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## Arab world joins Saudi Arabia to condemn 'treacherous' attacks on Kuwait, UAE, Qatar

RIYADH, May 11. (KUNA): The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Sunday voiced its "vehement condemnation" of the treacherous attacks targeting the territories and territorial waters of the United Arab Emirates, the State of Qatar, and the State of Kuwait.

In a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Kingdom reaffirmed its "unwavering solidarity" and support for all measures adopted by the sisterly Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states to safeguard their security, stability, and sovereign integrity.

The statement demanded an "immediate cessation" of these blatant provocations, warning against any attempts to obstruct the Strait of Hormuz or jeopardize the safety of international navigation.

The Ministry further underscored the imperative of upholding the freedom

of maritime passage in accordance with relevant international laws and conventions, characterizing any disruption to these vital waterways as a direct threat to global trade and regional peace.

The Muslim World League strongly denounced the latest attacks targeting of the United Arab Emirates, the State of Qatar and the State of Kuwait.

The treacherous attacks on the Arabian Gulf countries violate all religious and legal values, and run counter to international humanitarian norms, MWL Secretary-General Dr. Mohammad Al-Isa said in a press release on Sunday.

Dr. Al-Isa reaffirmed the League's full solidarity with the three countries in whatever measures they might take to protect their security, sovereignty and independence.

The Kingdom of Bahrain on Sunday expressed its vehement condemnation

of the recent attack targeting the State of Kuwait via several hostile drones.

In a press release, the Bahraini Ministry of Foreign Affairs characterized the incident as a "dangerous escalation" that jeopardizes regional security and stability.

It underscored that the act constitutes a flagrant violation of international law, the principles of good neighborliness, and the standing regional ceasefire declaration.

The Ministry reaffirmed the Kingdom's "unwavering solidarity" with the sisterly State of Kuwait, pledging full support for all sovereign measures taken by Kuwait to safeguard its territory, security, and the well-being of its citizens and residents.

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### Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

## Iran is the master of delaying tactics

THE US President Donald Trump's quick rejection of the new Iranian proposal did not come as a surprise, as the U.S. administration's position does not align with Tehran's demands. The widening gap reflects the priorities of the Iranian leadership and the beneficiary class, which are largely disconnected from the daily economic suffering of approximately 91 million Iranian citizens.

As a result, the situation with the Iranian regime remains unchanged - neither war nor peace. The regime is busy conducting local media campaigns claiming major victories and circulating narratives of alleged U.S. setbacks, while developments on the ground present a different reality.

I had previously stated that the Iranian regime is stalling negotiations to wear down its opponents, as was the case with the administration of former U.S. President Barack Obama in 2013, leading up to the agreement reached in 2015.

However, as soon as the agreement was signed and some of the frozen funds were

released, the Iranian regime rushed to increase uranium enrichment and directed resources toward its proxies in the region. Both actions were viewed as highly dangerous, contributing to a series of attacks on Gulf states, particularly Saudi Arabia, carried out by the Houthis group.

This led US allies to adopt positions that were inconsistent with shared interests.

As a result, Obama's second term witnessed a cooling in relations with Gulf states.

With the beginning of President Donald Trump's first term, this silly game was halted. Measures were taken to restrict financial flows to Iran, along with the withdrawal from the nuclear agreement.

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# Kuwait economy to dip as crisis disrupts oil exports

War slows regional economies' growth from 4% to 1.8%

By Inaas Awad

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 11: Officials and economists warned that the war in the Middle East has transformed from a geopolitical crisis into a "protracted economic shock", threatening growth, financial stability, food security and energy in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, amid rising debt and inflation and shrinking fiscal space in several regional economies.**

They made this statement at a virtual international seminar organized

by the Middle East Center for Economics and Finance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), in collaboration with its Middle East and Central Asia Department.

The seminar discussed the Regional Economic Outlook report titled, "The War in the Middle East: Economic Repercussions and Policy Changes," with the participation of Giovanni Melina, Deputy Director of the Middle East and Central Asia Department at the IMF, and John Bludorn, Deputy Director of the same department.

Sheikh Ahmed Diop, Chief Economist at the Islamic Development Bank, also participated in the discussion. The session was moderated by economic analyst Basel Awad and chaired by Director of the center Sami Ben Nasser.

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## Kuwait witnesses rapid progress in 'IP services'

KUWAIT CITY, May 11, (KUNA): Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Marwa Al-Jaidan said Monday intellectual property services in Kuwait are witnessing rapid growth, supporting the business environment and knowledge-based economy.

Al-Jaidan told KUNA that the 2025 report of the Trademarks and Patents Department recorded 68,632 transactions in trademarks, patents and industrial designs, with total fees reaching KD 6.69 million (about USD 21.7 million).

She said the figures reflect growing demand for intellectual property services and the ministry's efforts to enhance transparency, strengthen oversight systems and curb illegal practices, including money laundering and terrorism financing.

Al-Jaidan added that the ministry follows an integrated approach based on improving procedures, linking relevant departments and applying international auditing and monitoring standards to ensure transaction integrity and strengthen financial oversight.

She noted that the Trademarks Department recorded 62,942 transactions, generating KD 6.07 million (about USD 19.7 million) in fees.

Trademark registration requests topped transactions at 13,350, followed by 11,644 publication transactions and 10,518 registration and certificate issuance transactions.

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## Day by Day

ACCORDING to the wise, when the road is long, choose the right shoes rather than the most beautiful ones.

Unfortunately, our choices are sometimes misguided. Perhaps these choices are made in moments of carelessness. When a person becomes careless, their mind falls out of harmony with the demands of life.

... Yet tomorrow is another day

Zahed Matar



UK Embassy photo

Kuwait's Chief of Staff of the Kuwait Armed Forces Lieutenant General Khaled Saad Al-Shraian, British Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Qudsi Rasheed, and the visiting senior British defense official Vice Admiral Edward Ahlgren and Kuwait officers pose for a picture.

## UK remains devoted to supporting Kuwait's security, defense: envoy

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: The British Embassy in Kuwait is pleased to announce the visit of Vice Admiral Edward Ahlgren OBE MA, Royal Navy, the United Kingdom's Defence Senior Advisor for the Middle East and North Africa (DSAME), to the State of Kuwait on the 9th of May for 3 days.

During his visit, Vice Admiral Ahlgren held a series of high-level meetings with senior Kuwaiti officials to discuss the evolving regional situation, including the importance of maintaining the current ceasefire,

regional security dynamics, and the critical role of the Strait of Hormuz in global maritime security.

Vice Admiral Ahlgren was received by His Excellency Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs. Their discussions underscored the strength of the longstanding UK-Kuwait partnership and the shared commitment to regional stability, dialogue, and de-escalation.

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## Fugitive liquor kingpin, convicted in money laundering case, caught

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: Within the framework of joint security cooperation between the State of Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, the Criminal Security Affairs Sector, in cooperation and coordination with Interpol, has successfully extradited an Indian fugitive convicted in a money laundering case, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the Ministry of Interior explained that the extradition was carried out through Interpol Abu Dhabi, with follow-up by the Criminal Security Bureau in Dubai, as part of ongoing efforts to apprehend fugitives and prosecute those involved in organized financial crimes.

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Photo by Rizk Taufiq

Fountains gushing out water in Kuwait City as temperatures climbed, ushering in the arrival of summer.

## Kuwait raps attack on Pakistan police post

KUWAIT CITY, May 11, (KUNA): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kuwait strongly condemned the deadly terrorist attack that hit a security checkpoint in Bannu district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, north Pakistan, yesterday.

The Ministry reiterated, in a state-

ment on Monday, Kuwait's firm stance against all forms of terrorism and violence.

Expressing condolences to the people and government of the friendly Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and the families of the victims, the Ministry wished the wounded a quick recovery.



## 8,938 jay walkers fined over 1 year period: GTD

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: Assistant Director General for Traffic Regulation at the General Traffic Department in the Interior Ministry Brigadier General Bader Al-Qattan revealed that 8,938 traffic violation citations were issued to pedestrians crossing outside the pedestrian lane from April 22, 2025 to April 22, 2026.

Speaking at the conclusion of the 2026 Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Traffic Week, with the theme "Cross Safely," Al-Qattan explained the slogan conveys a message on the importance of commitment, attentiveness and responsibility among the drivers and pedestrians. He asserted that road safety starts with individual awareness and ends in societal security.

He added the General Traffic Department is keen on raising traffic awareness and promoting respect for traffic regulations due to their impact on protecting lives, reducing accidents, and creating a safer traffic environment for everyone.

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## 'Hantavirus' risk remains low in Kuwait - minister

KUWAIT CITY, May 11, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ministry of Health said on Monday that it is closely monitoring global developments related to Hantavirus following reported infections and deaths aboard a cruise ship that departed Argentina in early April.

Ministry spokesperson Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad said the outbreak prompted international health measures, including reporting under global health regulations, contact tracing across several countries, medical evacuations, and strengthened surveillance systems.

He added that Kuwait's public health sector, through the Kuwait Center for Disease Control and Prevention, continues to assess epidemiological indicators, with the latest technical evaluation concluding that the risk of transmission or outbreak within Kuwait remains low due to the absence of widespread global community transmission.

The ministry has implemented precautionary measures, including securing laboratory testing capabilities, enhancing epidemiological investigations, increasing preparedness of health teams, and maintaining coordination with regional and international health organizations.

Al-Sanad explained that hantavirus is primarily transmitted to humans through exposure to infected rodents or contaminated environments, while human-to-human transmission remains rare and limited to specific strains.

He affirmed the ministry's commitment to ongoing monitoring and rapid response measures to safeguard public health.



KUNA photo

Minister of Education Jalal Al-Tabtabaei receives the Omani Ambassador to Kuwait Saleh Al-Kharousi in his office.

## Kuwait, Oman eye education ties upgrade

KUWAIT CITY, May 11, (KUNA): Minister of Education Jalal Al-Tabtabaei received Omani Ambassador to Kuwait Saleh Al-Kharousi on Monday to discuss ways of enhancing bilateral cooperation and educational partnership between the two coun-

tries. The Ministry of Education said in a statement that the meeting addressed several issues of mutual interest, particularly cooperation in educational and training fields in support of shared development goals.

10 Warba Bank announces net profit of KD 6.3 million for Q1 2026, reflecting 14% growth

10 NBK opens registration for 2026 Aspire Summer Training Program

10 Al Tijaria Real Estate records net profit of KD 4,084,850 for the first quarter of 2026



Fajr	03:29	Asr	15:20
Sunrise	04:58	Maghrib	18:31
Zohr	11:44	Isha	19:57

Oil wealth, concessions seen shaping parliamentary behavior

# Kuwait MPs' voting patterns driven by incentives, study finds

Interview with Daniel L. Tavana and Erin York  
Al-Seyassah Special Report



Daniel L. Tavana



Erin York

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: Interviews were held with the researchers who prepared and published the study in the British Journal of Political Science titled "Legislative Cooptation In Authoritarian Regimes: Policy Cooperation in the Kuwait National Assembly."

In Kuwait, political alliances do not always begin under the dome of Abdullah Al-Salem Hall, nor are they decided solely through public speeches or ideological positions. Often, such agreements are shaped before voting sessions, within a complex network of political arrangements, economic calculations, and the balancing of relations between the government and parliament.

This conclusion is drawn from a recent American academic study, which argues that the relationship between the government and the National Assembly in Kuwait cannot be interpreted solely through the lens of "loyalty and opposition," but rather as an ongoing process of political negotiation. In this process, economic incentives, ministerial representation, and mechanisms of political cooptation are used to build parliamentary support.

The study, published in the British Journal of Political Science, was authored by Daniel Tavana, a professor of political science at Pennsylvania State University, in collaboration with Erin York, a professor of political science at Vanderbilt University. It analyzed more than 150,000 votes cast in the National Assembly between 1963 and 2016, seeking to understand how political cooperation is formed within Kuwaiti parliamentary life.

The study, published in the British Journal of Political Science, was authored by Daniel L. Tavana, a professor of political science at Pennsylvania State University, in collaboration with Erin York, a professor of political science at Vanderbilt University. It analyzed more than 150,000 votes cast in the National Assembly between 1963 and 2016, seeking to understand how political cooperation is formed within Kuwaiti parliamentary life.

In an interview with the daily, the two researchers discussed the impact of oil on parliamentary behavior, the limits of the relationship between popular representation and political influence, and how the legislative institution can sometimes become a space for managing interests and political balances within the Kuwaiti political system.

Here are the details of the interview:

**Question:** Your study challenges the traditional understanding of parliamentary politics. What is your main argument?

**Answer:** The study examines how cooperation between elected representatives and the government in Kuwait arises. It is often assumed that MPs vote with the government when they agree with it or when they are responding to their constituents' preferences. However, we identify another factor at play, which is a process we call "legislative cooptation," in which cooperation is produced through an exchange of benefits for political support.

After their election, representatives acquire real legislative power, which can serve as a constraint on the government. In principle, MPs could use this power to obstruct the government's agenda. The question, then, is - How does the government ensure this does not happen? Our answer is that cooperation is often produced through a combination of economic rents and political concessions.

This changes how we understand parliament. Rather than being solely a space for loyalty or opposition, it also functions as a bargaining arena where support is built and maintained through various incentives. What appears as cooperation in final votes often reflects understandings reached well before voting takes place. These understandings occur behind the scenes and are not directly observable, but the evidence we present supports this interpretation.

**Q:** The study relies on a very large database of parliamentary votes. What does this data reveal?

**A:** We built a database of more than 150,000 individual roll-call votes, covering the entire legislative history of

Kuwait from 1963 to 2016. To our knowledge, this is one of the most comprehensive records of its kind. It allows us to systematically measure how often elected representatives vote with or against the government.

The data shows that elected representatives vote against the Cabinet in only about 10 percent of cases. The government usually wins by a wide margin, and about 30 percent of laws are passed unanimously.

However, this does not mean that parliament is insignificant. At times, parliament passes legislation despite government opposition, and there is also considerable variation in the level of cooperation each elected representative has with the government.

This combination of generally high cooperation with occasional dissent suggests a system in which legislative behavior is shaped by incentives. Cooperation is the norm, but it is not automatic.

**Q:** One of the key findings of your study concerns the role of oil revenues and how they influence parliamentary behavior. Can you explain that?

**A:** We found a clear pattern. When oil revenues rise, so does the cooperation of elected representatives. An increase of about \$30 in the global price of oil is associated with nearly a 3-percentage-point increase in voting in favor of the government's legislative agenda.

It is important to note that we cannot directly track individual payments to MPs. We are not claiming that every vote is bought, but the pattern in the data is consistent with an interpretation in which the government uses its resources to secure support within parliament.

The point is that oil wealth not only helps governments manage public expectations but also helps them manage political elites, including elected representatives. It expands the state's ability to distribute benefits, reduce opposition, and secure cooperation within parliament itself. The other side of this dynamic is that when oil prices fall, the ability to maintain that level of cooperation also declines.

**Q:** The study also points to corruption scandals involving MPs. Why is this important to your argument?

**A:** The study highlights several publicly known cases of bribery and corruption, such as the 2011 scandal in which millions of dollars were allegedly transferred to the bank accounts of elected officials. This incident triggered a wider investigation, significant public backlash, and ultimately contributed to the dissolution of Parliament.

These isolated examples do not mean that every cooperative vote resulted from payment, and we are not making that claim. However, they show that the type of exchange we describe is not merely theoretical. We know from these cases that such payments have occurred and have, on several occasions, been exposed publicly.

The deeper point is structural - when elected officials hold real legislative power, that power itself becomes valuable and can be invested, traded, or influenced through material incentives. Our argument is that this form of exchange is a systematic feature of how the system operates. The scandals that occasionally surface are visible expressions of a broader pattern.

**Q:** Besides money, your study points to "political con-

cessions." How did you observe the practical effects of these concessions?

**A:** Money is one mechanism the government uses to secure votes in parliament. The other is political. In Kuwait, most laws are drafted first within the government and then submitted to parliament for amendment or approval.

As a result, those within the government have an early advantage in shaping what parliament votes on. We found that when an ideological current has one or more members in the Cabinet, elected representatives belonging to that current become significantly more cooperative. They are about two percentage points more likely to vote with the government for each minister representing their current.

This effect is even stronger when the minister's portfolio aligns with the subject of the legislation, which is consistent with the idea that ministers incorporate the preferences of their political currents into draft laws.

In this sense, cooperation is not always imposed or bought, but it can also be earned by granting forces outside the government a valuable seat at the policy-making table.

**Q:** Does this mean that parliament can be used as a tool for extracting benefits rather than serving the public interest?

**A:** One of the implications of the study's findings is that legislative institutions can perform multiple functions simultaneously. On one hand, they can provide genuine representation, with ideological currents winning seats, obtaining ministerial positions, and influencing policy. A striking example is that the composition of the Cabinet often reflects the composition of parliament, despite there being no legal requirement for this. This can be seen as a form of democratic representation.

On the other hand, parliament also functions as a space where individual members may gain benefits such as access, influence, and other privileges in exchange for their votes. Members may also use parliament to advance public interests or to negotiate with the government.

This dual nature does not diminish the importance of parliament, but it does make its role more complex. Parliament operates both as a site of representation and as a site of strategic exchange.

**Q:** What broader lessons does this study offer about the political system in Kuwait at present?

**A:** We are cautious about drawing too many conclusions. Our data extends to 2016, and more recent evidence would be needed before making firm claims about the current situation. Nevertheless, the study offers several insights.

The dynamics of parliamentary life are shaped not only by constitutional design but also by the incentives facing political actors. Cooperation, opposition, and political crises are all, to some extent, influenced by how those incentives are structured.

When the resources needed to sustain cooperation decline, as can happen during periods of falling oil prices, the system may come under strain. Our data also show that declines in cooperation sometimes precede the dissolution of parliament.

■ Researchers Daniel L. Tavana and Erin York: we analyzed more than 150,000 parliamentary votes from 1963 to 2016.

■ Oil wealth is one of the most important determinants of parliamentary behavior. The higher the oil prices, the more MPs tend to cooperate with the government.

■ Researchers: We are not claiming that every vote is bought, but the data pattern suggests that government resources are often used to secure parliamentary support.

■ The legislative institution often becomes an arena for managing interests and political balances within the system.

■ "Legislative cooptation" refers to the production of cooperation between members of parliament and the government through an exchange of benefits in return for political support.

■ Through a combination of economic incentives and political concessions, the government prevents members of parliament from obstructing its agenda.

■ The relationship between the two authorities is not simply one of "loyalty and opposition," but rather a negotiation in which economic incentives may be used for political cooptation.

■ In 2011, millions of dollars were transferred to the accounts of members of parliament, a scandal that sparked public outrage and ultimately contributed to the dissolution of parliament.

■ When an ideological current is represented by one or more ministers in the cabinet, members of parliament affiliated with that current tend to become more cooperative with the government.

At the same time, the findings highlight the importance of elections. Those chosen by voters do indeed influence who ultimately shapes policy, as the composition of the Cabinet often reflects the composition of parliament. This suggests that voters' choices at the ballot box can have meaningful consequences for how a country is governed.

## PAI tightens plot withdrawal rules

New fines, eviction process set

By Marwa Al-Bahravi  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: Minister of Commerce and Industry and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Industry (PAI) Osama Boodai issued Ministerial Decree No. 8/2026 on the rules, regulations and procedures for withdrawing plots under the supervision of the authority.



Boodai

The decree establishes a clearer legal framework for regulating industrial, service and craft plots, specifying the grounds for withdrawal, the appeals process, and enforcement procedures, along with fines for delays in handing over withdrawn sites.

The ministerial decree, published in the official gazette, Kuwait Al-Youm, on Sunday, cites nine cases under which the minister or his designee will issue a decision to withdraw an industrial plot.

These cases include the withdrawal of service, craft and commercial plots in accordance with the regulations, as well as service sites, quarries and vehicle scrap yards.

The decision stipulates that withdrawal procedures will commence one month after its publication. The occupant will be notified to vacate the plot within one month. After this, a report will be filed documenting the plot's return and its closure, and a custodian is appointed if necessary. If non-compliant, the case will be referred to the

Legal Department for legal measures like forced eviction and the collection of outstanding payments and usage fees up to the actual date of vacating the plot.

The decision imposes stricter financial penalties on those who delay vacating withdrawn plots. The fine is 25 percent of the annual usage fee for the first month, gradually increasing to 50 percent 75 percent, then 100 percent, and remains at 100 percent for each additional month of delay.

A daily fine of KD100 is stipulated for certain activities, such as workshops and craft units.

Furthermore, the beneficiary will continue to be charged all outstanding financial obligations until the plot is fully vacated.

This decision aims to regulate the management of industrial plots and enhance oversight of their use, ensuring the prevention of encroachments or illegal exploitation and fairness in the distribution and investment of industrial and service plots, while preserving the rights of the State and adhering to legal and regulatory standards.

The decision mandates the submission of the final report to the director general to pave the way for reallocating reclaimed plots according to the mechanism adopted by the authority.

The decision allows appealing the withdrawal decision within 30 days of its publication or notification. Such an appeal will lead to suspension of enforcement procedures until a decision is reached. If the appeal is rejected, eviction procedures will be completed within two weeks and the plot owner is obligated to pay all outstanding dues up to the date of handover.

The decision permits the director general to extend the eviction period for up to six months, provided all dues are paid in advance.

### Other Voices

## How long can the region live like this?

By Nasser Al-Hajeri

For more than 70 days now, people across the region have been living between headlines, rumors, statements, and uncertainty. One day there is talk of negotiations and possible understanding between Iran and the United States. The next day there are warnings, military movements, and fears of escalation once again.

The problem today is not only the possibility of war. It is the feeling of never knowing what comes next.

People wake up every morning checking the news before checking anything else. Oil prices move overnight. Flights are discussed constantly. Social media becomes full of analysis, fear, and speculation.

Even when life continues normally, there is a quiet tension in the background that many people can feel.

What makes the situation more exhausting is the endless cycle itself. Talks begin, then stop.

Mediators appear, then disappear. Optimism rises for a few days before another statement changes the atmosphere completely. The region has become trapped between hope and uncertainty.

Most ordinary people do not want conflict. They want stability. They want to work, travel, raise their families, and plan for the future without constantly wondering whether the situation around them could suddenly change. Many young people in the Gulf grew up hearing about regional tensions for

years. Today, another generation is experiencing the same feeling again.

The Gulf region has spent years focusing on development, tourism, investment, culture, and

economic growth. Cities are expanding. Young people are creating businesses and new ideas. Countries are trying to build stronger futures beyond oil. But uncertainty slows confidence. Even without direct conflict, instability affects the mood of the region.

At the same time, diplomacy remains important. Dialogue is always better than confrontation. Even difficult negotiations are still better than silence. But diplomacy also needs clarity and seriousness.

Endless waiting creates frustration for everyone watching from the outside.

Perhaps the hardest part is that people are slowly becoming used to living under pressure. Tension is starting to feel normal. That may be the most dangerous thing of all.

The region does not need more fear. It needs stability, wisdom, and genuine efforts to reduce tensions before uncertainty becomes the permanent reality of daily life.



Al-Hajeri

## Jahra advances infrastructure and service plans

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi presided over the regular meeting (no. 4/2026) of the Public Services Committee at the Jahra Governorate Council in the headquarters of the governorate.

The meeting tackled various topics related to public services, infrastructure and recommendations that other committees referred to the Public Services Committee.

The committee discussed the approved agenda, which included monitoring procedures related to several service sites, requesting data on the treated water network in Abdly farms, and reviewing the statement of the representative of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) regarding the mechanism for regulating the participation of productive families and owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the public parks in the governorate,



Jahra Governorate photo

Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi chairs a Public Services Committee meeting at the Jahra Governorate Council

It also deliberated on the need to obtain approvals for Mutlaa Cooperative Society and its affiliated investment branches in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Social Affairs. This aims to support

the provision of essential services to the residents of Mutlaa City and expedite procedures related to operating the approved service sites.

In line with the commitment of the committee to follow up issues con-

cerning citizens and addressing concerns within the municipal sector, the committee listened to the presentation of the representatives of Kuwait Municipality on various sites in the governorate. The presentation included an assessment of the regulatory and legal status of these sites and exploration of appropriate solutions to any related concerns within the established official frameworks, while safeguarding the interests of citizens and ensuring compliance with regulations.

The committee also reviewed the report of the working group tasked to identify locations for beautifying bridges and roundabouts in the governorate.

It discussed the formation of a joint working group to conduct a comprehensive field survey of directional signs throughout the governorate in order to improve services and raise the efficiency of public facilities the governorate.

