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PM Diwan photo
His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the meeting.

Operate hospitals as strategic project for gov't support: PM

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chaired a meeting on Wednesday to review the latest developments of the Health Assurance Hospitals (Dhaman) project.

His Highness the Prime Minister stressed the importance of operating the hospitals as a strategic project supporting the State's financial sustainability, infrastructure development and healthcare system in line with the highest modern medical standards.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, Advisor at the Prime Minister's Diwan Dr. Khaled Al-Fadhel, Director Gen-

eral of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority Sheikh Dr. Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Acting Chief of the Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikh Khaled Mohammad Al-Sabah.

Also attending were, Health Ministry Undersecretary Sheikh Dr. Salman Khalifa Abdullah Al-Sabah, Kuwait Investment Authority Managing Director Sheikh Saud Salem Abdulaziz Al-Sabah, Assistant Undersecretary for Technical Affairs at the Health Ministry Dr. Abdurrahman Al-Mutairi, Assistant Undersecretary for Private Medical Services Dr. Fatima Al-Najar, and Chairman of the Health Assurance Hospitals Company Meshari Al-Hajri.



HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Ignoring a warning led to the success of the attack on Pearl Harbor

Japan decided to expand its empire to compensate for its small size and limited resources

Japan occupied Korea, attacked Manchuria, and carried out the Nanjing Massacre

Franklin Roosevelt responded by imposing economic sanctions on Japan

Japan had two choices retreat or weaken the United States through a devastating attack

The Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto conceived the idea of the attack on Pearl Harbor

The attack destroyed 180 aircraft, killed 2,400 people, and wounded 1,282 others

Diplomacy means playing with a snake until you find the opportunity to cut off its head

Diplomacy is choosing words as carefully as a murderer chooses his poison

Diplomacy is concealing your intentions behind a compliment and placing a warning tone behind a smile

Diplomacy is losing a battle on the surface to win the war in the end

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Gulf impasse to dent '26 travel

'Airfares high, jet fuel rises many fold'

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The CEO of the government sector at Jazeera Airways, Nasser Al-Obaid, confirmed that the global aviation sector has been significantly impacted by the war in the region,

particularly as the closure of the Strait of Hormuz has disrupted the export of global fuel produced by Gulf states and Iran.

Speaking to the daily, Al-Obaid pointed out that the most prominent repercussions of this war are expected to negatively affect the global travel season this summer by 30 to 40 percent.

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KUNA photo
First Deputy Premier and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah and Ministers of Interior of GCC countries.

1st Dty PM heads Kuwait team to GCC urgent meet

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): First Deputy Premier and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah headed Kuwait's delegation participating in the extraordinary meeting of interior ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Kuwait Ministry of Interior said in a press release that the meeting was chaired by Bahrain's Minister of Interior General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al-Khalifa, and with the participation of GCC Secretary General

Jassem Al-Budaiwi on Wednesday at the headquarters of the GCC General Secretariat in Riyadh.

The meeting discussed the security situation in the region and ways to strengthen joint GCC security coordination and cooperation to address the challenges resulting from the attacks against the GCC states, with participants affirming that the security of the GCC states is indivisible.

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Refrain from booking through unauthorized airlines – PACA

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): Kuwait's Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) urged all travelers on Tuesday to refrain from making reservations or issuing tickets with unauthorized airlines until they receive official operating permits.

In a statement to KUNA, DGCA's spokesperson Abdullah Al-Rajhi said that only Kuwait Airways and Jazeera Airways are currently operating, all other airlines have not yet

received operating permits or official approval to operate flights from Kuwait International Airport.

Al-Rajhi added that any passenger who has booked a ticket or made a booking with an unauthorized airline can file a complaint through the Sahel app, this allows the necessary action to be taken against the violating airlines.

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KUNA photo
Acting Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Mohammad Al-Mannai receives the Polish Ambassador to Kuwait Michal.

Kuwait, Poland to up media ties

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): Acting Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Mohammad Al-Mannai discussed Wednesday with Polish Ambassador to Kuwait Michal Gulio ways to enhance media cooperation between the two countries.

During a meeting at KUNA headquarters, Al-Mannai praised the close ties between the two countries, stressing the importance of media in strengthening cooperation across various fields.

He highlighted the deep rooted Kuwaiti-Polish relations over the decades and expressed hope to further bolster them.

For his part, Ambassador Gulio praised the historical relations and ongoing cooperation between Kuwait and Poland in various fields, noting the distinguished bilateral ties since Kuwait's independence in 1961.

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Kuwait's gov't, regional Arabs jointly condemn hostile acts by Iran regime

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Cabinet Tuesday vehemently condemned Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) members' infiltration into Boubyan Island to perpetrate hostile acts against Kuwait and their gunfight with Kuwaiti army personnel, injuring an army member.

This came during the Cabinet's customary weekly meeting, held under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

The Cabinet called on Iran to stop such hostile acts immediately and unconditionally as jeopardizing regional security and stability and undermining ongoing regional and global de-escalation efforts.

It underlined Kuwait's longstanding and unwavering commitment to good neighborliness principles,

and its opposition to the using of its territory and airspace to launch any hostile acts against any country.

In this regard, it warned that Iran's antagonistic acts are a blatant breach of the sovereignty of the State of Kuwait and a serious infringement of international law and the UN Charter as well as heinous defiance of the international will and UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2817/2026.

The Cabinet held Iran fully responsible for such hostile acts and restated Kuwait's full and inalienable right to defend itself as per Article 51 of the UN Charter and to take all measures to defend its sovereignty and to protect its people and residents pursuant to international law.

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Expedite T2 work, maintain 'quality'

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan inspected the new passenger Terminal (T2) project at Kuwait International Airport to check the progress and review the implementation of its construction and technical phases.

During the inspection, Al-Mashaan visited several facilities at the project site. Officials and engineers overseeing the project briefed her on the current completion rates, future work plans, main challenges in the remaining phases, and mechanisms for overcoming these challenges to ensure that the

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Police nab 4 for illegally picking up 'passengers'

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Traffic officers arrested four expatriates of Arab and Asian nationalities for illegally transporting passengers.

A security source revealed that the traffic officers observed the four expatriates picking up passengers in a recent routine patrol.

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8 Al-Mubarak: Strong fundamentals support GCC real estate



9 Abu Dhabi leads global infrastructure push at ADIS 2026

'Teamwork key to maintaining stability in prevailing situation'

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lieutenant General Abdulwahab Al-Wuhaib affirmed on Wednesday the ministry's keenness to reinforce the principle of collective work in a spirit of teamwork and intensify efforts aimed at enhancing performance efficiency across various sectors.

Al-Wuhaib made the remarks while chairing an expanded security and coordination meeting attended by assistant undersecretaries and sector heads to review developments related to the "current regional situation," strengthen the level of security preparedness, follow up on the progress of the security and administrative system, and discuss ways to advance institutional performance, the Ministry said in a press statement.

Al-Wuhaib directed officials to remove obstacles, facilitate procedures, and move forward with updating security programs in line with ongoing developments in a manner that effectively contributes to protecting the nation's capabilities and reinforcing the pillars of security and stability in society.

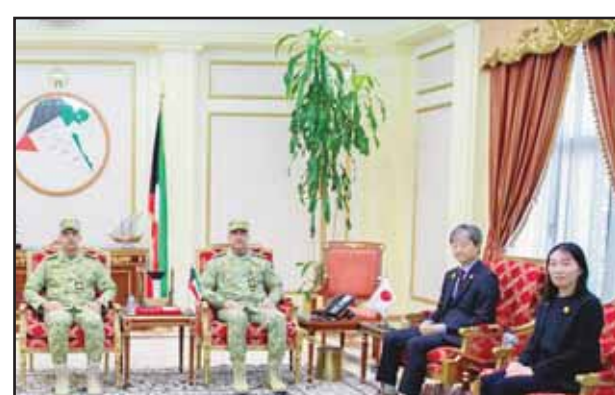
The Undersecretary also conveyed to attendees the greetings and appreciation of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah to all personnel across the ministry's sectors.

The statement added that the meeting included a comprehensive review of the stages of implementing the approved strategic plans, while emphasizing the need to maintain the highest levels of vigilance and readiness to deal with any emergency developments.

Participants also discussed the importance of ensuring the sustainability of security services for citizens and residents with high efficiency and quality.



Al-Wuhaib



KUNA photo
Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Undersecretary Lieutenant General Hamad Al-Barjas receives the Japanese ambassador to Kuwait Kenichiro Mukai.

Boost in military relations eyed

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Undersecretary Lieutenant General Hamad Al-Barjas met on Wednesday with Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Kenichiro Mukai to discuss matters of joint interest.

In a press release, KNG said that Al-Barjas received the Japanese Ambassador at the KNG headquarters and conveyed its greetings.

The release added that during the meeting both sides tackled subjects of common interest and ways to enhance cooperation in the military and security fields.

Day by Day

SOMEONE once said, and I agreed with him, that Surah Yusuf teaches us that the sick will be healed, the missing will return home, the sad will rejoice, hardships will come to an end, and the believer may be tested but will ultimately attain joy.

This is life and destiny. We must live it without distress or anxiety. We believe in destiny, in both its good and difficult moments. We should avoid despair and sadness. ... Yet tomorrow is always another day

Zahed Matar

Kuwait, Saudi joint bid traps runaway convict

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ministry of Interior (MoI) announced that security authorities had arrested a fugitive convict wanted in a case to serve the remainder of his prison sentence after fleeing the country.

In a press statement, the Ministry said the arrest came within the framework of joint security cooperation and ongoing coordination between Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

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Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:28 Asr 15:20
 Sunrise .. 04:57 Maghrib .. 18:32
 Zohr 11:44 Isha 19:59



MoE photo
 The Minister of Education receives the Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the country to discuss ways to enhance educational cooperation.



KRCS photo
 Officials from the Kuwait Red Crescent Society during the launch of the 'United in the Embrace of Humanity' event.

KRCS marks World Day with 'United in Humanity' campaign

Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) launched its "United in Humanity" event on Tuesday, at the Avenues Mall, to mark World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, emphasizing the importance of humanitarian solidarity and promoting the values of volunteer work.

In a statement to KUNA, KRCS's Chairman, Khaled Al-Maqamis, said that celebrating this humanitarian occasion highlights the vital role played by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and its efforts to provide relief to those affected around the world.

Al-Maqamis added that this year's theme embodies the importance of solidarity and joint humanitarian action to confront challenges, crises, and disasters, stressing the importance of humanitarian work in light of the increasing number of crises, conflicts, and natural disasters.

He explained that KRCS is committed to fulfilling its mission

based on the principles of the International Movement, which are humanity, neutrality, and independence, emphasizing its dedication to promoting a culture of volunteerism and humanitarian work among people and empowering youth in humanitarian and community initiatives.

The event, organized by KRCS in partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), aimed to raise awareness of the humanitarian role, introduce its principles and objectives, and highlight the efforts of the Society's volunteers and their role in supporting relief and humanitarian work both within and outside Kuwait. (KUNA)

Al-Maqamis noted that KRCS will continue to strengthen its partnerships with various local, regional, and international entities, contributing to solidifying Kuwait's position as a hub for humanitarian work. (KUNA)

Kuwait, Armenia move to boost educational synergy, expertise

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Education Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaie received on Wednesday Armenian Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Arsen Arakelyan accompanied by Third Secretary Vladimir Barseghyan and Armenian School of Kuwait Principal Dr. Nerses Sarkissian.

During the meeting, both sides

tackled subjects of common interest in the field of education and ways to enhance educational cooperation.

Additionally, both sides affirmed the importance of boosting cooperation and expertise exchange which contributes to supporting bilateral relations in the field of education between both sides.

Cabinet OKs government program for family protection: Al-Huwailah

Initiative brings unified national framework

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, announced on Tuesday the Cabinet's approval of the government's Family Protection Program, the first of its kind in Kuwait, aimed at strengthening family stability and social protection.

In a press statement, Al-Huwailah said that the program's approval is the culmination of joint government efforts to develop the family and child protection system

and address social challenges according to a comprehensive institutional vision, in implementation of the directives and the follow-up of His Highness the Prime Minister.

The program embodies the approach of joint government action by involving relevant entities in social, legal, health, educational, and security aspects, thus contributing to unifying national efforts and developing intervention and protec-



Dr. Huwailah

tion mechanisms within a unified institutional framework.

She noted that the program includes a set of initiatives distributed across several entities: 24 initiatives for the Ministry of Justice, nine for the Ministry of Social Affairs, seven for the Ministry of Education, and six for the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs.

The Minister added that the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Ministry of Interior, the Public Authority for Disability Affairs and the Supreme Council for Family Affairs each contribute five initiatives, while the Ministries of Higher Education, Information, and Foreign Affairs each contribute four initiatives.

Al-Huwailah indicated that the program includes a package of measures aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the family protection system, developing relevant legislation and policies, promoting digital transformation and institutional connectivity among relevant entities, and supporting awareness programs and psychological and social rehabilitation.

She emphasized that family protection is a national priority and a fundamental pillar of community development, affirming that the program reflects the state's commitment to consolidating family stability and enhancing quality of life in line with the country's social developments.



KUNA photo
 Kuwait's Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Bader Munayekh, and the Lord Mayor of the City of London, Susan Langley.

