rig fleets in the region, held its FY25 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Shareholders on Thursday, May 7, 2026, in Kuwait.

The General Assembly's shareholders approved all items on the agenda, including the Board of Directors' recommendation to distribute cash dividends to shareholders of 3% of the share's nominal value, equivalent to 3 fils per share. Shareholders also elected Mr. Issa Khalid Al-Issa and Mr. Walid Khalid Mandani as independent members of the Board of Directors.

Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Chairman of Action Energy Company said: "Action Energy continues to focus on its 2026 strategic priorities while maintaining operational flexibility and supporting national oil companies, underpinned by a strong financial position, a healthy balance sheet and a resilient business model. As a Kuwaiti operator committed to the country's long-term energy objectives, and a home-grown integrated upstream services provider, the Company stands ready and fully mobilized to support and contribute to the continued recovery of the energy sector."

AEC expects to continue its upstream operations without material disruption, absent a material escalation in the regional security environment. This outlook is supported by a record backlog of KWD 321.5 million, a strong revenue visibility, and an active pipeline of contracts under mobilization. AEC also continues to advance its growth strategy through the expansion of its fleet to 27 rigs (20 existing and 7 under construction), and other oilfield services contracts in pipeline. AEC is committed to protecting its people, maintaining operational continuity, and supporting Kuwait's national energy objectives, with its resilient business model and strength of its market position. The company continues to monitor the current situation closely while remaining focused on delivering high quality services and long-term value to its stakeholders. It has also taken measures to mitigate potential logistical risks, including the early activation of emergency response plans and the strategic stockpiling of critical spare parts.

About the Newly Elected Independent Board Members

Mr. Issa Khalid Al-Issa is a seasoned executive with over 40 years



Issa Khalid Al-Issa



Walid Khalid Mandani

of experience across the industrial, investment, and marketing sectors. He began his career at Kuwait National Petroleum Company and has held senior leadership roles at AlAhli Investment Group and United Industries Company (KIPCO

Group). He holds a Bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering, with a minor in Marketing, from the University of Portland, Oregon, USA.

Mr. Walid Khalid Mandani is an accomplished banking and investment executive with over 30 years



of experience across treasury, retail and private banking, and wealth management, most recently serving as Acting Chief Executive Officer of Gulf Bank (2023–2025) and previously holding senior roles at Kuwait Finance House (KFH), BNP Paribas (Kuwait), and Ahli United Bank (AUB). He currently serves as a Board Member of ACICO Industries and KNET, chairing the Audit Committees of both. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of Arizona, with executive education at Cornell University and Harvard Business School.



AGM group photo

Key Financial Highlights						
KWD Millions	Q4 2025	Q4 2024	QoQ %	FY 2025	FY 2024	YoY %
Revenue	9.2	5.4	70%	31.9	20.8	53%
Net Profit	1.7	0.6	173%	5.7	1.9	202%
EBITDA	4.6	2.7	68%	16.4	10.4	57%
Net Profit to Parent	1.7	0.6	172%	5.7	1.9	201%
EPS (Fils)	4.35	1.7	157%	14.35	5.06	184%

Türkiye secures \$8 bln in agreements at SAHA EXPO 2026

ISTANBUL, May 9, (Xinhua): Agreements signed at SAHA EXPO 2026, Türkiye's premier defense and aerospace exhibition, generated a business volume of 8 billion U.S. dollars, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced Friday.

Speaking at the event in Istanbul, Erdogan emphasized that 6 billion of the total came from direct export-oriented deals, highlighting the "growing global trust" in Turkish-made defense technologies, from unmanned aerial vehicles to naval systems.

"The Turkish defense industry has evolved into a sought-after and preferred

ecosystem on a global scale," he said.

This year's fifth edition of the expo brought together 1,763 companies, including 1,500 domestic and 263 foreign participants, with 203 products unveiled for the first time, Erdogan added.

The 8-billion-dollar business volume, finalized through 182 separate agreements, reflects both international sales and a deepening domestic supply chain within the SAHA Istanbul cluster, according to the president.

The five-day event, which opened on Tuesday, is scheduled to conclude on Saturday, with the final day exclusively for public visitors.

Grand prize totaling KD 1.5 million

KFH announces winners of Al-Hassad and Al-Rabeh monthly draws

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has announced the April 2026 monthly draw winners for its Al-UWAIT CITY, May 9: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Hassad and Al-Rabeh accounts.

Al-Hassad account offers total annual prizes of KD 3 million, while Al-Rabeh account awards KD 1,000 each to 30 winners every month, reflecting KFH's commitment to rewarding customer loyalty and trust.

KFH conducted two draws, awarding 31 winners a total of KD 130,000 in cash prizes, distributed as follows:

- Al-Hassad Account: One winner received KD 100,000.
- Al-Rabeh Account: 30 winners received KD 1,000 each.

The full list of winners is available on KFH's official social media channels.

The new campaign for Al-Hassad account features substantial prizes, headlined by a KD 1.5 million Grand Prize, a KD 500,000 semi-annual prize, and a KD 100,000 monthly prize.

Effective January of this year, the new Al-Hassad prize campaign coincided with the resumption of investment account draws conducted under the supervision of independent auditors appointed by the bank to ensure the highest standards of integrity and transparency.



Kuwait Finance House officials during the draw.

KFH continues to enhance the features of its Al-Hassad account, one of the bank's flagship products that has gained remarkable popularity and strong customer trust.

Al-Hassad account offers increased chances of winning, with one entry for every KD 50 deposited. The longer the balance is maintained, the greater the number of entries, bringing customers closer to the title of "KFH Millionaire".

As for Al-Rabeh account, it is a dedicated salary account. To qualify for the draws, customers must deposit at least three salaries over the three months preceding the draw and maintain a minimum monthly closing balance of KD 50 throughout that period. The account awards 30 winners KD 1,000 each month.

KFH remains committed to offering premium banking products that fulfill customer aspirations and provide unique opportunities to win significant cash prizes. This makes the account a highly appealing savings and investment solution.

Based on the Wakala investment structure, Al-Hassad account allows the bank to invest the full balance at a pre-agreed expected profit rate, in addition to the monthly, semi-annual, and annual prize draws.

Customers can open Al-Hassad and Al-Rabeh accounts through KFH branches, KFHonline, or ATMs to enjoy exclusive draw opportunities and a wide range of banking benefits.

Fed likely to hold rates as jobs market remains stable

US employers defy economic shock from Iran war and add a surprisingly strong 115,000 jobs in April

WASHINGTON, May 9, (AP): America's employers delivered a surprising 115,000 new jobs last month despite an economic shock from the Iran war.

Hiring beat the 65,000 jobs forecasters had expected, though it decelerated from the 185,000 jobs created in March. The unemployment rate remained at a low 4.3%, the Labor Department reported Friday.

The Iran war has caused the biggest disruption of global oil supplies in history and sent average U.S. gasoline prices surging past \$4.50 a gallon this week. But the conflict hasn't done much damage to the American job market so far. And the import taxes - tariffs - that President Donald Trump imposed last year haven't turned out to be as high and as damaging as originally feared.

"The labor market is not booming, but it is proving harder to break than many feared," said economist Olu Sonola of Fitch Ratings.

Healthcare added 37,000 jobs last month and transportation and warehousing companies 30,000. However, manufacturers cut 2,000 jobs in April and have shed 66,000 jobs over the past year despite Trump's protectionist policies aimed at creating factory jobs.

"Businesses to some extent are viewing the conflict in Iran as temporary," said Gus Faucher, chief economist at the financial firm PNC. "We're seeing strong business investment, particularly around tech and AI. The economy continues to expand. We've weathered some shocks. The worst of the tariff impact is likely over."

Still, Faucher cautioned that "the longer conflict in Iran lasts, the higher energy prices go, the longer they stay elevated the greater the drag on the economy."

Among those worrying is Michael Cramer, co-founder and CEO of online retailer Adagio Teas. He expects to freeze hiring this year. He typically adds anywhere from five to six workers per year to help pack up online tea orders at the company's warehouse in East Rutherford, New Jersey. Adagio Teas, which has about 50 workers, has seen a slight drop in sales after the Iran war drove up gasoline prices and squeezed shoppers, particularly those in lower-income brackets. Cramer is worried that shoppers are opting for less expensive supermarket tea to cut costs.

"You only hire when you have more orders that you can fill," he said. "I don't envision us being in that position for the remainder of the year. I think the remainder of this year is going to be fairly bumpy."

Labor Department revisions shaved 16,000 jobs from February and March payrolls.

Average hourly earnings rose 0.2% from March and 3.6% from April 2025, consistent with the Federal Reserve's 2% inflation target.

The number of people in the U.S. labor force dropped last month, and the share of those working or looking for work - the so-called labor force participation rate - dropped to 61.8%, lowest since October 2021.

After the U.S. and Israel launched their attacks Feb. 28, Iran shut down the Strait of Hormuz, through which about a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas passes. The disruption has caused a painful increase in the price of energy and led many economists to downgrade their estimates for global and U.S. economic growth.

But the job market keeps chugging along this year.

The economy is getting a boost from big tax refund checks this spring, arising from Trump's tax cut legislation last year; the refunds allow consumers to spend more freely, giving companies an incentive to add workers in response to rising sales.

The job market is showing intermittent signs of recovery after a bleak 2025. Employers last year created just 9,700 jobs a month, fewest outside a recession year since 2002. High interest rates and uncertainty over Trump's economic policies held back hiring.

The March and April hiring figures marked the first consecutive months of job growth above 100,000 since the end of 2024.

The recent uptick in hiring raises hopes that the job market will break out of a recent rut - in which Americans who have jobs are relatively secure from layoffs but jobseekers struggle to find work.

Angela Paniccia, 33, of Queens in New York City was laid off by an educational travel company in December. The job search can be frustrating. "You'll never hear back or you'll get just a generic 'We're moving on with someone else' without feedback," she said.

Many of the openings at colleges and other employers in her field simply don't pay enough to support someone living in one of the country's most expensive cities. To help with the rent, she's been working part-time for a caterer. "I've always had a full-time job," she said. "Admittedly, I'm struggling with the loss of daily routine."

U.S. hiring has been dominated by one industry: Healthcare companies, catering to an aging American population, have added 456,000 jobs over the past year; other employers have combined to cut 205,000 over the 12 months that ended in April.

Still, Heather Long, chief economist at Navy Federal Credit Union, noted that last month's job gains extended beyond healthcare. Retailers, for example, added 22,000 jobs and construction companies 9,000. "America's hiring recession appears to be over," she wrote. "Average job gains in 2025 were an anemic 10,000

a month. So far in 2026, the average is 76,000."

Simbe Robotics Inc., which deploys five-foot tall robots that scan shelves for out-of-stock items in more than 1,000 stores worldwide, is eager to hire. Co-founder Brad Bogolea started the company with a handful of workers and now has 100, many of them software and artificial intelligence engineers. Simbe has its pick of candidates. Applications more than doubled over the past year, partly because of layoffs elsewhere in the technology industry. Applications for robotics software engineer jobs are up 127% over that time period, Bogolea said.

The Labor Department's monthly jobs report consists of two parts.

For the so-called household survey, the government collects data from 60,000 households to calculate the unemployment rate and the share of people who are working or looking for work, among other things.

For the so-called establishment survey, the government gathers information from about 119,000 businesses and government agencies, representing 622,000 worksites, to calculate the number of jobs in the economy, how many hours Americans work and the hourly wages they receive.

The establishment survey is subject to revisions - sometimes big ones - because some employers submit their responses late or have to correct what they already sent in. The Labor Department - like government statistical agencies in other countries - has also been contending with a drop in the share of employers that respond to the survey, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the revisions and problems collecting the data, most economists, businesses and investors consider the monthly jobs report to be a reliable gauge of how the labor market is doing.