## Awareness crucial ... save power to tackle demand

"THE figures in Kuwait reflect a real challenge regarding electricity, especially during the summer, when consumption approaches the critical limits of available production capacity," columnist **Sheikh Eng. Fahad Dawood Al-Sabah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

According to official sources, electricity consumption two years ago reached a record high of 17,640 megawatts. Reports indicate that consumption peaks during daytime hours between 11:00 am and 5:00 pm, due to heavy reliance on air conditioning, which increases the electrical load and places pressure on all power stations.

"Last year, however, conservation campaigns helped stabilize the load at 17,610 megawatts, marking a slight yet unprecedented decline despite ongoing urban expansion. This summer, demand is expected to exceed 19,441 megawatts as new residential cities come into operation and temperatures continue to rise.

"Although the total production capacity of the power stations appears theoretically sufficient, actual operational capacity is affected by extreme heat and maintenance requirements, resulting in a shortfall. Consequently, the state relies on the Gulf interconnection network and electricity imports to bridge the gap. This necessitates a smart conservation campaign to reduce the annual waste caused by inefficient energy consumption.

"Several projects are underway, including the expansion of the Subiya and Al-Zour North power plants. However, through a comprehensive development plan, the state could save up to 1,000 megawatts through conservation efforts alone, achieving results far more quickly and at a much lower cost than constructing new power stations.

"It is important to make greater use of natural alternatives, especially as electricity demand continues to grow annually by four percent due to urban expansion.

"The ministry is adopting a range of solutions based on technical recommendations, all of which contribute to sustainability.

"Yet more is still required, particularly in the strategic management of energy. New cities should rely on district cooling systems instead of individual air-conditioning units, which could reduce peak loads by as much as 40 percent. The use of renewable energy, especially solar power, is also essential, given that Kuwait enjoys abundant sunshine throughout most of the year.

"The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy has begun implementing the Kuwaiti Building Code for energy conservation by increasing the thickness of thermal insulation, using high-efficiency glass, and mandating the installation of smart lighting and air-conditioning control systems in non-residential buildings.

"Raising electricity tariffs for the commercial and investment sectors has contributed to a slight decline in load growth.

"However, studies recommend that any increase in tariffs within the private residential sector should be accompanied by the installation of smart meters, enabling citizens to monitor and manage their consumption more effectively. The Ministry is currently moving in this direction through the installation of more than 200,000 smart meters.

"It is important to understand that electricity is a vital necessity for both people and daily life, which makes sustainability and continuous development essential to meeting growing demands. Numerous development plans and projects require sustained efforts to improve the electricity sector and raise public awareness about the importance of responsible and systematic conservation."

### Also:

"Kuwaiti farmers have proven their competence in production and marketing, and in meeting consumer demand with around twenty varieties of essential fruits and vegetables during the recent crisis." Secretary of the Kuwait Farmers Union **Ahmad Nasser Al-Shabak** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"This is not the first time the Kuwaiti farmers demonstrated their ability to serve the nation, as seen during the COVID-19 crisis.

"Driven by a genuine sense of national responsibility, Kuwaiti farmers continue to provide the produce of their farms - vegetables and fruits - at affordable prices for everyone in all residential areas of Kuwait through the 'Farmers' Corner' in every consumer cooperative society.

"Kuwaiti farmers are preparing to sustain agricultural production for

as long as possible throughout the summer, aiming to supply the largest possible quantities of fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables, despite rising prices of most agricultural materials and supplies in local markets, as well as concerns over sudden power outages and the daily shortage of treated water.

"Kuwaiti farmers do this out of a sincere sense of national duty and responsibility towards this country and its people.

"With God's permission, Kuwaiti farmers will achieve even greater agricultural success during the upcoming hot months, just as they did in the autumn, winter, and spring, producing large quantities that were displayed and marketed through the wholesale outlets of the local produce market - Wafra Company and the Kuwait Farmers Union in Sulabiya and Ardiya.

"All the agricultural and production achievements of Kuwaiti farmers in Abdali, Wafra, and other agricultural areas in Kuwait are attributed to the wise leadership of the Kuwaiti government, represented by the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, and the board of directors of the Kuwait Farmers Union, headed by Ahmed Musallat Al-Adwani, who has managed the union in a distinguished manner that serves both producers and consumers.



"In Kuwait and the Gulf countries, there are thousands of Indian workers. Despite their large numbers in all six countries, they are welcomed and appreciated due to their honesty and the long history of neighborly relations and hospitality between the Gulf peoples and their closest neighbor, India," Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"India is not like any other country for the Gulf countries. Gulf citizens and Indians share a close bond that is best understood by those who have lived for a long time in the Gulf or in India.

"This special relationship is not always understood by those who call for the deportation of Indian workers. They are a group of ignorant and selfish people who want to monopolize the Gulf's resources, as if these resources were meant specifically for them, or had descended from heaven for their benefit alone.

"They are a minority expressing hatred and envy. If given the chance, they would exploit the country without restraint, leaving nothing of its land or resources, not even its sand or pebbles.

"In Kuwait, we have seen, lived with, and experienced some of the worst, most hideous, and most wicked examples of such people, who were no less vile and cruel than invaders.

"At the same time, we have also seen honesty and diligence from Indian workers in the tasks assigned to them. Many even willingly offer useful advice to their Kuwaiti sponsors. There are, of course, some among the Indian workers who may be different, but they are a minority compared to other nationalities.

"Kuwaiti merchants have long preferred Indian workers for their experience and trustworthiness. Historically, many bank and company treasurers were from India or South Yemen.

"Many merchants and large companies still prefer to employ Indians and South Yemenis over others. My words are not meant as an attack on other nationalities, but rather a reflection of what is commonly observed in practice. This is the reality we live in, and it has become part of our culture, as reflected in the number of cases handled in police stations, prisons, and courts compared to those involving people of other Arab nationalities.

"Indians residing in the Gulf do not seek or think about acquiring Gulf citizenship or establishing their own state, as some may claim.

"The Gulf's relationship with India is longer than its relationship with some Arab countries. The cemeteries in Mumbai and Karachi bear witness to a shared history that only the people of the Gulf can fully understand.

"When life gets difficult for Gulf citizens, many turn to Mumbai in India or Karachi in Pakistan.

"Therefore, the alleged threat posed to the Gulf by Indians should not be taken at face value. I would ask those who call for the deportation of Indian workers to stop shedding crocodile tears. Gulf citizens and Indians have long understood each other well, and Indians remain one of the closest communities to the Gulf."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



Al-Sabah

## Kuwait, UK discuss boost in military ties

KUWAIT CITY, May 11, (KUNA): Chief of the Kuwaiti Army General Staff Lieut. Gen. Khaled Al-Shuraiaan and the UK's Senior Defense Advisor for the Middle East and North Africa Vice Admiral Edward Ahlgren discussed Sunday joint cooperation and the current regional situation.

In a press statement, the General Staff of the Army said that the meeting took place during Al-Shuraiaan's reception of the British advisor and his accompanying delegation on the occasion of their visit to the country.

During the meeting, they reviewed bilateral relations between Kuwait and the United Kingdom and discussed existing military cooperation and ways to develop it to serve the common interests of the two friendly nations, according to the release.

Several high-ranking Kuwaiti officers were present at the meeting.



KUNA photo  
Chief of the Kuwaiti Army General Staff Lieut. Gen. Khaled Al-Shuraiaan receives UK's Senior Defense Advisor for the Middle East and North Africa Vice Admiral Edward Ahlgren.



Farwaniya Governorate photo

Governor of Farwaniya Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah receives Director of Security for Farwaniya Governorate Brigadier General Mohammad Eid Al-Ghasab in his office.

## Boost field operations to hike security – Gov.

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: Governor of Farwaniya Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah met with Director of Security for Farwaniya Governorate Brigadier General Mohammad Eid Al-Ghasab at his office in the headquarters of the governorate on Sunday.

The meeting aimed to strengthen cooperation between the governorate and security agencies.

They discussed several topics of mutual interest, particularly the security and organizational matters, and mechanisms to support field operations in order to improve security performance and promote stability throughout the governorate.

Al-Ghasab expressed his gratitude to the Governor for the warm reception and his commitment to strengthen coordination with various security agencies in the governorate.

## Eatery set up in home illegally closed down

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: In coordination with the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN), the Security Directorates Sector, represented by the Capital Governorate Support Department, raided a private residence on Sunday that was being used as an unlicensed food establishment operating illegally, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the Ministry of Interior explained that investigations and field monitoring revealed that individuals were operating the establishment without a health license issued by PAFN, and were also handling spoiled food unfit for human consumption.

Legal measures were taken, and several reports were filed against the violators, who were referred to the competent authorities.

A warehouse containing prohibited tobacco products was also seized, with the necessary legal action taken against those involved, who were likewise referred to the appropriate authorities.

The Ministry of Interior affirmed its continued security efforts, in coordination with relevant authorities, to monitor and address violations and take all necessary legal measures against offenders, in order to maintain public safety and community security.

## 'Prosecution bedrock of criminality justice'

By Jaber Al-Hamoud  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait visited the Public Prosecution headquarters, where he met with Attorney General Saad Al-Safraan and a number of public prosecutors, heads, directors and members of the prosecution to look into the workflow and ways to strengthen cooperation between judicial bodies.

During the meeting, Al-Sumait emphasized that the Public Prosecution is the cornerstone of criminal justice, because it is entrusted with initiating prosecution on behalf of the society, monitoring the application of penal laws, pursuing defendants and enforcing judgments. He commended the professional and legal efforts exerted by members of the Public Prosecution in protecting society and upholding the rule of law.

He stressed that the Ministry of Justice is using all its resources to support the Public Prosecution and cover its needs – administrative, technical, training-related and legislative – to ensure integration among judicial bodies while maintaining the autonomy of the judiciary.

The two sides discussed ways to improve the work environment, expedite procedures, support digital transformation projects, and update legislation related to the work of the public prosecution in order to raise performance efficiency and speed up case resolution.

At the end of the visit, Al-Sumait expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the members of the Public Prosecution, stressing that the ministry will continue providing support to develop the work mechanism and increase the efficiency of the judicial system.



**Faiha house on fire:** Fire broke out in a room of a house in Al-Faiha on Sunday evening but no casualties were recorded, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) stated in a press release that firefighters from Shaheed and Madina fire stations rushed to the location and extinguished the fire. Investigations were launched to determine the cause of the fire.

## Jail for fighting others' battles

'Takfiri's' 7-year jail upheld

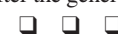
By Jaber Al-Hamoud  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: Secretary of Kuwait Lawyers Association Khaled Al-Suwaifan announced that the association will hold its regular general assembly, which will include the election of the Board of Directors for the 2026-2028 term, at 9:00 am on June 10 in its headquarters in Bneid Al-Gar.

Al-Suwaifan explained that the date was set after the previous meeting was postponed, in compliance with the circular issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs regarding the organization of general assemblies and due to the prevailing circumstances, in order to ensure the integrity of the legal procedures and the regularity of the proceedings.

He indicated that the agenda includes discussing and approving the administrative and financial report for the year 2024/2025, approving the estimated budget for the year 2026/2027, and appointing the auditor and determining his remuneration, in addition to any other business.

He added the Board of Directors election will be held after the general assembly.



**Fighting others' wars:** The Court of Cassation, presided over by Judge Sultan Boursli, upheld the three-year prison sentence imposed on a Kuwaiti citizen convicted of fighting in Syria against the regime of former Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad in 2021, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The sentence was based on investigations by the State Security Department at the Ministry of Interior and the conclusion of the court that the defendant is responsible for his action.

The investigation revealed that the defendant left Kuwait for the Turkish city of Antakya in 2021 and remained there for about three years, claiming he lost consciousness due to an earthquake and then woke up in Syria.

In a separate case, the same court upheld the seven-year prison sentence imposed on a Kuwaiti citizen described as a 'takfiri' (one who accuses others of apostasy).

He was convicted of insulting HH the Amir, planning to fight with ISIS in Nigeria, and promoting the group's ideology and propaganda on social media.

## Food safety priority, says PAFN

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) revealed that the Central Food Testing Laboratory in Shuwaikh Industrial Area receives around 1,200 food samples daily, which are collected from the borders, markets and factories.

In a statement published on the 'X' platform, PAFN confirmed that the

samples undergo testing and analysis using the latest technologies and digital systems, ensuring rapid, accurate results and enhancing food safety monitoring efficiency.

It revealed that the laboratory consists of several specialized departments for detecting chemical contaminants, microbes and harmful elements to guarantee food safety and suitability for human consumption as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen the national food safety system.



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**Integrated committees ready**

**Kuwait Awqaf Minister confirms Hajj mission arrival in holy lands**

KUWAIT CITY, May 11, (KUNA): Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Wasmi confirmed Monday the arrival of Kuwait's Hajj mission members in the holy lands to serve Kuwaiti pilgrims.

Al-Wasmi told KUNA that the delegation includes most committees and teams participating in the mission, representing the ministries of Health, Information, Interior and Foreign Affairs, alongside the Kuwait Fire Force, Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Public Authority



Dr. Al-Wasmi

for Food and Nutrition and Public Authority for Youth.

He said the committees began preparations immediately upon arrival to complete arrangements for Kuwaiti pilgrims expected to arrive before the start of Hajj rituals for the 1447 Hijri season.

Al-Wasmi added that the mission's organizational structure defines the responsibilities of all committees and teams, including providing religious guidance, answering pilgrims' inquiries and participating in mission activities.

He noted that awareness lectures and educational seminars will be delivered to mission members, alongside orientation meetings for Hajj campaign guides and the Arafat Day sermon.



Farwaniya Governor receives Al-Rehab Cooperative delegation during a meeting at the governorate headquarters.

**Farwaniya Governor and Al-Rehab Board review cooperative services**

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah had a meeting with Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al-Rehab Cooperative Society Marzouq Al-Mutairi at his office in the headquarters of the governorate on Sunday.

Al-Mutairi was accompanied by General Manager of the cooperative

Mubarak Fallah Al-Murshid and Deputy General Manager Bader Mubarak Al-Khanfour. During the meeting, Sheikh Athbi Nasser emphasized the important role that cooperative societies play in supporting the service sector and enhancing community engagement, while praising the efforts Al-Rehab Cooperative Society in serving the residents of the area.

**Ministerial decree strengthens society framework**

**Al-Huwailah approves new Al-Sadu Cooperative bylaws**

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah issued a ministerial decree on the publication of amendments to the bylaws of Al-Sadu Cooperative Craft Society.

The amended Article 25 stipulates that "the Board of Directors may appoint subcommittees and program managers to carry out specific tasks

assigned to them, provided that the board determines their powers, responsibilities, term of office and remuneration. The Board of Directors may also participate in local and international exhibitions, and special rewards for participation will be determined after the board selected the participants and the value of the reward."

The amendment also states that "members of the society may supply their handicrafts to the shop of the society and participate in its local and international training programs."

The society may establish a training institute for traditional crafts and provide consultations in the fields of handicrafts and heritage.

It has the right to establish a wool

production factory to provide the raw materials for the traditional weaving industry to reduce reliance on imports and support the local economy. This will help provide high-quality raw materials for artisans, increase their income, create sources of income, and achieve self-sufficiency.

Chapter Four of the bylaws is added stating that "the society has the right to purchase selected handicrafts produced by female artisans for sale in its shop or retail outlets."



Dr. Al-Huwailah

**Other Voices**

**The day when half of my dreams came true**

By Ahmad alsarraf

My colleague, Abdul Latif Al-Duaij, has published a collection of his articles titled "Battles of the Pen," which summarizes the central themes of most of his articles.

I had previously shared some of his "battles," one of which was the "Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice," an organization whose establishment was put forward by MPs affiliated with Salafist and Muslim Brotherhood groups.

At the time, we succeeded in preventing the proposal from being adopted.

Over the years, we agreed on many issues and topics, both before and after that period, and we both experienced the pressures of censorship. While our articles sometimes overlapped in subject matter, they more often differed in focus.

My concern was more directed toward confronting religious extremism and exposing the corruption within certain charitable organizations.

I succeeded in achieving half of what I had fought for. We were able to curb the corruption of some of these charitable organizations, whose large number raised questions about the motives behind their establishment.

The Minister of Social Affairs, in her capacity as the official responsible for charitable work, stated that the ministry is working to build a reliable and leading charitable sector by preventing the misuse of donations. This will be achieved through stronger regulation and oversight of charitable organizations, encouraging them to focus their activities

and funding within Kuwait, and localizing charitable work to ensure donations are not exploited for personal or partisan interests.

The ministry also aims to regulate fundraising activities exclusively through official and publicly announced platforms. These measures have been implemented through a series of organized ministerial and administrative decisions.

The ministry and its staff deserve appreciation for their commendable efforts in regulating and localizing charitable work.

However, it must be acknowledged that until a few months ago, things were out of control, particularly with regard to fundraising for charitable projects abroad.

Through a number of articles and interviews, we have repeatedly highlighted the lack of oversight over funds collected for external projects. Despite the ministry's repeated assurances that such funds were disbursed under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this has never been the case. The ministry's role was primarily confined to approving the transfer of funds, without direct monitoring of how or where the donations were spent.

Therefore, we continued to warn against the intense activity of certain organizations and their suspicious drive to collect donations for projects both inside and outside the country. This was car-

ried out through hundreds of donation appeals for dozens of projects that flooded social media.

Within an hour of presenting the matter to a senior official and outlining the serious flaws in these questionable activities, a decision was taken to immediately ban them.

As a result, the advertisements disappeared from social media platforms and public spaces, leaving only officially authorized campaigns.

We had previously succeeded in stopping the transfer of \$13 million intended for the construction of a children's hospital in Gaza, funds which would undoubtedly have vanished, just as hundreds of millions of other dollars had disappeared in similar cases. I also recall fundraising campaigns that were presented as efforts to finance the sending of preachers abroad. We had proved how the entire process was often a scam, as no preacher was ever sent.

Charitable work had long been a secretive affair, with no one knowing what was happening inside. The government's recent decisions have succeeded in shedding light to the dark corners, so that for the first time in 75 years, we now know what is happening within them.

I would like to extend thanks to those who listened to and acted upon these warnings, prevented this negligence, and contributed to achieving half of our dreams. We await the realization of the other half, which is the banning of certain other associations.

□ □ □

email: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

**MPW steps up road upgrades**

**Minister urges speed and quality**

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 11: The Ministry of Public Works continues its road rehabilitation and maintenance works in Mubarak Al Kabeer Governorate as part of a comprehensive plan aimed at developing the road network and raising infrastructure efficiency in the country in order to improve services and traffic flow.**



Dr. Al-Mashaan

In a press statement, Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan emphasized the importance of completing the work according to the highest quality standards and expediting the pace of implementation.

She disclosed that the current maintenance projects include main and internal roads under the new contracts for road development in various governorates.

She affirmed that field teams are continuing to carry out scraping, re-

paving and technical repairs, in addition to asphalt paving on main roads in several areas of the governorate, as per the timetable and a monitoring plan.

She explained that the goal is to address deterioration issues and improve road efficiency, thereby, ensuring the safety of road users and reducing breakdowns and traffic problems.

She added that the ministry is intensifying field efforts to ensure rapid completion and minimize traffic disruptions.

She stressed that these major maintenance projects are part of a comprehensive development vision to improve infrastructure and support the development plans of the country.

On the other hand, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT), in its meeting held on May 6, approved the request of the ministry publish the minutes of the preliminary meeting for the two tenders for removing sand from the highways in the southern and northern areas.

It also agreed on extending the closing date for the two tenders for two weeks, after which the bids will be opened and referred to the ministry for study and preparation of the technical recommendation, based on which the awarding decision will be made to choose the best bid that conforms to the specifications and requirements.

**Phase one to add 3,600 MW capacity**

**KAPP tenders feasibility study for Nuwaiseeb power and water plant**

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP) has announced the launching of a tender for the appointment of a consultancy firm to conduct a comprehensive feasibility study on Nuwaiseeb Power and Water Desalination Plant (Phase One), along with the necessary tender documents and procedures.

This tender is scheduled for the third quarter of this year. It is included in the annual plan for the current fiscal year, and based on Article 33 of Public Tenders Law No. 49/2016 and its executive regulations issued through Decree No. 30/2017.

In an announcement published in the official gazette, 'Kuwait Al-Youm',

KAPP clarified that the scope of consultancy services includes a comprehensive feasibility study and all the necessary documentation for the Nuwaiseeb project.

This must be done in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 39/2010 on establishing Kuwaiti shareholding companies to build and operate power and water desalination plants, its amendments and executive regulations, and the Public-Private Partnership Law and its executive regulations.

It is worth noting that this is considered one of the future power plants, upon which the State relies to increase production capacity by around 7,200 megawatts.

This will be introduced in two phases and the first phase has a production capacity of 3,600 megawatts.

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Strong Kuwait–Algeria ties rooted in shared history: envoy

# Algeria honors past, looks to expand cooperation with Kuwait

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: Algerian Ambassador to Kuwait Omar Belhadj stated that Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune officially recognized the National Remembrance Day to commemorate the sacrifice of more than 45,000 martyrs who died while demanding freedom and independence.

This is in remembrance of the massacres on May 8, 1945, perpetrated by French colonialism against Algerian civilians in the cities of Setif, Guelma and Kherrata.

In a press statement on the sidelines of the commemoration, Belhadj pointed out that Algeria is celebrating the 81st anniversary this year under the slogan, "People Who Sacrificed ... and Triumphed," affirming its commitment to honor the sacrifice of the martyrs.

He emphasized that Algerian-Kuwaiti relations are strong and distinguished by their deep historical roots, reinforced by firm ties dating back to the Algerian War of Independence, which enjoyed official and popular support from Kuwait. "This support laid the foundation for relations based on mutual respect, shared understanding, and fruitful cooperation in various fields, along with continuous consultation and close coordination on regional and international issues of common interest," he disclosed.

He added that the distinguished fraternal relations between His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Algerian President reflect the strength of the ties between the two countries. He cited His Highness the Amir's participation, when he was Crown Prince, in the Arab Summit hosted by Alge-



The Algerian ambassador is pictured with several embassy staff members and journalists during the commemoration of National Remembrance Day.

ria, which contributed significantly to the success of the summit.

He confirmed the ongoing consultation and coordination between the two countries on various bilateral issues, as well as Arab, Islamic, regional and international matters of mutual interest.

He said the Algerian president, from the very beginning of the recent crisis, initiated contact with his Arab

brothers and counterparts, including a call to His Highness the Amir, expressing Algeria's full solidarity with Kuwait in the face of all threats to its security and stability and supporting all efforts aimed at establishing peace and security in a way that preserves the interests and well-being of the brotherly Kuwaiti people.

He pointed out that in 2022, the Algerian authorities named the fountain opposite the Gulf Bank Alge-

ria branch in the Algiers district after HH the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, in recognition of his stature and significant role in strengthening bilateral relations.

Regarding the work of the joint committee between the two countries, he affirmed that Algeria is coordinating with the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs to hold the committee meeting this year and finalize the agreements slated for signing. He said these agreements are related to encouraging direct investment, developing exports, and cooperation in social affairs, in addition to several other agreements still under consideration.

He revealed that discussions are underway to launch a direct air route between Algeria and Kuwait, expressing his hope that the project will come to fruition this year. He stated this will be achieved through cooperation between the Algerian National Civil Aviation Agency and the Public Authority of Civil Aviation (PACA) in Kuwait, along with efforts to update the provisions of the air transport agreement signed between the two countries in 2008.

He asserted that operating a direct route between the two countries will boost the Kuwaiti investments in Algeria. "It will contribute to revitalizing trade and facilitating the export of high-quality Algerian agricultural products to the Kuwaiti market to support the efforts of Kuwait to achieve food security," he added.

He confirmed that the Algerian Embassy in Kuwait is committed to facilitating visa issuance for Kuwaiti citizens, indicating that the number of Kuwaitis visiting Algeria is increasing annually.

He stressed that the Algerian community residing in Kuwait, more than 2,000, is a distinguished community that actively supports the development process of Kuwait.

Continued from Page 1

## Iran is

Trump believed from the outset that the Tehran regime was incapable of escaping its medieval mindset, and sought to extend its influence throughout the Arab region, which it views as part of its strategic sphere of influence.

Iran's delaying tactics will not benefit it and are unlikely to alter the United States' position. The US has chosen not to be bitten twice by the same snake, especially since the Tehran regime has caused a global economic crisis.

Here, we must recall what happened in the final years of the reign of the Shah of Iran, when he attempted to exert pressure on global markets by raising oil prices. At that time, the United States, France, and the United Kingdom had no option but to agree on removing him.

Some believed at the time that Khomeini's regime could act as the region's policeman, but the opposite occurred. It transformed into a terrorist state, and the magic backfired.

As a result, the international community sought to curb the Iranian regime's power without using force.