Kuwaiti envoy, London Lord Mayor discuss trade and investment ties

LONDON, May 13, (KUNA): The Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the United Kingdom, Bader Almunayekh, met on Monday with Lord Mayor of the City of London, Dame Susan Langley, reviewing aspects of Kuwaiti-British trade and investment relations.

A statement by the Kuwaiti Embassy in London said that the meeting discussed ways to further strengthen and develop ties, as well as the services and facilities provided by both countries to foreign investors in support of the business environment and the promotion of mutual investment.

Kuwait Radio marks 75th anniversary with concert

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): Kuwait Radio celebrated Tuesday the 75th anniversary of its launch on May 12, 1951, with a musical concert featuring a group of Kuwaiti artists who performed some of the most beautiful classical and traditional songs that remain cherished in the memory of the Kuwaiti audience.

The concert and orchestra were conducted by Maestro Dr. Mohammed Al-Baijan, and singers Abdulaziz Ahmad, Abdulaziz Al-Mesbah and Hamad Al-Qattan offered some Kuwaiti songs.

Kuwait Radio is one of the most outstanding media and cultural platforms in the Arabian Gulf region and the Arab world.

Its official launch was marked by the announcer Mubarak Al-Mayyel, who broadcast for the first time the famous phrase, "This is Kuwait".

Kuwait Radio has received numerous awards across various Arab media forums, as a well-deserved recognition of the sincere and creative efforts reflected in its programming.



A scene from the Kuwait State Radio's celebration of its 75th anniversary.

KUNA photo

India emerges as global tech hub

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The Ambassador of the Republic of India to Kuwait, Paramita Tripathi, affirmed that India has transformed in recent years into a leading global hub for innovation and deep technologies, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, Ambassador Tripathi called on Kuwaiti investment institutions and economic entities to take advantage of the promising opportunities offered by India's innovation ecosystem and to build strategic partnerships that support future development goals.

She stressed that India is no longer merely a growing digital economy, but has become a major player in developing advanced technological solutions.

Ambassador Tripathi highlighted India's historic achievement of landing on the Moon's South Pole in August 2023, as well as its status as one of the world's largest startup ecosystems, comprising more than 10,000 companies specializing in advanced technology.

She affirmed that Indian startups have



Paramita Tripathi, Ambassador of the Republic of India to Kuwait

successfully moved from developing ideas in laboratories to delivering globally applicable technological solutions.

Ambassador Tripathi also highlighted the emergence of Indian companies in fields such as artificial intelligence and robotics, space technology, semiconductors, biotechnology, clean energy, and electric mobility.

T2 bids open

Civil Aviation secures KD 238.5m allocation

By Mohammad Ghanem
 Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The General Budget Report for fiscal 2026/2027 revealed an allocation of KD238.53 million for the Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA).

The largest portion of this allocation, around KD147.258 million, was earmarked for employee compensation, covering salaries and cash or in-kind bonuses for employees in all departments for the work performed during the fiscal year.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the report, which also indicated the allocation of KD28.374 million for goods and services to cover ongoing operations and procurement, KD62.740 million for capital expenditures related to projects and development, and KD131,000 for other expenses and transfers.

Meanwhile, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) set June 2 as the deadline for submission of bids for the operation, management, improvement of training, maintenance, and development of services in the new passenger Terminal Two (T2) at Kuwait International Airport, including the aircraft parking areas, as well as the operation, maintenance and management of the airport model.

This project is being offered on behalf of PACA, the relevant authority, while the Ministry of Public Works is currently implementing it.

If the deadline is not extended, the agency will open the bids, refer them to PACA and prepare the technical recommendation for the decision to award the contract.

Other Voices

Craig Venter passes away after serving humanity

By Ahmad alsarraf

ON the last day of April, American scientist J. Craig Venter, a pioneer in decoding the human genome, passed away at the age of 79 after battling cancer.

In the 1990s, Dr. Venter took a bold step after witnessing the slow progress of the \$3 billion government program aimed at decoding the human genome.

Entering the field as a physician, scientist, and entrepreneur, his efforts culminated in 2000 when his company, Celera, in collaboration with a competing research group, announced the successful sequencing of the first human genomes. It was a historic milestone in uncovering the genetic basis and origins of human diseases.

Dr. Venter possessed remarkable self-confidence that was clearly demonstrated when he revealed that the anonymous donor whose genome Celera had sequenced was none other than himself. It was a bold act undertaken only by scientists of exceptional conviction.

His determination and leadership skills enabled him to inspire loyalty and build teams of outstanding scientists, including Nobel Prize-winning microbiologist Hamilton. Together, they achieved remarkable breakthroughs in the emerging field of genomics.

In 1995, he sparked a revolution in microbiology by publishing the DNA sequence of Haemophilus influenzae, the first bacterial genome ever to be decoded, along with annotations identifying all of the organism's genes.

That achievement ignited a scientific revolution. For the first time, researchers were able to view the complete genetic makeup of an organism. The discovery provided microbiologists with a blueprint for bacterial genetics, triggering an intense global race to sequence the genomes of known pathogens in order to identify their genetic arsenals and develop effective countermeasures.

Decoding the human genome became Dr. Venter's next major challenge and the cen-

terpiece of a fierce competition between his team at Celera and a consortium of academic rivals. The National Institutes of Health, a major supporter of the genome project, refused to collaborate with him, prompting him to secure private funding instead.

His innovative "Schöten" method gave him a significant advantage over his competitors. Had he been granted sufficient time and financial support, he might have gone on to win the Nobel Prize. Instead, he reluctantly accepted the offer of an alliance, which ultimately reduced the recognition accorded to his achievements.

In acknowledgment of his scientific contributions, he was awarded the prestigious Nuremberg Prize in Science. In 2009, President Barack Obama honored him with the National Medal of Science.

Decoding the human genome means that scientists can read most of the genetic information contained in human DNA - the "map" of genes that determines many of the body's biological traits and predispositions.

Scientists are now able to determine nearly the complete genome sequence, greatly improving our understanding of genetic diseases and human development. Completing the genome has opened the door to more precise research into cancer, heart disease, neurological disorders, and aging.

The significance of this achievement lies in identifying difficult or previously missing parts of the genome that had not been accurately read before. With the genome now more fully mapped, it has become possible to study these mysterious regions and link them to specific genetic functions or diseases.

Scientists now have almost the "complete book" rather than an incomplete version, which improves diagnosis, scientific research, and potentially future treatments. If the human body is compared to a large city, then the genome is the blueprint showing where the buildings, roads, and infrastructure are located. Decoding the genome means learning how to read that blueprint.



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HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah



Ignoring a warning led to the success of the attack on Pearl Harbor

WHY did Japan attack the United States at Pearl Harbor? How did this attack affect it?

At dawn on December 7, 1941, the American command ignored a warning from two soldiers at a radar monitoring center. It was discovered later that the two soldiers had reported 183 Japanese aircraft approaching to attack the American naval base at Pearl Harbor in the Pacific Ocean, off the coast of Hawaii.

Japan viewed the expansion of its empire at the expense of its neighbors as a natural right, aiming to compensate for its small size and limited resources, and as a consequence of its status as an international power before entering World War II.

Japan had occupied Korea and attacked Manchuria, the northern part of China, in 1931. In 1937, it carried out the Nanjing Massacre, which claimed the lives of 300,000 civilians.

A year later, Japan attacked Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, then part of French Indochina.

In response, then-US President Franklin Roosevelt imposed economic sanctions on Japan.

To demonstrate the strength of the US military in the Pacific, Roosevelt ordered a naval strike group to move from San Diego, California, to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. This did not prevent Japan from continuing its expansion into Indochina. Roosevelt responded by imposing an oil embargo, literally cornering Japan. Japan was left with only two options - retreat or weaken the United States through a devastating attack. Japan chose the second option.

It is important to pause and consider the fact that the United States was largely isolated from the world, avoiding direct involvement in World War II in Europe and East Asia.

Even before the war broke out, many events foreshadowed it, but Washington remained unconcerned, as the Atlantic Ocean separated it from Europe and the Pacific Ocean from Asia. At the time, the United States enacted laws prohibiting its involvement in the war or the sale of weapons to any party.

However, President Roosevelt was no longer content with neutrality. He introduced the

Japan decided to expand its empire to compensate for its small size and limited resources

Japan occupied Korea, attacked Manchuria, and carried out the Nanjing Massacre

Franklin Roosevelt responded by imposing economic sanctions on Japan

Japan had two choices - retreat or weaken the United States through a devastating attack

The Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto conceived the idea of the attack on Pearl Harbor

The attack destroyed 180 aircraft, killed 2,400 people, and wounded 1,282 others

Diplomacy means playing with a snake until you find the opportunity to cut off its head

Diplomacy is choosing words as carefully as a murderer chooses his poison

Diplomacy is concealing your intentions behind a compliment and placing a warning tone behind a smile

Diplomacy is losing a battle on the surface to win the war in the end

Lend-Lease Act, authorizing the transfer of goods and war supplies to Britain, and declared that his country would become the great bastion of democracy.

Roosevelt's focus was on assisting Europe, and he had no intention of going to war with

Japan.

On the contrary, Roosevelt engaged in negotiations with Japan to reach a mutually acceptable solution. However, it was Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto who conceived the idea of attacking Pearl Harbor, convinced by his commanders that such a strike would severely damage the United States.

Indeed, the United States lost eight battleships, three cruisers, three destroyers, and a minesweeper. A total of 180 American aircraft were destroyed, 2,400 soldiers were killed, and 1,282 were wounded. Japanese losses were negligible. The attack forced the United States out of its isolation, leading to its entry into World War II. The US went on to defeat Nazi Germany and Japan, emerging as a superpower.

Diplomacy is not kindness

Diplomacy is not kindness, nor flattery, nor an attempt to please everyone. Diplomacy is about playing with a snake until you find the opportunity to cut off its head, smiling while gauging the distance between you and it, and extending your hand firmly not to shake hands, but to confuse.

Diplomacy is the art of remaining in a room with your enemy without drawing your sword. It does not require noise, but rather patience, a steady pulse, and choosing words as carefully as a murderer chooses his poison.

Diplomacy is making the other party believe you have agreed, while inwardly you are building a subtle plan. It is losing a battle on the surface to win the war in the end, and taking a step back not out of weakness, but to place your opponent in a more difficult position.

Diplomacy is allowing the lie to bear fruit because you know you will need to use the truth at the right time.

Diplomacy is concealing your intentions behind a compliment, placing a warning tone behind your smile, sitting calmly, and orchestrating your opponent's downfall without making anyone feel that you have begun to do so.

Diplomacy is making a snake bare its fangs, then convincing it that it did so willingly. Once it loses focus, the game is over.

God Almighty revealed four things and concealed four:

- God revealed creation and concealed Himself
- God revealed the nature of bodies and concealed the nature of souls
- God revealed the nature of this world and concealed the Hereafter
- God revealed the value of things and concealed the value of deeds.



The foundation of faith is belief in the unseen and belief in what follows from the unseen.



It is said that when a poor man acquires wealth, his greed may lead him back to poverty. Such is life - desiring what you do not possess.



No one will listen to you when you say something useful. Everyone will listen when you say something wrong; this is the way of most people.



We must admit that we live in an age of security.



I am glad that the talks with Iran have failed. Iran must be brought to an end so that the world can be rid of its regime, and its people can find peace.

'Internal auditing vital'

Minister orders 3 'private' clinics shut for big breach

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi has ordered the closure of three private medical centers due to serious violations and referred their cases to the relevant authorities for legal action, reports Al-Seyassah daily.



Dr. Al-Awadhi

The Ministry of Health explained that the first center violated regulations on medical advertising, in breach of Ministerial Resolution No. 728/2023. The second center was found to have irregularities in records of narcotic and psychotropic substances, along with documentation deficiencies.

The third center was cited for practicing medicine without a license, operating with expired permits, providing services beyond its licensed scope, running unlicensed departments, and lacking a medical director. Some of these cases have been referred to the competent legal authorities.



Internal auditing vital: The Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) affirmed that the integration of internal auditing and anti-corruption efforts makes a significant difference in promoting integrity and transparency, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

As part of the celebration of International Internal Audit Awareness Month, Nazaha stressed that internal auditing serves as a first line of defense in uncovering corrupt practices, reducing waste, and protecting public funds.

Woman dead, 3 kids, 2 maids hurt in home fire

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: A huge fire broke out in the house of a Kuwaiti family in Sabah Al-Ahmad, resulting in the death of a Kuwaiti woman and injuries to three of her children and two domestic workers.

According to a security source, the Operations Unit at the Ministry of Interior received information about the fire. Security and ambulance personnel were quickly dispatched to the scene. Upon arrival, firefighters evacuated the family members and referred them to the emergency medical services (EMS).

The source disclosed that the Kuwaiti woman died upon arrival at the hospital, while her three children and two domestic workers are currently undergoing treatment.

The source affirmed that the firefighting teams started an investigation to establish the actual circumstances leading to the fire incident.

In a related statement, Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) revealed that firefighting teams from Al-Kout and Arifjan fire stations put the fire under control.

KFF added that the fire caused injuries to five individuals, two of them are in critical condition and they were transferred to emergency medical services.

Hitches in goods flow 'eliminated'

Abattoirs in livestock pens

By Munif Naif/Marwa Al-Bahrawi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC) has taken several measures to ensure the steady movement of shipments and raise the level of its readiness for various emergency scenarios.

These measures are aimed at maintaining market stability and guaranteeing the continuous movement of commodities.