Friday's jobs data will likely keep the Fed on the sidelines, as it holds its key rate unchanged while evaluating the economic impact of the Iran war. Fed officials are increasingly focused on inflation, which has risen quickly since the war, driven higher by spikes in gasoline prices.

Inflation jumped to 3.3% in March, a two-year high and far above the Fed's target. The Fed typically keeps its rate unchanged -- or even raises it -- to combat inflation, while it cuts rates to spur more growth and hiring. Early this year many Fed policymakers were worried the job market was stalling and leaned toward rate cuts. But in more recent months hiring has stabilized, undermining the case for cuts.

Friday's jobs report, PNC's Faucher said, "actually makes it less likely that we see a rate cut anytime soon because the Fed can say, 'The job market is solid. Let's get inflation back down to 2%. This is not the time to cut rates.'"

America in focus: Jobs, strong earnings lead economic news

In the past week, many Americans remained focused on the economy, inflation and how those forces could impact their lives. Trips to the grocery store or gas station are more painful than they were last year, and that is impacting the decisions of both households and businesses.

Here's a snapshot of prominent economic data and news that occurred over the past week and what it potentially means for you.

America's employers delivered a surprising 115,000 new jobs last month despite an economic shock from the Iran war.

Hiring was better than the 65,000 forecasters had expected, though it decelerated from the 185,000 jobs created in March. The unemployment rate remained at a low 4.3%, the Labor Department reported Friday.

Healthcare added 37,000 jobs last month and retailers 22,000. However, manufacturers cut 2,000 jobs in April and have shed 66,000 jobs over the past year despite President Donald Trump's protectionist policies aimed at creating factory jobs.

The average long-term U.S. mortgage rate rose again this week, reflecting ongoing bond market volatility as surging oil prices due to the war with Iran heighten inflation worries.

The benchmark 30-year fixed rate mortgage rate rose to 6.37% from 6.3% last week, mortgage buyer Freddie Mac said Thursday. That's still down from one year ago, when the rate averaged 6.76%.

This is the second straight weekly increase, bringing the average rate back to where it was four weeks ago.

Weekly 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.

U.S. job openings were essentially unchanged in March but hiring improved before the full impact of the Iran war hit the economy.

Employers posted 6.87 million jobs in March, compared to 6.92 million in February, the Labor Department reported Tuesday.

The job market has been up and down so far this year after a dismal 2025. And the Iran war, which began Feb. 28, has clouded the outlook for the economy and hiring.

The Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey showed that layoffs rose in March. But hiring improved: Employers added 5.55 million gross jobs, the most since February 2024. More Americans also quit their jobs - a sign of confidence in their prospects.

U.S. stocks rose toward new highs to end the week on promising news in the labor market and also more strong earnings for major U.S. corporations.

The S&P 500 climbed 0.5% toward an all-time high after a report said U.S. employers added 115,000 more jobs than they cut last month, even though the war with Iran is raising fuel costs and uncertainty for everyone.

While hiring slowed from March's level, it was nevertheless nearly double what economists expected. And it kept the S&P 500 on track for a sixth straight winning week, which would be its longest such streak since 2024. The U.S. stock market has blasted higher since late March, in part on hopes that the war will not mean a worst-case scenario for the global economy and that the Strait of Hormuz will reopen to allow oil tankers to deliver crude from the Persian Gulf again. (AP)

Company denies wrongdoing

Google reaches settlement over racial bias allegations

SAN FRANCISCO, May 9, (AP): Google has settled with Black employees who alleged systemic racial disparities in hiring, pay, and advancement in a lawsuit filed in 2022.

April Curley, a former Google employee, had sued the tech giant for racial discrimination, saying it engages in a "pattern and practice" of unfair treatment for its Black workers. The suit claimed the company steered them into lower-level and lower-paid jobs and subjected them to a hostile work environment if they speak out. Other former Google workers also joined the suit, which later received class action status.

"This case is about accountability, plain and simple," said civil rights attorney Ben Crump, who represented the plaintiffs, in a statement. "For far too long, Black employees in the tech industry have faced barriers that limit opportunity. This settlement is a significant step toward holding one of the world's most powerful companies accountable and making clear that discriminatory practices cannot and will not be tolerated."

The settlement was announced in May 2025 and granted final approval this week. Google said when the settlement was reached that it strongly disagrees with the alle-

gations that it treated anyone improperly and remains "committed to paying, hiring, and leveling all employees consistently."

The lawsuit, echoed years of complaints from Black employees at the company. That includes prominent artificial intelligence scholar Timnit Gebru, who said she was pushed out in 2020 after a dispute over a research paper examining the societal dangers of an emerging branch of artificial intelligence.

The 2022 lawsuit claimed that Mountain View, California-based Google viewed Black job candidates "through harmful racial stereotypes" and claimed that hiring managers deemed Black candidates "not 'Googly' enough, a plain dog whistle for race discrimination."

In addition, according to the suit, interviewers "hazed" and undermined Black candidates and hired Black candidates into lower-paying and lower-level roles with less advancement potential based on their race and racial stereotypes.

The settlement, which does not constitute admission of liability by Google, also includes a commitment to pay equity analyses, pay transparency measures, and limits on mandatory arbitration for employment-related disputes through at least August 2026, according to Crump.

Imports surge, point to strong domestic demand

China exports jump 14% despite Iran war, tariffs

HONG KONG, May 9, (AP): China's exports rose 14.1% in April from a year earlier, the government said Saturday, despite the Iran war and lingering impacts from higher U.S. tariffs.

The data were released just days ahead of a planned meeting next week between U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping in Beijing.

That beat analysts' estimates and was a significant improvement from March's 2.5% year-on-year expansion. Exports to the U.S. rose 11.3% from the year before, up from a 26.5% drop in March.

Imports climbed 25.3%, slower than the 27.8% growth in March but still robust.

The Trump-Xi summit comes at a time when relations are beset by multiple issues, with efforts to end the war in Iran eclipsing the usual sources of friction.

"We're expecting that overall external demand will remain a solid driver of growth this year," said Lynn Song, chief economist for Greater China at Dutch bank ING, likely led by China's exports of semiconductors and autos.

In March, Chinese leaders set an annual economic growth target of 4.5% to 5%, slightly lower than last year's 5% expansion and the lowest target since 1991. Export



Aerial view of new vehicles waiting for shipment to overseas market at a port in Shanghai, China Saturday, May 9, 2026. (AP)

growth is expected to continue to power its wider economy, especially as shipments increased from China to Europe, Southeast Asia, Latin America and Africa over the past months.

China's exports to the U.S. have fallen for most of the months since Trump imposed steeper tariffs and harsher controls on sharing of technology after he took office last year. But trade with the U.S. is likely improving this year, said Song, particularly because of the base effects of

sharp declines caused by Trump's tariff hikes in 2025.

Apart from efforts to broker a peace agreement to end the Iran war, trade and export controls, including rare earths and U.S. tech restrictions on China, will likely be on the agenda during the Trump-Xi summit, following a yearlong U.S.-China trade truce reached late last year when the two leaders last met in South Korea.

Major breakthroughs on export controls are unlikely, but the leaders'

upcoming meeting may bring "incremental" steps to troubleshoot trade friction, HSBC economists said in a recent research note.

"On balance, China looks to have more leverage," wrote Leah Fahy, senior China economist of Capital Economics, in a note. "But higher tariffs haven't stopped China's exports from continuing to surge over the past year, and Beijing has showed that it is prepared to wait out U.S. pressure."

For China, oil and fuel price hikes caused by the war in Iran are also feeding higher manufacturing and logistics costs across its many factories, said Wei Li, head of multi-asset investments at BNP Paribas Securities (China), while higher global inflation could dampen consumer purchasing power in China's overseas markets.

Still, China's overall economy has remained resilient compared with other countries, owing to its large oil reserves and more diversified energy sources.

ING's Song said China's trade surplus, which reached an all-time high of almost \$1.2 trillion last year, could narrow for the whole of this year. Imports so far have been stronger in 2026, though China is still recovering from a prolonged property slump that has dragged on consumption and investment.

Variety

FLORIDA: Katy Perry will perform at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California, on June 12 before the first World Cup game in the United States, as FIFA announced entertainment Friday night before the initial matches in all three nations that will host games in the expanded 48-nation tournament.



Rappers Future, Lisa and Tyla, singer Anitta, singer/rapper Rema and DJ Sanjoy will be part of the ceremony before the U.S. plays Paraguay.

Entertainment before the tournament opener between Mexico and South Africa at Mexico City's Azteca Stadium on June 11 will include Tyla along with singers Alejandro Fernández, Danny Ocean, Lila Downs, Belinda and J Balvin and the groups Los Angeles Azules and Maná.

Canada's opener against Bosnia and Herzegovina at Toronto's BMO Field will have entertainment by singers Alanis Morissette, Michael Bublé, Alessia Cara, Jessie Reyez, Nora Fatehi, William Prince, Elyanna and Veedream, along with DJ Sanjoy.(AP)

LOS ANGELES: Joni Lamb, who with her late husband founded the Daystar Television Network and guided it to become one of the world's largest Christian TV networks, died Thursday. She was 65.

Lamb, the network's president, had been suffering from serious health issues before sustaining a back injury that caused her health to deteriorate, the network said in a statement. A cause of death was not released.

"Joni's love for the Lord and for the people we serve shaped this ministry from the beginning," the network's board of directors said in the statement.

The network said its ministry will continue on and that Lamb made sure a leadership team was in place.

She and her husband, Marcus Lamb, who died in 2021, began broadcasting in the Dallas area with a single station in 1993. Five years later, Joni Lamb began hosting her signature daily women's show. (AP)

NEW YORK: The bitter public feud between actors Blake Lively and Justin Baldoni may outlive their court fight after all.