However, Iran entered into an eight-year war with Iraq, which triggered a global economic crisis when the price of a barrel of oil soared to nearly \$40. This resulted in losses estimated at around one trillion dollars for the global economy, in addition to the losses suffered by Iran and Iraq, estimated at one trillion and one hundred billion dollars at the time.

Undoubtedly, this has contributed to numerous regional and international crises, the effects of which the world continues to suffer today, in addition to the losses to the global economy resulting from recent war. The Iranian regime is betting that the recent war could serve as a lifeline, but this is unlikely under President Trump, who stated that "the war file is my responsibility, and Iran will not receive the funds it received in 2015."

In the recent war, the international community observed that Iran no longer possesses the level of power it once used to threaten the world, particularly after the June war last year, which included strikes on nuclear-related sites.

Therefore, Iran deliberately targeted its neighboring countries, because it cannot harm the United States and Israel. Iran ignored the fact that attacking its neighbors would lead to its complete regional isolation and exacerbate its internal regime's crisis.

These factors suggest that the end of the war could be interpreted as the beginning of a popular uprising against the regime. This is why Iran is stalling in the negotiations.

## Kuwait economy

The speakers emphasized that the war has had a direct impact on energy markets, supply chains, trade routes and investor confidence at a time the region is facing one of its most sensitive economic periods since the COVID-19 pandemic, amid escalating geopolitical uncertainty.

They explained that the war's repercussions have extended to disruptions in hydrocarbon production, decline in tourism activity, increased financing costs, exchange rate volatility and capital flow fluctuations.

Meanwhile, oil futures reflect market expectations that prices will remain at pre-war levels.

The speakers pointed out that the baseline scenario assumes some of the disruptions will be contained by mid-year, but downside risks remain high, especially if the war is prolonged or expanded, which could lead to a new wave of oil and energy price hikes.

In this context, participants reviewed figures from the latest World Bank Group reports, which indi-

cated that the conflict caused widespread disruption to energy markets and supply chains, with oil prices soaring to around \$112 per barrel, an increase of nearly 60 percent.

This also led to rising inflationary pressures and decline in the region's economic growth prospects.

Furthermore, the growth of the regional economies – excluding Iran – is projected to slow down from four percent in 2025 to 1.8 percent in 2026, with growth forecasts for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries lowered to 3.1 percent.

Kuwait's economy is expected to decline by 6.4 percent as a result of the disruptions to oil exports and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Melina confirmed that while higher oil prices may provide temporary financial support to some Gulf economies, the GCC countries will also be affected by a slowdown in non-oil activities, particularly tourism, financial services and trade.

He explained that tourism is now a major driver of demand in Gulf economies as part of their economic diversification plans, making prolonged regional instability a significant factor putting pressure on non-oil growth.

He also warned about the vulnerability of Gulf economies to food security disruptions due to their heavy reliance on food imports.

The seminar highlighted the close ties between the economies of the MENA and the Gulf states through energy, remittances and investments, which means the effects of war can spread rapidly throughout the region, especially in oil-importing countries.

Participants pointed out that low-income and fragile states will be the most affected if the war continues due to their heavy reliance on imports of food, energy and fertilizers when food insecurity rates are rising alarmingly.

The speakers also stressed that the current crisis comes at a time the fiscal and political maneuvering room is narrower than before, due to higher levels of public debt, interest payments, and inflation compared to the pre-pandemic period. This puts governments in a difficult position, forcing them to choose between supporting growth, containing inflation, and stabilizing public finances.

Meanwhile, Diop confirmed that member economies are facing inflationary pressures and varying degrees of slowdown. He explained that uneven shocks and structural differences make it difficult to implement unified policies.

Diop called for strengthening regional cooperation, developing flexible financing mechanisms, and enhancing integration in the areas of energy, food and financial liquidity. He emphasized that the MENA region is a vital area within the Islamic Development Bank's membership, necessitating greater coordination among regional and international financial and development institutions.

## Kuwait witnesses

Trademark renewal requests during the final protection year reached 6,468, while publication of renewals totaled 7,103 transactions. Ownership transfer requests reached 1,406, reflecting active trademark trading in the local market.

Al-Jaidan said the Patents Department recorded 4,798 transactions, generating about KD 615,800 (around USD 2 million) in fees.

She added that the transactions included 643 patent applications by companies and 70 by individuals, alongside 97 patent examination and publication transactions for companies. Patent renewal requests accounted for the largest share of transactions.

The Industrial Designs Department recorded 892 transactions, generating KD 6,484 (about USD 21,000) in fees, she said.

Industrial design filing requests reached 507 transactions, while examination and publication requests totaled 255. Renewal requests stood at 37, reflecting continued protection of industrial designs.

Al-Jaidan stressed that the figures reflect the effectiveness of the ministry's regulatory policies and affirmed continued efforts to strengthen compliance, awareness and inspection measures to protect the national economy and boost investor confidence.

## UK remains

In addition, Vice Admiral Ahlgren participated in a joint meeting with His Excellency Lieutenant General Khaled Saad Al-Shraian, Chief of Staff of the Kuwait Armed Forces; H.E. Sheikh Dr Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah, Undersecretary Kuwait Ministry of Defence; Major General Saif Al-Hamlan, Commander of the Kuwait Naval Force; and Brigadier General Sheikh Khalifah Al-Sabah, Director of Armament & Procurement Authority; Brigadier General Raed Al-Sakran, Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans. The discussions focused on defence cooperation, maritime security, and the importance of safeguarding freedom of navigation, particularly in and around the Strait of Hormuz.

A further meeting was held with Brigadier General Feras Al-Qattan, Commander of Kuwait Air Defence. Discussions covered air and missile defence cooperation, future capability development, and the significant contribution the UK team alongside other allies has made to the Defence of Kuwait. Vice Admiral Ahlgren was also shown the impressive new purpose built facilities for the Air Defence Operations Centre.

The visit reflects the deep and enduring defence relationship between the United Kingdom and the State of Kuwait. Both sides reaffirmed their shared commitment to promoting regional security, supporting stability, and working closely with international partners to address common challenges.

Vice Admiral Ahlgren said: "It was a privilege to visit Kuwait and engage with such esteemed counterparts. The UK and Kuwait share a strong and trusted partnership, founded on mutual respect and a common interest in regional security. Our discussions have been constructive and forward-looking, particularly in addressing the current regional situation and ensuring the safety and security of vital maritime routes."

Captain Neil Marriott (Royal Navy), UK Defence Attaché said:

"In light of the current situation, DSAME's visit reflects the strength and continuity of our longstanding relationship. The productive engagements throughout the visit reaffirmed our shared commitment to continued cooperation and closer collaboration moving forward."

The British Embassy in Kuwait reiterates the United Kingdom's continued support for efforts to maintain stability in the region and its commitment to working closely with Kuwait and partners across the Middle East and North Africa.

Quddus Rasheed, British Ambassador to the State of Kuwait says: "The UK remains committed to supporting Kuwait's security and defensive capabilities. The deployment of UK personnel, equipment and defensive assets reflects our long-standing defence partnership and our shared commitment to protecting Kuwait and all those who live here. During our visit with Vice Admiral Edward Ahlgren to Kuwait's Air Defence Headquarters, we saw first-hand

the professionalism and impressive capabilities of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces, as well as the close cooperation between British and Kuwaiti teams. Our partnership is focused not only on addressing current challenges, but also on supporting Kuwait's long-term defense capabilities for the future."

## Arab world

Qatar condemned the drone attack targeting Kuwait, describing it as a blatant violation of Kuwait's sovereignty and a flagrant breach of international law, Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement on Sunday.

Qatar stressed the need to halt unjustified attacks against sisterly Arabian Gulf countries, statement added.

The Ministry also affirmed Qatar's full solidarity with Kuwait, and its support for all measures it may take to safeguard its sovereignty and security.

GCC Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi condemned in the strongest possible terms the egregious Iranian attacks that targeted the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the State of Kuwait.

"Iran's treacherous approach systematically seeks to destabilise the region and undermine regional security, constituting a flagrant violation of the principles of international law, the United Nations (UN) Charter, and the principles of good neighbourliness," he said in a press statement.

Arab League secretary-general on Sunday vehemently condemned the attacks targeting the State of

Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and the territorial waters of the State of Qatar, characterizing them as a "flagrant violation" of international law.

In an official statement, Ahmad Aboul-Gheit affirmed the League's "unwavering solidarity" with the Kingdom of Bahrain in its efforts to neutralize subversive plots.

The Secretary-General expressed his "categorical rejection" of this unjustified escalation, warning that such provocations threaten to derail ongoing diplomatic mediation efforts aimed at achieving a peaceful resolution to regional conflicts.

Palestine condemned on Monday the drone attack on Kuwait, describing it as a flagrant violation of international law and an unacceptable attack on Kuwait's sovereignty, security, stability, and territorial integrity.

In a statement, Palestine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs affirmed Palestine's full solidarity with Kuwait and its support for all measures taken by Kuwait to protect its sovereignty and the security of its citizens and residents.

Jordan also condemned a drone attack targeting Kuwait as a blatant violation of international law and the UN Charter, as well as a serious infringement on Kuwait's sovereignty, security, stability and territorial integrity.

In a press release, the Foreign Ministry expressed Jordan's condemnation and rejection of the attack, stressing the Kingdom's solidarity with the State of Kuwait and its support for all measures it is taking to safeguard its sovereignty, security and the safety of its people.

## Fugitive liquor

The court had sentenced the defendant to 10 years in prison with hard labor for money laundering, in addition to deportation after serving the sentence and the confiscation of all funds and proceeds obtained from the criminal activity.

The case began with the uncovering of an organized criminal network that operated illegally, selling and trafficking alcoholic beverages within Kuwait in violation of applicable laws and regulations.

Investigations revealed that members of the network collected proceeds from these activities and laundered them, concealing their true source through a series of complex financial transactions.

The network employed 157 Asian nationals to carry out 254 money transfers through 13 local exchange companies. The total value amounted to KD 433,745,875, in an attempt to split the funds and circumvent financial control systems, transferring the money to accounts outside Kuwait under the guise of "family expenses" to conceal their true source.

## 8,938 jay

He reiterated that traffic awareness is not just a temporary initiative but a national and humanitarian responsibility requiring everyone's cooperation and active participation.

He thanked all participating entities and those who contributed to the success of the event.

# JOINT OPERATIONS

SAUDI ARABIAN CHEVRON INC. (SAC)    KUWAIT GULF OIL COMPANY (K.S.C.)

Joint Operations (Saudi Arabian Chevron Inc. / Kuwait Gulf Oil Company) announces the below-mentioned Public Tenders for the procurement of materials. Kuwaiti and Saudi merchants, registered with either company wishing to participate in any of the under-mentioned Tenders should submit their bids electronically through "SMART BY GEP" <https://smart.gep.com>.

For first-time registration, please contact [TLQX@Chevron.com](mailto:TLQX@Chevron.com) - [BHSJ@Chevron.com](mailto:BHSJ@Chevron.com) for support and guidance.

A non-refundable fee mentioned against each tender. Tender fees to be deposited and bidder must attach proof of payment as follows:

STATE OF KUWAIT		KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA	
NATIONAL BANK OF KUWAIT		GULF BANK - KUWAIT	
ACCOUNT NUMBER: 1001132057		IBAN: KW25GULB000000000000090550035	
IN KUWAITI DINAR		IN KUWAITI DINAR	
		RIYADH BANK	
		IBAN: SA2620000003100019949901	
		IN SAUDI RIYAL	

The start date for the following tenders will be on **MON 11 MAY 2025** and closing date will be on **TUESDAY, 9 JUN 2026 @ 09:00 A.M.**

S. NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS CLOSING DATE	FEES (KD)	CLOSING DATE
1	BPT#289-26	Blanket Purchase Tender for Compressor Spares - Powerex	15	9 / 6 / 2026
2	053922	Instrument Cables - 10 Lines, Various Sizes, Approved MFR, Wafra, CGUP MP-736	25	9 / 6 / 2026
3	053958	Gate, Check & Ball Valves (2-12 IN), 5 Lines for Manifolds New Flowline - Wafra	5	9 / 6 / 2026
4	054155	Insert Sleeves (4 Line Items: 10", 12", 20" & 24"), Telescope/Reli-Sleeve, Wafra	35	9 / 6 / 2026
5	053966	HDPE Membrane Liner (1 Line, 2.0 mm), Any Reputed MFR - Wafra, PD-1105 Project	5	9 / 6 / 2026
6	048492-R1	Control Valve 1x 12" (Fisher/Rotork) Wafra-MGC Ratawi	5	9 / 6 / 2026
7	048500-R1	Marine Rope 16in x180ft / Approved MFR/ Mina Al Zour	15	9 / 6 / 2026
8	053968	Metal Plates (30 Items, Multi Sizes), Any MFR - Mina Al Zour	50	9 / 6 / 2026
9	053969	36IN Line Pipe (1 Line) API 5L X60, Approved MFR, Mina Al Zour	5	9 / 6 / 2026
10	051687-R1	Lufkin Legrand Pumping Spares, 12 Items, Bearings/Inverters 640/912, Wafra Field	35	9 / 6 / 2026
11	054043	Closed Drain Vessels (1LI/7UN) 1830x8000mm Approved MFR/MP-1086 MGC Wafra	25	9 / 6 / 2026

## INTERNATIONAL

## Voter confusion, headaches for election officials follow hasty GOP push to redraw US House seats

BATON ROUGE, La., May 11, (AP): Thousands of Louisiana voters have already cast early ballots for congressional candidates in what soon could be the wrong districts. Alabama's primaries are a week away, but the state could force a do-over for voting on US House races. A new congressional map in Tennessee upended races that had been underway for months.

Republicans' rush to gerrymander congressional districts across several Southern states after a US Supreme Court ruling hollowed out the Voting Rights Act is confusing voters and creating logistical headaches for local election officials. The changes are hitting while primary season is in progress.

The chaotic upheaval to an election season that could determine which party controls the US House is the latest fallout from an intensely partisan gerrymandering battle initiated by President Donald Trump last year to protect Republicans' slim majority.

The Supreme Court's decision last month severely weakening the Voting Rights Act required Louisiana to reconsider a map drawn in 2024 with two majority minority congressional districts that elected Black representatives. The GOP-controlled Legislature could eliminate one or both in a state

where roughly 30% of the population is Black.

The ruling also encouraged Republicans in Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina and Tennessee to consider eliminating four Democratic districts among them, three represented by Black lawmakers. Florida has a new map meant to cost Democrats four of their eight seats, out of 28.

In Louisiana, 66-year-old New Orleans resident Sallie Davis voted early last week. Her ballot allowed her to vote for Democratic US Rep Troy Carter, but a sign at her polling booth showed his race crossed off with a ballpoint pen. She was confused and frustrated - especially when a poll worker told her to go with what the sign seemed to convey. She's now worried that her entire ballot will not be counted.

"I was supposed to believe a piece of paper with an X on it marking out the person I wanted to vote for," she said, her voice breaking as she recounted her experience later. "I think I have been disenfranchised. I think my vote, that I just voted on, it's not going to count or something. I think it's illegal."

Louisiana's primary is on Saturday, and a week of early voting there began

May 2, two days after the Republican governor declared an emergency and suspended congressional primaries to give lawmakers a chance to draw a new map.

Republican Secretary of State Nancy Landry's office said nearly 179,000 primary ballots had been cast as of Friday, including about 53,000 absentee ballots returned by mail. She said the ballots included U.S. House races, but votes in those contests won't be counted.

In Alabama, South Carolina and Tennessee, Republicans justified pursuing new maps by saying that electing more Republicans would better reflect their states' conservative values. Alabama lawmakers passed legislation Friday allowing a do-over of congressional primaries.

Alabama's primary is May 19, and voting in congressional races will occur then as planned, but with the old districts. Those votes would end up not counting if a court allows the switch to different districts.

Mississippi held its primaries in March, but a federal court has ordered it to redraw its state Supreme Court districts, and Trump is pushing Republicans to redraw the state's four congressional districts.

A special session of its Legislature

is set for May 20. Renovations of the House chamber will force members to meet at the Old State Capitol, where, decades ago, Mississippi lawmakers passed Jim Crow laws suppressing Black voting.

"Modern-day voter suppression relies on election administration errors and chaos, and that's what we're going to see play out in all of these states," said Amir Badat, a Jackson, Mississippi, voting rights attorney and activist.

Tennessee was the first state to enact a new map since the U.S. Supreme Court decision, but Trump's push for redistricting started in Texas last year. Democrats countered in California and tried but ran afoul of the courts in Virginia.

Before Tennessee's GOP-controlled Legislature passed a new map last week, the state's elections coordinator told county officials in a memo that that would mean: reprogramming election systems, retraining poll workers and possibly adjusting precinct boundaries, meaning some voters' polling places could change.

Tennessee's congressional primaries still will be held Aug. 6 as planned, and candidates have until Friday to qualify for the ballot. Those who qualified previously will get a pass if they can run in a new district with the same number.



US Sen Charlane Oliver, D-Nashville, holds a banner and protests atop her desk on the Senate floor during a special session of the state legislature to redraw U.S. Congressional voting maps on May 7, in Nashville, Tenn. (AP)

## US president first state visit to China since re-election

## Xi and Trump to discuss bilateral relations, world peace and development: Guo

BEIJING, May 11, (Xinhua): Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump will have an in-depth exchange of views on major issues concerning China-US relations and world peace and development, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said on Monday.

Guo made the remarks at a regular news briefing when asked about Trump's upcoming state visit to China, scheduled from May 13 to 15, which will be the first visit to China by a US president in nine years.

Xi and Trump met last time in October 2025 in Busan, the Republic of Korea. Head-of-state diplomacy plays an irreplaceable strategic guiding role in China-US relations, he said.

China is willing to work with the United States in the spirit of equality, respect, and mutual benefit to expand cooperation, manage differences, and inject more stability and certainty into a turbulent and changing world, Guo said.

The Chinese capital will soon become the setting for one of the most closely watched, high-stakes diplomatic encounters of the year, as the leaders of the world's two largest economies prepare to meet face-to-face.

This will be Trump's first state visit to China since his re-election, and the second time Xi has hosted him in the country -- their last such meet-

ing in the country took place nearly a decade ago.

Against the backdrop of a complex international landscape and shared global challenges, expectations are running high: How can President Xi and President Trump manage differences between the two sides? How can they navigate the world's most consequential bilateral relationship?

"You and I are at the helm of China-US relations," Xi told Trump during their latest vis-a-vis talks held in Busan, South Korea, in October 2025. Lasting more than 100 minutes, the meeting marked another moment of direct engagement between the two leaders as they sought to steer China-US relations through uncertainty.

Using a maritime metaphor that has become a recurring theme in his remarks, Xi asked the US president to help keep the "giant ship" of bilateral ties sailing steadily forward.

Over the years, head-of-state diplomacy has anchored China-US relations, serving as a stabilizing force amid shifting global currents. Since Trump's re-election, Xi has spoken with him by phone five times, maintaining close communication on ties and global hotspot issues.

The two presidents first met in 2017, a year marked by an exchange of state visits that set the tone for their interactions. In April that year, Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan, visited Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in the



US President Donald Trump, (left), and Chinese President Xi Jinping shake hands before their meeting at Gimhae International Airport in Busan, South Korea on Oct 30, 2025. (AP)

US state of Florida, where the two presidents dined together and Xi met Trump's family, including his grandchildren.

It was during that visit that Xi delivered a line often recalled in discussions of bilateral ties: "There are a thousand reasons to make the China-US relationship a success, but not a single reason to break it."

Several months later, in November, Trump traveled to Beijing, where Xi hosted him during a series of special events. The two leaders and their spouses toured the Forbid-

den City along its central axis, visiting the Hall of Supreme Harmony, the Hall of Central Harmony and the Hall of Preserving Harmony -- an experience imbued with the Chinese cultural ideal of "harmony" reflected in the names of the three grand halls.

Walking inside the ancient royal palace, Xi told Trump that China's history can be traced back more than 5,000 years, or even earlier, and its culture has been passed down in an unbroken continuum.

During a chat over tea on that trip, Trump showed Xi a video of his

granddaughter, Arabella Kushner, singing and reciting classical poems in Mandarin. Xi said her performance deserved an A-plus. The clip quickly resonated with Chinese netizens and went viral online.

Those early exchanges were widely seen as helping to build a personal rapport between the two leaders, offering a channel to understand each other, manage differences and prevent the relationship from sliding into outright confrontation. "I have a lot of respect for President Xi," Trump has often said.

The past years have seen Xi's meetings with US leaders using this approach -- from the Mar-a-Lago summit and the Yingtai evening talks in the Zhongnanhai compound to the long conversation by China's West Lake -- often remembered as defining moments in bilateral ties.

The upcoming meeting is expected to continue the tradition of high-level engagement. "The real significance of this meeting may not lie in any grand deal," said Denis Simon, a senior fellow at the Quincy Institute. "Instead, it will test whether the United States and China can establish an equilibrium."

Earlier this year, on Feb. 4 -- "Lichun," the traditional Chinese marker for the beginning of spring -- Xi spoke with Trump by phone for the first time in 2026, returning to the metaphor that has come to define his messages on bilateral ties.

"In the year ahead," Xi said, "I look forward to working with you to steer the giant ship of China-US relations through winds and waves, keep it on a steady course, and achieve more major and positive outcomes."

In recent years, China-U.S. relations have experienced twists and turns. Some observers fear that China and the United States may repeat the historical pattern of major-power rivalry known as the "Thucydides Trap." Yet, Xi has rejected this notion: "There is no such thing as a 'Thucydides Trap' in the world. But repeated strategic miscalculations between major countries could create one for themselves."

Avoiding such miscalculations, therefore, has become a critical task for China and the United States, which requires both sides to engage in candid dialogue on several key issues.

Foremost is the Taiwan question. President Xi has repeatedly and unequivocally conveyed China's fundamental stance to the US side. In the Feb. 4 phone conversation with Trump, Xi once again stressed that the Taiwan question is the most important and sensitive issue in China-US relations, urging the US side to handle arms sales to Taiwan with utmost prudence.

Trade is another critical issue. In the face of unilateral US tariff offensives, China, under Xi's leadership, has taken resolute countermeasures.

## PM fights calls for ouster

## Starmer pledges to bring Britain closer to EU

LONDON, May 11, (AP): Prime Minister Keir Starmer pledged Monday to prove the "doubters" in his own party and among the electorate as a whole wrong as he tries to fight off demands to step down after devastating local election results for his Labour Party.

Starmer argued that he will "face up to the big challenges" and restore "hope" to the country. That includes getting closer to the European Union and "putting Britain at the heart of Europe," a decade after the UK voted to leave the EU.

"I know I have my doubters and I know I need to prove them wrong, and I will," Starmer said during a speech in London. He vowed to prove to millions of people "tired of a status quo that has failed them" that the government is on their side.

He said Labour is in "a battle for the soul of our nation," and the U.K. will go down "a dark path" if Reform UK, the anti-immigration party led by Nigel Farage, comes to power.

But Starmer's position is fragile, with dozens of lawmakers calling for him to announce a date for his departure.

Former Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner, a powerful lawmaker often seen as a potential challenger, said "what we are doing isn't



Britain's Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer speaks to Labour Party members at Kingsdown Methodist Church Hall, in Ealing, west London on May 8, a day after the local elections. (AP)

working, and it needs to change."

Rayner did not explicitly call for Starmer to quit, but accused him of presiding over "a toxic culture of cronyism" and said the government must "stay true to labor and social democratic values" and ease the cost of living for working people.

"This may be our last chance," Rayner said in a statement on Sun-

day. Labour has been plunged into gloom by heavy losses last week in local elections across England and legislative votes in Scotland and Wales. The elections have been interpreted as an unofficial referendum on Starmer, whose popularity has plummeted since he swept to power in a landslide less than two years ago.

His government has struggled to deliver promised economic growth, repair tattered public services and ease the cost of living, and been hamstrung by repeated missteps and policy U-turns on issues including welfare reform. He has been further hurt by his disastrous decision to appoint Peter Mandelson, a scandal-tainted friend of Jeffrey Epstein, as Britain's ambassador to Washington.

Last week's elections saw Labour squeezed from both right and left, losing votes to both Reform UK and the "eco-populist" Green Party. It reflects the increasing fragmentation of British politics, long dominated by Labour and the Conservatives.

Starmer hopes to regain momentum with Monday's speech and an ambitious set of legislative plans to be set out in a speech Wednesday by King Charles III at the State Opening of Parliament.

for disobeying Schmidt's decisions. (Xinhua)

**4 bodies recovered from Croatia rivers:** Croatian police on Sunday reported the recovery of four male bodies from the Kupa and Mreznica rivers in Karlovac County, central Croatia, on Saturday afternoon.