According to KGAC, it has started implementing its emergency protocols, which include rerouting shipments, accelerating customs clearance, and strengthening coordination with other concerned entities.

It affirmed that a high level of field readiness is maintained round the clock to prevent bottlenecks in the flow of goods.

It also heightened the deployment of field personnel and their operational efficiency to make sure that trade remains unaffected and operations are proceeding effectively.

It reaffirmed its commitment to maintain operational flexibility and superior coordination, as both measures are important in this period.

It continues to monitor operational changes in real-time, taking all the necessary steps to protect the supply chain and prevent domestic market volatility. It considers such changes not as a passing crisis but as evolving conditions that necessitate constant improvement.



KFF conducts building collapse drill

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Several security sectors, in cooperation with the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) and other government agencies, conducted a simulated building collapse exercise on Monday, reports Al-Anba daily.

The drill, which involved a building with several residents, was overseen and observed by the Director General of the

Fake items seized: The inspection teams of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry continued their campaigns in various governorates to uncover commercial violations and take legal action against violators.

An inspection team in Ahmadi Governorate raided a shop, where 543 counterfeit items were confiscated, including shoes for men and women. The shop owner was referred to the Commercial Prosecution for legal action.

The ministry stressed that it is keen on conducting such campaigns continuously to discover violations and combat commercial fraud in order to protect the rights of consumers and maintain the integrity of the local market.



Abattoirs in farms: The General Department of Criminal Investigations, represented by the Jahra Investigation Department, raided three livestock pens in Kabad that were being used as unlicensed slaughterhouses, and arrested ten Bangladeshi and Indian nationals who were operating the slaughterhouses without the required permits or official oversight by the relevant authorities, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Ministry of Interior explained that investigations showed the pens were being used in violation of regulations set by the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR), as they were repurposed for activities other than their designated use.

Following a judicial warrant, authorities raided the sites and arrested workers while they were carrying out slaughtering operations inside the illegal facilities.

The ministry confirmed that legal procedures are underway against those arrested, in coordination with the relevant authorities.

Civil Defense Directorate Brigadier General Mansour Al-Hashash.

A video shared on the General Traffic Department's X account showed a high level of preparedness in handling the scenario, highlighting evacuation and rescue operations carried out with efficiency and according to established standards.

29 judges sworn in as Appeal advisors

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: A total of 29 judges from the Court of First Instance have taken the legal oath following the issuance of Decree No. 69/2026, which promotes them to the rank of advisor at the Court of Appeals, in a ceremony held before the President of the Supreme Judicial Council, Counselor Dr. Adel Majed Boursli, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The oath-taking ceremony was attended by the President of the Court of Appeals, Counselor Mohammad Ahmad Al-Sayed Abdullah Al-Rifai, in accordance with Ar-

article 24 of Law No. 23/1990 on the organization of the judiciary and its amendments.

In this regard, the Supreme Judicial Council stated that these promotions are part of its plan and timetable to fully Kuwaitize the judiciary by the end of the 2029/2030 judicial year, in implementation of the relevant Amiri decree. The President of the Supreme Judicial Council urged the newly appointed advisors to expedite dispute resolution while maintaining the quality of rulings, stressing that people's rights, property, and honor are a trust entrusted to judges.

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Al-Tabtabaei outlines strategies to combat learning loss in GCC

MoE sets end-of-term dates for schools

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Minister of Education Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei said on Monday that Iranian attacks on Kuwait and other GCC countries have posed direct challenges for the education sector, underscoring the need for more flexible and efficient educational systems to ensure continuity of learning and maintain quality outcomes, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The minister said this in his speech at the opening of the forum titled "Learning Loss: Causes, Measurement Mechanisms, and Strategies for Addressing It," organized by the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States via video conference.

The forum brought together a group of experts, academics, and education specialists from GCC countries and several international educational institutions.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Education, Minister Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei began his speech by conveying the greetings of the political leadership and

their wishes for the success of the Gulf forum.

He expressed appreciation for the support and patronage that the education sector in GCC countries receives from Their Majesties and Highnesses, the leaders of the Gulf states.

Al-Tabtabaei said the forum is being held at a time that requires greater cooperation, unified efforts, and enhanced educational preparedness, in light of the challenges and rapid changes the region is witnessing.

He stressed the importance of strengthening joint Gulf cooperation in developing educational systems and improving their ability to adapt to changing circumstances, as well as exchanging expertise and benefiting from successful experiences.

Al-Tabtabaei affirmed that the Ministry of Education has taken flexible measures in recent years to ensure the continuity of the educational process, provide suitable alternatives, reduce the impact of learning loss, and maintain stability in all



Al-Tabtabaei

educational levels.

He noted that learning loss represents an educational and developmental challenge that requires unified visions and the development of scientific and practical solutions that support both students and teachers, while enhancing the efficiency of education systems.

Al-Tabtabaei commended the efforts of the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States in organizing the forum and its role in strengthening Gulf educational cooperation and promoting the exchange of knowledge and expertise among member states.

He also expressed appreciation to the participants, experts, and speakers, praising their specialized insights and contributions, which enrich scientific discussions and help formulate recommendations that support development and enhance readiness.

Meanwhile, Minister Al-Tabtabaei issued an official decision setting the dates for the end of the second semester in public schools, private Arabic schools, religious schools, and special education schools, including the final working days for students, teachers, and administrative staff in all levels.

According to the decision, Thursday, May 21 will be the last school day for kindergarten students, while

administrative and teaching staff in kindergartens will conclude their duties on Monday, June 8.

Thursday, May 21 will be the final school day for primary school students in the second semester, with administrative and teaching staff scheduled to finish work on Sunday, June 14.

Furthermore, the decision states that Thursday, May 21 will be the last school day for middle school students. Administrative and teaching staff in middle schools will conclude work on Sunday, June 14, except for those assigned to the General Secondary Education Certificate examinations.

For secondary school, end-of-term exams for 10th and 11th grades will begin on Wednesday, June 3, and continue until Monday, June 15.

Grade 12 exams are scheduled to begin on Wednesday, June 17, and run until Monday, June 29.

The decision also sets Sunday, July 5 as the final working day for administrative and teaching staff in high schools, excluding those assigned to second-semester examination duties.

Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Affairs Eng. Hamad Al-Hamad has approved the exam schedules for the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year for Grades 10, 11, and 12 in public and religious schools.



Photo by Rizk Taufique

French Ambassador to Kuwait Olivier Gauvin with the officials.

France has great opportunity to up 'trade ties' with Kuwait

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: French Ambassador to Kuwait Olivier Gauvin affirmed that Kuwait presents promising opportunities for French companies, particularly in the fields of infrastructure, sustainability, innovation and strategic development, in light of the implementation of Kuwait Vision 2035 and its focus on economic diversification and structural modernization.

Gauvin made the statement at a conference hosted by the French Business Council Kuwait (FBCK) recently, as part of its dialogue series with the theme, "Post-Crisis Opportunities and Strategic Sovereignty: Building Independence for a more Resilient Future".

Former Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development Dr. Khaled Mahdi and Chief Operating Officer of Veolia Arabia Sabri Al-Qadi also attended the event.

Gauvin stated that the FBCK plays a vital role as a platform for communication and relationship building, and as a bridge connecting the French and Kuwaiti economic systems, in addition to strengthening trade relations and promoting partnerships and projects that emerge from dialogue and communication between the two sides.

He said the number of French companies expressing interest in building

long-term partnerships with Kuwaiti economic entities based on mutual benefit has been increasing.

He added that this edition of the conference is held amid the development of French-Kuwaiti relations, proven by intensified diplomatic and economic exchange, increasing interest of French companies in the Kuwaiti market, and strong partnership and cooperation between French and Kuwaiti institutions and organizations.

He expressed his appreciation for the FBCK team, specifically their role in intensifying the presence of the council and expanding its network and relationships.

He confirmed that the French Embassy fully supports all initiatives aimed at improving economic dialogue and long-term cooperation between France and Kuwait.

He also emphasized that the FBCK Talks series continues to solidify its position as a growing platform for economic dialogue and trade relations between France and Kuwait.

He clarified that the event is not just a traditional conference, as it is rather an interactive space for exchanging views and experience, bringing together business leaders, institutions, experts and decision-makers to discuss current issues. He asserted that such an event helps build future business ideas and relationships, while strengthening economic ties between France and Kuwait.

'Al-Shartain' period starts with rising heat, longer days

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The Al-Ojeiri Scientific Center announced the start of the second phase of the "Al-Kannah" season on Tuesday, May 12, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The center explained that during this phase, shadows become shorter and daylight hours increase to more than 13 and a half hours.

This stage is known as the "Al-Shartain" star period, which lasts for 13 days and is marked by high daytime temperatures and active northerly winds accompanied by dust and sand.

The "Al-Shartain" period is one of the astronomical indicators of the arrival of summer and the spread of hot weather throughout the Arabian Peninsula, with rising temperatures, increased dryness, and lower humidity. Locally, this period is known as "Al-Barih."

"Al-Shartain" is one of the phases of the "Al-Kannah" season, during which the Pleiades star cluster disappears from view due to its conjunction with the sun, transitioning from an evening star to a morning star before gradually moving higher in the sky.

Officials push for closer coordination

Kuwait joins GCC transport talks amid regional hurdles

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Major General Abdulwahab Al-Wahib on Tuesday attended the virtual 30th extraordinary meeting of the Committee of Undersecretaries of Ministries of Transport and Communications in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

Assistant Director General of Traffic for Education and Coordination Brigadier General Khalid Al-Adwani was also present at the meeting.

They discussed ways to strengthen coordination in the transport and communications sector among the GCC countries, reviewed the guiding document outlining the exceptional measures taken by GCC countries during the current crisis, increased shipping costs, GCC railway project, latest developments and challenges.

The participants presented proposals and solutions for the Gulf transport system development in order to enhance integration among member states, along with several joint initiatives and projects that support the progress of joint Gulf action.

During the meeting, Al-Wuhaib reaffirmed the commitment of Kuwait to provide assistance and cooperate with other GCC countries.

He pointed out that the extraordinary



Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Major General Abdulwahab Al-Wahib, during his participation in the 30th extraordinary meeting of the Committee of Undersecretaries of Ministries of Transport and Communications of the GCC countries.

meeting was convened in view of the current circumstances, indicating that the main objectives are to overcome obstacles and streamline procedures.

He expressed his full support for the comprehensive guidelines and pledged to adhere to the agreed-procedures to facilitate joint operations.

Other participants stressed the importance of continuous coordination and the exchange of expertise among relevant entities to keep pace with modern developments in the transportation sector and raise the efficiency of services in GCC countries.

KU releases 2026/27 admission dates

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): Acting Dean of Admission and Registration at Kuwait University Fadhel Aziz announced Monday the opening of online applications for the first semester of the 2026/2027 academic year for Kuwaiti students meeting admission requirements.

Aziz said in a press statement that applications for graduates of the unified system, religious institute and American schools, as well as expected graduates of English schools in Kuwait, will be accepted from July 18-28 through the university's electronic admission portal.

He added that Kuwaiti students holding secondary certificates from outside

Kuwait may submit applications at Sabah Al-Salem University City between July 22-28 during official working hours.

Aziz noted that admission to all university majors is based on the equivalent GPA, except for the Faculties of Science and Law, where admission depends on weighted criteria including secondary school results and academic aptitude tests.

He affirmed Kuwait University's commitment to facilitating procedures for students and continuing its educational mission in preparing qualified national cadres capable of contributing to national development and meeting future requirements.

Continued from Page 1

Refrain from

He noted that the Sahel app is the approved electronic platform for receiving and tracking complaints related to airlines and travel agencies, this ensures the protection of passenger rights and facilitates the follow-up and resolution process by the relevant teams.

PACA chief discusses enhancing coop. with Oman amb. to Kuwait

Director General of the Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Humoud Al-Sabah discussed on Tuesday with Oman's Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Saleh Al-Kharusi ways to enhance cooperation in the field of civil aviation.

The authority said in a statement to KUNA that the meeting reviewed cooperation between Kuwait and Oman, and discussed ways to develop air transport, operational services, and exchange of expertise, contributing to the civil aviation sectors in both countries.

It added that during the meeting, Oman's Ambassador provided a brief explanation about the Salalah Tourism Festival, which is held annually from June to September, inviting Kuwaiti airlines and citizens to visit the city and contribute to the success of the festival.

The authority appreciated the efforts of Oman and affirmed the strong bilateral relations between both countries, wishing it continued success and prosperity.



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Price

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BHD 53.361 / Net

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Terms & conditions apply

Continued from Page 1

Gulf impasse

He revealed that some airlines have declared bankruptcy due to the enormous losses they have incurred as a result of the war in the Middle East.

Al-Obaid summarized the crisis facing global airlines during the war as stemming from three main reasons, the first being the scarcity of aviation fuel and its price increase from \$82 per barrel before the war to \$230 currently.

He explained that the second reason relates to the rise in airfare prices, which has led to global disruption in the international aviation market.

The third factor is the shift of many tourists towards non-air travel methods, such as trains and buses, due to the high cost of airfare.

Although Jazeera Airways' operations were rerouted through Saudi Arabia during the war, they were still affected by 25 percent.

Al-Obaid revealed that operations are no longer as strong as they were before the war, noting that while Jazeera Airways used to refuel in Saudi Arabia during the war, refueling is now done in Kuwait through the Kuwait Fuel Company (KAFCO).