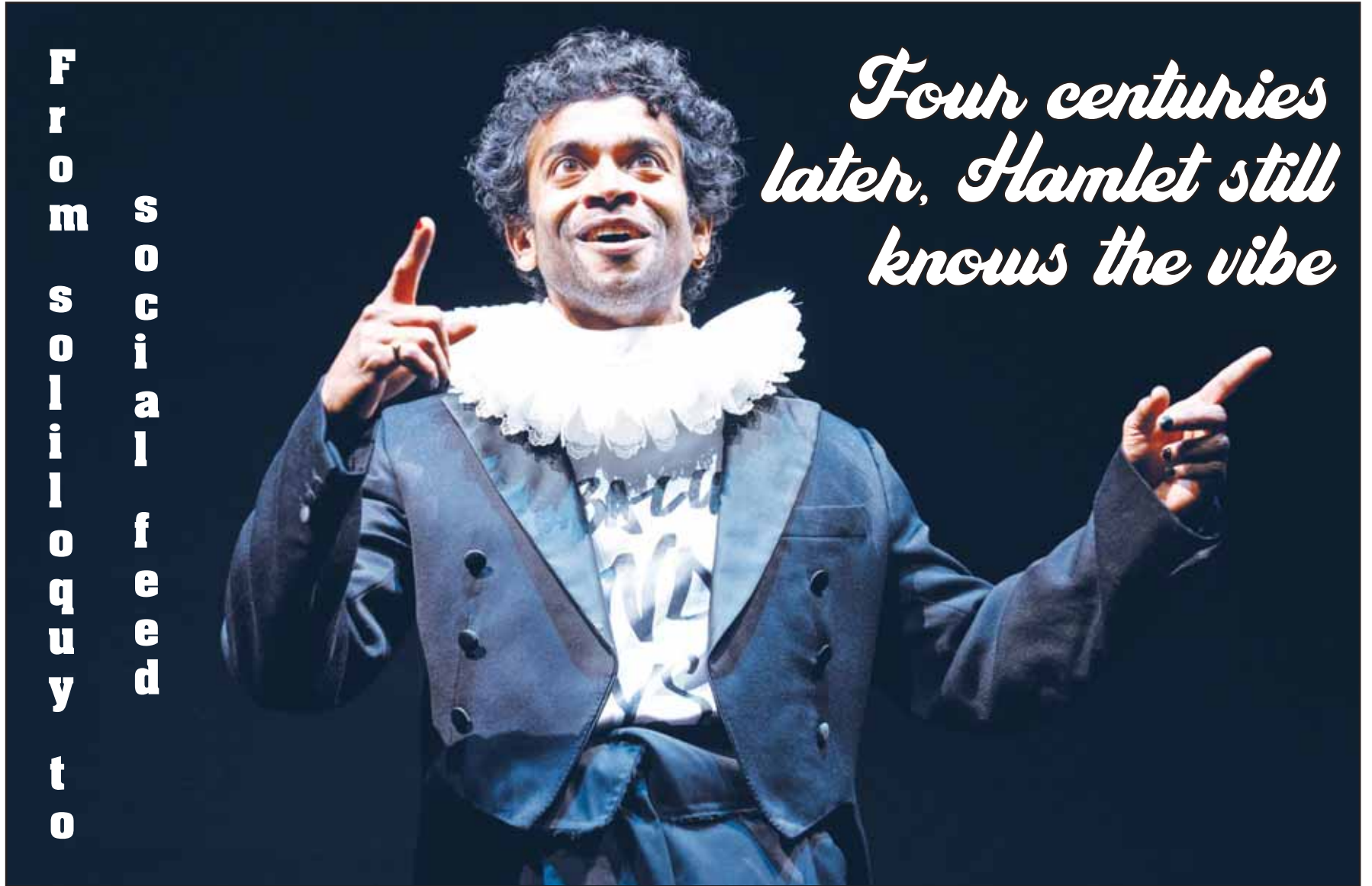
Three days after announcing a settlement of the lawsuit brought by Lively over the 2024 film "It Ends With Us," her lawyers put out a statement Thursday calling the deal a "resounding victory."

"By agreeing to this settlement, and waiving their right to appeal, Justin Baldoni and every individual defendant now face personal liability for abusing the legal system to silence and intimidate Ms. Lively," attorneys Michael Gottlieb and Esra Hudson said.

They were alluding to the tens of millions of dollars in legal fees and penalties that a judge could make the defendants pay for costs incurred by Lively when Baldoni filed a countersuit that was ultimately tossed out by U.S. District Judge Lewis J. Liman last June. That complaint accused Lively, her husband - "Deadpool" actor Ryan Reynolds - and their publicist of defamation and extortion. (AP)

From social media to soliloquy to culture

Four centuries later, Hamlet still knows the vibe



This image released by Polk & Co. shows Hiran Abeysekera in the role of Hamlet at the National Theatre in London on Sept. 25, 2025. (AP)

He's on screen, onstage, on tour, online and in song. "Hamlet" - William Shakespeare's masterpiece about a moody Danish prince - seems to be having a moment.

A National Theatre production has landed at the Brooklyn Academy of Music starring Hiran Abeysekera. There's a movie version set in London's South Asian community starring Riz Ahmed. Anthony Hopkins, at 88, is delighting fans on TikTok with some of Prince Hamlet's "To be, or not to be" soliloquy. The movie "Hamnet" - the fictionalized story of loss that inspired the creation of "Hamlet" - earned Jessie Buckley an Oscar. Taylor Swift's "The Fate of Ophelia" - that's Hamlet's ex - went to No. 1 on the Billboard singles chart. Eddie Izzard is taking her one-person production of the play on a worldwide tour.

Four hundred years on, "Hamlet" - whose seemingly quite modern antihero is endlessly mulling over what to do after his uncle murdered his father and married his mother - is still giving.

Want even more? There's even a "Hamnet" play, adapted from Maggie O'Farrell's original novel, and the Royal Shakespeare Company is taking it on a U.K. tour. Shakespeare & Company will stage a "Hamlet" this August in the Berkshires. There's a Canadian production of "Hamlet, Sweet Prince," using a queer, contemporary lens. The Acting Company in New York will have a modern-verse version led by a woman, and the Peruvian theater company Teatro La Plaza recently presented a version off-Broadway starring eight Spanish-speaking actors with Down syndrome.

Harvard's Jeffrey R. Wilson, a Shakespeare scholar, says "Hamlet" is perfect for our era, when the crush of bad news has triggered constant, existential check-ins, like: "Hey, how's everyone hanging in there?"

"People are exhausted from the onslaught of awfulness in the world," he says, "and 'Hamlet' gives audiences both permission to 'go there' to explore those emotions and a tool kit of ideas to help us process angst."

The plethora of works are markedly vibrant and fresh, from the Hamlet in Brooklyn who wears a beanie to the one who enjoys Bollywood-style dances in London.

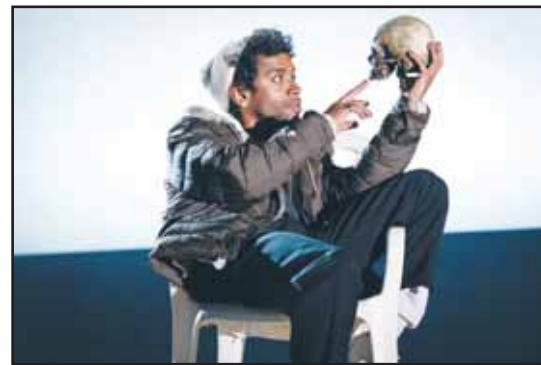
"Great plays survive not because they remain untouched, but because they can continue to be transformed," says director and playwright Chela De Ferrari, from Teatro La Plaza, whose neurodiverse "Hamlet" is a visceral and urgent call from those often excluded from cultural narra-



This image released by Vertical shows Riz Ahmed, left, and Timothy Spall in a scene from 'Hamlet.' (AP)



Left: Peruvian actor Octavio Bernaza appears during a performance of 'Teatro La Plaza's Hamlet' at the Theatre for a New Audience at Polonsky Shakespeare Center in New York. Right: This image released by Polk & Co. shows Hiran Abeysekera in the role of Hamlet at the National Theatre in London on Sept. 25, 2025. (AP)



tives.

"Working with actors with Down syndrome and cognitive disabilities brought me back to something essential in 'Hamlet': that beneath its philosophical brilliance there is an exposed human being asking, in one way or another, how to exist in a world that keeps misreading him," she said.

In one of the show's most potent moments, an actor attempts to imitate Laurence Olivier's delivery of Hamlet's "To be, or not to be" soliloquy with an image of the famous actor projected on a screen. It takes on a new urgency when spoken by someone whose very right to be in public or artistic spaces is often questioned.

"I like to imagine a kind of continuity between our actors and all the great actors who have carried the play before. I believe Shakespeare lives in all of them," says De Ferrari.

On school trips to see Shakespeare plays, filmmaker Anil Karia always felt like they were an arm's length away.

"I felt like I was primarily watching an intellectual experience unfold and I had to use my brain to keep up with the plot and the language and everything like that," he says.

He teamed up with Ahmed and screenwriter Michael Lesslie for a stripped-down, modern-day retelling of "Hamlet" that leans into the title character's unease at being complicit in a corrupt business system.

"That feels so pertinent to the moment we're in politically and everything. It feels like the question a lot of people are asking," says Karia. "It feels like these stories are actually a conversation through time itself."

Hamlet here parties at a neon-

drenched nightclub and delivers his soliloquy while hurtling down rain-slicked London streets in a BMW, taking his hands off the wheel as a truck approaches head-on. To be, or not to be, indeed.

"The best best-case scenario here is that it's opening up Shakespeare to audiences who didn't think it was for them, or who struggled with it previously," says Karia, whose film starts streaming Tuesday. "This is a big call, but I feel like Shakespeare would approve. I feel his whole thing was like, 'Take this stuff and do your thing.'"

The "Hamlet" in Brooklyn leans into the humor of the play for one good reason: The guy playing Hamlet is naturally funny.

Abeysekera is manic and mischievous as he pulls out the play's physical humor, addressing the audience directly in his soliloquies, sometimes sitting at the edge of the

stage and making eye contact.

"It's a very self-aware play. It sort of really knows that it's a play, if that makes any kind of sense," says director Robert Hastie. "Hamlet knows he's in a play called 'Hamlet,' like Deadpool knows he is in a film called 'Deadpool.'"

Abeysekera tackles his "To be, or not to be" speech as an errant thought, a wisp of an idea, instead of the traditional foot-planted, actor-y, big-thing-coming approach.

"Rather than thinking, 'Oh, here's the big speech coming up and that's freaking me out,' I started thinking, 'It's such a thought that most of us kind of have,'" he says. "Sometimes, in front of the mirror, we just see ourselves and go, 'Oof. Today's a tough day.'"

Hastie believes "Hamlet" is one of those works that reveals something new all the time. Grounded in the human condition, it speaks fresh things to each audience and we discover new things that have always been there.

"One of the reasons I think why we're still talking about Shakespeare, and this play in particular, is that whenever those words fuse with a new actor or a new group of actors, it becomes a different play," he says. "Maybe that's a good working definition of a classic."

Caitlin Cardile is doing her best to keep the 400-year-old playwright alive in the TikTok era. She and her three-person troupe Mad Spirits Theatre Company are on virtually every social media platform spreading the word.

"We wanted to bring Shakespeare to a modern audience and make it understandable," Cardile says. "We want people to feel more comfortable with Shakespeare and not think that it's old English and such a hard thing to understand."

They post live readings and commentary of the plays on YouTube but it's on Instagram and TikTok where the true coolness starts. They find trending audio snippets - of everything from dialogue on "The Office" to a Lady Gaga song - and assign a Shakespeare character to say them.

So Kitty Forman's popular line "I may have been a little irrational today" from "That '70s Show" is lip-synched by an actor playing Ophelia. A section of dialogue between Scar and Simba from "The Lion King" is put in the mouths of actors playing Claudius and Hamlet.

"We're like, 'Hey, wouldn't it be funny if we took these silly trending sounds that everybody's doing and what if we put them to Shakespeare characters?'" says Cardile. "This has ended up being so much fun." (AP)

Planet earth's greatest storyteller

Broadcaster and naturalist Attenborough turns 100

LONDON, May 9, (AP) - The BBC is hosting a party for David Attenborough at the Royal Albert Hall. Cinemas are playing his nature films. Friends have spent weeks lavishing praise on the man and his work.

But the world's most famous wildlife presenter is likely to be uncomfortable with all the attention as he celebrates his 100th birthday on Friday, said Alastair Fothergill, the producer of some of Attenborough's most well-known documentaries and the director of Silverback Films.

"He's always been very clear to all of us that work with him: 'Remember, the animals are the stars, I'm not,'" Fothergill told The Associated Press. "So, yes, surprisingly for one of the most famous men on the planet, he doesn't like being famous at all."

But Attenborough has had to accept the accolades this week as scientists, politicians and conservationists celebrated the man who has brought frolicking gorillas, breaching whales and tiny poisonous frogs into living rooms around the world for more than 70 years.

Through BBC programs such as Life on Earth, The Private Life of Plants and The Blue Planet, Attenborough has illuminated the beauty, ferocity and sometimes downright weirdness of nature in a hushed melodic voice that conveys his own awe at what he is witnessing.