The Karlovac Police Administration said investigations and autopsies are underway to determine the identities of the deceased and the exact causes of death. The discovery sites are located in the border region between Croatia and Slovenia.

According to a police statement, the first body was spotted by a citizen shortly after noon on Saturday in the Kupa River near Sracak. Members of the Croatian Mountain Rescue Service (HGSS), assisted by local police, recovered the unidentified man.

Later that afternoon, acting on information from Slovenian police regarding two more bodies in the Kupa River at Gornje Prilisce, officers from Duga Resa and Slovenian firefighters conducted a joint operation to retrieve the two unidentified men from the water. (Xinhua)

## Europe

**Int'l envoy for Bosnia to step down:** Christian Schmidt, the latest envoy tasked with overseeing the ongoing peace implementation in Bosnia following the Balkans war in the 1990s, is stepping down, his office said on Monday.

Schmidt has "taken the personal decision to conclude his service" as the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina after nearly five years, a statement said. The German diplomat will stay on until a new envoy is chosen in to replace him, it added.

Schmidt has repeatedly clashed with the Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik, the main politician in the Serb-run half of Bosnia called Republika Srpska. Authorities last August removed Dodik from the post of the president and temporarily banned him from politics



Schmidt



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Service, a forest fire burning in the exclusion zone around the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, Ukraine on May 8. (AP)

## Russia, Ukraine accuse each other of violating US-brokered 3-day truce

KYIV, May 11, (AP): A US brokered ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine was due to expire on Monday with both sides accusing each other of breaching the 72-hour arrangement, as American and European officials considered how they might steer the warring countries into further talks.

Ukrainian authorities said Monday that Russian drones, bombs and artillery shelling struck civilian areas of the northeastern Kharkiv and southern Kherson regions, killing at least two people and wounding seven others.

Russia's Defense Ministry on Sunday accused Kyiv of committing more than 1,000 ceasefire violations, state media reported. Similar ceasefires announced since Russia invaded its neighbor more than four years ago have also failed to stop the fighting, and US-led diplomatic efforts over the past year have come to nothing.

The Washington-based Institute for the Study of War said data from NASA observations indicated military activities decreased but did not stop after Trump announced last Friday that Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy had accepted his request for a ceasefire running Satur-



Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andrii Sybaha, right, arrives for a meeting of EU foreign ministers at the European Council building in Brussels on May 11. (AP)

day through Monday. The move was meant to mark Victory Day, the Russian celebration marking the defeat of Nazi Germany.

The ISW noted late Sunday that "ceasefires without explicit enforcement mechanisms, credible monitoring, and defined dispute resolution

processes are unlikely to hold."

Trump had said there would also be an exchange of prisoners, declaring that the break in fighting could be the "beginning of the end" of the war. Zelenskyy said the exchange of 1,000 prisoners from each side is being prepared.

Soldier killed in truck crash after Balikatan exercises

## Philippine VP Duterte impeached by lawmakers over suspected wealth and threats

MANILA, Philippines, May 11, (Agencies): An overwhelming majority of the House of Representatives of the Philippines voted to impeach Vice President Sara Duterte on Monday over alleged unexplained wealth and threats to have the president assassinated, as the rift between the two top officials escalated.

The House, which is dominated by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s allies, voted 255-26 with nine abstentions. The two impeachment complaints against Duterte, which will now be elevated to the Senate for a trial, mark an initial setback to her plan to seek the presidency in 2028.

The vice president, who is the daughter of former president Rodrigo Duterte, has generally denied any wrongdoing without answering the criminal allegations against her in detail.

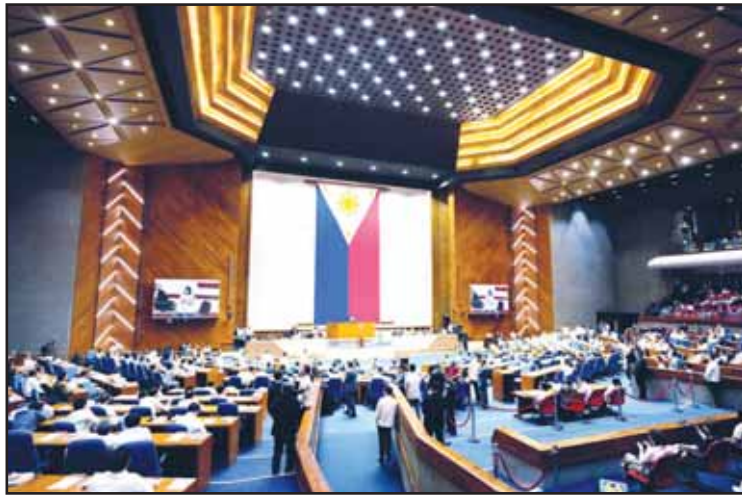
She has repeatedly accused Marcos, his wife and his cousin, former

House Speaker Martin Romualdez, of corruption, weak leadership and attempting to muzzle her because of speculation she may seek the presidency in 2028 when Marcos' six-year term ends.

Last year, she was also impeached by the House but survived by successfully petitioning the Supreme Court to declare the impeachment bid unconstitutional on a technicality.

Rep. Gerville Luistro, who heads the House Justice Committee, said the impeachment complaints included several criminal allegations, like huge bank transactions over the years that Duterte has not declared as required by law and misuse of confidential funds of her office as vice president and as education secretary, a post she once held under Marcos.

Luistro also cited threats made by the vice president during an online news conference in 2024 to have Marcos, his wife and Romualdez



Members of the House of Representatives vote to impeach Vice President Sara Duterte in Quezon city, Philippines on May 11. (AP)

killed by an assassin if she herself was assassinated, as their political disputes escalated. The vice presi-

dent then warned that her threat wasn't a joke.

She later said she wasn't threaten-

ing him but was expressing concern for her own safety. Her threatening remarks set off a criminal investigation and national security concerns.

Duterte's lawyers questioned an initial finding by the House Justice Committee that there was ground to impeach the vice president, saying last month that the committee proceedings "departed from the constitutional design."

Duterte's husband, Manases Carpio, has filed criminal complaints against Luistro and other legislators and officials after government records of the couple's bank transactions were made public in a recent House hearing. They said that violated the country's bank secrecy law.

Former president Duterte is detained by and facing trial before the International Criminal Court in the Netherlands for alleged crimes against humanity. The charges stem

from the deadly anti-drugs crackdowns he oversaw while in office.

The vice president remains popular, based on independent surveys. Sara Duterte and President Marcos were running mates in a whirlwind alliance in the 2022 election but have since had a bitter falling out.

**Also:**

**MANILA:** A Philippine Army soldier was killed, and several others were injured after a military truck crashed along a highway in Pangasinan province, north of Manila, on Friday afternoon, police and military said on Sunday.

Philippine Army spokesperson Colonel Louie Dema-ala confirmed the incident, which occurred around 2 p.m. local time, saying the truck was returning to a military camp in Tarlac province after participating in the annual Balikatan joint military exercises when one of its tires burst.

## Thai ex-PM Thaksin released from prison after serving 8 months for abuse of power

BANGKOK, May 11, (AP): Thailand's former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, whose 21st-century political odyssey sharply divided Thai society for decades, was released from a Bangkok prison on Monday after serving eight months of a one-year sentence for a corruption-related charge.

A crowd of about 300 supporters and political allies gathered outside the Klong Prem Central Prison to greet the 76-year-old billionaire populist.

Thaksin was a telecommunications magnate who founded his own political party in 1998 and served as prime minister from 2001 until a military coup ousted him in 2006 while he was abroad. His ouster triggered nearly two decades of deep and sometimes violent political polarization, while his political machine staged several comebacks even as Thaksin himself stayed in self-imposed exile to escape what he said was political persecution through the courts.

His three children, including



Former Thailand prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, (center), walks among his supporters following his release on parole from a Bangkok prison in Bangkok, Thailand, on May 11. (AP)

former prime minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra, and other family members also arrived early to welcome him.

Thaksin emerged from the prison gate in a white polo shirt and blue

pants and was embraced by his family. He smiled brightly as he walked around to greet his supporters who chanted "we love Thaksin," and gave red roses to him. He then left without speaking to reporters.

### Changing geopolitics in focus

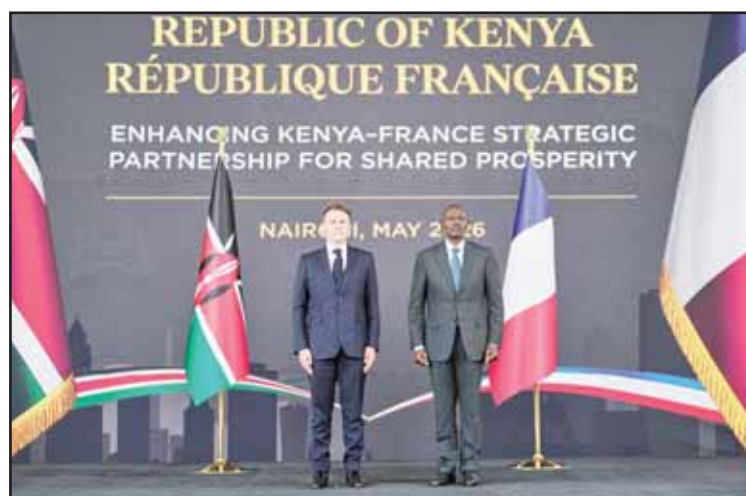
## France woos Anglophone Africa at Kenya summit

NAIROBI, Kenya, May 11, (AP): France is pitching what it says is a new model of partnership with African countries at a summit that begins Monday in Kenya as it completes a military withdrawal from West African countries that has been widely seen as marking declining influence on the continent.

But Paris is expected to use the two-day Africa Forward Summit, which it is co-hosting, to push a new Africa policy that focuses more on English-speaking countries and offers what it calls a "partnership of equals." Its new defense agreement with Kenya marks the direction it hopes to go.

France has long maintained a policy of economic, political and military sway over its former colonies dubbed *Françafrique*, which included keeping thousands of troops in the region. But after years of criticism from leaders and opposition parties in those countries over what they described as a demeaning and heavy-handed approach, France has been forced to withdraw most of those troops.

The summit - France's first in an English-speaking African country - will be attended by more than 30 heads of state and government, including from Francophone countries. On his arrival Sunday, French President Emmanuel Macron said France may dis-



France's President Emmanuel Macron, (left), and Kenya's President William Ruto stand during the national anthem at State House in Nairobi on May 10. (AP)

agree with West African governments but "never disagrees with the people."

Kenya's newly ratified defense agreement with France has been criticized by civil society groups for granting too much immunity local law to French troops, a sensitive issue in a country where a similar agreement with the United Kingdom has left a trail of hard-to-prosecute crimes against locals.

At a time when many African na-

tions, particularly in the Sahel region, are reducing or expelling foreign military presences in what they say is a quest to reclaim their sovereignty, Kenya is hosting a growing international military presence.

The Kenya-France Defense Cooperation Agreement was signed on Oct. 29, 2025, by Kenya's Defense Minister Soipan Tuya and French Ambassador to Kenya Arnaud Suquet and ratified by parliament on April 8. The

same month, it also ratified defense agreements with countries including the Czech Republic, China and Italy.

While defending the defense agreements, parliament defense committee chair Nelson Koech said Kenya's treaties with advanced militaries provide training and intelligence-sharing opportunities that will make its defense stronger.

Koech said the agreements were not a "surrender of sovereignty," adding that newer agreements guarantee that foreign troops will be tried in Kenya in the event of serious crimes such as murder.

A month ahead of the summit, a contingent of around 800 French troops arrived in Kenya aboard a navy ship.

The agreement grants visiting French forces primary jurisdiction over their personnel for on-duty offenses, echoing broad legal protections in past UK pacts that shielded British soldiers from Kenyan courts amid scandals like the 2012 murder of a young woman named Agnes Wanjiru and the deadly 2021 Loldidaiga ranch fire.

A British soldier is due to be extradited after Kenyan courts found him answerable for the 2012 death of Wanjiru, who was last seen alive in his company near the British troops' training grounds in Nanyuki, central Kenya.

### Lat/Am

**4 killed in Colombia coal mine explosion:** Four miners were killed in a coal mine explosion in Colombia's central department of Cundinamarca, local fire authorities said Sunday.

The blast occurred Saturday afternoon at the Las Quintas mine in the municipality of Cucunuba, where four miners were working underground and trapped.

Cundinamarca fire officials confirmed Sunday morning that the bodies of the four miners had been found with no signs of life. Forensic procedures are underway to identify the victims before their bodies are handed over to their families.

"We deeply regret that another fatal accident has occurred in mining activities and express our solidarity with the families of the deceased workers," Cundinamarca Governor **Jorge Emilio Rey Angel** said on X.

The mine where the explosion occurred has been operating in the area for more than a decade. The region is known for its significant mineral potential and has been the site of several exploration projects.

Authorities are investigating whether the accident was caused by safety failures or external factors. (AP)

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**US ups intelligence-gathering off Cuba:** US military intelligence-gathering flights have increased off the coast of Cuba in recent months, CNN reported

Monday.

Since Feb 4, the US Navy and Air Force have conducted at least 25 flights, mostly near Havana and Santiago de Cuba, with some coming within 40 miles (64 km) of the coast, said the report, analyzing publicly available aviation data from FlightRadar24, a live flight tracker.

The missions have predominantly involved P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, designed for surveillance and reconnaissance, while some have been conducted by other types of aircraft and drones specializing in signals intelligence gathering and high-altitude reconnaissance, it said.

The flights are unusual not only for their proximity to Cuban shores but also for their sudden frequency, as such public activity had been rare in this region prior to February. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

**4 convicted of conspiracy:** A Florida jury convicted four men of conspiracy in the 2021 assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse, whose death led to extraordinary turmoil in the Caribbean nation.

South Florida served as a central location for planning and financing the plot to oust Moïse and replace him with someone of the conspirators' choosing, U.S. prosecutors alleged.

Arcangel Pretel Ortiz, Antonio Intriago, Walter Veintemilla and James Solages were found guilty of conspiring to kill or kidnap Haiti's elected leader and providing material support for the plot. They were also convicted of violating the US Neutrality Act and could face possible life sentences. (AP)

## Severe weather in S.Africa officially classified as national disaster

CAPE TOWN, May 11, (Xinhua): The South African government has officially classified the devastating severe weather affecting multiple provinces across the country as a national disaster.

In a statement issued on Saturday night, the Department of Cooperative Governance (DCoG) said that since May 4, heavy rainfall, flooding, thunderstorms, damaging winds and snowfall have caused deaths, infrastructure damage and disruptions to essential services in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, North West, Free State and Mpumalanga provinces.

After consultations with various state organs and provincial disaster management authorities, and after assessing the magnitude and severity of the severe weather, head of the National

Disaster Management Center under DCoG **Elias Sithole** said, "I hereby give notice that I regard this occurrence as a disaster and ... classify the disaster as a national disaster."

According to him, the classification now places the primary responsibility for coordinating and managing the disaster on the national government.

Sithole called on the government to further strengthen support for disaster management structures to implement their contingency arrangements and ensure that measures are put in place to enable the national executive to effectively deal with the effects of the disaster.

He further recommended that national, provincial and municipal governments implement a "multisectoral prevention, mitigation, relief and rehabilitation plan" to address the effects of the disaster, while submitting progress reports to enable the government to monitor response initiatives implemented by state departments, municipalities, non-governmental organizations and affected communities.



Sithole



A Turkish Airlines aircraft is seen after passengers were safely evacuated and Nepal's main airport shut down, following a fire on the jet while landing in Kathmandu, on May 11. (AP)

### Turkish Airlines jet catches fire while landing at Nepal airport, all safe

A Turkish Airlines jet caught fire while landing at Nepal's main airport on Monday, causing no reported injuries but forcing the airport to shut

down.

The flight from Istanbul landed at Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport with fire and smoke on the right land-

ing gear. Emergency crew responded and controlled the fire and passengers were safely evacuated, according to airport officials. (AP)

## El Faro says assets frozen in retaliation for reporting on El Salvador's Bukele

MEXICO CITY, May 11, (AP): Salvadoran investigative outlet El Faro announced that two of its members' assets, including a bank account and property, were frozen, in what it denounced as an escalation of political persecution for its work exposing corruption in the government of President Nayib Bukele.

"It's another level of attack against us with a clear purpose," El Faro Director Carlos Dada said in a news conference. "These are not fiscal measures. They are political measures trying to silence us."

El Faro has publicly sparred with Bukele over its investigations into corruption during his administration, including revelations that his administration negotiated with gangs. The latest move comes shortly after the outlet released a documentary with PBS Frontline about the gang negotiations.

Bukele, who rose to power on an anti-corruption platform in 2019 as the region's youngest leader, has faced increasing criticism from human rights groups for his crackdown on dissent and abuses under a four-year state of exception that has imprisoned more than 91,000 people.

Bukele's office did not immediate-



President of El Salvador, Nayib Armando Bukele Ortiz, listens as President Donald Trump speaks during the National Prayer Breakfast on Feb 5, in Washington. (AP)

ly respond to a request for comment, but he has called the outlet's reporting "fake news" in the past.

The outlet learned of the freezing of assets through the bank and property registry, according to Dada, rather than through formal notification from the government.

The outlet has been subject to on-going audits by Salvadoran authori-

ties since 2020, in which the government alleges it has evaded \$200,000 in taxes, which Dada denied.

El Faro journalists have been the target of spyware attacks, and Pegasus was detected on more than 20 of its journalists' iPhones in 2022. Its journalists sued NSO Group in United States federal court later that year.

Engaging with clients and investors

## Markaz hosts 'House Views' webinar series on markets, private assets, and real estate

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" hosted a three-part Markaz House Views webinar series, bringing together investment professionals and specialists to discuss developments shaping the global and regional investment landscape across public markets, private assets, and real estate. Designed for professional and qualified investors, the series addressed the implications of geopolitical developments on market behavior, the growing role of private infrastructure and private credit in portfolio construction, and evolving dynamics across international and regional real estate markets.

The opening session, hosted by Mr. Raghu Mandagolathur, Chief Executive Officer – Marmore MENA Intelligence, explored how geopolitical developments continue to influence investor sentiment, capital markets and risk transmission, particularly through energy markets, trade flows and inflation. While such developments can trigger short-term

volatility, discussions highlighted that historical market patterns have often shown limited long-term structural disruption. This reinforces the importance of disciplined portfolio construction grounded in diversification and risk management. The session also addressed the GCC's relative positioning, noting the region's fiscal strength while emphasizing the need for selectivity as capital flows shift across sectors and geographies.

Private assets were in focus for the second session as Mr. Kashish Tandon, Executive Vice President – Investment Advisory, talked about how Private infrastructure has emerged as the essential architect of global prosperity, transitioning from a discre-

tionary diversifier to a mission-critical strategic core allocation. Private Infra sits at the intersection of powerful structural forces, including the accelerating demand for digital capacity driven by AI, the global shift toward energy transition and electrification, and the strategic need for supply chain resilience. By providing exposure to high-barrier, tangible assets that deliver services critical to society, private infrastructure offers a unique combination of defensive stability and structural growth. As the global economy undergoes a fundamental regime shift, these real assets serve as a vital backbone, offering investors resilient, inflation-linked income and a stabilizing force

against broader market volatility. The discussion on private credit session, hosted by Mr. Shamlan Al Bahar, Senior Analyst – Investment Advisory, highlighted a broader structural shift in global lending, as tighter regulatory requirements continue to reshape the role of traditional banks. This has created opportunities for private credit to expand as a flexible, customized, non-dilutive financing channel. Key portfolio considerations included income generation, diversification beyond public fixed income, and downside protection through senior secured structures and collateral-backed lending. Manager selection also matters more than ever, given

the wide dispersion in performance, underwriting discipline, and risk management across private credit managers. The final session examined real estate across international and regional markets. Hosted by Mr. Sandeep Pathak, Chief Executive Officer for International Real Estate – Margulf International Real Estate, the international segment provided insights into U.S. real estate conditions, including transaction activity, lending dynamics, and portfolio-level observations, alongside an overview of Markaz's investment platform and track record across the U.S. and Europe. The regional real estate segment,

hosted by Mr. Khaled Al-Mubarki, Senior Vice President – MENA Real Estate, focused on market dynamics across Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, highlighting real estate's role as a defensive, income-generating asset class during periods of uncertainty. Discussions also addressed how domestic market structures, capital flows and investor sentiment may influence transaction activity and overall market stability in the near term. Through the Markaz House Views webinar series, Markaz continues to engage with investors by sharing perspectives across key asset classes and market themes, supporting informed decision-making in an evolving investment environment.



R. Mandagolathur



Kashish Tandon



Shamlan Al Bahar



Sandeep Pathak



Khaled Al-Mubarki



## Financial Results Q1 2026

REVENUE

569

KD MILLION

↑6%

EBITDA

182

KD MILLION

↑6%

NET INCOME

80

KD MILLION

↑51%

EPS

18

FILS

CUSTOMERS

51.2

MILLION

↑1%

ZAIN TECH ZAIN VENTURES ZAIN FINTECH Zai ZAIN INSURE ZAIN ESPORTS

zain.com

A Wonderful World

### Nursery sales reach KD 79.3m

## Q1 real estate transactions reflect investor confidence

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Executive Manager of Real Estate Valuation, Eng. Hamad Al-Hasawy, said that the real estate sector demonstrated resilience during the first quarter of 2026 and reinforced investor confidence, despite geopolitical developments, in addition to reduced trading days and hours due to public holidays and the month of Ramadan.



Hamad Al-Hasawy

He noted that the real estate market recorded high transaction levels exceeding KD 1 billion during Q1 2026, marking a 15.7% year-on-year increase. This growth was driven by notable activity in commercial real estate and private residential properties.

He further pointed out that a new and significant activity emerged in the plant nurseries segment, which recorded 21 transactions valued at KD 79.3 million during the quarter.

Al-Hasawy emphasized that this diversity across real estate segments reflects the underlying strength of the market and its multiple interlinked drivers, which enhance its resilience and ability to withstand and manage risks.

He stated in a press release: "A modest increase in demand for various real estate segments was observed, reflected in 1,324 transactions recorded during the first quarter, representing a 1.7% year-on-year increase. This was driven by a slight rise in transactions within the private residential segment, while trading activity declined across other real estate categories over the same period, except for the coastal strip. However, overall transactions decreased by 24% on a quarter-on-quarter basis."

Al-Hasawy noted that real estate market performance during the first quarter of this year reinforces to investors the importance of avoiding concentration in a single real estate sector and the need for diversification to reduce risks and maximize benefits from market developments. He also emphasized the importance of studying opportunities related to growing demand and trading activity across different real estate segments.

Furthermore, Al-Hasawy emphasized that real estate valuation is a cornerstone of the industry, operating at multiple levels. It facilitates seamless financing and organizes market transactions through transparency, professional standards, and fair appraisals that reflect current market realities. He highlighted the exceptional caliber and professionalism of KFH's valuation team, which continues to bolster the deep trust placed in them by a diverse customer base.

Moreover, KFH's robust organizational structure ensures market-leading performance. Combined with decades of experience, impartiality, and a reputation for reliability, KFH has become the preferred choice for valuation services across all sectors. As an accredited entity, KFH leverages an extensive database and a specialized technical team (comprising engineering, legal, and accounting experts) to deliver valuations rooted in rigorous market studies and real-time monitoring.

## Aramco Q1 profit up 25% on oil price spike

RIYADH, May 11, (AP): Aramco, the world's largest oil company, said Sunday its first quarter profit jumped 25% as the Iran war disrupted oil supplies and raised prices.

Dhahran, Saudi Arabia-based Aramco said it successfully shifted some oil exports to a pipeline to avoid the Strait of Hormuz, which has been disrupted by the war.

On Sunday, the price of Brent crude, the international standard, rose 2.58% to \$103.91 per barrel. That's below its heights above \$119 during the war, but it's still much more expensive than its roughly \$70 level from late February before the fighting began.

Aramco President and CEO Amin Nasser said the company's East-West Pipeline, which runs across Saudi Arabia from its Eastern oil fields to the Red Sea, is now operating at its maximum capacity of 7 million barrels of oil per day. Nasser said the pipeline is "helping to mitigate the impact of a global energy shock and providing relief to customers."

Still, that's only a fraction of Aramco's typical production. Aramco produced 11.1 million barrels of oil per day in the fourth quarter of 2025, for example.

Aramco reported a profit of \$32.5 billion for the quarter ending March 31, up 25% from the same period a year ago. The state-owned company reported a 12% decline in annual profits in 2025.

Before the war, 20% of the world's traded oil typically flowed through the strait every day, as well as large supplies of natural gas, fertilizer and other petroleum products. Iran effectively seized control of the critical waterway after the U.S. and Israel attacked it on Feb. 28. A U.S. naval blockade imposed last month also complicates its use.