He added that current refueling is at prevailing international prices, unlike the pre-war rates.

Expedite T2

work proceeds as per the schedule.

She underscored the importance of continuing the intensification of efforts and acceleration of completion, while fully abiding by the quality and safety standards.

She added that the project, once completed, will boost the civil aviation sector and increase the capacity of the airport to cater to the growing air travel and transportation sector.

1st Dty PM

The ministers emphasized the importance of intensifying coordination between the ministries of interior and the relevant authorities in the GCC states, in light of the arrest of a number of cells linked to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, confronting all threats targeting the security and stability of the GCC states, addressing the repercussions and developments of the ongoing events, and combating all forms of terrorism.

The ministers commended the significant and valuable efforts undertaken by the security authorities in the GCC states in uncovering and apprehending these cells, affirming that what has been achieved reflects the efficiency and vigilance of the GCC security authorities, as well as their high level of readiness in protecting the security and stability of the GCC states and confronting all threats to the safety of their societies.

Kuwait, Poland

He also commended KUNA's media role regionally and internationally, praising its professional and accurate coverage in reporting news alongside credibility and accuracy, noting that the current period poses major challenges for media outlets due to the spread of misinformation and rumors.

The meeting reviewed prospects for boosting news exchange and joint cooperation.

Attending the meeting were KUNA Deputy Director General for Editorial Affairs Esam Al-Ghanim, Director of Marketing and Public Relations Esam Al-Ruwaieh, and Second Secretary at the Polish Embassy responsible for political and economic affairs Agata Karcz-Cholewa.

Kuwait, Saudi

The Ministry expressed its deep gratitude and appreciation to the Ministry of Interior in Saudi Arabia, headed by Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud, for the swift response and fruitful cooperation in apprehending and extraditing the suspect, affirming that such cooperation reflects the strong security partnership between the two brotherly nations.

Specialized investigation committee had been formed to determine the circumstances regarding the incident in preparation for taking the necessary measures against those responsible, and to reaffirm that the law applies to everyone without exception and anyone who attempts to violate the law and flee from justice, the statement added.

Police nab

As a result, traffic violation citations were issued against them, their vehicles were impounded, and they were transferred to the traffic police station for legal action.

Peddler's flee bid foiled: Patrol officers apprehended a Bangladeshi in Zahra, as part of the ongoing efforts of the Hawally Security Directorate to track down criminals.

According to a security source, Hawally security personnel spotted a pedestrian during their routine night patrol in South Surra. When the suspect noticed the approaching patrol, he fled on foot. The officers immediately pursued and apprehended him after he resisted arrest.

The Bangladeshi was found in possession of about 25 bags containing substances suspected to be narcotics. He and the seized items were referred to the Drug Control General Department at the Interior Ministry.

Kuwait's gov't,

In this context, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah gave a briefing on the confession of four infiltrators belonging to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) after having been arrested while attempting to illegally get into the country by sea on May 1 to perpetrate hostile acts in Kuwait.

The Cabinet highly commended the efforts of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah and Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and all security, military and civilian leaders and personnel for the complete vigilance and accurate monitoring in order to ensure the country's security, safety and stability.

Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah explained the latest regional developments amid heinous Iranian aggressions on the State of Kuwait and other Gulf and regional countries.

In this regard, the minister gave a briefing on the Kuwaiti Armed Forces' interception of several hostile drones on Sunday, reassuring that the army is absolutely prepared to safeguard national security and the safety of citizens and residents.

In addition, he informed the Cabinet of the outcomes of his recent official visit to Turkiye, during which letters of intent were signed with the Turkish Defense Industry Agency, aiming at promoting defensive, logical and technical cooperation.

For his part, the minister of foreign affairs kept the Cabinet posted on the efforts of his ministry and diplomatic missions abroad to cope with the latest regional and international developments.

On other hand, the Cabinet expressed vehement condemnation and denunciation of heinous Iranian ballistic missile and drone attacks on the UAE.

It also reiterated solidarity with Bahrain and its support for all measures to arrest a group associated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), commending the efficiency and vigilance of Bahrain security organs regarding response to all plots targeting the Kingdom's security.

The Cabinet finally strongly condemned and denounced a recent drone attack on a commercial tanker in Qatar's territorial waters in a blatant breach of international law and relevant UN resolutions, mainly UNSC Resolution 2817.

Meanwhile, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia expressed on Tuesday, in the strongest terms, its condemnation and denunciation of the infiltration of Boubyan Island by an armed group belonging to the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), with the aim of carrying out hostile acts against the sisterly State of Kuwait.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs voiced the Kingdom's rejection of these attacks, which violate the sovereignty of Kuwait in a clear breach of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, affirming that such violations undermine international efforts aimed at restoring security and stability in the region.

The Muslim World League (MWL) strongly condemned on Tuesday the infiltration attempt carried out by members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) that aimed at conducting hostile acts on Kuwait's Bubiyan Island.

In a statement, the League's Secretary-General and Chairman of the Organization of Muslim Scholars Mohammad Al-Issa, renewed calls for the immediate cessation of such hostile acts, which violate all religious values as well as international and humanitarian laws and norms, and threaten security, stability, and de-escalation efforts in the region.

Yemen's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tuesday strongly condemned the infiltration into Kuwait's Bubiyan Island carried out by an armed group linked to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), calling this hostile acts.

The Ministry underscored that the security of Kuwait and its neighbours is an inseparable from that of Yemen and vital to global stability.

The statement described these hostile acts as a blatant violation of the sovereignty of a UN member state and of international law.

It also stated that these acts contradict all rules of good neighbourliness.

The statement noted that this behaviour shows the Iranian regime's strategy of exporting chaos and undermining regional security by using militias and cross-border armed groups for blackmail.

Arab League's Secretary General Ahmad Aboul Gheit condemned Tuesday the hijacking of an oil tanker carrying eight Egyptian sailors and others of different nationalities while it was sailing off the coast of Shabwah Governorate.

In a statement, Aboul-Gheit said the tanker was forcibly taken to Somali regional waters, in a flagrant violation of international law, including the law of Sea, and the relevant

UN Security Council resolutions.

He called for the immediate and unconditional release of all the kidnapped sailors, ensuring their safety, and strengthening cooperation among all concerned parties.

GCC Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi condemned, in the strongest possible terms, the infiltration of members from the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) into Boubyan Island in Kuwait, and their planning of hostile acts.

These hostile Iranian policies represent a direct threat to the security and stability of the region and constitute a systematic attempt to destabilise regional peace and undermine the foundations of collective security, Al-Budaiwi said.

Qatar condemned Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) group's infiltration into Bubiyan Island to carry out hostile acts against Kuwait, following clashes with Kuwaiti armed forces before being arrested, injuring a Kuwaiti army member.

In a statement issued Tuesday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the incident is a blatant violation of Kuwait's sovereignty and a dangerous escalation threatening the security and stability of the region.

The ministry reaffirmed Qatar's full support for Kuwait and all measures taken to safeguard its sovereignty, territorial integrity, security, and stability, while praising the vigilance of Kuwaiti authorities and their successful handling of the incident.

The Arab League on Tuesday condemned an attempt by members of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to infiltrate into Kuwait's northern coastal island of Boubyan, slamming the incident as an "illegal act of aggression."

The attempt by the IRGC-linked group to infiltrate Kuwait by sea and subsequent skirmish with Kuwait's armed forces was a "flagrant violation" of Kuwait's sovereignty and security, the Cairo-based bloc's chief Ahmad Aboul-Gheit said in a statement, describing the turn of events as a "dangerous precedent."

Announcement

The owners of

Sahala Insurance Brokerage LLC

have submitted a request to the

Insurance Regulatory

Unit to cease operations and terminate

their operating license, number

(IBC20210033)

Anyone with an objection should submit it in writing to the Insurance Regulatory Unit at its headquarters located on Khalid Bin Al Waleed Street – Kamco Tower, **within thirty days of the date of this announcement.**

The objection must be accompanied by supporting documentation; otherwise, it will not be considered.



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America

Obama meets with Talarico: Former US president Barack Obama met with US Senate candidate James Talarico Tuesday in Texas, putting his support behind a campaign that Democrats see as a shot, if a long one, for the party to win statewide in the reliably conservative state.

Obama lunched with Talarico and Democratic state Rep. Gina Hinojosa, the nominee running to unseat Texas' Republican Gov. Greg Abbott, at a taco shop in Austin. The visit was meant to give the candidates a boost from one of the more liked figures in the Democratic Party.

Obama has been highlighting younger leaders in the party, including New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, who he joined recently in the Bronx to promote free child care. (AP)



Air Force trainer jet crashes, pilots safe: A US Air Force training jet crashed Tuesday in west Alabama with both pilots ejecting safely, military officials said.

Military officials said a T-38 Talon II aircraft from Columbus Air Force Base in Mississippi was involved in a mishap at noon on Tuesday.

"The cause of the mishap is currently unknown and will be investigated by a Safety Investigation Board," according to a news release from base officials.

The public affairs office at the Columbus Air Force Base said it could not provide information about the condition of the pilots other than to say they safely ejected. (AP)



Former US president Barack Obama, Texas Democratic Senate candidate Rep James Talarico, D-Austin, and Texas Democratic gubernatorial candidate Gina Hinojosa visit the Taco Joint on May 12, in Austin, Texas. (AP)

10 rescued after plane crashes: A small plane crashed Tuesday in Bahamian waters off the coast of Florida and all 10 people aboard were rescued, officials in the Bahamas said.

The pilot had declared an emergency and then communication with the aircraft was lost, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Authority in the Bahamas said in a media post. The US Coast Guard and multiple Bahamian agencies were involved in the ensuing search and rescue.

The aircraft crashed about 50 miles (80 kilometers) east of Florida's Vero Beach Regional Airport at around 12:05 pm, the US Federal Aviation Administration said. (AP)

Hegseth gets bipartisan grilling on rising costs of Iran war and Trump's end game

WASHINGTON, May 13, (AP) — US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth faced tough questions Tuesday from Republican and Democratic lawmakers about the Trump administration's end game for the Iran war, the conflict's rising \$29 billion cost and its impact on diminishing U.S. weapons stockpiles.

While the Pentagon chief softened his tone from hearings before Congress nearly two weeks ago, notably avoiding the same pointed criticism of lawmakers, he got far more pushback from members of his own Republican Party about the levels of US munitions used in the Iran war and President Donald Trump's intense criticism of traditional allies for not taking part in the conflict.

"I take issue with the characterization that munitions are depleted in a public forum," Hegseth said. "That's not true."

Even as he insisted that the US military has plenty of missile defense systems and other munitions for the Iran war or future conflicts, Hegseth told House and Senate lawmakers overseeing defense spending that the Trump administration is working to ramp up production of weapons.

Pentagon officials also told lawmak-



Acting Under Secretary of Defense and Comptroller Jules Hurst III, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Dan Caine arrive to testify at a Senate Appropriations subcommittee on defense hearing on the budget request for the Department of Defense on May 12 in Washington. (AP)

ers that the cost of the Iran war has risen to about \$29 billion, the vast bulk of which - roughly \$24 billion - is related to replacing munitions and repairing equipment but also includes operational costs to keep forces deployed. That is

up from the overall total of \$25 billion that Pentagon comptroller Jay Hurst revealed nearly two weeks ago. He said the updated estimate does not include the cost to repair or rebuild US military sites damaged in the region.

'Rulings sided against voters in every respect'

Trump's redistricting push fizzles in S. Carolina Senate but wins in Missouri court

WASHINGTON, May 13, (AP) — US President Donald Trump's push to redraw the nation's US House districts received mixed results Tuesday as South Carolina senators defied his desires but Missouri's top court upheld a new map that could help Republicans win an additional seat in the November midterm elections.

Rather than waning, a national redistricting battle that began 10 months ago has intensified - inflamed by a recent US Supreme Court ruling that weakened the federal Voting Rights Act and provided grounds for states to try to eliminate voting districts with large minority populations.

Republican lawmakers in Louisiana are wrestling with how politically aggressive to be when redrawing House districts after the US Supreme Court invalidated a majority-Black district as an illegal racial gerrymander.

The ripples of the Louisiana ruling already have led to new US

House districts in Tennessee and have extended to Alabama, where Republican Gov Kay Ivey announced an Aug. 11 special primary for four of the state's seven congressional districts. That came after the US Supreme Court on Monday overturned an order mandating use of a map with two largely Black districts. The state plans to switch to a map passed in 2023 that has only one majority-Black district, giving Republicans a chance to win an additional seat.

Republicans think they could gain as many as 14 seats from new House maps enacted so far in Texas, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Florida and Tennessee. Democrats, meanwhile, think they could gain six seats from new maps in California and Utah. The Virginia Supreme Court last week struck down a redistricting effort that could have yielded four more winnable seats for Democrats.

Missouri was the second Republican state, after Texas, to redraw its congressional districts at Trump's



Protesters against a Missouri congressional redistricting plan gather outside the Missouri Capitol on May 12, in Jefferson City, Mo. (AP)

urging last year.

Tuesday's two unanimous state Supreme Court decisions, delivered

just hours after arguments, "are a complete victory for Missouri and for the people's elected representa-

tives," Republican Attorney General Catherine Hanaway said in a statement.

The rulings sided "against voters in every respect," the ACLU and Campaign Legal Center, which represented suing voters, said in a joint statement. "This state - and our democracy - are worse off for this outcome."