Viewers who might never leave their hometowns were transported to the Himalayas, the Amazon and the unexplored forests of Papua New Guinea. But behind the stunning images was an attention to scientific accuracy that helped teach people about complex subjects like evolution, animal behavior and biodiversity.

And as the evidence mounted, he began to sound the alarm about climate change, ocean plastic and other human-caused threats to the planet.

That helped people understand not only how life evolved but, more importantly, why we have to protect it, said Professor Ben Garrod, an evolutionary biologist at the University of East Anglia and himself a broadcaster who has worked alongside Attenborough.

Attenborough, Garrod believes, initially saw himself as a neutral observer but was compelled to speak out when he saw that politicians, business leaders and the public weren't taking the emergency seriously.

"He is showing you the majesty, the ferocity, the fragility of the natural world. He shouldn't have ever had to have turned to policymaking and advocacy," Garrod said.

"I think it's very easy for a lot of people to say, 'He should have done it sooner. Why didn't he act 20 years, 30 years, 40 years ago?'" Garrod then asked: "Why didn't we?"



Butterfly Conservation President Sir David Attenborough poses for a photo with a south east Asian Great Mormon Butterfly on his nose, as he launches the Big Butterfly count at London Zoo, July 11, 2012. (AP)



Another side of the Barbican Center



The National Theater, South Bank, London



Brutalist architecture all around, Barbican Estate, London



Government Architecture in London

Concrete jungles of London, alive with art and imagination

LONDON, May 9, (KUNA): One might be taken aback upon witnessing London's brutalist architecture, with its angular, sharp, and unflattering designs, but a closer look reveals that such concrete jungles are filled with life, arts, and dare one say, imagination.

Off-beat individuals, tourists, and architects will find locations such as the Barbican Estate, Trellick Towers, the National Theater, and the Brunswick Center amusing for their brutalist architectural designs, which have their roots in the

1950s post-World War II London.

While brutalism remained in style for decades, its popularity waned in the late 1970s; however, people continued to build their lives upon such brutalist structures, creating spaces full of joy and wonder.

Music

Track set for release on May 14

Shakira teams up with Burna Boy for FIFA World Cup 2026 track 'Dai Dai'

NEW YORK, May 9, (AP): From Maracanã Stadium in Rio de Janeiro, just in time for the FIFA World Cup, emerges a familiar global superstar: Shakira.

The Colombian singer shared a minute-long teaser clip on Thursday of a new song, writing on social media, "From Maracanã Stadium, here is 'Dai Dai,' the FIFA World Cup Official Song 2026." She also included a mention of Afrobeats star Burna Boy.

In the video short, Shakira appears on the field of Maracanã Stadium, joined by dancers. "Here in this place / You belong," she sings in English, a male voice harmonizing with her. "What broke you once / Made you strong."

According to her post, the full song will arrive May 14.

The FIFA tournament will kick off on June 11 with Mexico taking on South Africa at the Azteca Stadium in Mexico City. The final is scheduled for July 19 at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, just outside New York City.

Shakira is no stranger to World Cup anthems. Her song "Waka Waka (This Time For



In this file photo, Colombian pop star Shakira gives a free concert on Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro, Saturday, May 2, 2026. (AP)

Africa)" was the official song of the 2010 World Cup held in South Africa.

"Dai Dai" is not to be confused with Coca-Cola's official anthem for the FIFA World Cup 2026, a reimagining of Van Halen's "Jump" that features Colombian singer J Balvin, drummer Travis Barker, pop/R&B singer Amber Mark and guitarist Steve Vai.

Mark's rich, crystalline voice is the first heard on the track; she sings the song's original English lyrics. Vai transforms its iconic guitar; Barker amplifies its percussion.

The greatest difference is found in Balvin's contributions. He wrote a new verse - in Spanish - atop production courtesy of his collaborator L.E.X.V.Z, a sound he described to the Associated Press in March as "Brazilian funk with hard strings, kind of like hip-hop."

"Jump" is not a fútbol song," he said of the original, using the Spanish word for soccer. "So that's why I had to put the Latin love and passion for fútbol (in the lyrics)."

That's certainly something Shakira knows a thing or two about.

Art



Artists perform during the opening performance of the 36th Macao Arts Festival held in Macao, south China, May 8, 2026. (Xinhua)

New streams of inspiration

Macao Arts Festival opens honouring Silk Road Friendship with diverse performances

MACAO, May 9, (Xinhua): The 36th Macao Arts Festival opened at the Macao Cultural Center on Friday, highlighting Macao's role as a pivotal hub of the Maritime Silk Road and bringing together artworks from various countries and regions.

The opening performance featured vibrant Kazakhstan dance rich in ethnic characteristics and showcasing the cultural charm of the Silk Road in Central Asia, according to the organizer. Local dance troupes also joined on stage.

Organized by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) of the

Macao Special Administrative Region government, the event features 15 selected programs and nine outreach activities, with the theme "New Streams of Inspiration."

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Leong Wai Man, head of the IC, noted that this year's festival presents artists from Italy, Portugal, Kazakhstan and beyond. She added that the event extends into local neighborhoods with outdoor performances, alongside exhibitions and outreach programs that bring art to every corner of Macao.

The festival continues until June 27.

Archaeology

Structure stabilized after collapse risks

Angkor temple restoration completed in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH, May 9, (Xinhua): Archaeologists have completed the emergency restoration of the early 10th-century Baksei Chamkrong temple in Cambodia's famed Angkor Archaeological Park after parts of the structure were at risk of collapse, the APSARA National Authority (ANA) said in a news release on Saturday.

Put Soth, head of the Baksei Chamkrong restoration site, said the restoration team had reinforced the Hindu temple's most vulnerable sections, ensuring that the historic monument will remain stable and preserved for generations to come.

The most critical areas included the roof and the inner walls of the upper sanctuary, he said, adding that the roof had suffered severe deterioration due to decayed bricks, and stones had fallen twice during the rainy season last year.

"To address these risks, the APSARA restoration team replaced damaged bricks with newly produced ones, refilled the interior core of the upper structure to restore its original form and stabilize the remaining walls, and applied additional mortar reinforcement to strengthen the structure," Soth said.

"Although the restoration work has been completed, the scaffolding will remain temporarily in place to allow experts to continue monitoring the condition of the mortar and cracked stones, ensuring the long-term durability and safety of the structure," he added.



This photo taken on May 8, 2026 shows the Baksei Chamkrong temple in Siem Reap province, Cambodia. Archaeologists have completed the emergency restoration of the early 10th-century Baksei Chamkrong temple in Cambodia's famed Angkor Archaeological Park after parts of the structure were at risk of collapse, the APSARA National Authority (ANA) said in a news release on Saturday. (Xinhua)

Soth expressed pride in the achievement of Cambodian conservation specialists who successfully restored the nearly 30-meter-high temple tower.

The project demonstrates the growing capability of Cambodian experts in preserving national cultural heritage, he said, adding that additional restoration work may be conducted in the future, particularly on the tower, stairways, and surrounding walls.

The emergency stabilization and

restoration project for Baksei Chamkrong Temple began in October 2025 and concluded in May 2026.

Made of bricks, laterite and sandstone, the Baksei Chamkrong temple, which is more than 1,000 years old, stands on a four-tiered laterite platform with a total height of 29.2 meters.

It is one of the major temples in the UNESCO-listed Angkor Archaeological Park in northwest Siem Reap province, which is home to 91 ancient temples built from the ninth to the 13th centuries.

We can't leave this sport: Abu Assi

Surfers in war-torn Gaza find rare moments of joy taking to the waves

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip, May 9, (AP): Despite the dire humanitarian crisis across the Gaza Strip, where a fragile ceasefire remains in place, a handful of Palestinian surfers are finding joy - and relief - riding the waves of the territory's Mediterranean coastal waters.

Only three or four men still surf due to a shortage of surfboards and the materials needed to fix damaged ones, said Tahseen Abu Assi, a surfer in Gaza City.

Abu Assi carried his surfboard with him through every displacement he endured during the two-year war because, he said, he wouldn't be able to replace it.

"If something happened to it I won't be able to get another one," he said, noting that no boards have entered the Palestinian territory since 2007. Surfboards are among sports equipment and other products that are banned by Israel.

On Tuesday, Abu Assi was among three surfers who took to the sea off



Palestinian Tahseen Abu Assi, center left, prepares his board before surfing on the beach in Gaza City, Monday, May 4, 2026. (AP)

the Gaza City port, including Khalil Abu Jlab, who rode the high waves with his arms raised in joy.

After the war began, the Israeli military heavily restricted sea activity in Gaza, with the United Nations

reporting that some fishermen were attacked onshore or at sea, including incidents involving fishermen using paddle boats.

Last year, Israel declared Gaza's waters a "no-go zone," banning fish-



Palestinians Tahseen Abu Assi, left, Khalil Abu Jayyab, center, and Abed Rahim Alostaz warm up before surfing on the beach in Gaza City, May 4, 2026. (AP)

ing, swimming and sea access, making surfing risky.

Fishing and swimming are prohibited and dangerous in the waters off northern and southern Gaza. It's also risky to enter the waters off central

Gaza, where Gaza City is located, due to Israeli patrols.

"There is fear of course, but we can't leave this sport," Abu Assi said. "During the war, in the middle of the war, in the middle of the bombing and

the planes above us, we used to go down and practice this sport."

Gaza's waves rarely rise high enough for surfing, so when they do, surfers drop everything to get in the water, he added.

Intense fighting across the enclave eased after a shaky ceasefire took effect on Oct. 10, but deadly Israeli strikes have continued, with both Hamas and Israel accusing each other of violating the truce.

Israel's war with Hamas broke out on Oct. 7, 2023, after the militants attacked southern Israel, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking another 251 hostage. Israel's military offensive in Gaza has killed 72,628 Palestinians and injured 172,520 others, according to the latest figures by Gaza's Health Ministry.

Palestinians continue to struggle to secure food, clean water, medical care and shelter after the war caused widespread destruction, dismantled health-care infrastructure and displaced most of the territory's residents.

Space

Spiral galaxy's brilliant heart shines bright in new pic from NASA's Webb

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., May 9, (Agencies): A spiral galaxy's brilliant heart outshines everything within sight in a new picture from NASA's Webb Space Telescope.

The image released this week depicts the Messier 77 galaxy 45 million light-years away in the Cetus, or whale, constellation. A light year is about 6 trillion miles.

The galaxy's active nucleus is powered by a supermassive black hole that's 8 million times more massive than the sun. Surrounding gas is sucked into a tight orbit around the black hole, becoming so hot that it radiates in the extreme. Webb's mid-infrared instrument captured the stunning details.

The world's largest and most powerful space telescope has been photographing the cosmos since launching in 2021. Meanwhile, NASA and SpaceX are targeting May 12 for the launch of a new commercial resupply mission to the International Space Station (ISS).

A SpaceX Dragon spacecraft carrying about 6,500 pounds of cargo is scheduled to lift off at 7:16 pm Eastern Time from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in the southeastern US state of Florida.

The spacecraft is expected to dock autonomously with the ISS at about 9:50 am on May 14.

Dragon will deliver supplies for the crew aboard the space station, along with several new experiments, according to NASA.

The spacecraft is scheduled to remain at the orbiting laboratory until mid-June before returning to Earth with time-sensitive research samples and cargo.

This will mark the 34th SpaceX commercial resupply services mission to the ISS for NASA.