Net profit soars 51% to \$260 million, a 15-year high

# Zain Group Q1 2026 revenue up 6% to \$1.86 billion

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: Zain Group, a leading TechCo providing innovative ICT and digital lifestyle communications in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announces its consolidated financial results for the first quarter ended March 31, 2026, with customer base reaching 51.2 million customers.

Zain Group recorded consolidated revenue growth of 6% to reach KD 569 million (USD 1.86 billion) for Q1'2026. EBITDA for the quarter jumped 6% to reach KD 182 million (USD 594 million), reflecting an EBITDA margin of 32%. Net income for the quarter soared 51% to reach KD 80 million (USD 260 million), a 15 year high and reflecting an Earnings Per Share of 18 Fils (USD 6 Cents).

### Key Operational Notes for Q1 2026

1. Kuwait's 5.5G network supports the nation during crisis and drives market leadership on all major KPIs
2. Strong revenue growth in Sudan (+34%), Iraq (+14%), and Jordan (+5%)
3. Robust net profit increases of 116% in Zain KSA and 12% in Zain Iraq
4. Groupwide CAPEX reached USD 129 million representing 7% of revenue
5. New growth verticals revenue grew 16% to reach USD 227 million representing 12% of total revenues
6. Zain Ventures strategic investments record notable gains of USD 123 million for the quarter
7. Data revenue grew 18% to reach USD 751 million, representing 40% of the Group's overall revenue
8. Kuwait, KSA, Bahrain, and Jordan 5G networks enhance customer experience and 5G customer base
9. Fintech services (Bede in Kuwait, Bahrain and Sudan; Tamam in KSA and Zain Cash in Jordan and Iraq) witnessed revenue growth of 28% and customer increase of 38%
10. ZainTECH revenue grew 7%, contributing to the 9% YoY overall increase in groupwide enterprise revenue
11. Zain Omantel International (ZOI) wholesale carrier achieved healthy revenue growth of 16% YoY
12. Zain Group publishes 2025 Sustainability Report entitled 'Grounded in Purpose, Growing Sustainably'
13. Zain brand valuation up 16% YoY, to reach a milestone of USD 4 billion, highest in Kuwait's private sector

Mrs. Nour Al-Jassim, Chair of the Board of Zain Group said, "I extend my sincere appreciation to the previous Board of Directors for their dedicated efforts in advancing the company's strategic agenda and strengthening the Group's position as a leading regional TechCo. The Board will build on this solid foundation, enhance strategic partnerships and continue to deliver sustainable value for our shareholders."

Mr. Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO commented, "Despite ongoing regional challenges, we delivered a prosperous first-quarter performance on multiple fronts. This was underpinned by strong operational execution across our key markets and growing contributions from our new business verticals and profitable investment strategy. We remain focused on elevating customer experience through innovative, AI-driven solutions, while actively pursuing value accretive opportunities. This strong momentum behind the Group's '4WARD-Progress with Purpose' strategy signals an exceptional year ahead."

"Our robust and diversified business model, coupled with the agility of our teams, enabled us to maintain critical connectivity across all markets during the recent crisis. I am immensely proud of the resilience and dedication demonstrated by our teams. Their unwavering commitment ensured uninterrupted network connectivity and customer support, enabling the continuity of remote work, education, and essential services under highly challenging circumstances. These efforts have been truly inspiring."

"Our operations in Kuwait, KSA, Iraq, Sudan, Jordan, and Bahrain performed in line with expectations despite a challenging and highly competitive environment. In parallel, our strategic verticals, ZainTECH and Zain Omantel International, continued to deliver healthy growth, playing a vital role in sustaining essential services across the region and beyond."

"Our strategic partnership with Ooredoo



Nour Al-Jassim, Chair of the Board of Zain Group



Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO

- Chair of the Board, Mrs Nour Al-Jassim: "The Board of Directors places strategic partnerships and the creation of sustainable shareholder value at the forefront of its priorities"
- Vice-Chairman & Group CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi: "A prosperous first quarter on multiple fronts that signals an exceptional year ahead"
- EBITDA up 6% to USD 594 million with CAPEX reaching USD 129 million
- Kuwait's 5.5G network supports nation during crisis and drives market leadership on all major KPIs
- Strong revenue growth in Sudan (+34%), Iraq (+14%), and Jordan (+5%)
- Key markets deliver net profit growth of 116% in KSA and 12% in Iraq
- Data revenue grew 18% to reach USD751 million, representing 40% of total revenue
- New growth verticals revenue grew 16% to reach USD 227million representing 12% of total revenues
- Zain Omantel International' (ZOI) reports healthy revenue growth of 16% during Q1' 2026
- ZainTECH revenue up 7%, contributing to a 9% YoY increase in group-wide enterprise revenue
- Zain Ventures strategic investments record notable gains of \$123 million
- Partnership with Ooredoo and TASC progressing towards establishing the largest Tower Coin region
- Fintech services witness consolidated revenue growth of 28% across multiple markets
- Zain Group publishes 2025 Sustainability Report entitled 'Grounded in Purpose, Growing Sustainably'
- Zain is most valuable brand in Kuwait's private sector with a valuation of USD 4 billion, up 16% YoY

### Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) for Q1 2026

Total Managed Active Customers	51.2 million	
Revenue	KD 569million	USD 1.86billion
EBITDA	KD 182million	USD 594 million
EBITDA Margin	32%	
Net Income	KD 80million	USD 260million
EPS	18fils	USD 0.06

to establish the region's largest tower company continues to progress well. Following recent regulatory approvals in Qatar, the TASC Towers team is finalizing operational readiness ahead of the first tower closing, expected during June 2026. Upon completion, we will focus on expanding into additional markets in line with our infrastructure optimization strategy."

Al Kharafi concluded, "I look forward to working closely with the new Board and Chair, Mrs. Nour Al Jassim, as we take Zain to new heights to enhance shareholder value."

Since its inception, Zain Ventures has made a series of strategic investments across venture capital funds and the regional and

global startup ecosystem. The portfolio includes high-growth, globally recognized companies such as Revolut, SpaceX, and xAI, that are proving very profitable. Zain Ventures will continue to pursue disciplined investments that enhance long-term shareholder returns.

Zain's fintech ecosystem continues to deliver impressive growth in both revenue and customer base. The Group remains focused on scaling this fast-growing ecosystem by strengthening financial inclusion, increasing wallet engagement, and supporting SME digitization across our markets.

The Group recently published its 2025 Sustainability Report, 'Grounded in Purpose, Growing Sustainably,' marking a



Zain HQ building

significant milestone in communicating its long-term value creation. This is the first report of its kind in Kuwait prepared in accordance with the International Integrated Reporting Framework. In addition, Zain achieved an 'A' score in the CDP Climate Change 2025 disclosure cycle, placing the company among the top performers globally and making us the only Kuwait-based company to attain leadership level.

The strength of the Zain brand continues to grow. According to Brand Finance's 2026 rankings, the brand value increased by 16.1% year-on-year to USD 4.04 billion, placing it as the highest valued brand in Kuwait's private sector and among the top 25 telecom brands globally. Nineteen years since its launch, this sustained growth reflects the success of the 4WARD strategy, investment in differentiated customer experiences, and the strength of its networks and services. Today, with more than 26 million social media followers and over 4 billion views generating 1.5 billion annual interactions, Zain stands as one of the region's most recognized and engaging corporate brands, and the ICT provider of choice for individuals, businesses, and governments.

### Financial KPIs of key markets for first quarter (Q1) ended March 31, 2026

**Kuwait:** Maintaining its market leadership, the flagship operation's customer base stood at 2.6 million. Revenue for the period reached KD 92 million (USD 301 million), EBITDA stood at KD 31.4 million (USD 103 million), representing an EBITDA margin of 34%. Net income for the quarter reached KD 16 million (USD 53 million). Data revenue grew 8%, representing 40% of total revenue. The operator continued to develop and monetize its resilient 5.5G Advanced network that supported the nation during the recent regional crisis empowering digital enablement through dynamic customer-facing platforms.

**Saudi Arabia:** Revenue reached USD 708 million, EBITDA for the period reached USD 214 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 30%. Net income for the quarter soared 116% to reach USD 54 million, inclusive of SAR 98 million (USD 26 million) from the Kingdom's Universal Service Fund. Data revenue grew by 8%, representing 43% of total revenue, while active customers reached 8.3 million. The operator witnessed continued growth in 5G and B2B revenue, with Yaqoot, Zain KSA's digital arm, witnessing stable revenue YoY, while Tamam, the consumer micro finance arm, witnessed healthy revenue growth, all of which contributed towards the increase in top-line. Read more on Zain KSA Q1 2026 results.

**Iraq:** Revenue grew 14% YoY to reach USD 325 million, while EBITDA reached USD 110 million, up 5% YoY. Net profit grew 12% YoY to reach USD 29 million. The operator's customer base reached 20.7 million customers, sustaining market leadership in Iraq. This growth was fueled by strong commercial strategy execution, continued network deployment, and a robust contribution from its subsidiaries Horizon and Next Generation, all achieved despite a challenging macroeconomic environment.

**Sudan:** Revenue for the quarter soared 34% YoY to reach USD 157 million, with EBITDA reaching USD 90 million, an increase of 35% YoY, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 58%. Net income reached USD 56 million. Customer base expanded 13% YoY to 12.4 million, supported by the restoration of coverage, service availability and return of population to affected areas. Data revenue grew 70% YoY, accounting for 37% of total revenue.

**Jordan:** Revenue grew 5% YoY to reach USD 148 million, EBITDA increased by 4% to reach USD 57 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 38%, with net income up 1.4% to reach USD 19 million. Data revenue grew 15% on the back of its continually expanding 5G network, representing 58% of total revenue. Customer base grew by 2% to reach 4.2 million, maintaining a market leading position.

**Bahrain:** Revenue remained stable YoY at USD 56 million, EBITDA reached USD 14.5 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 26%. Net income increased by 1% to reach USD 3.1 million, with data revenue growing 4% YoY to represent 45% of total revenue. Read more on Zain Bahrain Q1 2026 results.

Strong investment, fee growth boosts Warba earnings

## Warba Bank announces net profit of KD 6.3 million for Q1 2026, reflecting 14% growth

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: Warba Bank announced its financial results for the first quarter of 2026, reporting a 14% increase in net profit to KWD 6.3 million despite geopolitical challenges affecting the region during the quarter. The bank maintained operational stability through a solid financial foundation and advanced digital infrastructure, with earnings per share reaching 1.33 fils.

The performance was driven by a 25% growth in net investment income to KWD 5 million as of 31 March 2026 as compared to KWD 4 million in 31 March 2025, and a 31% increase in net fees and commission income to KWD 3.3 million as of 31 March 2026 as compared to KWD 2.5 million in 31 March 2025.

Total assets grew by 2% to KWD 6.1 billion as compared to the year ended 2025, while the financing portfolio reached KWD 4 billion and depositors' accounts reached KWD 3.4 billion as of March 31, 2026.

### Risk Management and Operational Stability:

Hamad Mosaed Al-Sayer, Chairman of Warba Bank, stated: "During the first quarter of this year, Warba Bank demonstrated an exceptional ability to handle the geopolitical challenges that affected the local, regional, and global economic landscape. Our results reflect the robustness of our financial position and the success of our prudent risk management and mitigation strategy, which was proactively activated to ensure the protection of all stakeholders, including shareholders, customers, partners, employees, and the community at large."

Al-Sayer added: "Under these exceptional circumstances, we continued to fulfill our role as a responsible national Islamic banking institution. We ensured an active presence to support national efforts and activated an integrated social responsibility plan to assist state institutions and society. We will continue to work through a balanced approach aimed at ensuring sustainable growth and strict compliance with Sharia principles and the highest standards of governance."

### Operational Continuity and Digital Infrastructure:

Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem, Chief Executive Officer of Warba Bank, noted that strategic investments in digital transformation contributed significantly to the bank's performance. "Our advanced digital infrastruc-



Hamad Al-Sayer, Chairman of Warba Bank



Shaheen Al-Ghanem, Chief Executive Officer of Warba Bank

### Al-Sayer:

"Warba continues its strong performance, supported by a robust financial position and a prudent risk mitigation strategy amid geopolitical challenges."

"We have activated business continuity plans to protect the interests of our shareholders, customers, partners, and employees."

"We remain committed to our national and social role, standing side-by-side with state efforts to navigate this exceptional period."

### Al-Ghanem:

"Our banking and digital infrastructure has proven highly efficient in ensuring the seamless and secure delivery of our services despite challenges."

"During the first quarter, we continued to implement operational and community initiatives that reflect our responsibility toward our clients and society."

"Own the Future' is a steadfast commitment to building an Islamic banking institution capable of adapting and growing under various circumstances."

ture played a central role in our ability to continue serving our customers seamlessly and securely during the past weeks. This digital readiness enabled us to ensure business continuity without interruption and meet customers' banking needs seamlessly," Al-Ghanem said.

He emphasized: "Despite the challenges, we continued to implement our planned operational and community initiatives for the first quarter. We continued to provide innovative financial solutions and focus on enhancing customer experience while supporting the national economy. Our slogan, 'Own the Future,' embodies our ongoing commitment to developing our technical capabilities and continuing our growth trajectory as a leading Islamic bank."

### Reliability and Cybersecurity:

Amid regional challenges, the bank continued operating without interruption through its branches and digital platforms. These operations were supported by advanced cybersecurity measures to safeguard customer data and assets. The bank's rapid response reaffirmed its role as a stable national institution supporting operational stability and customer confidence during this period.

### Q1 Operational and Digital Initiatives:

Coinciding with its 15th anniversary, Warba Bank advanced its digital transformation by launching a redesigned website and an updated app interface featuring fully digital account opening. The bank also strengthened its product portfolio with the return of "Al Sunbula" account draws and introduced new digital features for its Gold Account.

In social responsibility, the bank sponsored several national and youth events, including the Shamia Carnival and the Kuwait University Cultural Festival. It also renewed its partnership with the National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) and continued its charitable initiatives during Ramadan, including the "Warba Quran Reciters" competition.

### Key Operational Indicators:

■ Net profit: KWD 6.3 million (+14%)

■ Total assets: KWD 6.1 billion (+2%)

■ Net Investment Income: KWD 5 million (+25%)

A banking program preparing students for work

## NBK opens registration for 2026 Aspire Summer Training Program



Yaqoub Al-Baqer

**Al-Baqer:** Aspire introduces students to the banking work environment at an early stage.

■ We continuously develop the program to align with the aspirations of young people and the needs of the job market.

■ Empowering youth and preparing qualified national talent is a priority in NBK's strategy.

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: National Bank of Kuwait announced the opening of registration for its 2026 Aspire Summer Training Program, as part of its ongoing commitment to supporting youth and students with educational and training opportunities that contribute to developing their personal and professional skills and job market readiness.

The program targets high school students aged 15 to 18, offering them a comprehensive initial training experience to familiarize them with the nature of work in the banking sector through a combination of theoretical and practical training.

This year's program includes two training courses, each lasting two weeks. The first course will run from June 7 to 18, 2026, followed by the second from June 21 to July 2, 2026.

Through the program, NBK focuses on delivering a range of topics and interactive workshops that contribute to developing critical thinking, teamwork, creativity, innovation, problem-solving, and integrity in the workplace. It also introduces the concept of service quality and includes modern and advanced training and academic materials, in addition to field visits that allow participants to gain firsthand experience in NBK's operations and branches.

Moreover, this program aims to develop students' practical and personal skills, providing them with a space to interact and learn in a stimulating training environment, which should enable them to gain early experience that shapes their academic and professional paths.

On this occasion, Yaqoub Al-Baqer, AVP - Public Relations and Event Management at NBK, said: "The NBK Aspire Program stems from the Bank's commitment to making the most of students' summer break by offering them a comprehensive training experience that introduces them to the banking environment and helps refine their skills and build their professional awareness at an early stage."

"At NBK," Al-Baqer added, "we are keen to continuously develop the Aspire program in line with the aspirations of the youth and job market needs, as we focus on



Aspire Summer Training Program.

developing personal and practical skills, as well as promoting a spirit of taking initiative and creativity, which qualifies participants to be effective in the job market in the future."

Al-Baqer emphasized that supporting the youth is one of the foundations of NBK's corporate social responsibility strategy, which is why it continues to launch programs and initiatives that prepare national professionals, support human resources sustainability, promote education and youth empowerment, and align well with this vision that strives to build a prosperous and sustainable future.

It is worth mentioning that since its establishment, NBK has prioritized the support of all fields of social responsibility, such as education, health, employment, training, and providing support for national professionals, in addition to social welfare programs, sports initiatives and environmental activities.

## Al Tijaria Real Estate records net profit of KD 4,084,850 for the first quarter of 2026

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: Mr. Abdulfatah M. R. Marafie, Chairman of The Commercial Real Estate Company (Al-Tijaria), stated that the company's business results for the financial period ended 31 March 2026 resulted in achieving net profits amounting to KD 4,084,850 (Kuwaiti Dinars Four Million Eighty four thousand eight hundred fifty), reflecting an increase of 32% compared to the same period of the previous year.

According to the financial results of the first quarter of 2026, Marafie stated that the achieved results reflect stability in the net operational revenues, in addition to an increase in profits from associate companies and investments. Regarding the financial indicators, the company witnessed notable improvement, as the growth in return on equity, return on assets, and return on the company's capital reached 27.5%, 29.8%, and 28.2% respectively, compared to the same period last year.

Mr. Marafie affirmed that despite the current geopolitical circumstances, Al-Tijaria has maintained its strong performance while closely monitoring and assessing ongoing developments and their potential impact on economic conditions should they continue. The company is taking proactive steps to adapt to these challenges in a manner that contributes to safeguarding shareholders' rights. "He added that the Company continues to implement and develop its balanced strategies and plans in line with the current market conditions. Management is continuously working on improving performance and enhancing achieved results through creating new investment opportunities, developing existing assets, and diversifying income sources both locally and internationally, while focusing on achieving sustainable growth, enhancing shareholders' rights, and maintaining a strong financial position through the growth of operating profits and increased cash flows.

He further noted that Al-Tijaria is currently working on a number of promising investment opportunities in the real estate sector, which are expected to contribute to enhancing the Company's profitability and creating



Abdulfatah M. R. Marafie

added value for shareholders, in addition to studying investment opportunities offered by government entities in support of the Company's future strategic direction and the diversification of its investment portfolio."

Marafie added that during the first quarter of 2026, The Commercial Real Estate Company (Al-Tijaria) launched a series of initiatives as part of its corporate social responsibility, reaffirming its vital role in this area and its commitment to implementing corporate governance principles.

Under the slogan "We Care," the Company organized the 10th edition of its annual "Plant a Tree in My Country" campaign at Boulevard Park under the theme "We Want It Greener", in collaboration with Omniya for green building and facilities solutions, in the presence of Mr. Fouad Nasser Al Salman - Member of the Committee for Green Urban Development Initiatives, representing Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al Sabah - Chairman of the Urban Development Committee, alongside the participation of government entities, companies, and community and educational institutions.

The Company collaborated with LOYAC by providing venue sponsorship to host a blood donation campaign at Boulevard Mall, supporting health initiatives and promoting a culture of giving and social responsibility.

The Company also participated in the "Zero Waste" campaign dur-

ing the holy month of Ramadan in collaboration with KAFO (Kuwait's Achievers for Future Opportunities), a national non-profit platform that connects and empowers achievers in Kuwait, raising awareness on waste reduction and sustainable practices in line with Kuwait Vision 2035."

In addition, the Company supported community awareness efforts during recent regional developments, including promoting public safety awareness, as well as values of unity, resilience, and social responsibility.

We also consider mentioning the company's contribution in the environmental field, as it focuses its attention on engaging in environmentally friendly investments and assets that achieve financial returns and a positive environmental impact. Among the initiatives implemented by the company are the installation of motion sensors for lighting systems in some of our properties, updating cooling systems to enhance energy efficiency, and converting lighting to LED technology, which has helped reduce related emissions, minimize environmental impact, and effectively reduce energy consumption and significantly lower electricity costs. We also ensure that our operations align with best practices in water governance, and we have implemented measures to reduce consumption and minimize unnecessary water waste while maintaining operational efficiency, which has helped save and lower water costs.

To conclude, Mr. Marafie expressed his deepest gratitude and appreciation to all shareholders, Board of Directors and employees for their efforts, continuous support, and hard work to reach the goals and objectives.

He also emphasized that The Commercial Real Estate Company (Al-Tijaria) devotes all its resources to achieving its future vision based on its potential and capabilities to achieve maximum profit for shareholders.

## Asia braces for a second wave of energy shocks from the Iran war

BANGKOK, May 11, (AP): Asia's first defenses against energy shocks from the Iran war are running short and a more consequential second wave of impacts is beginning to hit.

When the war started, governments scrambled to adapt to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a critical artery for energy flowing to Asia. They made difficult trade-offs: saving power at the risk of slowing businesses, prioritizing gas for households at the risk of fertilizer production and dipping into energy stockpiles for temporary relief.

But these measures were based on the war lasting only a short time, allowing a quick resumption of energy flows. That has not happened.

With no clear end in sight, the fuel crisis is now rippling across economies. Airfare costs, shipping rates and utility bills are climbing, jeopardizing economic growth. About 8.8 million people are in danger of being pushed into poverty and the conflict may cause \$299 billion in economic losses to the Asia-Pacific region, according to the United Nations Development Program.

"The countries with the least resources to respond, or the consumers who can least afford to pay, are the ones who feel everything first," said Samantha Gross of the U.S.-based think tank Brookings Institution.

Asian governments planned their budgets assuming the price of oil would average around \$70 a barrel. Subsidies helped to keep fuel prices stable. But the war pushed the price of Brent crude to as high as about \$120 a barrel.

Governments now face a stark choice between maintaining those costly subsidies, straining public finances, or cutting them to pass higher costs on to consumers, risking a public backlash, said Ahmad Rafdi Endut, a Kuala Lumpur-based independent energy analyst.

In India, early steps to redirect fuel supplies toward cooking gas for roughly 330 million households cut into supplies for fertilizer plants. The surging of fertilizer prices and meteorologists warning of weak rainfall in an El Niño year is a concern for the world's largest rice exporter.

India has relied on subsidies to shield its 1.4 billion people until now, but on Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged citizens to buy locally and cut down on travel abroad to save dollars. He also encouraged people to work from home and use public transport to reduce fuel consumption, and asked farmers to halve fertilizer use.

The Philippines quickly shifted to a four-day work week to save fuel. It also rolled out targeted subsidies for poorer households. However, Fitch Ratings



An ANA jet flies above a gas station in Inglewood, Calif., on May 6, 2026. (AP)

noted that most consumers are still paying higher energy costs, causing business activity to slow in major cities like Manila.

Thailand abandoned its diesel price cap less than a month after the conflict began, as its fuel subsidies ran out. It's now cutting other spending to manage higher oil prices while trying to keep its budget under control.

Vietnam extended a suspension of fuel taxes to ease pressure on domestic prices. Jet fuel shortages have led to flight cuts. Tourism makes up nearly 8% of Vietnam's gross domestic product - the nation's total output of goods and services - so that affects the entire economy.

"Business is not good right now," said Hanoi-based tour guide Nguyen Manh Thang. "There are already fewer tourists."

Fuel shortages have pushed cash-strapped countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh to buy oil and gas at current market prices, which are often higher and

more volatile than long-term contracts. This raises import costs and adds to pressure on their already limited foreign exchange reserves.

Governments can keep costly fuel subsidies by cutting spending from other priorities like welfare, or borrow more and risk higher inflation, said Endut in Kuala Lumpur. Alternatively, they can reduce subsidies and pass higher costs on to consumers, risking angering voters.

Once subsidies are exhausted and inflation starts to rise, countries could face what he called a "fiscal time bomb."

The war's eventual end won't bring quick respite to Asia.

The global oil and gas trade will not bounce back right away, and it will take time to restart production, said Gross with the Brookings Institution. Repairing damaged infrastructure, restarting facilities and allowing for transport time from the Middle East to final markets will take weeks or even months.

Europe will feel a similar impact to Asia, but with about a four-week lag, experts say.

Americans are also feeling the pinch as gas prices spike across the U.S. But Southeast Asia is currently the "biggest pain point," said Henning Gloystein of the Eurasia Group consultancy firm.

"This fuel shortage situation is going to get worse," he said.

In Africa, higher energy and import costs are similarly straining budgets, widening deficits and driving up inflation. The war is also taking a toll on Latin America and the Caribbean, where growth is projected to slow slightly.

The complex disruptions across global supply chains will continue to have broader impacts, warned Ted Krantz, CEO of supply chain risk firm Interos.ai. The crisis also highlights the fragility of Asia's growing middle class, said Maria Monica Wihardja of the Singapore-based ISEAS-Yusuf Ishak Institute, with many people at risk of slipping back into poverty.