Attorneys challenging Missouri's new map had focused on changes to a Kansas City-based district long represented by Democratic U.S. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, who previously was the city's first Black mayor.

The new map takes a compact urban district that covered 20 miles (32 kilometers) and two counties and stretches it 200 miles (322 kilometers) over 15 counties, distorting it "into a sprawling behemoth that cuts clear across the state to unite territories that share nothing in common," said Abha Khanna, a partner in the Elias Law Group, a Democratic firm.

But the Supreme Court upheld a March decision by a lower court,

which found the map as a whole satisfied the compactness requirement even though the Kansas City district looks less compact. No Missouri court has ever struck down a congressional map for not being compact, said attorney John Gore, who defended the districts on behalf of the Republican Party.

A second case heard by the high court centered on whether the new map took effect in December, as asserted by Hanaway and Republican Secretary of State Denny Hoskins, or whether it should have been suspended when referendum signatures were submitted.

To suspend the map before validating the signatures would let activists temporarily undercut laws by submitting boxes of fraudulent signatures, Missouri Solicitor General Lou Capozzi argued.

But to not immediately suspend the map "would dilute the referendum right, if not destroy it altogether," said attorney Jonathan Hawley, arguing for voters who sued.



Britain's King Charles III sits beside Queen Camilla during the State Opening of Parliament at the Palace of Westminster in London on May 13. (AP)

Starmer's job hangs in balance

King Charles III lays out UK govt agenda

LONDON, May 13, (AP) — King Charles III laid out on Wednesday the British government's legislative program for the coming year or so, as Prime Minister Keir Starmer fought to remain in power following rising discontent within his Labour Party.

In a speech to lawmakers laced with all the pomp that accompanies the ceremonial opening of Parliament, the king said the U.K.'s energy policy, defense and national security would be tested as it deals with the fallout from the wars in Iran and Ukraine.

Pledging action on antisemitism, he said the government would "defend the British values" of decency and tolerance.

The question is whether Prime Minister Keir Starmer will be around to implement the measures in the speech and, even if he remains in post, whether he will have the authority to push his proposals through.

The embattled prime minister has been urged to set a timetable for his departure by more than a fifth of the Labour Party's lawmakers in the House of Commons. Some junior ministers have quit the government in protest, but no one has yet challenged Starmer directly.

Early on Wednesday, Health Secretary Wes Streeting, who is one of those widely tipped to be interested in succeeding Starmer, had a meeting with the prime minister that lasted less than 20 minutes. Streeting did



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer and wife Victoria leave 10 Downing Street to attend the State Opening of Parliament at the Houses of Parliament in London, on May 13. (AP)

not speak to reporters on his way in or out of 10 Downing Street but the BBC and the Times of London reported that he could resign and launch a leadership challenge as soon as Thursday.

The King's Speech represents Starmer's latest effort to save his premiership after Labour suffered

huge losses in local and regional elections last week. If those results were repeated in a national election that has to be held by 2029, the party would be overwhelmingly ejected from power.

After the speech, Streeting made no mention of a leadership bid but said he was focused on his job. The planned health bill in the coming parliamentary session will "boost the impact of our investment and modernization" in the state-run National Health Service, he said.

"Lots done, lots to do," he said on social media.

Labour secured a landslide election victory in 2024, driving the Conservatives from power after 14 years, but since then the party's popularity has plunged and Starmer is getting much of the blame. The reasons include a series of policy missteps, a struggling British economy, a perceived lack of vision on the prime minister's part and questions over his judgment. Starmer's choice of Peter Mandelson as U.K. ambassador to Washington despite ties to the convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein has continued to haunt him.

The King's Speech, which is written by the government, merges the historic power and grandeur of Britain with the reality of the modern United Kingdom, a mid-sized country with an underfunded military, rising debt and waning international influence.

Trump talks of possible peace

Russia presses its barrages of Ukraine

KYIV, Ukraine, May 13, (AP) — More than 100 Russian drones targeted areas of Ukraine on Wednesday, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, hours after another barrage of civilian areas killed at least eight people.

"Russia continues its strikes and is doing so brazenly - deliberately targeting our railway infrastructure and civilian sites in our cities," Zelenskyy said in a post on X.

The overnight strikes targeted Ukraine's residential and railway infrastructure in the central Dnipro and northeastern Kharkiv regions, port infrastructure in the southern Odesa region, and energy facilities in the central Poltava region, according to Zelenskyy. On Tuesday, he said, 14 regions came under attack throughout the day.

"It is important to support Ukraine and not remain silent about Russia's war. Every time the war disappears from the top of the news, it encourages Russia to become even more savage," Zelenskyy said, in an apparent reference to world attention being gripped by the Iran war.

Moscow's attacks on its neighbor are unrelenting, even as Ukraine is emboldened by its recent military accomplishments and as US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin claim - without providing evidence - that the war could be approaching the end.

Trump said Tuesday said he believes Moscow and Kyiv will soon reach a deal to end fighting.



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Service, emergency services personnel work to extinguish a fire following a Russian drone attack on a gas pipeline in Dnipropetrovsk region, Ukraine on May 13. (AP)

"The end of the war in Ukraine I really think is getting very close," Trump told reporters as he departed the White House for a summit in Beijing. "Believe it or not, it's getting closer."

Putin said in a speech last weekend that his invasion of Ukraine is possibly "coming to an end."

Neither leader elaborated on what persuaded them about the possibility of peace in Europe's longest conflict since World War II. US-led diplomatic efforts over the past year to end the war have fizzled after making no progress on key issues, such as

whether Russia gets to keep Ukrainian land and what can be done to deter Russia from invading again.

Meanwhile, European governments are assessing the merits of opening talks with Putin. Europe has for years tried to isolate the Russian leader and punished his country with international sanctions.

The correlation of forces in the war has shifted in recent months. Ukraine has gone from pleading for international help with its defense to offering foreign countries expertise on how to counter attacks, thanks to its domestically developed drone technology.

Ministers take office in Hungary's 1st non-Orbán govt

BUDAPEST, Hungary, May 13, (AP) — The Hungarian government's new Cabinet was sworn into office on Tuesday, marking the final transfer of power from the former administration of Viktor Orbán to a new center-right government led by Prime Minister Péter Magyar.

The swearing-in of the 16 ministers came after only two days of parliamentary committee hearings, a sign that Magyar, a 45-year-old lawyer who took office on Saturday, is seeking the quickest possible end to the political system Orbán led for 16 years.

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

The win, which gave Tiszsa a two-thirds majority, will allow it to roll back many of the policies that gave Orbán a reputation among his critics as a far-right authoritarian.

During comments following the swearing-in of his new ministers in Hungary's Parliament, Magyar said "the government now being formed will be the government of all Hungarians" and "a servant of the nation and not of the prime minister," in a direct critique of his predecessor.



Hungary's Prime Minister Peter Magyar speaks in front of Speaker of the Parliament Agnes Forsthofer during the plenary session of the new National Assembly following the appointment ceremony of the Tiszsa cabinet in Budapest, Hungary on May 12. (AP)

'We're the two superpowers'

US President Trump arrives in Beijing for talks with China's Xi on Iran war, trade

BEIJING, May 13, (AP): US President Donald Trump arrived in Beijing on Wednesday for his hotly anticipated talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the Iran war, trade and US arms sales to Taiwan.

The meat of the summit won't happen until Thursday, when the leaders hold bilateral talks and a formal banquet. But the Chinese are offering Trump a pomp-filled welcome after Air Force One landed in the Chinese capital.

The president was to be greeted by Chinese Vice President Han Zheng; Xie Feng, China's ambassador to Washington; Ma Zhaoxu, executive vice minister of foreign affairs; as well as the US envoy to Beijing, David Perdue, according to the White House. The welcoming ceremony is to include some 300 Chinese youths, a military honor guard and a military band.

"We're the two superpowers," Trump told reporters as he departed the White House on Tuesday after the long flight to Beijing. "We're the strongest nation on Earth in

terms of military. China's considered second."

While Trump likes to project a sense of strength, the visit occurs at a delicate moment for his presidency as his popularity at home has been weighed down by the US and Israel's war with Iran and rising inflation as a consequence of that conflict. The Republican president is seeking a win by signing deals with China to buy more American soybeans, beef and aircraft, saying he'll be talking with Xi about trade "more than anything else."

The Trump administration hopes to begin the process of establishing a Board of Trade with China to address differences between the countries. The board could help prevent the trade war ignited last year after Trump's tariff hikes, an action China countered through its control of rare earth minerals. That led to a one-year truce last October.

But Trump is visiting Beijing when Iran continues to dominate his domestic agenda. The war has led to the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, stranding oil and natu-



US President Donald Trump walks with China's Vice President Han Zheng during an arrival ceremony on May 13, at Beijing Capital International Airport in Beijing. (AP)

ral gas tankers and causing energy prices to spike to levels that could sabotage global economic growth. The US president declared that Xi didn't need to assist in resolving the

conflict, even though Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi was in Beijing last week.

"We have a lot of things to discuss. I wouldn't say Iran is one of

them, to be honest with you, because we have Iran very much under control," Trump told reporters Tuesday.

The status of Taiwan also will be a major topic as China is displeased with US plans to sell weapons to the self-governing island that the Chinese government claims as part of its own territory.

Trump told reporters Monday that he would be discussing with Xi an \$11 billion weapons package for Taiwan that the U.S. administration authorized in December but has not yet begun fulfilling. The arms package is the largest ever approved for Taiwan.

But the US leader has demonstrated greater ambivalence toward Taiwan, an approach that's raising questions about whether Trump could be open to dialing back support for the island democracy.

At the same time, Taiwan - as the world's leading chipmaker - has become essential for the development of AI, with the U.S. importing more goods so far this year from Taiwan than China. Trump has sought to use Biden-era programs and his own

deals to bring more chipmaking to America.

The Chinese Communist Party's news outlet, People's Daily, published a strongly worded editorial ahead of Trump's arrival underscoring that Taiwan is "the first red line that cannot be crossed in China-US relations" and is "the biggest point of risk" between the two nations.

Trump was already portraying the trip as a success before he even left White House grounds. He openly mused about Xi's planned reciprocal visit to the U.S. later this year, lamenting that the White House ballroom under construction would not be completed in time to properly fete the Chinese leader.

"We're going to have a great relationship for many, many decades to come," Trump said of the US and China.

Trump embarked on Air Force One for the big meeting with a coterie of aides, family members and business world titans, including Nvidia's Jensen Huang and Tesla and SpaceX's Elon Musk.

French president demand silence from audience in Kenya

Macron faces backlash after interrupting Africa summit panel

DAKAR, Senegal, May 13, (AP): French President Emmanuel Macron is facing backlash after he interrupted a panel at the Africa Forward Summit in Kenya to demand silence from the audience.

Macron stormed the stage to rebuke audience members for what he called a "total lack of respect," accusing them of disrupting speakers during a presentation by artists and young entrepreneurs. He had earlier described himself as a "Pan-Africanist" during a news conference.

The summit is meant to showcase France's new policy for the continent - a shift from a former colonial power seen as dominating to what Paris describes as a partnership of equals. On Tuesday, Macron announced a \$27 billion investment into various sectors in Africa, including energy, artificial intelligence and agriculture.

Videos of Macron's heated intervention on Monday quickly spread across social media, drawing a mix of mockery, praise and criticism.

Appearing visibly frustrated by the noise in the room, Macron abruptly walked onto the stage and asked the speaker to hand him the microphone, saying he would "restore order."

Addressing the audience in English, he criticized attendees for talking over the speakers and creating disruptions during the session.

Some audience members applaud-



France's President Emmanuel Macron attends the Africa Forward Summit at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre in Nairobi, Kenya on May 12. (AP)

ed the intervention, but Macron also drew criticism over his response.

"Just imagine what would happen if an African leader did the same thing in America or Europe," said Thierno Mbaye, a history student at a university in Senegal's capital, Dakar.

"He acted like a schoolteacher scolding children," Mbaye told The Associated Press.

The intervention also drew criticism in France.

"It's stronger than him: as soon as he sets foot on the African continent, he can't help but behave like a colonizer," Daniele Obono, a lawmaker for the hard-left party France Unbowed, said in a post on X.

The Africa Forward Summit, which is set to close on Tuesday with a declaration that is expected to be signed by all 30 heads of state, comes amid a fallout between France and its former colonies, mostly in West Africa.

Shots fired in Philippine Senate as ICC seeks to arrest ex-police chief

MANILA, Philippines, May 13, (AP): A burst of gunfire rang out Wednesday night in the Philippine Senate, where authorities have tried to arrest a senator who is wanted by the International Criminal Court for a charge of crime against humanity, an Associated Press journalist and other witnesses said.

It wasn't immediately clear what set off the gunfire or if there were injuries in the Senate, where Sen Ronald dela Rosa has stayed in protective custody by allied senators as Philippine authorities tried to arrest him and possibly turn him over later to the ICC.

Senate President Alan Cayetano briefly appeared before journalists in the Senate and confirmed that he has been told by the building's security that gunshots were fired, but he didn't provide other details and hastily left.

"The emotions are high here," Cayetano said. "This is the Senate of the Philippines and we are allegedly under attack."

On Monday, the ICC unsealed an arrest warrant for dela Rosa, a former national police chief who first enforced then President Rodrigo Duterte's anti-drug crackdowns, in which thousands of mostly petty suspects were killed.