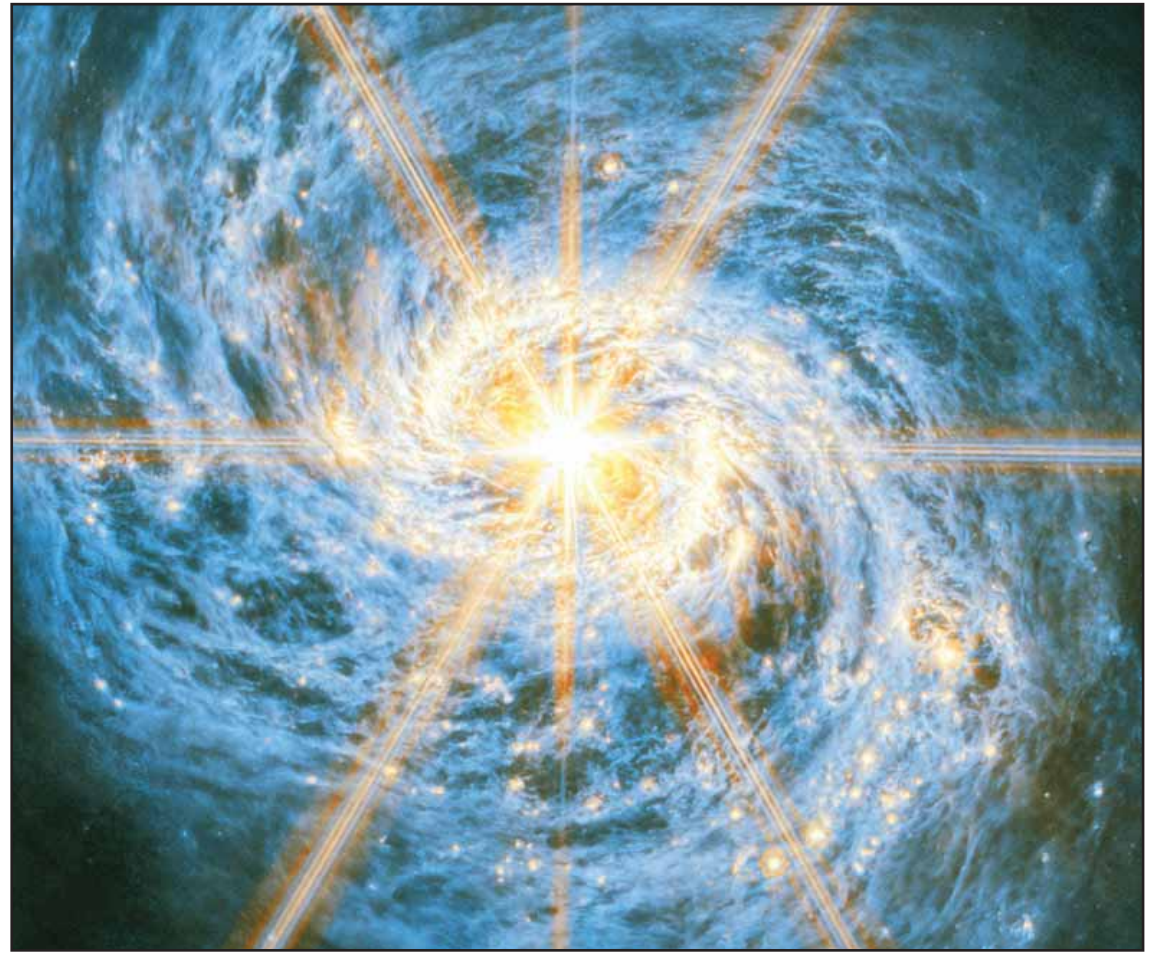
Also:

WENCHANG, Hainan Province: The combination of the Tianzhou-10 cargo craft and a Long March-7 carrier rocket was vertically transferred to the launch site on Friday, according to the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA).

The cargo spacecraft will be launched at a proper time in the near future, the CMSA said.

Currently, the facilities and equipment at the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site in the southern island province of Hainan are in good condition, and comprehensive functionality checks and joint tests are scheduled to proceed as planned ahead of the launch, the CMSA added.

The Tianzhou-9 separated from the orbiting Tiangong space station combination on Wednesday and re-entered the atmosphere under controlled conditions on Thursday. The space station has thus cleared a docking port to make room for the Tianzhou-10, the CMSA noted.



This image provided by NASA/ESA/Webb from the NASA/ESA/ESA James Webb Space Telescope shows Messier 77 (M77), a barred spiral galaxy famous and appreciated among astronomers for its combination of relative proximity and spectacular features to study. (AP)

Environment

'Degradation is slower and more silent, it's like a chronic condition'

Despite gains combating deforestation in Brazil's Amazon, forest degradation a looming threat

SAO PAULO, May 9, (AP): The administration of Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva frequently touts how it has sharply slowed deforestation in the Amazon, and indeed it has. When the next official annual numbers are released in October, the deforestation rate is expected to be the lowest since 2012.

Despite gains in keeping forest standing, however, many other threats, ranging from climate change to potential legislation on the horizon, are putting the forest at risk. Forest degradation, driven by wildfires, logging and drought, affects about 40% of the Amazon and has outpaced clear-cutting in recent years. All of this could be exacerbated in 2026 with a strong El Niño, a cyclic warming of the equatorial Pacific, which causes higher temperatures and drier weather in the rainforest, conditions that worsen wildfires.

"Degradation is slower and more silent. It is like a chronic condition," said Taciana Stec, a climate policy specialist at Talanoa, a Brazilian climate think tank.

While the Amazon is still a carbon sink - that is, it absorbs a vast amount of planet-warming carbon dioxide - it could reach a tipping point beyond which it cannot recover. At that stage, the forest could emit more CO2 than it absorbs.

Scientists say repeated stress could trigger a regional or biome-wide collapse. A 2024 study published in Nature estimated that by 2050, between 10% and 47% of the Amazon could be pushed into conditions capable of triggering such a critical shift.

The Amazon is spread across nine countries in South America. Brazil has by far the largest chunk - more than 60% - meaning what happens in this section can impact the rest of forest.

In Brazil, the official annual deforestation rate covers the period from August of the previous year to July of the current year. Preliminary data based on DETER, Brazil's official satellite-based system that provides real-time alerts, show that both deforestation and forest degradation have significantly declined since last year.

However, degradation continues to outpace deforestation. From August 2025 through April 2026, deforestation alerts covered nearly 1,700 square kilometers (656 square miles), while degradation affected about 4,420 square kilometers (1,706 square miles).

The DETER system provides environmental authorities with daily alerts of ongoing deforestation - complete clear-cutting - and degradation, which are areas affected by human activity where soil is exposed but the forest has not yet been fully lost.

During the 2023 and 2024 El Niño, temperatures rose 2 to 4 Celsius (3.5 to 7 Fahrenheit) above the forest's historical average. Associated with severe drought, the heat fueled the Amazon's worst wildfires in two decades, and forest degradation increased at a rate roughly three times greater than the decline in deforestation.

The combined effect was a net loss of rainforest that undermined the deforestation progress, a study by Guilherme Mataveli, a researcher at



A wildfire consumes land recently deforested by cattle farmers near Novo Progresso, Para state, Brazil, Aug. 23, 2020. (AP)

Brazil's National Institute for Space Research, or INPE, showed.

A degraded rainforest may still be standing, but it can no longer fully support the ecosystem. That weakness could be compounded by external factors like El Niño. For example, if the Amazon were a human patient with a chronic illness, El Niño would strike like a flu, triggering a fever that leaves the body weaker and more vulnerable. Two years later, the flu returns. But this time, the patient has not fully recovered. The fever burns hotter, and the illness hits harder.

Assessing a forest in this state is relatively new to scientists, as identifying degradation through satellite images is more complex than tree-cutting. But they have increasingly warned about its prolonged and dan-

gerous effect.

This new scenario requires the government to prioritize forest restoration, experts say. Brazil plans to restore 12 million hectares (29.7 million acres) of native Amazon forest by 2030, as part of the commitment it made under the 2015 Paris Agreement. According to the Environment Ministry, 3.4 million hectares (8.4 million acres) are already undergoing recovery.

Above all, the country must continue its efforts to curb deforestation, experts say. But a fast-tracked bill in Congress threatens the main tool that enabled Brazil curb deforestation.

If approved, the legislation, proposed by lawmaker Lucio Mosquini, would prohibit IBAMA, Brazil's environmental enforcement agency,

from imposing sanctions on landowners for illegal deforestation based solely on satellite monitoring, a pillar of the country's environmental enforcement.

Mosquini said satellite-based sanctions harm farmers because they are not given a chance to mount a defense. Authorities, however, say farmers can challenge the sanction within 20 days and have it overturned if they can show the deforestation was authorized.

IBAMA first began relying on satellite data in 2016 to complement field inspections and support deforestation control in remote areas. Former President Jair Bolsonaro's administration halted the policy in 2019 as part of its environmental deregulation efforts, which drove Amazon deforestation rates to a 15-year high in 2021. Under Lula, who returned to office in 2023 after previously being president between 2003-2010, the environmental agency resumed remote monitoring.

Since March, the proposal has been set for an eventual vote by Congress' lower chamber. If it passes, it would move to the Senate. Since agribusiness is the country's most powerful economic sector and most influential in Congress, political experts expect it to be approved.

If approved, the project would be "a major environmental setback," Jair Schmitt, IBAMA's president, told The Associated Press. "In effect, you end up encouraging environmental offenders and unfair competition."

Satellite technology supports environmental enforcement such as

speed cameras assist traffic authorities, Schmitt said. It would be impossible for a city to deploy a guard to every corner. Likewise, the federal government cannot station agents to every on every square kilometer of the rainforest.

In March, the government announced the hiring of 4,600 firefighters and launched real-time monitoring of potential fire outbreaks. Schmitt, the IBAMA president, said authorities have identified rural properties at high fire risk by combining historical heat-spot data with deforestation and weather records. Some landowners are now being notified and ordered to adopt preventive measures.

"The situation this year is worrying. We're still in the rainy season, and we've already recorded two fires in April," said Tainan Kumaruara, a member of the Indigenous volunteer Guardioes Kumaruara fire brigade, in the Kumaruara Indigenous land in Para state.

"The forest is different from what it was 10 years ago. It's much drier. The trees no longer behave as they did," she added.

In 2024, a major wildfire season fueled by severe drought affected more than 17 million hectares (42 million acres) of rainforest, according to MapBiomos, a nonprofit that tracks land use. Most wildfires in the Amazon are not natural but rather started by humans.

Amid the warnings, a study published in April by Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences added more evidence about how the Amazon recovers from fire.

Health

WHO head to oversee evacuation of passengers and crew from hantavirus-stricken cruise ship

TENERIFE, Spain, May 9, (AP): The head of the World Health Organization arrived in Spain on Saturday to oversee the evacuation of more than 140 passengers and crew from a hantavirus-stricken cruise ship headed to the Canary Islands.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said he would be heading to the Spanish island of Tenerife off the coast of West Africa, along with senior Spanish government officials, "to oversee safe disembarkation of the passengers, crew members and health experts."

The Dutch-flagged ship, the MV Hondius, is expected to arrive in Tenerife in the early hours of Sunday. Tedros said that at this point, nobody on board the Hondius was showing symptoms of the virus.

"WHO continues to actively monitor the situation, coordinate support and next steps and will keep Member States and the public updated accordingly. So far, the risk for the population of Canary Islands and globally remains low," he posted on X.

Spain's Health Minister Monica Garcia said on Friday she would be heading to Tenerife with Tedros and Interior Fernando Grande-Marlaska to coordinate the disembarkation.

Three people have died since the outbreak, and five passengers who left the ship are infected with hantavirus. Both the U.S. and the U.K. have agreed to send planes to evacuate their citizens from the cruise ship.