The energy shock will reshape Southeast Asia's economies over time, she said, including shifts in job markets and how countries plan for future energy crises.

Countries are already debating and implementing longer-term solutions, like diversifying fossil fuel suppliers, developing nuclear energy and renewables like solar.

The war is making geopolitical risk central to the economic outlook of Southeast Asia and directly slowing regional growth, said Albert Park of the Asian Development Bank.

"The longer it lasts, the larger those negative effects would be," he said



Director Jafar Panahi, winner of the Palme d'Or for the film 'It Was Just an Accident,' appears at the awards ceremony photo call at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, on May 24, 2025. (AP)



Director Julia Ducournau, center, winner of the Palme d'Or for the film 'Titane,' poses with Vincent Lindon, left, and Agathe Rousselle during a photo call at the 74th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, on July 17, 2021. (AP)



Writer-director Ruben Ostlund, winner of the Palme d'Or for 'Triangle of Sadness,' poses at the 75th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Saturday, May 28, 2022. (AP)

Indie studio brings nine contenders to this year's showcase

## Neon enters the Cannes Film Festival as an unlikely heavyweight after winning six straight Palme d'Ors

CANNES, France, May 11, (AP): Neon chief and co-founder Tom Quinn has watched the last six Palme d'Or ceremonies from the same spot: gathered with colleagues around a laptop on the breakfast tables at his Cannes hotel.

"I think we upgraded a couple years ago and connected the computer to a TV," Quinn says. "I wouldn't want to do it any different."

Quinn has good reason to keep any good luck charm. In all six of those awards ceremonies, Neon has won the Palme, the prestigious top honor of the Cannes Film Festival. It's an unparalleled streak for one of the most sought-after prizes in movies, second only to the best picture Oscar. No other studio has ever come close to anything like it.

"No one ever believes it, but we've never gone to Cannes thinking we were going to win the Palme d'Or," Quinn says. "It's been a surprise every single year."

When the 79th Cannes Film Festival gets underway Tuesday, Neon - a 60-person company founded in 2017 - rides in as an unlikely heavyweight. It's backing more than a quarter of the 22 films in competition for the Palme. Its odds of making it seven in a row are good. Some of the most hotly anticipated titles - including Japanese filmmaker Ryusuke Hamaguchi's "All of a Sudden," Korean auteur Na Hong-jin's "Hope" and James Gray's "Paper Tiger" - are Neon's.

Altogether, the indie distributor has nine films in Cannes. All, Quinn notes, they signed on for before the films' Cannes invite.



Justine Triet, winner of the Palme d'Or for 'Anatomy of a Fall,' poses for photographers during a photo call following the awards ceremony at the 76th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, on May 27, 2023. (AP)

"I hate to break it to everyone but don't hate us for our good taste," says Quinn. "Who's chasing who here? Thierry (Frémaux, Cannes artistic director) is going to make up his own mind and we're going to make up our own mind. It just so happens that we agree."

When Frémaux announced the lineup of this year's festival, he lamented the almost nonexistent presence of Hollywood's major studios. "When the studios are less present in Cannes, they are less present full stop," he said.

While studio releases like Warner Bros.' "One Battle After Another" and Universal's upcoming "The Odyssey" can be major Oscar players, a wide swath of the most original movies of the past decade have been released by specialty la-

bels like Neon and A24.

Both have risen to prominence at international film festivals like Cannes and at the Oscars by focusing on filmmakers, not IP.

"It's not rocket science and there's nothing secret about it," says Quinn. "It's pursuing the directors and films we want to be a part of."

Quinn had worked at Samuel Goldwyn Films and Magnolia Pictures before, in 2011, launching Radius, a boutique label with Harvey Weinstein. Though, at Neon, Quinn expected A24 to be his chief competition, he found himself often bidding against Netflix, on movies like Neon's first acquisition, the Margot Robbie-led "I, Tonya" and Céline Sciamma's "Portrait of a Lady on Fire."



Sean Baker, winner of the Palme d'Or for the film 'Anora,' appears at the 77th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, on May 25, 2024. (AP)

"We did not outbid them but we out-passioned them," says Quinn.

Neon does produce films (like the upcoming "I Love Boosters"), but it largely sticks to distributing movies in North America, often with awards campaigns attached to their releases. It has boarded its Palme d'Or winners - "It Was Just an Accident," "Anora," "Anatomy of a Fall," "Triangle of Sadness," "Titane" and "Parasite" - in a variety of ways.

Some were acquired in Cannes. Some, like "Parasite," Neon boarded at the script stage. Quinn signed up for the body horror freak-out "Titane" even though the script made no sense to him. He just believed in its writer-director Julia Ducournau. In that way, Neon is the ultimate anti-algorithm studio. And yet faith in filmmakers and

good taste have carried Neon to the greatest heights of Hollywood. Both "Parasite" and "Anora" won best picture at the Academy Awards after winning the Palme. Neon nearly swept the best international Oscar category last March, with four of the five nominees: the winning "Sentimental Value," "Sirat," "The Secret Agent" and "It Was Just an Accident."

"Parasite" famously became the first non-English-language film to win best picture - a triumph for the "1-inch-tall barrier of subtitles," as Bong Joon Ho noted in his acceptance speech.

Neon, majority owned by Dan Friedkin's 30West, is far from competing with studio blockbusters at the box office. (Its biggest ticket seller thus far was Osgood Perkins'

"Longlegs," with \$75 million.) But Neon has proved there's a larger audience than many would have expected for daring, often international cinema.

They are, Quinn says, "agnostic" about where its titles come from, and the company's small size means they can give each movie a bespoke rollout. And by the end of the year, Neon will gather its releases into a DVD box set, even though many voters don't have DVD players anymore.

"Audiences are desperate, desperate for creativity," Quinn says. "Films are not packaged goods. The idea that this art form that is so subjective is treated as a P & L (profit and loss statement), I don't know how you can make good creative decisions when you're dealing with billions of debt looming at your door."

Neon's slate in Cannes is typically wide-ranging. Also up for the Palme is Romanian filmmaker Cristian Mungiu's "Fjord," with Sebastian Stan and Renate Reinsve; Japanese auteur Hirokazu Kore-eda's "Sheep in the Box"; and "The Unknown," by "Anatomy of a Fall" cowriter Arthur Harari. It also has Nicolas Winding Refn's "Her Private Hell"; Arie Esiri and Chuko Esiri's "Clarissa" and William and David Greaves' already lauded documentary, "Once Upon a Time in Harlem."

Some of the movies that escaped Neon's grasp still irk Quinn. He missed out on Kore-eda's "Shoplifters," the Palme winner in 2018.

"The idea that we would have won seven Palmes in a row is completely outlandish," Quinn says. "But that's a huge regret."

### Music



The Beatles, from left, Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, George Harrison and John Lennon, perform for the CBS 'Ed Sullivan Show' in New York, as they record a set on Feb. 9, 1964, that would be shown later on a broadcast of the show. (AP)

Iconic music landmark reimagined

## The Beatles to open immersive seven-story London attraction

LONDON, May 11, (AP): The Beatles are headed back to one of the band's most famous sites with a new fan experience in London.

Apple Corps Ltd, the company founded by the Fab Four, announced Monday that it will open a new seven-floor fan experience at the company's early headquarters. The building is the place where the band's "Let It Be" album was recorded and its rooftop was the site of the Beatles' last public performance on Jan. 30, 1969.

The attraction at 3 Saville Road in central London will allow fans access to the rooftop, studios and extensive Beatles archives.

"It was such a trip to get back to 3 Savile Row recently and have a look around. There are so many special memories within the walls, not to mention the rooftop. The team have put together some really impressive plans and I'm excited for people to see it when it's ready," Paul McCartney said in a statement announcing the attraction.

"Wow, it's like coming home," Ringo Starr said in a statement.

An opening date for the attraction has not yet been announced.

Interest in the Beatles remains high, with four biopics in production. Peter Jackson's 2021 documentary series, "The Beatles: Get Back," relied heavily on footage filmed during the "Let It Be" recording sessions and of the farewell rooftop performance.

In 2023, artificial intelligence helped create the final Beatles recording, the song "Now and Then," which relied on recordings by the original Beatles.

### Film

## Salim Ahamed's fifth directorial feature

## Newton Cinema makes Cannes market debut

CANNES, France, May 11, (PRNewswire): Newton Cinema makes its Cannes market debut at Marché du Film with a screening of MAYILAA, directed by Semmalar Annam, at Lérins Cinéma Club on May 12.

This marks an international moment for Newton Cinema as it brings an auteur driven slate spanning Malayalam, Tamil, Hindi, English, French and German, built on distinct voices, artistic courage and global resonance. Booth: Palais -1, 27.03.

Newton Cinema announces LEFTOVER, Salim Ahamed's fifth directorial feature, starring Arjun Radhakrishnan, Zarin Shihab, Tanmay Dhanania, Shweta Basu Prasad and Roshan Mathew. Written by Salim Ahamed and P. V. Shajikumar, the film features cinematography by Sharan Velayudhan, editing by A. Sreekar Prasad, music by Christo Xavier, production design by Ashik S, sound design by Vishnu Govind, costume design by Gayathri Kishore and makeup by Salam.

Salim Ahamed is best known for Adaminte Makan Abu / Abu, Son of Adam, which won four Indian National Film Awards and was India's official entry to the Academy Awards. Earlier films include Pathemari, Kunjananthante Kada and And the Oscar Goes To...

"LEFTOVER comes from silence, memory and moral urgency," said Salim Ahamed. "It carries pain without spectacle, dignity without explanation, and a shared human experience that transcends borders. I am grateful



PRNewswire photo  
Newton Cinema makes Cannes market debut and announces Salim Ahamed's fifth directorial feature.

to introduce the film to the international industry with Newton Cinema."

MAYILAA follows its world premiere at the International Film Festival Rotterdam and

Audience Award in Toulouse. LEFTOVER's world premiere plans will be announced in coming weeks.

Newton Cinema's Marché slate also includes The Gambler, directed by Prasanna Vithanage, written by Vithanage and Anushka Senanayake, and starring Roshan Mathew, Shweta Basu Prasad, Prakash Raj, Mahendra Perera and Lakshan Abeynayake, with cinematography by Rajeev Ravi, editing by A. Sreekar Prasad, music by K and sound design by Tapas Nayak; The Sorbonne Conspiracy, directed by Salim Ahamed; and The Wild Hunt, from TIFF alumnus Nithin Lukose.

Newton Cinema is in final discussions with international sales representation and Indian distribution partners for the festival journeys and theatrical releases of LEFTOVER, MAYILAA and its slate.

Anto Chittilappilly, Founder, CEO and Producer of Newton Cinema, said: "We are building a home for auteur cinema, for filmmakers whose work carries a signature and a conscience. With LEFTOVER, MAYILAA and our upcoming slate, we aim to stand with independent filmmakers, protect difficult and necessary stories, and bring voices from the margins into world cinema."

Newton Cinema is an international production house for auteur cinema, independent filmmakers and underrepresented voices, with offices in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Colombo, Sri Lanka, and Kochi, India.

## Poems transcend languages and borders

## Chinese and Arab poets deepen literary cooperation in Guangzhou

GUANGZHOU, May 11, (Xinhua): Young poets, writers and scholars from China and Arab countries have gathered in south China's Guangzhou for a poetry festival aimed at deepening literary dialogue and people-to-people exchanges.

A China-Arab States special session of the 2026 International Youth Poetry Festival began over the weekend in the southern Chinese metropolis, drawing more than 40 young poets, sinologists and writers from 13 Arab countries, including Morocco, Syria and Egypt, as well as over 40 young Chinese poets.

The event will run through May 17. In the coming days, Chinese and Arab poets will take part in a series of cultural exchange activities in Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Beijing, including poetry readings, academic dialogues, poetry seminars and field visits.

"Though separated by thousands of miles and different languages, the two great poetic traditions of China and the Arab world have both become roots and souls of their civilizations with condensed language, profound wisdom, and sincere emotion," said Zhang Hongsen, chairman of the China



Guests check in at the registration desk. (Xinhua)

Writers Association.

Zhang said he hopes young poets from both sides will draw inspiration from one another while staying rooted in their own cultures, allowing poetry to flourish through exchanges between tradition and modernity, and between the local and the global.

For Egyptian poet Yahia Mohamed Wagdy Lotfy Omar, poetry can travel across languages and borders.

"When I write a line of poetry, a friend on the other side of the world who speaks a different language can still be moved by it and

understand its poetic language. That is poetry," he said at the event, adding that translation serves as an important bridge and that such gatherings can help poets break through their own limitations.

Launched by the China Writers Association in 2024, the International Youth Poetry Festival has previously held special sessions for BRICS countries and China-Latin America exchanges.

Organizers say the platform is growing into an international venue for young writers to promote literary dialogue and mutual learning among civilizations.

## Gemini's 'Mona' handles hiring, orders &amp; inventory

## AI-driven café in Sweden keeps human barista on the counter

STOCKHOLM, May 11, (AP): The coffee might be poured by a human hand, but behind the counter something far less traditional is calling the shots at an experimental café in Stockholm.

San Francisco-based startup Andon Labs has put an artificial intelligence agent nicknamed "Mona" in charge at the eponymous Andon Café in the Swedish capital. While human baristas still brew the coffee and serve the orders, the AI agent - powered by Google's Gemini - oversees almost every other aspect of the business, from hiring staff to managing inventory.

It is not clear how long the experiment will last, but the AI agent appears to be struggling to turn a profit in Stockholm's competitive coffee trade. The café has made more than \$5,700 in sales since it opened in mid-April, but less than \$5,000 remains from its original budget of \$21,000-plus. Much of the cash was spent on one-time setup costs, and the hope is that it eventually levels out and makes money.

Many café patrons have found it amusing to visit a business that's run by AI. Customers can pick up a telephone inside the café and ask the agent questions.

"It's nice to see what happens if you push the boundary," customer Kajsa Norin said. "The drink was good."

Experts say ethical concerns abound, ranging from technology's role in humankind's future to conducting job interviews and judging employee performance.

Emrah Karakaya, an associate professor of industrial economics at Stockholm's KTH Royal Institute of Technology, likened the experiment to "opening Pandora's box" and said putting AI in charge can cause many problems. What might happen, he said, if a customer gets food poisoning? Who's to blame?

"If you don't have the required organizational infrastructure around it, and if you overlook these mistakes, it can cause harm to people, to society, to the environment, to business," Karakaya said. "The question is, do we care about this negative impact?"

Founded in 2023, Andon Labs is an AI safety and research startup that says it focuses on "stress-testing" AI agents in the real world by giving them "real tools and real money." It has worked with ChatGPT maker OpenAI, Claude's Anthropic, Google DeepMind and Elon Musk's xAI, and the startup says it is preparing for a future where "organizations are run autonomously by AI."

The Swedish café is billed as a



Barista Kajetan Grzelczak makes a coffee at Andon Café at the Vasastan neighborhood in Stockholm, Sweden. (AP)



Hanna Petersson, a member of Andon Labs' technical staff, uses a telephone handset to speak with Andon Café's AI agent 'Mona' in Stockholm, Sweden. (AP)



A general view of the entrance of the Andon Café at the Vasastan neighborhood in Stockholm, Sweden. (AP)

"controlled experiment" to explore how AI might be deployed going forward.

"AI will be a big part of society in the future, and therefore we want to make this experiment (to) see what ethical questions arise when we have AI that employs other people and runs a business," said Hanna Petersson, a member of Andon Labs' technical staff.

The lab previously held pilots that put Anthropic's Claude AI in charge of a vending machine business and a San Francisco gift store. The vending machine simulation revealed some worrying traits: The AI agent told customers it would issue refunds but never did, and it also intentionally lied to suppliers about competitor pricing to gain leverage.

Mona got to work after it was

prompted with some basic instructions, Petersson said. The team told it to try to run the café profitably, be friendly and easygoing, and figure out operational details by itself but ask for new tools if needed.

From there it set up contracts for electricity and internet, and secured permits for food handling and outdoor seating. The agent then advertised for staff on LinkedIn and Indeed, and set up commercial accounts with wholesalers for daily bread and bakery orders. It communicates with the baristas via Slack, often messaging them outside of working hours, which is a workplace no-no in Sweden.

Other problems have arisen, particularly related to inventory.

The AI agent has placed orders for 6,000 napkins, four first-aid kits and 3,000 rubber gloves for the tiny café

- plus canned tomatoes that aren't used in any dish the café serves.

And then there's the bread. Sometimes the agent orders far too much, while other days it misses bakeries' daily deadlines, forcing the baristas to strike sandwiches from the menu.

Petersson said the ordering issues are likely due to the AI assistant's "limited context window."

"When old memory of ordering stuff is out of the context window, she completely forgets what she has ordered in the past," Petersson said.

Barista Kajetan Grzelczak said he isn't worried about being replaced by AI just yet.

"All the workers are pretty much safe," he said. "The ones who should be worried about their employment are the middle bosses, the people in management."

## Harvest fuels perfume making

## Afghan farmers turn fields of poppy into fields of roses

DARA-I-NUR, Afghanistan, May 10, (Xinhua): With its beautiful landscape and virgin nature, suitable for cultivating rose flowers, Dara-i-Nur district in eastern Afghanistan's Nangarhar province is rapidly becoming a rose hub in the country's eastern region, as many farmers are turning to rose farming as a source of income.

They believe that the rose plantation is easier and more profitable than poppy growing.

"Rose farming is a profitable business and a good alternative to poppy. This business needs support and development," Ahmad Siar, a farmer, told Xinhua in his rose farm.

While collecting rose flowers from his farm in the Dara-i-Nur district, he said with joy that he is satisfied with the earnings from his work and business.

Around eight rose-collecting centers have been established in Dara-i-Nur district, the farmer said, adding that some 50,000 kilograms of rose petals had been collected so far this year.

"The farmers, after collecting their rose petals, transport them to the collecting centers and from there shift them to the factory to make perfume and export overseas," Siar said.

Situated in a mountainous terrain and covered by trees, the lush green but isolated Dara-i-Nur district has been gaining popularity with the increasing rose farming culture over the past few years.

Although the remote district is underdeveloped, the scent of roses has turned it into a leisure spot for people



A boy is seen among rose petals at a rose garden in Dara-i-Nur district of Nangarhar province, Afghanistan. (Xinhua)

living in adjoining areas.

"I used to farm poppies, but now cultivate roses, which gives reasonable benefit compared to poppies -- along with their fragrance and a refreshing effect on your mood," another farmer, Nasim Khan, said, advocating rose plantation as a profitable source of livelihood.

Ehsanullah Irfan, also a farmer, told Xinhua that rose farming has created job opportunities for numerous people to earn a livelihood and support their families.

"About 1,500 people are working in the rose farms, collecting petals and earning daily wages," Irfan said, adding that people are happy with their incomes.



A man picks rose petals at a rose garden in Nangarhar province, Afghanistan, May 4, 2026. (Xinhua)

## Robot revives ancient calligraphy

## China pavilion showcases 'Dream Stream' at Venice Art Biennale



People visit China's national pavilion in the 61st Venice Biennale in Venice. (Xinhua)

VENICE, Italy, May 11, (Xinhua): The China pavilion of the 61st International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, has attracted interest of visitors recently, with presentation bridging the past and the future.

Since joining the Venice Biennale in 2003, the China pavilion has become an important platform for Chinese contemporary art to meet international audience.

Themed as Dream Stream, the China pavilion this year tries to deliver a sense of crossing time and space. The theme was named after Dream Stream Essays, an encyclopedia written by Shen Kuo in China's Song Dynasty.

The exhibition combines calligraphy, video, digital art, multimedia installations and robot display to present Chinese tradition in new forms.

Artist Xu Jiang said "Dream

Stream" includes elements from the treasure house of Chinese culture which are presented through imagination.

One of the highlights was a robot which writes the Chinese characters of "Dream Stream" with a writing brush. Its mechanical arm guides the writing brush with rhythm on the paper, showing force and beauty of Chinese calligraphy, with visitors gathering around and taking pictures.

Italian visitor Vanna Rossetti said Chinese calligraphy moved her deeply, calling it "a beautiful form of communication."

Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure and Transport Matteo Salvini said he admired Chinese culture and praised the exhibition as "wonderful," noting that it showed both China's historical culture and its vision for the future.

After receiving a robot-written calligraphy work of "Dream Stream," he said he liked the fragrance of Chinese ink and would place the work in his office.

Laura Fincato, former Italian deputy foreign minister, said the China pavilion reflects openness, dialogue and connection, as well as the creativity of the artists. She said art and culture remain important forces in building bridges when the world needs more com-

munication and mutual understanding.

Li Xiaoyong, charge d'affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Italy, said China and Italy, both ancient civilizations, will continue to deepen exchanges in art, cultural heritage protection and other fields, strengthening the people-to-people exchanges for the development of bilateral ties.

The exhibition of the China pavilion will last till November.

## Health

## Pediatricians group finds kids of all ages need regular recess for physical and mental health



Whittier Elementary School students enjoy recess on Oct 18, 2022 in Mesa, Ariz. (AP)

WASHINGTON, May 11, (AP) — Recess isn't just a fun break for grade schoolers. It's crucial to good health and good grades for kids of all ages.

That's the message from a leading pediatricians group, which just released the first new guidance in 13 years about this unstructured time at school and how it needs to be protected.

The updated policy statement by the American Academy of Pediatrics comes after years of shrinking recesses and worsening children's health.

The group "has always supported play - free play for kids - but it's been increasingly threatened over time," partly by the drive for higher test scores, said Dr. Robert Murray, a lead author. "It has a very powerful benefit if it's used to the fullest."

The new guidance, published Monday in the journal *Pediatrics*, is similar to the previous policy statement but cites the latest research on why these breaks are essential for kids' academic success and mental, physical, social and emotional growth.

For example, new evidence shows that kids need pauses between concentrated bouts of learning so the brain can hold and store the information. Researchers also say recess gives kids a chance to navigate relationships and build confidence, which is just as important for older kids as younger ones.

Murray and his colleagues also stressed the importance of physical activity in preventing obesity, a condition that now affects about 1 in 5 US children and teens.

Given these benefits, they recommend that recess be protected and never withheld for academic or punitive reasons, as sometimes happens in schools.

"If the child is disruptive or rude and disrespectful, recess is one of the things that teachers use to punish kids," Murray said, adding that students

struggling with behavioral issues or grades are often the ones who need recess most.

But those students aren't the only ones losing out. Recess has been waning for all kids. Since the mid-2000s, up to 40% of school districts nationally have reduced or eliminated recess, according to data from the group Springboard to Active Schools in collaboration with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Today, the duration of recess varies widely across US schools, ranging from less than 10 minutes to more than an hour a day, the pediatricians group said. Older kids generally get less time than younger ones.

Ideally, studies show, kids should get a minimum of 20 minutes a day and multiple breaks. In other countries such as Denmark, Japan and the United Kingdom, students get breaks after every 45 minutes to 50 minutes of classroom instruction.

"They should get a long enough period of time where they can de-stress and blow off steam and prepare for the next class," Murray said.

Dr. Lauren Fiechtner, a childhood obesity expert at Mass General Brigham for Children in Boston, said she's glad about the updated recess recommendations. She's seen the importance of recess as both a doctor and mother of two. She recalled how her 8-year-old son learned how to play basketball at recess and now loves the game.

Fiechtner, who wasn't involved in creating the guidance, agrees with the recommendation that middle and high school students need recess, too.

"As kids get older, they're more on their screens. So it's really helpful, I think, for outdoor activity and recess to be happening," she said. "Recess is great. We all kind of need recess."

### Alliance launched in Malaysia to enhance regional collaboration in rare disease care

## AI screening tool gives pathologists 'super vision' to detect hidden cancers: study

SYDNEY, May 11, (Xinhua) — Scientists in Australia have developed an artificial intelligence (AI) screening tool, giving pathologists "super vision" to detect hidden cancer markers in routine tissue samples.

Researchers at Australia's QIMR (Queensland Institute of Medical Research) Berghofer Medical Research Institute showed how the machine learning tool, STImage, used spatial biology analysis to accurately predict breast, skin and kidney cancers and a liver immune disease, while also assessing prognosis and treatment response, said a QIMR Berghofer statement released Wednesday.

The study, published in *Nature Communications*, found the tool was reliable, low-cost and rapidly generated results that were easy for pathologists to interpret, the statement said.

The breakthrough could usher in a new era of digital pathology and precision medicine, enabling faster and more accurate diagnoses, personalized treatments and improved access to specialist care in remote areas, it said.