Originally issued in November, the warrant charges dela Rosa with



Philippine troopers exchange fire along a hallway at the Philippine Senate in Pasay, Philippines on May 13. (AP)

the crime against humanity of murder of "no less than 32 persons" between July 2016 and the end of April 2018, when he led the national police force under Duterte.

Dela Rosa, 64, has vowed to fight the ICC arrest order and said that he would seek all legal remedies. He also called on his followers on Wednesday night to gather in the Senate to prevent what he said was his impending arrest.



Students protest outside University of Buenos Aires (UBA) to demand President Javier Milei's government comply with a funding law, amid deep budget cuts in Buenos Aires, Argentina on May 12. (AP)

Mass protests in Argentina decry Milei's funding cuts to prized public universities

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, May 13, (AP): Tens of thousands of Argentines flooded the streets of major cities nationwide on Tuesday to protest funding cuts by libertarian President Javier Milei to the public university system that represents a near-universal point of pride in this crisis-prone country.

Vast crowds in downtown Buenos Aires marched toward the government headquarters to denounce budget shortfalls eroding the financial foundation of the country's higher education. Argentina's public university system, a cornerstone of its well-educated workforce cher-

ished by its large middle class, has been tuition-free since 1949 and produced five Nobel Prize laureates.

Congress passed a law last year to fund universities' operational costs and raise teacher salaries in line with high inflation. But the government has not implemented it as it challenges the legislation in court.

Like his powerful backer and ally US President Donald Trump, Milei routinely attacks university campuses as bastions of "woke" indoctrination. He has slashed public education funding as part of his plan to take a chain saw to state funding in a sharp break from what he describes

as decades of reckless spending that spawned corruption under his left-leaning predecessors.

Tuesday's protest gathered people of all ages and political persuasions as Milei faces declining approval ratings over slumping economic activity, falling wages and climbing unemployment. A recent series of corruption scandals has also struck a nerve, with fallout particularly growing from an investigation into lavish spending by Milei's close ally, Cabinet chief Manuel Adorni, that appears inconsistent with his modest public salary and declared assets.

Lat/Am

Honduran arrests powerful ex-mayor: Honduran authorities on Tuesday arrested three people, including a powerful politician, accused of masterminding the 2024 assassination of an environmental leader, which became a symbol of government corruption and the ongoing perils of protecting the environment in the region.

Adán Fúnez, former mayor of the city of Tocoa, was captured at his home on Tuesday on suspicion of masterminding the killing, following years of accusations by religious and environmental leaders. (AP)

Cite Soleil residents demand protection: Residents of the Cite Soleil neighborhood in Haiti's capital protested Tuesday, demanding government protection after gang violence forced hundreds of people to flee their homes over the weekend.

Roseline Jean-Pierre, 67, was among two dozen people who gathered at an intersection in Cite Soleil holding tree branches and demanding that police intervene in the area, even as gunshots were ringing nearby. (AP)

Africa

100 civilians dead in Nigeria - group: Nigeria's military Tuesday denied a rights group's claim that an airstrike killed 100 civilians in a market over the weekend, as attention turned again to a long-running fight against armed groups in the country's volatile north.

Amnesty International in a statement Monday said a military airstrike on Sunday hit a market in Tumfa in Zamfara state. A Red Cross official in the state, Ibrahim Bello Garba, confirmed the strike to The Associated Press and said "multiple civilians" were killed. (AP)

31 killed in Somalia inter-clan clashes: At least 31 people were killed and 30 others injured in inter-clan fighting that broke out in northern Somalia's Laashimo Valley last week, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) confirmed on Monday.

The fighting, which occurred between May 6 and 7, displaced approximately 9,000 people, 85 percent of whom are women and children, according to the latest UNHCR situation report. (Xinhua)

S.Africa opens impeachment committee

Ramaphosa refuses to resign as leader

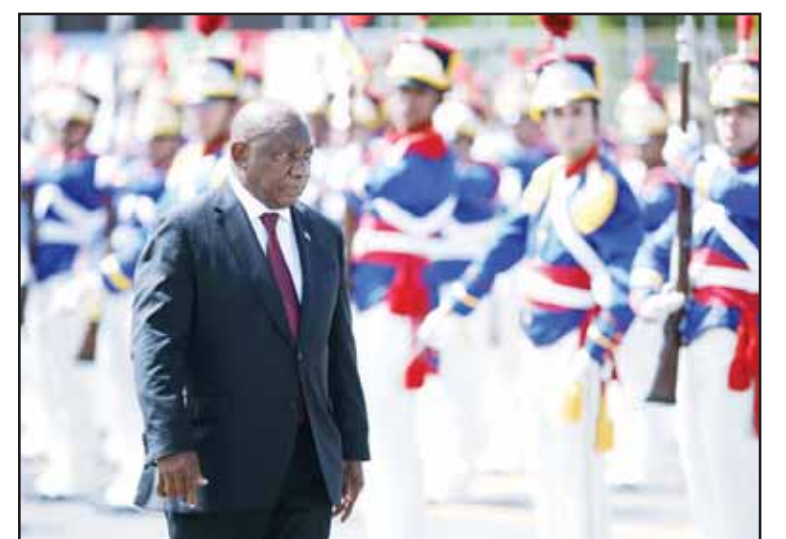
CAPE TOWN, South Africa, May 13, (AP): South African President Cyril Ramaphosa announced Monday that he will not resign from his position despite the establishment of an impeachment committee to reinvestigate allegations that he committed serious misconduct by hiding the theft of more than half a million dollars in cash, which had been stashed in a sofa at his game ranch.

In a televised address to the nation, Ramaphosa said he would legally challenge a parliamentary report which found credible evidence of wrongdoing on his part, a process that is likely to significantly delay possible impeachment proceedings against him.

He has faced calls from various quarters, especially opposition parties, to step down from his position while these processes unfold.

His announcement came a few hours after the South African Parliament said it would establish the impeachment committee in compliance with a decision of the country's highest court last week that the report should be referred to an impeachment committee.

"I therefore respectfully want to make it clear that I will not resign. To do so would be to preempt a process defined by the Constitution. To do so would be to give credence to a panel report that unfortunately has grave



South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa receives military honors during a welcome ceremony at the Planalto Presidential Palace, prior to a meeting with Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in Brasilia, Brazil on March 9. (AP)

flaws," Ramaphosa said on Monday.

His decision follows a ruling by the top Constitutional Court on Friday saying a 2022 Parliament vote that blocked impeachment proceedings against Ramaphosa over the scandal was unconstitutional.

At the time of the vote, Ramaphosa's African National Congress party had a majority in Parliament. The vote was held despite an independent

report finding evidence of wrongdoing by the president in allegedly not properly reporting the theft to police and trying to keep an investigation to recover the money secret.

The Constitutional Court last week said that, according to procedure, the 2022 independent report should have been referred to an impeachment committee for further investigation.

Subcontinent

6 dead amid heavy rains in India: At least six persons, including three children, died and over a dozen others were injured when the structure under which they had taken shelter amid heavy rains and strong winds, suddenly collapsed on them in India's southwestern state of Maharashtra, confirmed the local police on Wednesday.

The incident was reported from the state's Sangli district late on Tuesday evening.

The victims were among nearly 350 devotees who had visited a temple on the occasion of a local religious festival. As soon as heavy rains started, accompanied by strong winds, they took shelter inside an under-construction structure. As a result of strong winds, the tin sheds and wall collapsed on them, trapping them instantly.

After rescue work was carried out, six dead bodies were recovered, and those injured were rushed to a

local hospital, said a local cop. (Xinhua)

Pakistan van accident kills 11: At least 11 people, including women and children, were killed and five others critically injured after a passenger van plunged into a deep ravine in Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, local rescue officials told Xinhua on Monday.

The accident occurred in the Swat district of the province on Sunday when the van was traveling from the tourist resort of Malam Jabba to Sair Telegram on a mountainous route, the officials said.

Rescue teams and local residents rushed to the site and launched a relief operation and shifted five bodies and 11 injured to a hospital, where six of the injured succumbed to their injuries during treatment.

The medics feared that the death toll might rise because all of the injured were reportedly in critical condition. (Xinhua)

CBK issues bonds, tawarruq

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced on Wednesday that it issued bonds and related tawarruq estimated at KD 50 million (about

USD 165 million) for a seven-year term. The securities bear a return rate of 3.00 percent, the central bank said in a press release.

Business

Geopolitical risks slow deals, not property values

Almubarak: Strong fundamentals support GCC real estate

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Periods of geopolitical uncertainty tend to test market sentiment more than they alter underlying fundamentals. Across the GCC, the current environment is reinforcing a familiar pattern: while volatility may temper activity in the short term, real estate performance remains underpinned by structural strength. This is what Mr. **Khaled Almubarak**, Senior Vice President – MENA Real Estate, said during one of a series of webinars launched by Kuwait Financial Centre “Markaz” to shed light on key market developments, emerging risks, and evolving investment opportunities across the region.



Khaled Almubarak, Senior Vice President – MENA Real Estate

This resilience is not new. During previous periods of market stress, including the Global Financial Crisis, the oil price downturn, and the COVID-19 pandemic, real estate demonstrated a markedly different trajectory from broader equity markets. It experienced only limited corrections and continued to generate cash distributions and was one of the best sectors in terms of performance compared to other sectors.

The implication is clear. Real estate does not operate in isolation from macroeconomic conditions, but its response is typically more measured, supported by income generation and relatively stable demand dynamics.

Stability driven by fundamentals

At the asset level, performance across key GCC markets remains steady. Occupancy and collection rates continue to hold at high levels, while rental movements have largely remained stable, with selective increases observed in specific segments.

This consistency reflects the core characteristics of real estate as an asset class. As an income-generating investment, it provides steady cash flows even during periods of heightened volatility. At the same time, its relatively low fluctuation compared to equity markets reinforces its role as a stabilizing component within portfolios.

Divergence across markets

While the broader regional outlook remains stable, the current environment is highlighting important differences across GCC markets. In Kuwait, where real estate activity is primarily

driven by domestic capital & domestic demand in transactions leading to having real estate a defense asset class in such crises, heightened uncertainty is translating into increased caution among banks and family offices. This is slowing transaction activity, although asset values continue to be supported by underlying economic fundamentals.

Saudi Arabia presents a more insulated profile. Demand is largely domestic and supported by state-led development, limiting exposure to shifts in cross-border capital flows. This structural positioning continues to support market stability despite external pressures. The UAE, by contrast, is more sensitive to investor sentiment due to its stronger linkage to foreign capital. While this can result in more immediate fluctuations in transaction activity, the market has consistently demonstrated an ability to recover from periods of disruption due to proven record in facing crises supported by governmental regulatory frameworks and global connectivity.

Activity versus value

A key distinction emerging in the current cycle is the difference between transaction activity and asset performance. Across the region, uncertainty is primarily affecting the pace of deals rather than underlying property fundamentals.

This is particularly evident in markets such as Kuwait, where increased risk aversion is slowing trans-

actions. However, occupancy levels, collection rates, and rental stability indicate that demand remains intact. This divergence suggests that current conditions are less about structural weakness and more about temporary adjustments in investor behavior.

Selective resilience in a shifting environment

As geopolitical risks persist, the impact is unlikely to be uniform across all assets. Highly leveraged and speculative investments are expected to face greater pressure, particularly if uncertainty is prolonged or begins to affect broader economic activity.

At the same time, assets supported by strong fundamentals are positioned to demonstrate greater resilience and stability. This dynamic reinforces the importance of selectivity, where the quality of underlying assets and the strength of income streams play a more decisive role in performance outcomes.

Outlook: stability with measured caution

Looking ahead, the trajectory of regional real estate will remain closely tied to the evolution of geopolitical conditions. Prolonged disruption, particularly to oil exports or global financial systems, would introduce additional risks.

However, under current conditions, the outlook remains stable. High occupancy and collection rates, coupled with steady rental performance, indicate that the market continues to be supported by strong fundamentals. Recent developments in the region, including the current ceasefire, may also provide a pathway towards greater stability if sustained.

A measured approach to uncertainty

For investors, the current environment reinforces a consistent principle. Volatility may influence timing and sentiment, but it does not necessarily undermine asset quality. Real estate's ability to generate income, maintain occupancy, and demonstrate resilience across cycles positions it as a steady component within a broader investment strategy. In periods where uncertainty shapes market behavior, this stability becomes increasingly relevant. Rather than prompting retreat, the current cycle calls for a measured and selective approach, one that recognizes the distinction between short-term disruption and long-term value.

Private housing prices drop

Kuwait's real estate market faces unusual Q1 slowdown

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Real estate expert Abdulaziz Al-Dughhaishim says the current economic climate and geopolitical tensions in the region have impacted the Kuwaiti real estate market, which is experiencing a period of stagnation.

In an interview with the daily, Al-Dughhaishim responded to several questions.

Question: How do you assess the state of the real estate market during the first quarter of 2026?

Answer: The real estate market experienced a clear and unusual stagnation during the first quarter of the year compared to previous years. The first quarter usually sees relative activity due to the continuation of trading activity from the end of the previous year, but what happened this year was completely different.

Several factors coincided and directly affected market activity, including the start of Ramadan, the implementation of certain laws, and geopolitical tensions and economic conditions. A state of anticipation and caution has become the dominant characteristic of buying and selling decisions.