The head of Spain's emergency services, Virginia Barcones, has said passengers will be taken to a "com-



Media crew members stand in the area where passengers from the MV Hondius cruise ship are expected to arrive at the port of Granadilla in Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain on May 9. (AP)

pletely isolated, cordoned-off area" once they disembark.

Hantavirus is usually spread by the inhalation of contaminated rodent droppings and isn't easily transmitted between people. But the Andes virus detected in the cruise ship outbreak may be able to spread between people in rare cases. Symptoms usually show between one and eight weeks after exposure.

According to a letter sent by the Dutch foreign and health ministers to parliament late Friday, Spain has activated the EU civil protection mechanism for a medical evacuation plane equipped for high-consequence infectious disease to be on standby.

In case anyone falls ill, the med-

ics on board the ship will inform the Spanish authorities, and the evacuation plane "will be sent to Tenerife so that the sick person can be quickly transported by air to the European mainland."

The Dutch government will work with Spanish authorities and the ship company to arrange repatriation of Dutch passengers and crew as soon as possible after arrival in Tenerife, subject to medical conditions and advice from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, the letter said. Those without symptoms will go into home quarantine for six weeks and be monitored by local health services.

As the ship is Dutch-flagged, the Netherlands may also temporarily ac-

commodate people of other nationalities and monitor them in quarantine.

Health authorities across four continents were tracking down and monitoring more than two dozen passengers who disembarked before the deadly outbreak was detected. They were also scrambling to trace others who may have come into contact with them.

On Friday, the WHO said a flight attendant on a plane briefly boarded by an infected cruise passenger had tested negative for hantavirus. Her possible infection had raised concerns about the virus' potential transmissibility.

The flight attendant's negative result should ease concerns among the public, said Christian Lindmeier, a WHO spokesman. "The risk remains absolutely low," he said. "This is not a new COVID."

On April 24, nearly two weeks after the first passenger had died on board, more than two dozen people from at least 12 different countries left the ship without contact tracing, Dutch officials and the ship's operator have said.

It wasn't until May 2 that health authorities first confirmed hantavirus in a ship passenger, the WHO said.

The KLM flight attendant who tested negative for the virus was working on a plane headed from Johannesburg to Amsterdam on April 25, and had later fallen ill.

The cruise passenger briefly aboard that flight - a Dutch woman whose husband died on the ship - was too ill to stay on the international flight to Europe and was taken off in Johannesburg, where she died.



Chinese Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, inspects Shanghai Jiao Tong University in Shanghai, east China on April 30. (Xinhua)

China calls for enhanced basic research, original innovation

BEIJING, May 9, (Xinhua): Chinese Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang has stressed that the country needs to comprehensively improve its basic research level and original innovation capability.

Ding, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, made the remarks during recent inspection tours in Fujian Province, Shanghai and Beijing.

Ding visited the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and the Huairou Laboratory to learn about progress in original innovation and breakthroughs in core technologies in key fields.

He stressed the need to optimize the layout of basic research, with a clear focus on priority areas and major fields. He called for strengthening original and disruptive innovation to achieve mutually reinforcing progress in scientific discovery and technological invention.

Ding also inspected Shanghai Jiao Tong University and the University of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. He emphasized the importance of advancing the integrated development of education, science and technology, and talent cultivation.

During a visit to the memorial of the "two bombs, one satellite," referring to China's first atomic bomb, intercontinental ballistic missile and satellite, at the CAS, Ding underscored the importance of carrying forward the spirit legacy, and encouraged scientists and researchers to shoulder the mission entrusted by the country and scale new heights in science.

He also encouraged leading tech companies to make original breakthroughs.

Knight Riders struggle on a slow pitch

Allen blasts century as Kolkata crushes Delhi for fourth straight win

NEW DELHI, May 9, (AP) — Finn Allen's 47-ball century against Delhi Capitals rushed Kolkata Knight Riders to their fourth straight win in the Indian Premier League.

Allen finally struck form with an unbeaten 100 including 10 sixes and five boundaries, as Kolkata cruised to 147-2 in 14.2 overs for a thumping eight-wicket win.

Delhi struggled on a slow pitch and was restricted to 142-8 despite opening batters Pathum Nissanka (50) and Lokesh Rahul (23) providing a decent start of 49 in the first five overs.

Kolkata was up to seventh in the table, three points off the top four. Delhi was eighth and still mathematically in the playoffs race.

Allen accidentally ran out fellow opener and captain Ajinkya Rahane when his shot deflected off Mitchell Starc's hand onto Rahane's stumps. But Allen made up for it, and rewarded persistence after coming into the game with 110 runs from six games.

"I've been working on having more strings in my bow," Allen said. "I've got a few starts, frustrating not to carry on. Nice to have some personal success. Some-

times being left out changes your perspective. Allows time for mental refresh. I was putting too much pressure on myself."

The New Zealander reached a half-century off 32 balls and the second fifty off just 15. His batting partner, million dollar signing Cameron Green, was content to feed Allen the strike and watch the fireworks.

When Kolkata was on the brink of victory and Allen was on 94, Green teed up his teammate who smashed Mukesh Kumar with his 10th six to reach his hundred and clinch the win.

Green was unbeaten on 33 off 27 balls.

"I knew I'd be the most hated player in Kolkata if I didn't help him get the ton," Green said.

Delhi was put in to bat, lost wickets in clusters, and slumped to 89-5 in the 11th over. That included the key dismissal of Nissanka, stumped after reaching 50.

Kolkata spinners Sunil Narine and Varun Chakravarthy frustrated Delhi by bowling a combined eight overs for just 45 runs.

"We were short on runs," Delhi skipper Axar Patel said. "We lost five wickets in two-three overs and lost momentum."



Kolkata Knight Riders' Finn Allen plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Delhi Capitals and Kolkata Knight Riders in New Delhi, India. (AP)

Croatian qualifier stuns Djokovic as Eala soaking in Filipino cheers



Poland's Iga Swiatek returns the ball to United State's Caty McNally during their match at the Italian Open tennis tournament, in Rome. (AP)

Rybakina sweeps past Sakkari at Italian Open

ROME, May 9, (Agencies): Six-time champion Novak Djokovic suffered a shock second-round exit at the Italian Open after falling to Croatian youngster Dino Prizmic. Sixth seed Alex de Minaur was also eliminated, while former champions Alexander Zverev, Elena Rybakina and Iga Swiatek advanced to the third round.

It was the first meeting between Djokovic and Prizmic since the 2024 Australian Open. Djokovic took control early in the opening set, breaking in the sixth game with a forehand winner after constructing the point with a delicate drop shot and volley combination, before sealing the set 6-2.

Prizmic responded strongly in the second set as Djokovic's first-serve effectiveness dipped. The Croatian raced to a 4-0 lead and leveled the match with a 6-2 set before securing a decisive break in the fifth game of the third set on his way to a 6-4 victory, denying Djokovic a place in the last 32.

Djokovic said after the match that he did not think he had played poorly overall, although he admitted he was "half a step late." The Serbian also praised Prizmic's performance, saying the Croatian had "definitely performed high-level tennis" and that his forehand had improved significantly since their previous meeting.

In other men's singles round of 64 matches, second seed Zverev defeated fellow German Daniel Altmaier 7-5, 6-3. De Minaur, meanwhile, lost to Italian wildcard Matteo Arnaldi 6-4, 6-7 (5), 4-6 after a hard-fought three-set contest.



Croatia's Dino Prizmic celebrates after defeating Serbia's Novak Djokovic at the Italian Open tennis tournament, in Rome. (AP)

In the women's draw, second seed Rybakina swept past Greece's Maria Sakkari 6-4, 6-1, while three-time Rome champion Swiatek needed two hours and 43 minutes to overcome American Caty McNally 6-1, 6-7 (5), 6-3.

Tenth seed Victoria Mboko of Canada withdrew from the tournament on Friday due to a gastrointestinal illness and was replaced in the draw by lucky loser Nikola Pietrangeli.

There were plenty of Filipino flags waving in support of Alexandra Eala amid the statues lining the picturesque Pietrangeli court at the Italian Open.

Eala beat 31st-seeded Wang Xinyu 6-4, 6-3 to follow up her three-set victory over Magdalena French in the opening round and put together consecutive clay-court victories for the first time since the qualifying rounds for the 2024 French Open.

"Yes, I did notice it," Eala said of the Filipino support in Rome.

The 20-year-old Eala has become

a worldwide sensation among the large Filipino diaspora ever since her breakthrough run to the Miami Open semifinals last year. Her fan base expanded again when she beat Clara Tauson in a long third-set tiebreaker in the first round at the U.S. Open last year for her first win in a major.

She attracted more attention at this year's Australian Open - the closest Grand Slam to the Philippines.

Eala also noticed Filipino flags hanging outside a building on her way to visit the Vatican this week.

"I was like, 'OK, we really are everywhere.' And then I later learned that that's the embassy of the Philippines to the Vatican," she said. "And funny story: My great grandmother, she used to work there way back when. So it was full circle or something sentimental."

While Eala prefers faster surfaces, she has plenty of access to clay courts at the Rafa Nadal Academy in Spain where she's based.

"I have a great team, very knowledgeable, and they are definitely

guiding me and navigating me through this phase of the tour," Eala said. "I trust in them a lot."

"What I've been trying to do is just be very patient and kind of try to enjoy being in that mode or that kind of mindset of being physically pushed and trying to stay in that suffering kind of zone."

While Eala is preparing for the French Open, her favorite Grand Slam remains Wimbledon.

"Growing up, Wimbledon was always the Grand Slam for me because I loved the tradition and seeing it from afar was very beautiful," Eala said. "I saw everyone was in all white, the grass was so green, everything very elegant. So I carry that opinion until now."

Eala has played in the main draw of the last four Grand Slams. So Roland Garros will mark her second time around in that category. She's ranked No. 42.

"I haven't been past a second round in a Grand Slam," she said, "so that would be nice."

Being based in Spain - the Nadal academy is in Manacor on the Balearic Islands - has helped Eala learn a third language after Filipino and English. During the recent Madrid Open she was able to do interviews in Spanish.

"To be able to get out of my shell and really break that barrier of being embarrassed was a great step for me," she said. "Having a third language is really a great skill and it's very useful so I'm quite proud of myself."

Eala's emergence helped the Philippines host a WTA 125-level tournament in January. Amid huge attention, she reached the quarterfinals.

"Every time I go home I'm able to experience Manila in a different light because thankfully I've been getting better and better," Eala said. "Home will always be home and I love going back there."

F1 leaders agree to make engine design change for 2027 season

PARIS, May 9, (AP) — Formula 1 leaders have agreed to an engine design change for 2027 that will slightly increase internal combustion output.

F1 started the year with big changes including a 50-50 split in power between a traditional engine and the onboard battery pack, but driver criticism was immediate.

Governing body the FIA said it met with teams and F1 officials in an online session and that the changes were agreed in principle.

"The measures agreed in principle today for 2027 would see a nominal increase in internal combustion engine (ICE) power by (tilde)50kW alongside a fuel-flow increase and a nominal reduction of the

energy recovery system (ERS) deployment power by (tilde)50kW," the FIA statement said.

The changes, it added, will be "intuitive for drivers and teams."

After just three grands prix this season, tweaks were made that slightly curbed the influence of the electrical power. They answered driver criticism by promoting pure driving skill over electrical recharging, especially in qualifying.

Last weekend's Miami Grand Prix was the first under those changes. Sunday's race was one of the most wide open in recent F1 history with drivers from four different teams leading before Kimi Antonelli took his third win of 2026 for Mercedes.