"It's like giving pathologists the super resolution vision of Superman or Superwoman to scan millions of invisible biomarkers in a tiny tissue sample to find the two or three that are showing signs of cancer," said QIMR Berghofer Associate Professor Quan Nguyen, who led development of the tool.

"It makes a diagnostic prediction and mathematically computes the level of certainty about the result," Nguyen said, adding the tool is designed to assist, not replace, pathologists, and could provide "extra information about cell types and genetic activity that they can't see with their own eyes."

Spatial biology provides insights not accessible through standard pathology, the team said, hoping the STImage tool could be part of clinical practice within two years.

## Also:

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Human Genome Project II Rare Disease Alliance of the

Asia-Pacific Region (HGP2 RaDiAnce-APAC) was launched here on Sunday to advance regional collaboration in rare disease care.

The launch meeting brought together clinical experts, researchers in genomics, and representatives from public health and policy sectors from 10 APAC countries, including Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, Pakistan, Indonesia, Nepal, China, the Philippines, Cambodia, and India.

The alliance, co-initiated by China's BGI Group and regional partners from across the Asia-Pacific, aims to strengthen regional collaboration in rare disease diagnosis, research in genomics, capacity building and public health response, while addressing persistent gaps in diagnostic capacity, uneven access to precision medicine, and fragmented standards and experience-sharing across the Asia-Pacific region.

During the event, alliance members signed the Joint Declaration of the HGP2 RaDiAnce-APAC Initiative, reaffirming their shared commitment to advancing regional collaboration in rare disease care.

Nor Fariza Binti Ngah, deputy director-general of health (research and technical support) at the Malaysian Ministry of Health, said that stronger regional cooperation on rare diseases across the Asia-Pacific is of great importance.

Zilfalil Bin Alwi, professor of medical genetics and senior consultant pediatrician and clinical geneticist at Universiti Sains Malaysia, said the diversity and inclusiveness of the alliance demonstrate the significance of the initiative.

Hou Yong, general manager of BGI Genomics, a subsidiary of BGI Group, said that HGP2 RaDiAnce-APAC will help advance the standardization, intelligent transformation, and equitable accessibility of rare disease diagnosis and

treatment across the Asia-Pacific region.

Thong Meow Keong, professor at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman and visiting consultant clinical geneticist at University Malaya Medical Centre, said that the Asia-Pacific region is currently advancing the HGP2, focusing on the development of rare disease diagnosis, genetic technology, and precision public health.

With millions of people worldwide affected by rare diseases, he expressed his expectation that genetic technology and artificial intelligence will drive the transformation of healthcare systems in the field of rare diseases.



**COLOMBO:** Patients in Sri Lanka suffering from cancer, kidney and liver diseases are facing increasing difficulties in accessing essential medicines amid a widening drug shortage, local media Daily Mirror reported Friday, citing a health expert.

Chamal Sanjeeva, chairman of the Doctors' Trade Union Alliance for Medical and Civil Rights, said the shortage has also affected patients receiving treatment for chronic non-communicable illnesses and those awaiting surgical procedures, with limited supplies disrupting critical treatment.

He said a combination of economic and regulatory factors has contributed to the situation. These include delays in the registration of certain pharmaceutical products, the weakening of the Sri Lankan rupee against the US dollar, and rising inflation, all of which have increased the cost of imports.

Existing government price controls have further discouraged some suppliers from importing medicines, as controlled prices have reduced the commercial viability of certain drugs.

As a result, some overseas suppliers have been unable to maintain regular shipments, leading to supply shortages in the local market.

## Climate

## Planes and ships could run on kelp someday, but there are serious hurdles

WOODS HOLE, Mass., May 11, (AP) — Green cells whirl around a red-light chamber, propelled by a blade through bubbling water. These little seaweed cells, called gametophytes, will develop into a strain of fast-growing kelp - part of what was once a government-funded initiative to develop sustainable biofuels for American transport.

Electricity from solar and wind energy can power cars, however ships and aircraft largely run on liquid fuels made with a large percentage of oil or gasoline. When burned, those emit carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that causes global warming. Biofuel, refined from organic material like plants or algae, is a potential option to change the fuel makeup.

One kind of biofuel comes from kelp. Through a process that uses heat and pressure to produce fuel, known as hydrothermal liquefaction, this humble seaweed could power ships and aircraft without any petroleum.

"We need other sources of energy that are sustainable, we can't just rely on petroleum," said Scott Lindell, a marine scientist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution about a 90-minute drive south of Boston. "There's hardly anything simpler, or anything that grows quite as fast and as sustainably, as seaweed."

Existing biofuels, like corn-derived ethanol, primarily work as gasoline additives. Corn crops require agricultural land, fresh water and pesticides while kelp, by contrast, can be grown in the ocean with minimal resources.

Although any bioethanol - whether produced from corn or kelp - releases hazardous gases when burned, such as acetaldehyde, these fuels produce fewer greenhouse gases overall compared to petroleum-based fuels.

Researchers like Lindell have successfully bred kelp varieties that in some cases produce up to three times more biomass than conventional strains. Yet energy companies are hesitant to invest in large-scale aquaculture projects without demonstrated demand, and farmers are reluctant to scale up without a guaranteed buyer, forming a circular problem that has slowed industry development.

Aquaculture farms today remain small, supplying kelp primarily to restaurants, cosmetics companies and fertilizer producers. Hauke Kite-Powell, an engineer and economic analyst at Woods Hole, said scaling kelp production to support a biofuel economy would require sustained government support, beyond just the

private sector.

While oil price volatility, driven in part by international conflicts such as the war in Iran, has led to bursts of renewed interest in energy independence, government support for options like biofuel fluctuates in the United States. In 2016, a program run by the Department of Energy set out to develop tools for kelp-based biofuel production.

The program, known as MARINER - Macroalgae Research Inspiring Novel Energy Resources - consisted of projects ranging from developing heat-resistant kelp strains that can withstand warming oceans to studies on seaweed genomes. The Department of Energy often backs exploratory, high-risk high-return projects, and researchers involved in MARINER said they made progress, such as increasing kelp yields.

The program mirrored a similar feasibility-testing venture that began in the 1970s, which was swiftly terminated once oil prices stabilized. Lindell's lab, funded by MARINER, focused on improving crop yield by selectively breeding kelp with desirable qualities - such as nonreproductive capabilities to prevent interbreeding with wild kelp - so that, down the line, farmers could scale up their kelp production.

Lindell's MARINER funding lasted six years, finishing in 2024. Since then, federal research funding opportunities have been fewer and delayed. But the urgent need for sustainable energy remains, he said. "I don't think things have changed incredibly since the first oil crisis."

Farmers note the difficulties of finding consistent kelp buyers. Oliver Dixon, a shellfish farmer based in Point Judith, Rhode Island, grows kelp to supplement his oyster business during the winter. As of this month, he expects to harvest about 10,000 pounds (4,500 kilograms) of kelp, selling most of it to local restaurants and seafood markets.



Oliver Dixon harvests kelp lines in Point Judith, RI, on March 20. (AP)

"The buyers come in and out, it's pretty discouraging," Dixon said. His 9-acre (3.6-hectare) farm is hundreds of times smaller than what would be needed to produce biofuel, and without proven demand from the energy sector, he has no plans to expand.

Bren Smith, an ocean farmer and co-founder of GreenWave, a nonprofit supporting ocean farmers, argues that the issue isn't a lack of demand, but instead where kelp makes sense economically: Kelp is currently more viable in products like cosmetics or food, rather than fuel, which remains one of its lowest-value uses.

"We've made this mistake before, right?" Smith said, referring to large-scale investments in kelp research focused on fuel production instead of the seaweed's myriad other uses. "Competing with the most technically advanced, subsidized industry on the globe, the fossil fuel industry."

Even with a guaranteed buyer, expanding kelp farming would face regulatory hurdles, according to Kite-Powell. In the United States, coastal waters are largely prioritized for recreation, fishing and conservation, making it difficult to obtain permits for large aquaculture projects. By contrast, countries in Asia often prioritize extensive seaweed farms, sometimes covering entire bays.

For now, most U.S. farms remain small and nearshore. Dixon said that he cannot obtain a permit to keep his farm infrastructure in the water year-round, requiring him to remove his lines and anchors each spring and reinstall them in the fall.



Passengers are sprayed with disinfectant by Spanish government officials before boarding a plane after disembarking from the hantavirus-stricken cruise ship MV Hondius at Tenerife airport in the Canary Islands, Spain on May 10. (AP)

## 2 passengers test positive for hantavirus as third shows symptoms after cruise ship evacuation

THE HAGUE, Netherlands, May 11, (AP) — A French woman and two Americans tested positive or showed symptoms of hantavirus Monday as nations around the world scrambled to repatriate passengers from a cruise ship hit by an outbreak and quarantine or isolate them.

Passengers from the ship began flying home aboard military and government planes Sunday after the vessel anchored in the Canary Islands. Personnel in full-body protective gear and breathing masks had escorted the travelers from ship to shore in Tenerife in an effort that was continuing Monday.

The French woman tested positive for hantavirus and her health worsened in the hospital overnight, French Health Minister Stephanie Rist said Monday. The woman was among five French passengers repatriated Sunday to Paris from the MV Hondius. She developed symptoms on the flight to Paris, Rist told public broadcaster France-Inter.

One of the 17 American passengers evacuated from the ship and flown to Nebraska also tested positive for the hantavirus but is not showing any symptoms, and another had mild symptoms, U.S. health officials said late Sunday. The flight landed in the early hours of Monday morning and stopped near awaiting buses and police vehicles.

The Americans would first be taken to the University of Nebraska Medical Center, which has a federally funded quarantine facility, to assess whether they have been in close contact with any symptomatic people and their risk

levels for spreading the virus.

"One passenger will be transported to the Nebraska Biocontainment Unit upon arrival, while other passengers will go to the National Quarantine Unit for assessment and monitoring. The passenger who is going to the Biocontainment Unit tested positive for the virus but does not have symptoms," said Kayla Thomas, a spokesperson for the Nebraska Medicine hospital that will help care for the passengers.

The medical school also has a special unit for treating people with highly infectious diseases that was used early in the pandemic for COVID-19 patients and previously for Ebola patients.

The World Health Organization recommended close monitoring of the former passengers, and many countries quarantined them.

Earlier, officials from the Spanish Health Ministry, the World Health Organization and the cruise company Oceanwide Expeditions had said none of the more than 140 people who were then on the Hondius had shown symptoms of the virus.

All of the passengers were escorted Sunday from the ship to shore by personnel in full-body protective gear and breathing masks. The planes arriving in Tenerife were to fly out passengers from more than 20 countries in an evacuation effort that was running into Monday.

Three people have died since the outbreak began, and five people who left the ship earlier were infected.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has stressed

that the general public should not be worried about the outbreak. "This is not another COVID. And the risk to the public is low. So they shouldn't be scared, and they shouldn't panic," he said Sunday.

Hantavirus usually spreads from rodent droppings and is not 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.

WHO is recommending that passengers' home countries "have active monitoring and follow-up, which means daily health checks, either at home or in a specialized facility," said Maria van Kerkhove, the organization's top epidemiologist.

Numerous countries have said their people will be quarantined or hospitalized for observation.

Australia is sending a plane, expected to arrive Monday, to evacuate its people and those from nearby countries, such as New Zealand, and unspecified Asian countries, said Spanish Health Minister Monica Garcia, who added that the evacuation flight was expected to be the last to leave Tenerife.

Dutch Foreign Minister Tom Berendsen said a second Dutch flight Monday would bring back more passengers from the Netherlands and other nations.

Berendsen said the evacuation operation "is based on concern for the passengers. But also concern for public health, and we try to do that in the best way."

McDowell holds firm for third

# Gisbergen extends road-course reign at Watkins Glen

WATKINS GLEN, N.Y., May 11, (AP): Shane van Gisbergen insists his NASCAR road-course dominance is harder than it looks, and that he feels "a lot of pressure" to beat the best in stock-car racing.

But the Trackhouse Racing driver was in another league, schooling the stars of the Cup Series at Watkins Glen International.

Starting from the pole position, van Gisbergen scored his seventh Cup Series victory - all on road or street courses - and his second consecutive on the 2.45-mile track by leading 74 of 100 laps in his No. 97 Chevrolet.

"We weren't very good in practice, and then qualifying was amazing, and then today, what a race car," van Gisbergen said. "And then (crew chief) Stephen (Doran) made great calls. I wasn't sure how it was going to work, and then to run them down like that, it's very, very special to do two in a row."

Pitting from the lead under green

with 24 laps remaining, van Gisbergen emerged in 24th and was nearly 30 seconds behind leader Ty Gibbs.

Extending his Cup record of wins by a driver born outside the United States, the New Zealand native needed only 17 laps to retake the lead from Gibbs, winning by 7.288 seconds over Michael McDowell.

"He's made it pretty clear, especially at these tracks, he likes to be on offense, so we put him there and just let him go do his thing," Doran said of the call to make a late stop for four tires instead of pitting earlier and conserving fuel as many others did.

Gibbs finished third, followed by Chase Briscoe and points leader Tyler Reddick.

McDowell, who started second, also had to charge through the pack after falling to 27th on his last pit stop. He occasionally thought he could keep pace with the race winner but soon realized van Gisbergen was playing possum.



Shane Van Gisbergen celebrates after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race, Sunday in Watkins Glen, N.Y. (AP)

"It felt like he was just pacing himself off me, and he'd take back off," McDowell said. "We still got a little work to do, but it's a good building block."

Dating to Mexico City last June, van Gisbergen has now won six of the past seven races on road or street courses in Cup.

"It's not easy," van Gisbergen

said. "Everyone's really good. McDowell was good. Connor (Zilisch) was good. Tyler Reddick. There were some really good guys and a lot of pressure. So just stoked to execute every facet of our game. And speechless. This is so cool."

The win by van Gisbergen came a day after a win in the O'Reilly Auto Parts Series by rookie teammate Zilisch, who finished 20th Sunday after a tire problem late in the race. It still was a strong showing for Trackhouse, which qualified all three of its cars in the top five after compiling only four top-10 finishes in the first 11 races.

"Just frustrating because we had a really good day going," Zilisch said. "At worst, we were going to get ourselves our first top five and walk out of here with something. But congrats to Shane, Trackhouse and everybody who makes this happen."

Chase Elliott is known for avoiding public stances on NASCAR topics, but the eight-time Most Popular

Driver concluded a Saturday media availability by volunteering a strong opinion.

With the vote on the NASCAR Hall of Fame Class of 2027 set for May 19, Elliott made an impassioned plea to elect his uncle Ernie Elliott, who built engines for Hall of Famer Bill Elliott, Chase's father. Ernie Elliott is on the ballot for the first time this year.

"I don't talk about this stuff a lot, but you don't have to dig very far into the Elliott racing story to recognize how much of a family effort it was," Chase Elliott said. "I don't think the story has the same ending, throughout the course of the 1980s and even leading into my career, without Uncle Ernie and what he meant to all of us. He's meant a lot to my career. There are a lot of very, very deserving names on the list, but he is one of the very deserving that doesn't get talked about enough for the credit that he deserves."

# Reitan wins first PGA Tour title

Snedeker ends 8-year drought

CHARLOTTE, N.C., May 11, (AP): Norway's Kristoffer Reitan shot 2-under 69 on Sunday to earn a two-shot win over Rickie Fowler and Nicolai Hojgaard at the Truist Championship for his first victory on the PGA Tour.

Reitan, who won twice previously on the European Tour, finished at 15-under 269 and secured his spot in the Masters next year.

Alex Fitzpatrick, the 54-hole leader, finished three shots back after shooting 73.

Reitan, a PGA Tour rookie who started the round one shot behind Fitzpatrick, was even par for the day after 13 holes and one shot behind Fowler, who surged to the lead after shooting 30 on the front nine.

But Fowler, who started the day seven shots behind, couldn't sustain the momentum and shot 65. Reitan birdied the reachable par-4 14th and the par-5 15th to pull ahead.

Jeeon Thitikul fought off one final challenge Sunday and pulled away with a pair of late birdies for a 3-under 69 to win the Mizuho Americas Open by four shots over Ruoning Yin, giving the Thai player her second LPGA Tour victory this year.

Thitikul was staked to a two-shot lead at the start of the final round. Yin managed to rally from four back to get within one shot.

The turning point came on the par-3 16th hole, a two-shot swing when Yin fell behind with a bogey, and Thitikul made her first birdie on the back nine. That made it a three-shot lead, and Thitikul added a birdie on the final hole at Mountain Ridge.

She also won the Honda LPGA Thailand earlier this year, and Thitikul now has nine career LPGA titles. This is her fourth season with multiple wins since joining the LPGA in 2022.



Kristoffer Reitan, of Norway, poses with the trophy after winning the Truist Championship golf tournament at the Quail Hollow Club in Charlotte, N.C. (AP)

Brandt Snedeker poured in the birdies on the back nine and closed with a 5-under 66 to win the Myrtle Beach Classic on Sunday for his first PGA Tour title in nearly eight years, earning a surprising spot in the PGA Championship.

And now the Presidents Cup captain will get a closer look at his American players the rest of the year. The victory should get him into high-profile tournaments the 45-year-old Snedeker might not have been expecting.

Snedeker drove into the right trees on the 18th hole at Dunes Golf and Beach Club, pitched out to the fairway and two-putted from 30 feet for bogey.

Mark Hubbard, seeking his first PGA Tour win in his 274th start, was tied for the lead when he did the same thing - a drive into trouble on the right, no real option but to pitch back to the fairway and a 25-foot par to force a playoff that missed. Hubbard shot 70.

Lucas Herbert capped off a wire-to-wire win Sunday at LIV Golf Virginia by closing with a 3-under 69 for a four-shot victory over Sergio Garcia at Trump National.

Not only was it the first LIV Golf win for Herbert, the Australian moved up to No. 3 on the points list and earned a spot in the U.S. Open. It will be his first U.S. Open appearance in three years.

Garcia shot 70 and was runner-up, while Bryson DeChambeau closed with a 66 to finish third.

Anthony Kim, who won earlier this year in Australia, shot a 62 that helped his 4Aces team get into a playoff, which it won over Fireballs for the team title.

Yurav Premllall capped one of the most extraordinary performances in European tour history when the South African ranked No. 598 in the world closed with a 9-under 63 to win the Catalunya Championship by 14 shots.

It's the largest margin of victory for a sanctioned European tour event since Tiger Woods won the 2000 U.S. Open by 15 shots at Pebble Beach.

I think it's an obvious decision, Arteta

# Arsenal survives late scare & VAR drama in title push

LONDON, May 11, (AP): Arsenal needed a late goal and an even later, dramatic VAR call to stay in control of the Premier League title race.

A 1-0 win over relegation-threatened West Ham restored Arsenal's five-point lead over second-place Manchester City and came with a huge dose of controversy.

Leading thanks to Leandro Trossard's 83rd-minute goal, Arsenal looked like it would be throwing away two crucial points - and losing its slim advantage in the title race - when West Ham substitute Callum Wilson lashed a shot over the line following a corner in the fifth minute of stoppage time.

Arsenal's players complained and there was a long video review, which spotted West Ham player Pablo had his left arm across the face of David Raya as the Arsenal goalkeeper attempted to get to the ball after the corner was swung in.

The referee, Chris Kavanagh, looked at the incident on the pitchside monitor and chose to rule out the goal. "I saw the replay now," Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said, "and I think it's an obvious decision."

West Ham's players felt aggrieved, with Tomas Soucek complaining that video reviews were only brought in to



Arsenal goalkeeper David Raya, center, is fouled by West Ham United's Pablo Felipe in the build up to Callum Wilson disallowed goal during the English Premier League match in London. (AP)

look for "big errors."

"For football, this is a disappointing moment," Soucek said, "and for every fan this is not what we want - we want goals, we want celebrations. Not to wait 10 minutes for a small foul."

West Ham captain Jarrod Bowen

added: "I get that you can't wipe a goalkeeper out and there's arms there but the keeper's come out to try and grab the ball so ... he's got to expect some contact. It's a corner kick, it's physical, it's the Premier League - there's going to be contact and tussles."

It was a big call with huge ramifications.

It left Arsenal two wins from a first league title since 2004, with games to come at home to already-relegated Burnley and, in the final round, away to a Crystal Palace team that might field a weakened lineup due to having the Conference League final three days later.

It also left West Ham a point adrift of safety, in third-to-last place with two games remaining, while guaranteeing another season in the Premier League for Nottingham Forest and Leeds.

It was a huge blow to City, which has three games left - against Palace at home on Wednesday, Bournemouth away on May 19 and Aston Villa at home on the final day.

Even three wins might not be enough for City to pull off a seventh title success in Pep Guardiola's 10-year reign.

Arsenal is still in sight of a Premier League - Champions League double, having reached the final of Europe's top competition against Paris Saint-Germain on May 30.

For Arsenal captain Martin Odegaard, beating West Ham under so much pressure was a "big moment for us."

Al-Ghanim attends team training

# Kuwait Club completes preparations for final

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff  
KUWAIT CITY, May 11: Kuwait Club will conclude its training sessions this evening as it prepares for tomorrow's final against Cambodia's Svay Rieng at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium in the AFC Challenge League.

Kuwait Club has stepped up its preparations ahead of the decisive clash, as it targets another continental success after previously winning the competition on three occasions.

Head coach Nebojša Jovović held a meeting with the players, stressing the importance of correcting mistakes made in the quarter-final win over Oman's Al Shabab and the semi-final against Kyrgyz side Muras United, while also urging maximum focus in the final to improve their chances of lifting the trophy.

Club honorary president Marzouq Al-Ghanim attended a training session earlier this week, where he boosted the players' morale and called on them to deliver their best performance to secure another achievement for Kuwait Club.

Several Kuwait Club players also called on fans to turn out in large numbers, highlighting their crucial role in motivating the team during the final.



Kuwait Club player attends training session.

Goalkeeper Khaled Al-Rashidi said the squad is looking forward to strong fan support on May 13 at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium. Ali Hussein and Ibrahim Kamel also emphasized the importance of the supporters in pushing the team toward victory.

Svay Rieng continues its preparations at the stadium's training pitch and will hold their final session at Jaber Stadium today.

The pre-match press conference will also take place today at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium, featuring a coach and player from each side, along with the official technical meeting.

UEFA gives Letexier Europa final

# Siebert gets Arsenal-PSG in CL final after missing out on WC

NYON, Switzerland, May 11, (AP): German referee Daniel Siebert was picked Monday by UEFA for the Champions League final after FIFA left him off its World Cup list.

The game between Arsenal and Paris Saint-Germain on May 30 at Puskas Arena in Budapest will be Siebert's 10th in the Champions League this season - and the third straight round he will have worked an Arsenal match.

Siebert handled Arsenal's 1-0 wins at Sporting Lisbon in the quarterfinals first leg, and at home to Atletico Madrid in the semifinals second leg.

He refereed PSG once this season, in a league phase game at Athletic Bilbao that ended 0-0.

In his nine Champions League games this season Siebert has shown two red cards and awarded just one penalty kick.

FIFA did take Siebert to the 2022 World Cup in Qatar where he worked two group-stage games, Tunisia-Australia and Ghana-Uruguay. He was not picked for the 2026 tournament in North America, with FIFA selecting his fellow German Felix Zwayer.

Siebert worked at the past two European Championships, handling a total of five games.

The Women's Champions League final between Barcelona and OL Lyonnes will be refereed by Tess Olofsson of Sweden. The game is on May 23 in Oslo, Norway. Olofsson worked the women's final at the 2024 Paris Olympics



Referee Daniel Siebert speaks to Atletico Madrid's Robin Le Normand during a Champions League semifinal, second leg, soccer match between Arsenal FC and Atletico Madrid in London. (AP)

tournament, won by the United States 1-0 against Brazil.

French referee François Letexier, who handled the men's Euro 2024 final, was picked by UEFA for the Europa League final. Aston Villa will play Freiburg on May 20 in Istanbul.

The Conference League final between Crystal Palace and Rayo Vallecano on May 27 in Leipzig, Germany, will be refereed by Maurizio Mariani of Italy. Mariani worked the Champions League quarterfinals, second-leg game at Anfield last month where he awarded a penalty to Liverpool against PSG then overruled himself after a video review.

Letexier and Mariani are both among the 52 referees FIFA is taking to the World Cup where 104 games will be played in the United States, Canada and Mexico from June 11 to July 19.

## Change Name

I, Mustafa Holder of Indian Passport no P1837617 Issued at India on 22/09/2016 And permanent Resident of Laxmi bai marg bohra mohallah, Thandla, Dist Jhabua Pin code 457777 MADHYA PRADESH. Do hereby change my name From Mustafa to Mustafa bohra With immediate effect,

# Shanto's resilient 58 extends Bangladesh lead over Pakistan

DHAKA, Bangladesh, May 11, (AP): Skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto and Mominul Haque hit resolute half-centuries as Bangladesh reached 152-3 on rain-hit Day 4 of the first cricket test against Pakistan on Monday.