Many investors preferred to wait until the economic and legislative picture became clearer, which led to a noticeable decline in trading volumes compared to previous years.

Q. Can the situation be described as a recession or a price decrease?

A. The reality is that the market is experiencing a mix of stagnation and price declines in some sectors, particularly private housing, which has seen drops of between 20 percent and 25 percent in some areas due to weak demand and heightened uncertainty.

The investment sector has remained the most resilient and active, witnessing movements driven by the entry of companies and investors seeking operational returns and long-term stability. Industrial real estate is almost at a standstill. Commercial real estate has been quieter compared to previous periods, while trading in chalets and coastal properties has slowed due to seasonal factors and economic conditions.

Q. Do you expect the stagnation to continue in the coming period?

A. I expect the slowdown to continue through at least the second quarter of 2026, due to seasonal factors that affect the market annually, such as the school exam period, followed by holidays, and then travel, which naturally lead to a decrease in transactions.

Continued economic caution and anticipation among investors may prolong the lull, especially as markets await any new economic or legislative developments.

The real estate market usually begins to gradually recover towards the end of September and the beginning of October, coinciding with the return of citizens from travel and the stabilization of the economic cycle.

Q. Does the vacant land tax law affect prices?

A. Yes, the law has certainly contributed significantly to controlling prices and curbing speculation on vacant land, especially in areas that witnessed exorbitant price increases in recent years.

However, the law has created a sense of unease among landowners, particularly with the tax exemption limit set at only 1,500 square meters. There is a segment of the population that owns land for their children or for future purposes, not for the purpose of hoarding or speculation.

Addressing this issue requires raising the exemption limit to 3,000 or 3,500 square meters, thus achieving a balance between combating hoarding and not harming genuine landowners.

Q. Do you think the timing of issuing the regulations for fees on undeveloped land was appropriate?

A. I believe the timing was not opportune, especially given the current economic and political circumstances, as the market was already experiencing a state of anticipation and caution.

Therefore, issuing new regulations at this time contributed to increased anxiety and confusion among market participants.

Such laws require careful consideration and dialogue with stakeholders before implementation.

Q. The idea of creating residential areas for each nationality has been proposed. What is the goal?

A. The goal is not to discriminate between nationalities, as some might think, but rather to regulate

population distribution and reduce the current lack of organization in some areas.

The reality is that there is a clear concentration of certain communities in specific areas, but this presence is unstructured, creating pressure on infrastructure and services, and sometimes social and organizational problems.

The idea can be implemented by creating integrated residential cities outside traditional residential areas, offering diverse services such as restaurants, markets, schools, and recreational centers that suit the nature and culture of different communities. These cities can be linked by modern infrastructure and advanced transportation networks, which would reduce pressure on inner areas and contribute to a better reorganization of population distribution.

Q. Don't you think this proposal might be misunderstood?

A. Yes, the idea could indeed be misunderstood if it is discussed outside its regulatory framework. However, the goal is to improve the quality of housing and services, not to discriminate between different communities.

Q. Is this proposal related to the idea of foreign ownership?

A. Yes, opening ownership to foreigners in specific and regulated areas could greatly support this trend. It would also contribute to revitalizing the real estate market and stimulating related economic sectors. This step could attract new investments and increase liquidity within the local real estate market.

Q. What about vertical housing as a solution to the housing crisis?

A. So far, there is no widespread public acceptance of the idea. Kuwaiti citizens are accustomed to horizontal housing, spacious areas, and a high level of privacy, which makes apartments less attractive to a large segment of the population.

Some past experiences, such as the Al-Sawaber complex, have left a negative impression on society regarding this type of housing.

However, with increasing housing challenges and rising land costs, vertical housing may become a more viable option in the future.

Q. How do you assess the draft mortgage law?

A. The mortgage law could represent a significant turning point in the market if implemented thoughtfully and in a balanced manner, as it contributes to increasing the purchasing power of citizens, especially young people. The draft law enhances the activity of banks and finance companies and creates new real estate and financing products.

However, the success of the project requires clear legislation and precise regulatory controls to prevent inflation and unsustainable speculation, along with the importance of integration between the government, banks, regulatory bodies, and real estate development companies.

Elements for the success of the mortgage law:

- Clear legislation regulating the relationship between banks and beneficiaries
- Effective banking supervision to ensure the sustainability of financing and reduce risks
- High local demand for housing, especially among young people
- Diversification of financing products to suit different segments
- Stability of the banking sector and its capacity for long-term financing
- Enhancing liquidity and stimulating real estate transactions
- Supporting real estate developers and increasing future housing supply
- Increasing citizens' purchasing power and facilitating homeownership

Key challenges facing mortgages:

- Potential rise in property prices due to increased financing and liquidity
- Concerns about increased default rates if financing controls are weak
- The need for supplementary legislation to regulate mortgages, enforcement, and repayment mechanisms
- The necessity of achieving a balance between financing and the true value of the property
- Concerns about real estate speculation and the exploitation of financing to inflate prices
- The importance of promoting financial literacy regarding long-term obligations
- The need to develop the regulatory framework for the mortgage finance market
- Government coordination with banks and the real estate sector to ensure the success of this initiative.

Al Salmiya Group achieves net profit of KD 773,067

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Mr. **Adwan Aladwani**, Chairman and CEO of Al Salmiya Group For Enterprise Development K.S.C.C. (a subsidiary company owned 81.9% by 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 773,067 (Kuwaiti Dinars Seven Hundred Seventy-Three Thousand and Sixty-Seven), reflecting an increase of 8.2% compared to the same period of the previous year.



Adwan Aladwani, Chairman and CEO

According to the financial results of the first quarter of 2026, Aladwani stated that the achieved results reflect stability in the operational performance and improvement in revenues, supported by the continued development of the company's projects and operational facilities. The company also witnessed improvement in its financial indicators, including growth in return on equity, return on assets, and return on the company's capital, which reached 6.6%, 10.1%, and 8.2% respectively, compared to the same period last year.

Aladwani affirmed that Al Salmiya Group continues to strengthen the role of its projects, particularly Boulevard, as vibrant destinations for families and the community through supporting entertainment and community activities, while continuously enhancing visitors' experience and upgrading services and

facilities in line with the needs of different segments of society.

He further noted that the company is in the process of commencing the development of its integrated commercial project Al Qairawan in cooperation with the Public Authority for Housing Welfare in the State of Kuwait, as part of its expansion strategy aimed at developing quality projects that serve different segments of society. The project includes a commercial complex, health club, and public parking facilities, while the company is currently finalizing preliminary procedures and site handover in preparation for commencing construction works in accordance with the approved project timeline.

Aladwani also stated that Al Salmiya Group continues to place significant focus on environmental sustainability and green spaces as part of its social responsibility and commitment to enhancing the overall environment and visitor experience across its projects and facilities. In this regard, the company planted 1,053 trees at Boulevard during January and February 2026 as part of its ongoing efforts to expand green areas and support environmental balance.

He added that Boulevard hosted several community initiatives and events during the first quarter of 2026 as a venue sponsor, including the blood donation campaign in collaboration with LOYAC, in addition to hosting the “Plant a Tree in My Country” initiative in collaboration with The Commercial Real Estate Company (Al Tijaria) and Omnia. These initiatives reflect the company's commitment to supporting community and environmental initiatives and promoting a culture of social responsibility and sustainability.

To conclude, Mr. Aladwani expressed his deepest gratitude and appreciation to all shareholders, Board Members, and employees for their continuous support and dedicated efforts. He emphasized that the company will continue working towards achieving its future vision and strengthening its position through the implementation of its strategic plans and delivering sustainable added value to shareholders.

Al Mutajara Real Estate Company achieves net profit of KD 1,992,109

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Mr. **Abdufatah M. R. Marafie**, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Al Mutajara Real Estate Company K.S.C.C. (a subsidiary company owned 79.2% by 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 1,992,109 (One Million Nine Hundred Ninety-Two Thousand One Hundred Nine Kuwaiti Dinars), reflecting an increase of 75.7% compared to the same period of the previous year.



Abdufatah M. R. Marafie, Chairman and CEO

According to the financial results of the first quarter of 2026, Marafie stated that the achieved results reflect growth in the operational performance and notable growth in investment revenues, supported by the continued implementation of the company's strategy aimed at maintaining a diversified real estate and investment portfolio

while enhancing operational efficiency. 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 66.6%, 68.9%, and 75.7% respectively, compared to the same period last year.

Marafie added that the company continues to operate according to a balanced strategy based on diversifying its real estate investments in terms of investment size, nature, and geographical distribution, contributing to balancing risks and returns while enhancing the company's financial sustainability.

The company also continues to implement its development plans across its real estate projects, most notably the expansion project of Al Rihab Complex, which aims to develop the complex's facilities and services through the addition of new leasable spaces, contributing to enhancing the experience of visitors and tenants while supporting the complex's position as an integrated commercial destination, in line with the company's future vision to develop its real estate assets and achieve sustainable long-term growth.

To conclude, Mr. Marafie expressed his deepest gratitude and appreciation to all shareholders, Board Members, and employees for their continuous support and dedicated efforts. He emphasized that Al Mutajara Real Estate Company will continue working towards strengthening its financial position and achieving its strategic objectives in a manner that delivers sustainable added value to shareholders.

As part of the bank's ongoing support for Diraya campaign

KFH hosts awareness workshop on financial fraud

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: In line with its continued support for the banking awareness campaign, Diraya, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) organized a specialized workshop to enhance employee awareness of financial fraud and its risks, as well as methods for identifying and countering fraudulent attempts.

The workshop, “What a Fraudster Thinks”, reflects KFH's commitment that employees are the banking sector's first line of defence. It emphasizes the necessity of continuously strengthening their readiness and awareness against the rapidly evolving fraud landscape.

The workshop was delivered by KFH Executive Manager Fraud Risk, **Ahmed Abdulwahab Al-Zamami**. It provided a comprehensive overview of the latest internal and external fraud schemes targeting both institutions and individuals, with particular emphasis on cyber fraud and phishing attacks.

Participants were introduced to common fraudulent practices, such as fake links, deceptive calls, and institutional impersonation. To maximize customer security, the workshop outlined practical ways to detect and respond to



Ahmed Al-Zamami

suspicious activity. It also examined the psychological manipulation tactics fraudsters use to deceive victims and access confidential information.

Al-Zamami said that the aim of the initiative was to deepen employees' understanding of the motives and methods behind financial crimes through real-life examples and case studies. He stressed the importance of safeguarding data privacy and avoiding any engagement with suspicious communications or unofficial requests.



A scene from the workshop.

He further emphasized never sharing passwords, OTPs, or PINs, urging vigilance against fraudulent messages impersonating official entities to solicit suspicious link clicks or OTPs. This warning applies to all KFH customers and the public. He noted that ignoring unsolicited messages from unknown sources remains the primary defence against fraud, protecting both funds and personal data.

Al-Zamami also warned against emerging scams that leverage artificial intelligence to replicate the voices of

real individuals. Fraudsters then contact the victim's acquaintances by phone or through social media, creating a sense of urgency to persuade them to transfer money, thereby adding a layer of legitimacy to the scam.

As part of its CSR program, KFH continues educating employees and the public on evolving fraud trends, hence reinforcing the Bank's leadership in promoting financial awareness in the community.

Summit explores AI-driven sustainable city models

Abu Dhabi leads global infrastructure push at ADIS 2026



Abu Dhabi hosts ADIS 2026 infrastructure summit

By Marlon Aquino Malinao
Managing Editor, Arab Times

ABU DHABI, May 13: At a time when cities around the world are grappling with rapid urbanization and mounting sustainability challenges, Abu Dhabi is positioning itself at the forefront of the global infrastructure transformation.

The second edition of the Abu Dhabi Infrastructure Summit 2026 (ADIS 2026) opened Tuesday at the ADNEC Centre Abu Dhabi, bringing together policymakers, investors, developers, financiers, and innovators from around the world to discuss the future of sustainable urban development and next-generation city planning.

The summit commenced with a keynote address titled “Abu Dhabi’s New Era: Powering Growth, Securing Stability” delivered by Mohamed Ali Al Shorafa, Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Projects and Infrastructure Centre (ADPIC). The keynote highlighted Abu Dhabi’s long-term vision for infrastructure-led economic growth, resilience, and sustainable development.

This was followed by another keynote session titled “From City-

Building to City-Making: Redefining Urban Evolution” presented by Maysarah Mahmoud Eid, Director General of ADPIC, who emphasized the transition toward more people-centric, technologically advanced, and sustainable urban environments.

A major highlight of the summit came during the on-stage session titled “Fireside Chat: The UAE Model: Building the World’s Best Infrastructure,” featuring Minister of Energy and Infrastructure Suhail bin Mohammed Al Mazrouei in conversation with Becky Anderson.

During the discussion, Al Mazrouei revealed that Abu Dhabi will lead the UAE’s largest wave of infrastructure spending over the next four years, with investments set to cover roads, transport systems, railways, metro projects, and high-speed train networks.

He underscored the UAE’s commitment to building integrated and resilient infrastructure systems capable of supporting economic diversification, population growth, and environmental sustainability, while enhancing national and regional connectivity through advanced transportation networks.

The summit, which runs until May 14, reflects Abu Dhabi’s growing

stature as a leading global platform for shaping future-ready cities amid accelerating worldwide urban transformation.