F1 has used V6 engines with electrical hybrid power since 2014 and an increase in the amount of electrical power has forced drivers to adjust. Timing the electrical boost and recharging is the key to tactical racing. Four-time world champion Max Verstappen loathes it so much he's questioned his future in F1.

The FIA said Friday's session began with a review of the changes put in place before Miami.

"The conclusion from the deployment of modifications in Miami, designed to improve safety and reduce excessive harvesting, was that they resulted in improved competition and were a step in the right direction," it said.

Infantino defends ticket prices

FIFA triples price to \$32,970 for its best available tickets to the World Cup final

NEW JERSEY, May 9, (AP) — FIFA tripled the price of its best available tickets to the World Cup final, making \$32,970 seats available for the July 19 match at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

Soccer's governing body listed those seats as front category one on its sales site.

It previously had a high price of \$10,990 for category one. The \$10,990 category for the final was available only as wheelchair and easy access amenity category one.

Tickets for the July 14 semifinal at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas, were listed at \$11,130, \$4,330, \$3,710 and \$2,705. Seats for the following day's semifinal at Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium were at \$10,635, \$3,545 and \$2,725.

Seats for the U.S. opener against Paraguay on June 12 at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California, were available for \$2,735, \$1,940 and \$1,120, while tickets for the Americans' June 19 game against Australia at Seattle were listed at \$2,715. Tickets for the Americans' group-stage finale against Turkey at Inglewood on June 25 were \$2,970, \$1,345, \$990 and \$840.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino has defended the ticket prices.

"We have to look at the market. We are in a market in which entertainment is the most developed in the world, so we have to apply market rates," he said Tuesday at the Milken Institute Global Conference in Beverly Hills, California. "In the U.S. it is permitted to resell tickets, as well, so if you were to sell tickets at the price which is too low, these tickets will be resold at a much higher price. And as a matter of fact, even though some people are saying that the ticket prices we have are high, they still end up on the resale market at an even higher price, more than double of our price."



FIFA World Cup trophy.

He added, "You cannot go to watch in the U.S. a college game, not even speaking about a top professional game of a certain level, for less than \$300."

On the FIFA Resale/Exchange Marketplace, tickets for the final were available Thursday ranging from \$11,499,998.85 to \$8,970. The high price was listed for a ticket four rows from the top of the upper deck, in block 307, row 22, seat 12.

FIFA does not control the asking prices on its Resale/Exchange Marketplace but takes a 15% purchase fee from the buyer of each ticket and a 15% resale fee from the seller.

Last month, someone listed tickets for the final at \$2,299,998.85.

"If some people put on the secondary, on the resale market some tickets for the final at \$2 million, No. 1, it doesn't mean that the tickets cost \$2 million, and No. 2, it doesn't mean that somebody will buy these tickets," Infantino said. "Actually if somebody buys a ticket for the final for \$2 million, I will personally bring a hot dog and a Coke to make sure that he has a great experience."

FIFA waives bans for Otamendi, Caicedo

GENEVA, May 9, (AP) — Argentina defender Nicolás Otamendi and Ecuador midfielder Moisés Caicedo will not have to serve one-game bans at the World Cup despite being sent off in their last qualifying games.

The unprecedented decisions are part of an amnesty of all but the most severe disciplinary sanctions stemming from World Cup qualifiers instigated by the FIFA Bureau - a panel consisting of FIFA President Gianni Infantino and the presidents of the six continental soccer bodies.

"Single yellow cards and pending one- or two-match suspensions ... are not carried over to the final competition," FIFA said in a statement, adding it wanted to ensure teams "can compete with their strongest possible squads on the biggest stage of men's international football."

It follows a previous unprecedented FIFA disciplinary ruling that ensured Cristiano Ronaldo will not miss any World Cup games despite a red card for using his elbow to strike an Ireland opponent in Portugal's second-to-last qualifier in November.

The remaining two games of Ronaldo's three-game ban were deferred for a one-year probation period.

Otamendi and Caicedo both were shown red cards in Ecuador's 1-0 win over Argentina in September. Otamendi got a direct red card for fouling an attacker running clear on goal and Caicedo got a second yellow card for a hard tackle.

Their mandatory one-game bans should now be served in another competition after the World Cup.

Argentina opens the defense of its World Cup title against Algeria on June 16 in Kansas City.

If selected, the 38-year-old Otamendi likely will be playing at his fourth and last World Cup. The Benfica center back also went to the tournaments in 2010, 2018 and 2022 when he played every minute of all seven Argentina games in Qatar.

Ecuador starts against Ivory Coast on June 14 in Philadelphia. The 24-year-old Chelsea midfielder Caicedo also played in Qatar four years ago.

The FIFA decision on Friday also benefits Qatar defender Tarek Salman, who was sent off against United Arab Emirates in October. FIFA disciplinary judges imposed a two-game ban.

Best of the Rest

Brazil stays top of rankings: FIFA released its latest futsal world rankings, with Brazil retaining the top spot in both the men's and women's categories.

A total of 321 men's matches and 84 women's matches have been played since the previous rankings were issued in December 2025.

The top seven positions in the men's rankings remain unchanged, with Brazil leading ahead of Portugal, Spain, Argentina, Iran, Morocco and Russia.

In the women's rankings, Brazil continues to lead the field, followed by Spain, Portugal, Argentina, Italy and Japan.

FIFA launched its first official futsal world rankings in May 2024. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

Tessmann has muscle injury: U.S. midfielder Tanner Tessmann will not play any more games for Lyon this season because of a muscle strain, coach Paulo Fonseca said, in another injury concern for the Americans ahead of the World Cup.

It wasn't immediately clear how serious Tessmann's injury is, with barely a month until the start of the tournament being co-hosted by the United States.

Tessmann, who can also fill in at center back, would be a likely selection for the U.S. squad, which is being announced May 26. The Americans begin training the following day in Fayetteville, Georgia. (AP)

Sébastien Buemi, Brendon Hartley and Ryo Hirkawa secure first place in newly debuted Toyota TR010 HYBRID

TOYOTA RACING claims victory at 6 Hours of Imola



Top and above: Toyota GAZOO drivers in action

Toyota GAZOO Racing celebrates after a hard-fought victory.

IMOLA, Italy, May 9: TOYOTA RACING has kicked off its 2026 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) campaign with a double podium finish at 6 Hours of Imola. Sébastien Buemi, Brendon Hartley and Ryo Hirkawa took home first place in the No.8 Toyota TR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar after working their way into the lead. Teammates Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi and Nyck de Vries followed quickly behind and took third place in the No.7 Toyota TR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar. The 6 Hours of Imola marked TOYOTA RACING's 100th race in the WEC hybrid era and delivered the team's 50th championship victory.

Kamui Kobayashi, Team Principal and driver, car #7, said: "We tried everything we could today to bring home

the best possible result. It was quite a smooth race but not easy to find the opportunities to make up places. It was challenging for us, but we managed to get both cars on the podium and start the season with a win, so I'm really happy. Most importantly, our car seems to be strong so that brings us confidence for the rest of the season. Congratulations to all the team who worked so hard on the TR010 HYBRID and to execute the race today. Next we head to Spa and a long season ahead of us. We will work hard and try our best to achieve all our targets."

Held on challenging Italian asphalt, conditions evolved throughout the race with light rain and strong winds in the closing stages. These shifts placed a premium on tyre and fuel management and presented a

further test for the Toyota TR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar, which was introduced in January 2026 as an evolution of the Toyota GR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar. The Toyota TR010 ran consistently across the six-hour contest, supported by well-judged strategy and clean execution from the crews.

The No.8 Toyota TR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar remained among the leading cars throughout before moving into the lead during the middle stages. In the closing hours, the crew navigated tricky track conditions during a light shower to hold the advantage until the end.

The No.7 Toyota TR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar also worked its way forward over the course of the race,

securing third place just under a minute after the No.8 crew, to secure a double podium finish for the team.

Toyota advances vehicle and human development through motorsports by leveraging competition as a testing ground under extreme conditions. From the 2026 season, Toyota competes in the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) under the TOYOTA RACING brand, strengthening its long-term technological foundation through cutting-edge motorsports activities. Alongside endurance racing, GAZOO Racing (GR) continues to expand the bond between customers and Toyota products through its participation in rally and customer motorsports, supported by TOYOTA RACING GmbH.

Wembanyama stars as Spurs grab series lead

Knicks on verge of East finals

MINNEAPOLIS, May 9, (AP): Victor Wembanyama delivered another masterpiece with 39 points, 15 rebounds and more game-wrecking defense for the San Antonio Spurs, who took a 2-1 lead in the second-round NBA playoff series with a 115-108 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Wembanyama went 13 of 18 from the floor and 10 of 12 from the line, adding five blocks and a full night of paint deterrence as the Spurs won their second straight game after dropping the opener at home.

De'Aaron Fox scored 17 points, and Stephon Castle had 13 points and 12 assists with a team-high plus-17 rating.

Anthony Edwards had 32 points and 14 rebounds and Naz Reid added 18 points and nine rebounds for the Wolves, whose defense kept them alive after a woeful start but allowed the Spurs to shoot 6 for 10 from 3-point range in the pivotal third quarter.

Minnesota will host Game 4 on Sunday night. The series shifts back to San Antonio for Game 5 on Tuesday.

Jaden McDaniels drew Wembanyama's fifth foul with 6:18 left and brought the Wolves within 99-98 on pair of free throws, but the Spurs never trailed in the second



San Antonio Spurs guard Stephon Castle, left, drives against Minnesota Timberwolves guard Anthony Edwards, right, during the second half of Game 3 of a NBA basketball second-round playoff series in Minneapolis. (AP)

half despite never leading by double digits. Wembanyama sat for about a minute before coach Mitch Johnson sent him back in.

Wembanyama didn't flinch despite the foul risk, finishing with 16 points in the fourth quarter. His 3-pointer that answered Reid's pushed San Antonio's lead to six with 3:06 to go. Reid tried another one near the end of the shot clock on the next possession that hit the rim and Wembanyama snagged for another rebound.

Edwards, who showed Minnesota yet again his swift healing ability by returning from a deep bone bruise in his hyperextended left knee after just one week to make the start of the series, had

22 points in the first half to help them snap back from an early 18-3 deficit.

The Wolves missed their first 12 shots and didn't get a basket to go down until Rudy Gobert's putback with 6:52 had elapsed, but unlike in the 133-95 drubbing they took in Game 2 on Wednesday they had the defensive intelligence and tenacity at the ready to make up for the long shooting lulls.

Edwards hit a buzzer-beating 31-footer at the end of the first quarter, and McDaniels swished a 3-pointer from the wing to end the first half with a 51-all tie.

McDaniels and Julius Randle were the most affected by Wembanyama's presence, unable to get

their short-range and rim-attacking game going. They shot a combined 8 for 34 from the floor.

Knicks 108, 76ers 94

In Philadelphia, Jalen Brunson scored 33 points and sealed the game with big buckets late to the delight of roaring Knicks fans, leading New York to a 108-94 win over the Philadelphia 76ers for a 3-0 lead in the Eastern Conference semifinals.

Game 4 is Sunday in Philadelphia.

Brunson shook off a 2-of-8 start from the floor and finished 11 of 22 in 38 minutes to send the Knicks to their sixth straight postseason victory.

With 2016 and 2018 Villanova national championship banners hanging in the rafters, the so-called Nova Knicks all took turns taking the fight out of the Sixers in the fourth quarter, turning a four-point lead into another double-digit victory.

Josh Hart had 12 points and 11 rebounds and Mikal Bridges added 23 points, pushing the Knicks within one victory of their second straight conference finals appearance.

When Brown took the job after Tom Thibodeau was fired, the veteran coach said he wouldn't know what kind of team he really had until he got "into the trenches with them."