Bangladesh's lead grew to 179 runs, keeping it on course to push for a result on the final day after bad light forced an early end to play with Shanto unbeaten on 58 and Mushfiqur Rahim on 16.

Shanto, who struck a fluent century in his first innings, put on a 105-run partnership with Mo-

minul for the third wicket to keep Bangladesh on the front foot after the host slumped to 23-2 in the morning session.

Mominul followed his 91 with 56 in the second innings, extending his rich form with five half-centuries in a row.

Play was stopped for more than three hours because of rain. After resuming at seven for no loss, Bangladesh received an early blow when Mahmudul Hasan was trapped leg-before-wicket by pacer Mohammad Abbas for five.

Pacer Hasan Ali dismissed Shadman Islam for 10, with Saud Shakeel taking a catch at gully after the batter was surprised by the extra bounce.

In a repeat of their first innings rearguard, Mominul and Shanto showed resolve to frustrate Pakistan's attack, keeping Bangladesh on course to set a challenging final innings target for the visitors.

They also came together in the first innings to share 170 runs when Bangladesh was struggling at 31-2.

Mominul survived two chances before edging a delivery from pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi behind

the wicket.

Shanto played an almost flawless innings and raised his sixth test half-century off 90 balls with a single to mid-off Afridi.

He and Mushfiqur Rahim then safely dealt with remaining overs to deny Pakistan any further breakthroughs.

Bangladesh earlier was bowled out for 413 in its first innings, before taking a 27-run lead, dismissing Pakistan for 386 with offspinner Mehidy Hasan taking five wickets.

Marseille moves into sixth place after gritty win at Le Havre

## PSG edges closer to Ligue 1 title, Champions League race intensifies

PARIS, May 11, (AP) — Désiré Doué's late goal earned Paris Saint-Germain a 1-0 home win over Brest and all but sealed a record-extending 14th Ligue 1 title.

PSG leads second-place Lens by six points and only needs a draw when they meet in their rescheduled game on Wednesday, after which comes the final round next Sunday.

If PSG loses twice and Lens wins both its matches, Lens could mathematically win the title on goal difference but PSG has a far superior goal difference of +44 compared to +29.

Doué picked up a pass on the left side of the penalty area and skipped past three players before bending a fine shot into the bottom right corner in the 83rd minute of a mostly dull contest.

With heavy rain falling at Parc des Princes, the game was briefly held up in the first half when a technical glitch prevented communication between referee Jérôme Brisard and his assistants.

Lens beat Nantes 1-0, guaranteeing a spot in next season's Champions League and relegating eight-time French champion Nantes to Ligue 2.

The top three earn an automatic place in next season's Champions League and the last spot will be contested by Lille, Lyon and Rennes next Sunday.

Lille is in third after grinding out a 1-0 win at Monaco courtesy of an own-goal from Monaco captain Denis Zakaria with 20 minutes left.

That moved Lille one point ahead of Lyon, which lost 2-1 at Toulouse, and two points clear of fifth-place Rennes, which rallied to a 2-1 win against Paris FC.

Esteban Lepaul netted his league-leading 20th goal

of the season for Rennes, which goes to Marseille next weekend.

Auxerre moved out of 16th place and the relegation-playoff spot after a 2-1 home win over Nice, which in turn dropped to 16th with a worse goal difference.

Lassine Sinayoko got Auxerre's winning goal midway through the second half.

Nice has the easier-looking game next weekend because it hosts last-place Metz - which lost 4-0 at home to midtable Lorient - while Auxerre has a daunting trip to Lille.

Le Havre survived on the final day last season and faces a repeat scenario because it is only one point ahead of Nice and Auxerre. Le Havre has a difficult game coming up at Lorient, which is strong at home.

Marseille moved into sixth place after a gritty 1-0 win at Le Havre thanks to forward Mason Greenwood's second-half penalty.

Veteran Marseille striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang was absent from the squad following an alleged prank at the club's training facility. Media reports said he doused Bob Tahrir - the club's sports coordinator - with a fire extinguisher.

Marseille's chaotic season began with key midfielder Adrien Rabiot and forward Jonathan Rowe being sold after fighting in the locker room following an opening-day defeat at Rennes.

Still, Marseille can finish fifth on goal difference if it next beats Rennes in a match pitting Marseille's coach Habib Beye against his former club.

Angers assured its safety by drawing 1-1 at home with Strasbourg.



PSG's Lucas Beraldo, left, and Brest's Pathe Mboup jump for the ball during the French League One soccer match between Paris Saint Germain and Brest in Paris, France. (AP)

## Knicks storm back to East finals as Wolves even series; Wemby ejected

New York rains down 3-pointers

PHILADELPHIA, May 11, (AP) — Jalen Brunson, Josh Hart and the New York Knicks are back in the Eastern Conference finals, tying the NBA postseason record with 25 3-pointers in front of a raucous crowd rooting for the road team and rolling past the Philadelphia 76ers 144-114 to sweep the second-round series.

Deuce McBride started in place of the injured OG Anunoby and hit seven 3-pointers, going 4 for 4 in the first quarter when the Knicks had another record with 11, and scored 25 points. Brunson had 22 points and Hart and Karl-Anthony Towns each scored 17 in the Knicks' latest lopsided playoff victory.

The Knicks' 19.4 point-per-game margin of victory is the largest through two rounds since the playoffs went to 16 teams in 1984.

The Knicks advanced to the East finals for the second straight season and will play the winner of the Cleveland-Detroit series. The Pistons lead 2-1.

The Knicks last season reached the conference finals for the first time in 25 years before losing to



New York Knicks' Karl-Anthony Towns, left, tries to dunk against Philadelphia 76ers' Andre Drummond during the second half of Game 4 in a second-round NBA basketball playoffs series in Philadelphia. (AP)

Indiana. The Knicks then fired coach Tom Thibodeau and replaced him with Mike Brown, who has guided them to seven straight playoff wins, starting with the last three games against Atlanta.

Game 4 was a laugher from the tip, with the Knicks using the 3-point arc as a starting point for their personal pop-a-shot game.

With Knicks fans on their feet and exclaiming "Deuuuce," McBride hit one, two, three, four - four! - 3-pointers in succession for a 20-6 lead and the Sixers were already on their heels. McBride became the first Knick (since play-

by-play tracking began in 1997) to hit four 3s in the first quarter of a playoff game.

New York's 3-point records were just heating up.

### Timberwolves 114, Spurs 109

In Minneapolis, Anthony Edwards had 16 of his 36 points in the fourth quarter to help the Minnesota Timberwolves even their second-round NBA playoff series against the San Antonio Spurs with victory following the stunning ejection of star Victor Wembanyama early in the second quarter of Game 4.

Naz Reid took the fateful el-

bow to the neck from a frustrated Wembanyama and finished with 15 points and nine rebounds to help the Timberwolves finish strong after some shaky stretches.

Edwards hit a 27-footer to bring the Wolves within 94-91, turning to shout at the crowd for some help down the stretch as the Spurs quickly called timeout. His catch-and-shoot 3-pointer from the wing with 5:12 left put them up 98-97, their first lead since midway through the third quarter.

Then the big men went to work without Wembanyama patrolling the paint. Rudy Gobert got a three-point play with 3:02 left off a slick feed from Reid and later threw down a dunk for a 107-101 lead with 1:56 to go after a pass from Julius Randle. Gobert had 11 points and 13 rebounds.

Reid's follow shot with 40 seconds left gave the Wolves a seven-point lead, before Dylan Harper had a rebound, a drawn foul, a steal, and two free throws to help the Spurs pull within three. Ayo Dosunmu sank two foul shots with 9.8 seconds left to put the game out of reach and tie the series at two games apiece.

San Antonio hosts Game 5 on Tuesday, with Wembanyama's status to be determined by the league following the Flagrant 2 foul call and automatic ejection he was levied for the excessive contact to Reid.

### Austin draws with Minnesota United

## McGlynn scores in each half to spark Dynamo to win over LAFC

LOS ANGELES, May 11, (AP) — Jack McGlynn scored a goal in each half and the Houston Dynamo thumped Los Angeles FC 4-1.

McGlynn used an assist from Lawrence Ennalli in the 25th minute to score on a shot from well outside the box, giving Houston a 1-0 lead. It was McGlynn's first goal after scoring a career-high six times last season.

Guilherme Santos scored off a free kick in the 34th minute for a two-goal lead. The first-year midfielder has six goals in 11 matches.

McGlynn had a shot from nearly the same spot hit the far post, also in the 42nd, and Nathan Ordaz answered for LAFC three minutes later to cut it to 2-1 at halftime. McGlynn was booked for a yellow card in the fourth minute of stoppage time.

Stephen Eustáquio notched his third assist in seven appearances on Ordaz's second goal, and Jacob Shaffelburg picked up his second in five outings this season and his 15th in 134 appearances. Ordaz has found the net eight times in 67 matches.

Mateusz Bogusz got a second chance to score in the 51st minute, using his left foot to find the net for the second time for a 3-1 lead. Bogusz scored 18 goals in 60 appearances with LAFC from 2023-24.

McGlynn gave the Dynamo a three-goal lead in the 55th with assists from Ennalli and Santos, who already has five helpers. Ennalli collected his first two assists of the campaign.

Jonathan Bond finished with five saves for Houston (6-5-0), which improves to 2-3-1 on the road.

Hugo Lloris saved two shots for LAFC (6-3-3), which drops to 4-2-1 at home. Lloris entered with eight shut-outs through his first 10 starts, posting three more clean sheets than any other keeper in the league.

The Dynamo have gone 5-2-1 in the

last eight matchups, holding LAFC scoreless in five of them.

LAFC beat the Dynamo 2-0 in Houston to close out February.

Christian Ramirez scored in the 79th minute after Minnesota United had just grabbed the lead, helping Austin FC earn a 2-2 draw.

Ramirez took a pass from Facundo Torres and scored two minutes after Joaquín Pereyra found the net to put Minnesota United up 2-1. It was the fourth goal for Ramirez, equaling his total last season. Torres notched his sixth assist, matching his total from last season and four off his career high.

Myrto Uzuni scored on a penalty kick in the 14th minute to give Austin an early lead. Uzuni has scored in three straight matches and has four goals on the season. The PK was awarded after a foul on Minnesota United defender Nectarios Triantis.

Kelvin Yeboah missed two cracks at a PK in the 22nd minute for Minnesota United. Brad Stuver made a save on the first attempt, but Tomás Chancalay corraled the rebound and scored. The goal was waived off after fouls on both teams caused a do-over for Yeboah that hit the crossbar.

Defender Anthony Markanich scored for the fourth time this season, finding the net on a header in the 69th minute. James Rodríguez subbed into the match in the 63rd minute before picking up his first assist in his fifth career appearance and Wil Trapp, who entered with Rodríguez, snagged his first of the season.

Rodríguez added a second assist, setting up Pereyra. It was the first goal for Pereyra after netting six last year in his first full season in the league.

Drake Callender stopped three shots on goal for Minnesota United (6-3-3), which had won five of its last six entering play.

Stuver had three saves for Austin (3-4-5), which was coming off back-to-back 2-0 victories.

Minnesota United was booked for five yellow cards, four in the first half.

Austin played Minnesota United to a 2-2 draw at home in the season opener.

### One month to go

## World Cup preparations gather momentum

MEXICO CITY, May 11, (Xinhua) — With one month remaining before the FIFA World Cup kicks off in Mexico City, organizers across the three host countries are finalizing stadium preparations and security planning, while teams monitor injuries ahead of squad selections.

The June 11-July 19 tournament will be the first World Cup to feature 48 teams, with matches in 16 cities across the United States, Canada and Mexico. Here are some of the key talking points as the buildup enters its final stretch.

### Stadiums

Host cities are racing to ensure match venues and key infrastructure are ready for the tournament.

At Miami's Hard Rock Stadium, crews face a tight schedule to remove temporary facilities used for this month's Formula One Grand Prix and adapt the complex to FIFA requirements, while workers in New Jersey are installing a temporary grass pitch over MetLife Stadium's artificial surface.

In Mexico City, renovation work continues at Estadio Azteca, which is due to stage the opening match on June 11. The stadium has faced legal and operational complications linked to its refurbishment - notably a dispute over luxury box access rights and construction delays - although organizers continue to say it will be ready in time.

Mexico City International Airport is also still undergoing redevelopment ahead of the tournament, with authorities saying last month that work was about 70% complete.

### Ticket Sales

FIFA President Gianni Infantino has defended ticket prices after seats for the final in New Jersey were listed for more than two million U.S. dollars on the governing body's resale platform.

"If somebody buys a ticket for the final for two million dollars I will personally bring him a hot dog and a Coke to make sure that he has a great experience," Infantino told reporters earlier this month.

He said the resale listings did not reflect the original ticket prices and argued FIFA's pricing was consistent with other major sporting events in the United States.



In this file photo, the newly completed 7,000 seats (grey area) in the south end of BMO Field are shown as part of the stadium's upgrades ahead of hosting six FIFA World Cup 2026 matches in Toronto, Ontario. (AP)

FIFA has not provided a recent update on overall ticket sales, although it released additional batches of tickets in April and May through "last-minute sales" phases. Secondary market data shows tickets remain available for many matches.

### Security

Security planning has intensified across the three host countries in recent months.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said in March that nearly 100,000 security personnel would be deployed across Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey during the tournament, with authorities increasing patrols around airports, hotels and fan zones.

Canada's public safety ministry announced additional funding in April for World Cup security preparations, including support for policing, border management and emergency coordination in host cities.

The ministry said up to 145 million Canadian dollars (105 million U.S. dollars) would be made available to support safety and security operations during the tournament.

In the United States, federal agencies are continuing to coordinate preparations through the White House task force established for the World Cup.

### Iran

Iran's football federation has confirmed the country will take part in the competition de-

spite questions over entry requirements for some players and officials.

The federation said it had asked the United States, Canada and Mexico to guarantee visas, security and respectful treatment for Iranian players, officials and national symbols.

Iranian officials have also sought assurances that players and staff who completed mandatory military service with the Revolutionary Guard would be allowed to enter the host countries without difficulty.

Infantino has previously said Iran would play in the tournament as scheduled.

Iran has been drawn in Group G and is due to open its campaign against New Zealand in Los Angeles on June 15. It will then face Belgium at the same venue on June 21 and Egypt in Seattle on June 26.

### Injuries

Teams are monitoring the fitness of key players before FIFA's June 2 deadline for final World Cup squads.

Federations must first submit preliminary lists of between 35 and 55 names, including four goalkeepers, before selecting final squads of between 23 and 26.

Injuries have already ruled several high-profile players out of the tournament, with Brazil hit particularly hard. Defender Eder Militao and forward Rodrigo will miss out with knee injuries, while goalkeeper Alisson Becker remains a doubt because of a recurring hamstring problem.

Meanwhile, Brazil's all-time leading scorer Neymar is still trying to regain fitness after a series of injuries that have kept him out of the national team since October 2023.

France forward Hugo Ekitike and Netherlands midfielder Xavi Simons will also miss the tournament with Achilles and knee injuries, respectively.

Others are battling to be fit for the competition. Spain winger Lamine Yamal and Egypt forward Mohamed Salah are nursing hamstring injuries but are expected to be ready in time, while France striker Kylian Mbappe has returned to training after a muscle injury. Enderm

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KUNA photo  
The President of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) and Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC) Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al-Thani received Kuwait's Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Dr. Tareq Al-Jalahma in Doha.

# Sports

## OCA chief receives Dr. Tareq Al-Jalahma

## Kuwait confirms strong participation in Doha Gulf Games with 127 athletes

DOHA, May 11, (KUNA): Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Dr. Tareq Al-Jalahma announced that Kuwait will participate in the 4th Gulf Games in Doha with a delegation of 127 male and female athletes, as the event runs from May 11 to 22.

In statements to KUNA, Al-Jalahma emphasized the importance of Kuwait's participation in strengthening sports cooperation among Gulf countries and reinforcing ties between Gulf youth.

His remarks came during a reception hosted by Kuwait's Ambassador to Qatar, Ahmad Al-Shuraim, in honor of the Kuwaiti delegation attending the Games.

The minister wished the athletes success in achieving strong results that would raise Kuwait's flag in regional and international sporting arenas. He also expressed gratitude to the event's organizing committee for the warm welcome and generous hospitality, extending his best wishes to all participating athletes and teams.

For his part, Ambassador Al-Shuraim welcomed Kuwait's participation, noting that such high-level gatherings help deepen integration and cooperation among GCC member states.

He also thanked Qatar for its excellent organization and hospitality, wishing success to all Gulf nations taking part in the competition.

Meanwhile, President of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) and Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC) Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al-Thani received Kuwait's Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Al-Jalahma in Doha.

In a statement, the Qatar Olympic Committee said the meeting comes as part of efforts to strengthen sports cooperation and enhance ties between the two countries.

The 4th Gulf Games are set to officially open on Wednesday in Doha and will run until May 22, with Kuwait taking part in the event.



KUNA photo  
Kuwait's Ambassador to Qatar Ahmad Al-Shuraim hosts reception in honor of the Kuwaiti delegation attending the Gulf Games.

# Barca seals La Liga title with knockout blow to Real

Defeat caps embarrassing week for Madrid

MADRID, May 11, (AP): Watched by its grieving coach, Barcelona won its second straight Spanish league title and 29th overall with a comfortable 2-0 win over Real Madrid at Camp Nou, adding to its rival's troubled season.

Goals by Marcus Rashford in the ninth minute and Ferran Torres in the 18th gave Barcelona the victory and an insurmountable 14-point advantage over its fierce rival with three rounds remaining in La Liga.

Barcelona coach Hansi Flick was in the dugout for the Clásico following the death of his father, which Barcelona announced hours before kickoff. Players from both teams wore black armbands, and there was a moment of silence before kickoff.

A draw would also have been enough for the Catalan club to seal its third league title in four seasons.

Madrid, which remains the most successful club in the league with 36 trophies, is ending a second consecutive season without a major title. Sunday's defeat at Barcelona capped an embarrassing week for Madrid, marked by altercations between players in training that led the club to fine Federico Valverde and Aurélien Tchouaméni 500,000 euros (\$589,000) each.



Barcelona players lift the trophy after winning the Spanish La Liga soccer match against Real Madrid to clinch the Spanish league title in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

Rashford opened the scoring for the hosts with a wonderfully taken free kick, curling the ball over the wall and into the top corner. Torres added to the lead from inside the area after a flick from Dani Olmo.

Flick's father reportedly died overnight. The coach celebrated Barcelona's goals and looked emotional after the final whistle.

"I will never forget this day. It was a tough day for me. It starts with this

(news that) my father passed away, but here, my team is fantastic," Flick said. "I really love it, this is like a family, and they gave everything today, and I'm really proud. It's amazing, in this stadium, and also in the clásico against Real Madrid, to win La Liga."

There was a brief scuffle between players in the 51st minute after Olmo confronted a Madrid player. Olmo was shown a yellow card.

Madrid's Jude Bellingham had a goal disallowed for offside in the 63rd.

Brazil forward Raphinha replaced Rashford in the 64th to return from a long injury layoff.

Barcelona has been playing the final league games without the injured Lamine Yamal, its biggest star. Yamal was on the field lifting the trophy along with his teammates.

Madrid was without the injured

Kylian Mbappé, the league's leading scorer with 24 goals. The French forward failed to recover from a left-hamstring ailment that has kept him sidelined since late April.

Mbappé last week addressed a fresh wave of criticism of him in Spain, insisting he was fully committed to the club and to recovering from his latest injury. Some Madrid fans had expressed concern that the France forward was saving himself for the upcoming World Cup. He posted a story during the game while it was being shown on a television, along with supporting words for the club and a white heart.

Madrid was also without Valverde, who hurt his head in the altercation with Tchouaméni after allegedly accidentally knocking his head on a table. It was not the only altercation involving Madrid players during training last week. Alvaro Carreras confirmed he was in a "minor" incident with a teammate. Spanish media said he and fellow defender Antonio Rüdiger got into a scuffle.

The loss is likely to increase criticism of coach Álvaro Arbeloa, who was promoted from Madrid's reserve team when Xabi Alonso was fired in January. The rumors of a possible return of José Mourinho to the club were only likely to increase.

"There's not a lot we can say," Arbeloa said. "We understand how frustrated and dissatisfied the fans must be. The only thing we can do is work

and look to the future, learn from everything that we have done badly this year. Real Madrid is always back. We have fallen many times, and we have risen many times."

Singer-songwriters Olivia Rodrigo and Nathy Peluso were among the celebrities at the stadium. Rodrigo, an American multi-Grammy winner, had her logo appearing in the team's jersey as part of the club's partnership with Spotify.

Barcelona this season also won the Spanish Super Cup. It has won 11 consecutive games in the league.

Spain forward Nico Williams had to be substituted before halftime in Athletic Bilbao's 1-0 loss to Valencia at home, prompting more concerns ahead of the World Cup.

Williams appeared to suffer a hamstring injury and was replaced by his brother, Iñaki Williams in the 37th minute.

Nico Williams had already been sidelined for several weeks earlier this year because of another injury.

Athletic did not immediately release details about Sunday's injury.

The 23-year-old forward has been a regular in Spain's squad, playing in attack along with Yamal.

Mallorca stayed two points clear of the relegation zone after a 1-1 draw at home against third-place Villarreal.

Last-place Real Oviedo moved closer to returning to the second division after a 0-0 draw with Getafe at home.

## Sheikh Jaber makes mark in series

LONDON, May 11, (KUNA): Kuwaiti racer Sheikh Jaber Athbi Al-Sabah secured a podium finish, tak-



KUNA photo  
Kuwaiti racer Sheikh Jaber Athbi Al-Sabah celebrates on the podium.

ing third place overall and winning the Rookie category in the British Formula 4 (F4) Championship races held in the United Kingdom.

In a phone call with KUNA, Sheikh Jaber expressed pride in the achievement, crediting his technical team's continuous efforts for the strong result.

He emphasized that his participation in the highly competitive series reflects his ambition to raise Kuwait's profile on the international motorsport stage.

The result marks a steady improvement for the Kuwaiti driver, who in the opening round of the championship finished second in the Rookie class and seventh overall.

The British F4 Championship is widely regarded as one of the most competitive development series in global open-wheel racing.

## Japan waits on Mitoma's fitness for WC

BRIGHTON, England, May 11, (AP): Japan coach Hajime Moriyasu has an anxious wait on the fitness of star forward Kaoru Mitoma before naming a World Cup squad on Friday.

Mitoma limped off with an apparent hamstring injury Saturday in the second half of Brighton's 3-0 win over Wolverhampton in the Premier League.

One of Japan's standout players at the 2022 World Cup, Mitoma scored in a 1-0 win over England in March at Wembley Stadium.

His World Cup tournament is in doubt five weeks before Japan faces the Netherlands on June 14 in Arlington, Texas.

"I hope it's a minor injury. I was told by staff, 'It doesn't seem minor,'" Moriyasu was reported tell-

ing Japanese media Sunday about Mitoma.

Brighton coach Fabian Hürzeler said "it looked like a hamstring injury" but the club would await scan to clarify the severity.

Seventh-place Brighton is still in contention to qualify for the Champions League with two rounds left in the Premier League. England could get a record-tying six entries.

Japan's World Cup plans are already missing another key forward Takumi Minamoto, who tore an ACL playing for Monaco in December.

Japan also plays Tunisia on June 20 in Monterrey, Mexico then returns to Texas to play Sweden on June 25. The top two in Group F advance to the round of 32 and the third-place team also could join them.

## Historic milestone

# Kuwait holds national ice hockey 3x3 championship



KUNA photo  
All the winners pose for a group photo after the closing ceremony.

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: The Kuwait Winter Games Club organized its first national ice hockey (3x3) championship, featuring competitions across three categories: men, women, and juniors, with a strong technical level on display.

The tournament, held at the club's ice rink, saw Ice Stars win the men's title, Wild Cats claim the women's crown, and Ice Miva take the juniors' championship.

Club Chairman Fahad Al-Ajmi said the event

coincided with the resumption of local sports activity, which had been suspended on February 28 due to exceptional circumstances in the country and region before resuming on May 6. He noted that the goal was to help players regain competitive rhythm and improve their technical standards.

Al-Ajmi praised the performance of all participants, particularly the junior players, describing them as "the product of the club's academy."

He added that the national ice hockey league for men will resume in the coming period, while all five club teams have returned to training in preparation for upcoming competitions.

He also highlighted that the return of competitive action will positively impact Kuwait's national team preparations for the fourth international ice hockey tournament of the Islamic Countries Forum, scheduled to be held in Kazan, Russia, next June.