Brown now sees the makings of a championship team.

The Knicks have the luxury not to rush back forward OG Anunoby, who's averaging 21.4 points per game in the postseason. He sat out with a strained right hamstring and remains day to day.

Uruguay's first Giro stage winner

Guillermo wins crash-marred Giro stage 2, takes overall lead

VELIKO TARNOVO, Bulgaria, May 9, (AP): Uruguayan cyclist Guillermo Silva won a crash-marred second stage of the Giro d'Italia in a sprint finish and took the overall race lead on Saturday.

Silva made some history too as the first Uruguayan to win a Giro stage and to don the maglia rosa. The Maldonado-born rider put his hands on his head in disbelief before playfully sticking out his tongue as he celebrated the biggest win of his career.

"I'm over the moon. It's only my second stage at the Giro d'Italia and I've already managed to win and even take the maglia rosa," he said. "I was feeling good but I never imagined I could achieve something like this."

Pre-race favorite Jonas Vingegaard was among four leading riders on the home stretch but they were caught by a big group of sprinters with 300 meters left.

Silva's XDS Astana teammate Christian Scaroni put him in an ideal position to attack and he just held off German rider Florian Stork and Italian climbing specialist Giulio Ciccone, who finished third.

"I have to thank Christian Scaroni, who



Uruguay's Guillermo Thomas Silva Cousan wears the pink jersey of the overall leader after winning the second stage of the Giro d'Italia cycling race, from Burgos to Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria. (AP)

helped me both in the chase to the leaders and in setting up the sprint," Silva said. "I don't think I'll ever forget this day."

They finished the 221-kilometer (137-mile) hilly trek from Burgos to Veliko Tarnovo in north-central Bulgaria, which featured three moderate climbs, in 5 1/2 hours.

Arbeloa backs duo after training scuffle

BARCELONA, Spain, May 9, (AP): Real Madrid coach Álvaro Arbeloa has defended players Federico Valverde and Aurélien Tchouaméni, saying their apologies for having scuffled were enough to settle the incident that led the club to fine both of them a whopping 500,000 euros (\$590,000).

"My players recognized their mistake, expressed their remorse and asked for forgiveness," Arbeloa told reporters in Madrid on Saturday in his first public appearance since the fight.

"That is enough for me," he said. "What I am not going to do is burn them on a pyre in a town square, because they don't deserve that. It

is time to turn the page."

The tussle by the two midfielders when Madrid practiced on Thursday ended with Valverde at the hospital to treat a head wound. Valverde said he had hit his head on a table, calling the incident "a meaningless fight."

Madrid said both players apologized to one another the next day when they met with club officials investigating the incident. They also apologized to their teammates, coaching staff and fans.

The 15-time European champion, however, found the spat a serious enough breach of team discipline to slap the players with fines that bite even the bank account of a top soccer player.

Arbeloa said he was satisfied with how the club had handled the situation, while also adding that he had seen worse behavior in his playing career as a defender, which included Madrid, Liverpool, West Ham and Spain's national team.

"I had a teammate that hit another with a golf club," he said, without giving any more detail. "Situations like this have always happened, but I am not justifying them."

During Arbeloa's playing days at Liverpool, teammates Craig Bellamy and John Arne Riise were involved in an incident in which Bellamy hit Riise with a golf club prior to a Champions League game at Barcelona in 2007.

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New York Knicks' Landry Shamet, right, and Philadelphia 76ers' Tyrese Maxey chase a loose ball during the first half of Game 3 in a second-round NBA basketball playoff series in Philadelphia. (AP)
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Sports

Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser: Gulf Games strengthen fraternal ties among GCC nations

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: The President of the Kuwait Olympic Committee, Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, said that the 4th Gulf Games, set to take place in Doha from May 11 to 22, represent a valued sporting event that reflects the deep brotherly relations and shared destiny among GCC countries.

He stressed that the Kuwait Olympic Committee is committed to taking part actively in the event despite regional challenges, emphasizing the belief that sport remains a strong bridge for unity, friendship, and cooperation among Gulf peoples.

Sheikh Al-Nasser noted that such major sporting gatherings highlight the spirit of solidarity between GCC nations, adding that the true goal goes beyond winning and losing to promoting friendship and the values of fair play. He said all participants are winners simply by being part of this important regional event.

He also expressed hope that the Games will be successful at all organizational and technical levels, wishing all athletes the best in achieving strong results.

The Kuwait Olympic Committee chief thanked Qatar for hosting the event, praising its proven expertise in organizing major international and regional competitions, and its ability to deliver a successful edition that reflects the ambitions of Gulf sport.

The Kuwaiti delegation will depart on Sunday to Doha to begin its participation in the Games, with strong ambitions to compete for medals and deliver a strong performance across events.

Kuwait will be represented by a 120-athlete delegation, competing in 13 sports out of 17 on the program, including equestrian, 3x3 basketball, handball, athletics, bowling, swimming, padel, taekwondo, archery, billiards and snooker, fencing, karate, and shooting.

The delegation is led by mission director Abdullah Shaaban, with Dr. Suad Al-Faqaan as deputy, alongside an administrative team including Dr. Hussein Al-Saeed and Ali Mishari, as well as medical and media staff to ensure full support for the athletes throughout the competition.



Kuwait 4th Gulf Games delegation.

Upgrade highlights growing confidence

Kuwait padel tournament upgraded to major status



Chairman of BNK Holding Bader Al-Kharafi



KUNA photos
Kuwait Premier Padel Tournament Director Mishal Al-Ansari

MADRID, May 9, (KUNA): The International Padel Federation has announced the elevation of Kuwait's tournament from P1 to Major status in the 2026 Premier Padel calendar.

According to the federation, Kuwait will host one of the prestigious Premier Padel Major events from October 26 to 31, featuring the world's top-ranked players. The statement also noted that the Pretoria tournament in South Africa has been upgraded from P2 to P1.

Federation President Luigi Carraro said the decision reflects a balanced strategy aimed at ensuring calendar stability while supporting the continued global expansion of professional padel.

For its part, the Kuwait organizing committee described the upgrade as a significant sporting milestone, highlighting growing international confidence in Kuwait's ability to host major global events.

BNK Holding Chairman Bader Al-Kharafi praised the support of Kuwait's political leadership and government institutions for national sports, saying hosting a Major tournament reinforces Kuwait's presence on the global sports map and will positively impact the sports, tourism, and economic sectors.

Kuwait Premier Padel Tournament Director Mishal Al-Ansari called the development a historic achievement for padel in Kuwait and the wider region. He noted that Major events represent the highest tier in professional padel in terms of competition level, prize money, and ranking points.

Al-Ansari added that this success follows Kuwait's previous hosting of the World Padel Championship, which received strong praise from the international federation, players, and fans.

The International Padel Federation, founded in Madrid in 1991 and based in Lausanne, oversees the sport globally through 100 affiliated national federations.

Kuwait handball season set to resume in Oct after Asian Games in Japan

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 9: The Kuwait Handball Federation is planning to resume and complete the current 2025-2026 season during October and November, following the national team's participation in the Asian Games scheduled in Japan next September. The remaining competitions will include the league and the Federation Cup.

The federation is working to compress the schedule in order to finish all domestic competitions before December, allowing the national team sufficient time to prepare for the 30th IHF Men's World Championship, which will be held in Germany from January 13 to 31 with 32 participating teams.

The new 2026-2027 season is expected to begin after the conclusion of the World Championship.

Domestic sports activity had previously been suspended following a decision by Minister of State for

Youth Affairs and Sports Dr. Tareq Al-Jalalma on February 28, before being resumed earlier this month.

The federation's plan comes as part of efforts to reorganize the domestic calendar after the long break, while ensuring that local competitions are completed without affecting national team preparations or international commitments.

In the coming period, coordination will take place between the competitions committee and clubs to finalize a compressed fixture schedule, enabling the league and cup tournaments to be played within a tight timeframe, while considering players' international duties and clubs' external engagements.

In a separate decision, the Handball Federation has appointed former national team star Fahad Rabee as manager of the senior national team. Rabee previously enjoyed a successful playing career with Al-Fahaheel Club and the national team before serving as team manager at the club level after retirement.

Al-Hilal seals historic 10th King's Cup crown

RIYADH, May 9: Al-Hilal came from behind to defeat Al-Khlood 2-1 in the King's Cup final, securing the trophy for a record-extending 10th time.

Al-Khlood made a dream start, taking the lead after just four minutes through Ramiro Enrique. However, Al-Hilal responded strongly late in the first half, turning the game around in quick succession. Nasser Al-Dawsari equalised in the 42nd minute before French defender Theo Hernandez struck in stoppage time to seal the victory.

The win marks Al-Hilal's 10th King's Cup title, adding to their previous triumphs in 1980, 1982, 1984, 1989, 2015, 2017, 2020, 2023, 2024 and 2026.

Club president Nawaf bin Saad expressed his joy at the achievement, describing the victory as the result of a difficult journey and intense competition that lasted until the final whistle.

In comments to "Thmanya" after the match, he said the patronage of King Salman bin Abdulaziz and the attendance of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman gave the final added significance and honour, highlighting the importance of the trophy for the club and Saudi football.

He added that Al-Hilal earned the title after a demanding campaign, noting the rising competitiveness of Saudi clubs this season, which has made every match a tough challenge.



Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman presents the trophy to Salem Al-Dawsari.

Chelsea ends losing streak as Liverpool faces Anfield backlash

Man U fires blank; Bournemouth and Brighton keep dream alive

MANCHESTER, England, May 9, (AP): Liverpool fans jeered as the defending Premier League champion dropped more points on Saturday.

A 1-1 draw with Chelsea at Anfield saw Liverpool move a step closer to guaranteed Champions League qualification - fourth in the table with two rounds left - but another unconvincing performance sparked a frustrated reaction from the crowd.

There were boos at the final whistle to mark growing unrest from Liverpool supporters in a season that has seen the team tamely surrender the title despite spending around \$570 million in the transfer market.

There has been speculation about the job of coach Arne Slot, who insists there will be improvements next term.

"This season they (fans) will have their opinion and it will not change, but if we can have the summer that we are planning to have I am 100% convinced we will be a different team next season," he said. "Different in terms of results, different in how things look."

Third-placed Manchester United drew at Sunderland 0-0 while there were wins for Champions League-chasing Bournemouth and Brighton. Manchester City met Brentford in the late game.

Liverpool can make certain of a place in the Champions League



Chelsea's Jorrel Hato, left, and Liverpool's Federico Chiesa fight for the ball during the Premier League soccer match between Liverpool and Chelsea in Liverpool, England. (AP)

with a victory at Aston Villa next Friday. But it could find itself in fifth place by the time that game kicks off.

Villa was fifth and would leapfrog Liverpool by beating relegated Burnley on Sunday. The top five automatically qualify for the Champions League and English clubs could get a sixth spot if Villa wins the Europa League and finishes outside the top four.

The draw allowed Chelsea to break its six-game losing streak. Enzo Fernandez's bouncing free kick went in before halftime to equalize after Ryan Gravenberch's early goal.

Liverpool twice went close to a winner in the second half when Dominik Szoboszlai and Virgil van Dijk hit the woodwork.

Bournemouth and Brighton were still pushing for Champions League qualification after both recorded

wins. Sixth-placed Bournemouth won at Fulham 1-0 in a game in which both teams were reduced to 10 men.

Brighton was seventh and beat last-placed Wolverhampton 3-0.

Without injured striker Benjamin Sesko and Brazil midfielder Casemiro, United failed to find a breakthrough at Sunderland.

United managed just one shot on target in a four match.