Discussions throughout ADIS 2026 are centered on developing urban models that are smarter, greener, and more resilient to environmental, economic, and technological pressures. Key themes include sustainable mobility, digital infrastructure, climate adaptation, energy-efficient urban planning, and the integration of artificial intelligence into modern city management systems.

The event comes as urban populations worldwide are projected to increase by approximately 2.5 billion people by the middle of the century, intensifying pressure on governments and planners to rethink how cities are designed and operated. At the same time, global infrastructure projects are expected to require investments totaling nearly \$106 trillion by 2040, underscoring the enormous scale of future development demands.

Participants stressed that collaboration between governments, private sector stakeholders, and financial institutions will be essential to delivering sustainable infrastructure capable of meeting future global needs.

Action Energy Co. reports Q1 2026 financial results

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Action Energy Company K.S.C.P. (Bursa Kuwait: ALFTAQA), Kuwait’s leading local partner for integrated upstream services, owner and operator of one of the youngest rig fleets in the region, today announced its financial results for the first quarter ended 31 March 2026.

Highlights

■ Revenue grew 69.2% year-on-year, primarily driven by the expansion of the operating rig fleet from 13 rigs in Q1 2025 to 20 rigs in Q1 2026, including the full-quarter contribution of 10 new rigs deployed during 2025.

■ EBITDA increased 53.6% year-on-year to KWD 4.6 million, with EBITDA margin of 50.2% reflecting a change in revenue mix, while underlying margins on operating rigs remained stable across both periods.

■ Net profit increased 150.0% year-on-year, reflecting the full-quarter contribution of the enlarged rig fleet, combined with lower finance costs following the conversion of convertible preference shares in October 2025.

■ Cash flow from operations rose 179.5% year-on-year, in line with the strong growth in profitability.

■ Net debt to equity ratio improved from 1.67x to 0.61x, reflecting a significantly stronger and more resilient capital structure following the capital increase, the conversion of preference shares, and the IPO completed in December 2025.

Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Chairman of Action Energy Company (AEC), said: “The results of the first quarter of 2026 reflect the strength and resilience of our business model, with continued growth momentum supported by fleet expansion, high rig utilization, and a substantial multi-year contracted backlog with Kuwait Oil Company. Despite regional disturbances during the period, AEC delivered performance in line with expectations, ensured uninterrupted support to KOC operations, and continued to operate with safety as a core value. As we execute on our growth strategy, we remain committed to disciplined financial management, operational excellence, and creating long-term value for our shareholders, while reinforcing our position as a trusted national partner supporting Kuwait’s energy ambitions.”

Ahmad Mohammad Al-Ajlan, Board Member and Chief Executive Officer, said: “Q1 2026 demonstrates the operational scalability of our platform. With 20 operational rigs throughout the quarter, including the full contribution from the 10 new rigs deployed in 2025, we delivered strong revenue growth of 69.2% year-on-year. Our balance sheet has been significantly strengthened following the IPO, with net debt to equity improving from 1.67x to 0.61x. We have already secured awards for an additional 7 rigs announced in January 2026, with deployment progressing in line with schedule, positioning the Company for continued growth through 2026 and beyond.”

Operational Review by Business Line

Drilling Services

Drilling and workover services account for approximately 72% of the total backlog, with an average remaining contract life of 5 years. During Q1 2026, Action Energy operated 20 rigs throughout the quarter, comprising 2 rigs at 1,500 HP, 6 rigs at 750 HP, 2 new rigs at 550 HP, 8 new rigs at 750 HP, and 2 rigs at 3,000 HP. The fleet maintained



Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Chairman of Action Energy Company



Ahmad Mohammad Al-Ajlan, Board Member and Chief Executive Officer

100% utilization during the period, supported by disciplined preventive maintenance and operational standards in place since the Company’s inception. A total of 103 rig moves were completed during the quarter, compared to 30 in Q1 2025, reflecting the full-quarter activity of the enlarged workover fleet.

Oilfield Services

Oilfield Services account for approximately 28% of the Company’s backlog, with an average remaining contract duration of 6–7 years. During Q1 2026, the Company continued to advance the mobilization of its electric submersible pumps (ESP), Slickline, and once-through steam generator (OTSG) service lines in line with the planned schedule, further strengthening the diversification of the Company’s revenue streams and deepening its integration across the upstream value chain.

Strategic Developments

In January 2026, Action Energy announced two contract awards from Kuwait Oil Company. The First contract of KWD 14.8 million, covers two rigs of 750 HP, expected from the second half of the year. The Second contract of KWD 62.1 million, covers four rigs of 1500 HP and one rig of 1000 HP, expected to start the operation from Q4 2026 and Q1 2027. Together, these awards bring the Company’s rig fleet backlog to 27 rigs once fully mobilized.

The Company also continued to make progress on its broader oilfield services platform during the quarter, with continued mobilization across new service lines and ongoing engagement on additional pre-qualifications. Management has good visibility on KOC’s medium- to long-term drilling plans, supported by Kuwait’s production growth targets and existing multi-year contracts, and remains well placed to compete for upcoming tenders through 2027–2030.

Business Outlook

AEC enters the remainder of 2026 with strong revenue visibility supported by a substantial multi-year contracted backlog with Kuwait Oil Company, full fleet utilization, and a clear pipeline of new rig deployments and oilfield services contracts under mobilization. The Company’s strategic priorities for 2026 remain centered on three pillars: sustaining its leadership position in Kuwait’s onshore drilling market, expanding its oilfield services platform, and selectively pursuing growth



AEC Rig

opportunities across the GCC through partnerships and acquisitions of pre-qualified entities.

AEC expects EBITDA margins to normalize within a sustainable range of approximately 48%–50% as the contracted backlog is fully deployed and new rigs reach steady-state operations. The Company remains committed to disciplined capital allocation, with the capital expenditure required to support the new contract awards expected to be funded through a combination of bank financing and internal cash generation. Action Energy continues to monitor regional developments closely while maintaining its focus on delivering high-quality services and creating long-term value for its shareholders.



الشركة العمالية للطاقة (ش.م.ك.ع.)
Action Energy Company (K.S.C.P)

Q1 2026 RESULTS

KD Million

REVENUE

9.1 ▲ 69.2%
Q1 2025
5.4

EBITDA

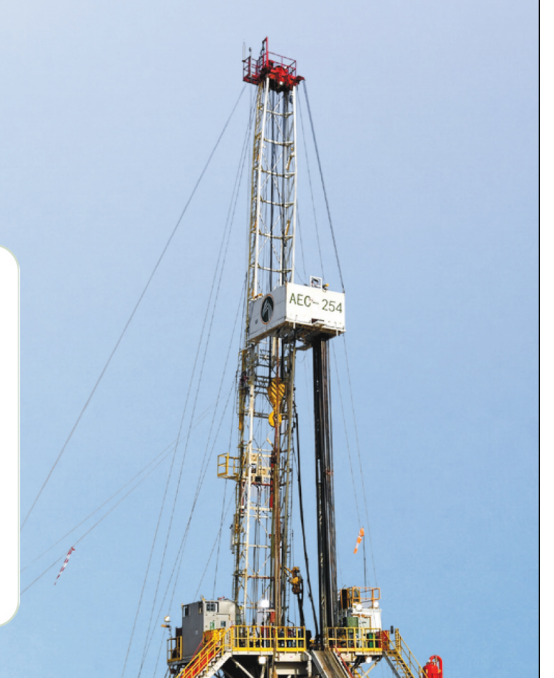
4.6 ▲ 53.6%
Q1 2025
3.0

NET PROFIT

2.2 ▲ 150.0%
Q1 2025
0.9

EPS (FILS)

3.97 ▲ 66.1%
Q1 2025
2.39
Fils



In recognition of excellence in regional banking

Natinal Bank of Kuwait named 'Best Bank in Kuwait – 2026' by Global Finance

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Further reinforcing its banking leadership and distinguished market position, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has been named "Best Bank in Kuwait - 2026" by Global Finance as part of the magazine's "World's Best Bank Awards 2026 - Middle East," which recognizes a select group of the region's leading banking institutions.



This recognition underscores NBK's outstanding performance and clear differentiation within the banking sector, driven by a resilient business model built on operational excellence and the continuous enhancement of its services. It also reflects the Bank's ability to deliver advanced banking solutions that address evolving customer needs while keeping pace with the rapid transformation of the financial industry.

Global Finance selects winners based on a comprehensive evaluation methodology anchored in rigorous criteria that assess financial performance and sustainable growth, as well as banks' ability to adapt to economic challenges and deliver innovative solutions that meet the evolving needs of customers across retail, corporate, and private banking.

The evaluation also takes into account the level of digital transformation, investment in fintech and artificial intelligence (AI), geographic expansion, service quality, and the bank's role in supporting sustainability and responsible finance initiatives, reflecting its commitment to modern and evolving banking practices.

Receiving this award from Global Finance reflects the success of NBK's strategic vision in delivering balanced performance that combines financial growth with technological innovation, while maintaining high levels of trust among customers and international institutions.

Global Finance noted that NBK has expanded the breadth of its banking services by focusing on enhancing customer experience and service quality through investment in the latest technological solutions and the launch of innovative digital products, reflecting the Bank's commitment to continuous development and keeping pace with the ongoing digital transformation of the banking sector.



NBK Headquarters

The magazine added that NBK continues to invest in a scalable and flexible technology infrastructure to strengthen its core systems and digital platforms, supporting the faster rollout of new products that integrate seamlessly with its existing services and enhancing its ability to deliver exceptional banking services across its international network.

Furthermore, the magazine highlighted a number of notable initiatives launched during 2025, including upgrades to the TCS BaNCS system, digital-deposit services, and the introduction of a new e-Saver account. It also noted the enhancement of digital channels through the rollout of more than 100 new features, alongside improvements in operational efficiency and scalability, as well as the streamlining of digital onboarding through the adoption of facial-recognition technology for automated identity verification.

On the retail banking front, NBK continues to deliver advanced banking solutions tailored to customers' evolving needs, offering exclusive experiences through strategic partnerships with leading global brands, including The Bicester Collection, co-branded credit cards with Harrods, and a prepaid card launched in collaboration with Alshaya Group.

For SME clients, NBK launched Kuwait's first point-of-sale financing solution tailored specifically to this segment, supporting business growth and

- The award reflects NBK's outstanding performance and distinction among its peers across the banking sector
- Global Finance: NBK expanded the breadth of its banking services through innovative digital products and solutions
- NBK's advanced technological infrastructure supports business expansion and accelerates the rollout of new products
- The Bank's strategy aligns with Kuwait Vision 2035 and the country's transition toward a digital economy

further advancing financial inclusion.

These initiatives are aligned with Kuwait Vision 2035, which aims to accelerate the transition toward a digital economy and expand access to banking services through the adoption of the latest financial technologies.

Global Finance also highlighted that NBK continues to make notable progress in the areas of financial literacy and financial inclusion, in line with the directions of the Central Bank of Kuwait, alongside advancing its sustainable finance agenda. The magazine noted that NBK's sustainable assets portfolio grew by 23% year-on-year to reach USD 6.11 billion as of end-December 2025, as part of its strategic objective to reach USD 10 billion by 2030.

Founded in 1987 and headquartered in New York City, Global Finance is regarded as one of the world's most prestigious publications specializing in finance and economics. The magazine reaches more than 50,000 executives and senior decision-makers responsible for investment and strategic decisions across financial institutions in 188 countries worldwide.

Each year, the magazine conducts extensive assessments and surveys evaluating innovation and profitability across banks and financial institutions worldwide, based on which it selects the top performers at both the regional and global levels.

For more information on the winners of the "World's Best Bank Awards 2026 - Middle East," please visit:

<https://gfmag.com/award/award-winners/worlds-best-banks-2026-middle-east/>

Board approves distribution of interim dividends of 83 fils

Jazeera Airways reports Q1 2026 financial results

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Jazeera Airways today announced its financial results for the first quarter (Q1) of 2026, reporting operating revenue of KD 45.1 million, a year-on-year decline of 15.8%. Performance during the quarter was significantly affected by the geopolitical crisis that resulted in the temporary closure of Kuwait International Airport and the suspension of all flights from Kuwait starting February 28.



Jazeera Airways

Jazeera Airways delivered a strong operational performance in the first two months of the year, with stable demand and network activity across its key markets that covered around 70 destinations. During the quarter, marred by a regional disruption, total sectors operated by Jazeera Airways fell by 28.4% to 6,569 during the quarter, while capacity decreased by 27.6% to 1.1 million seats and Passenger numbers during the quarter declined only by 25.6% to 925,543. The airline subsequently recorded a net loss of KD 1.1 million, compared to a net profit of KD 4.7 million in the same period last year.

The Board of Directors recommended the distribution of interim cash dividends of 83 Fils.

With the Kuwait Airport closed for 57 days, the longest closure of any airport in the region, Kuwaiti airlines faced the greatest operational and financial strain. During this period, Jazeera Airways remained focused on one clear priority: keeping Kuwait connected to the world through Mission Barakah.

By March 11, Jazeera Airways had successfully resumed operations through an integrated overland-air corridor via Saudi Arabia, restoring connectivity to 27 destinations across 11 countries. Within days, Jazeera deployed 14 aircraft and operational assets across borders, including technical equipment and spare parts, while mobilizing more than 500 employees and coordinating over

9,000 large-scale bus movements between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Through close coordination with authorities, the airline facilitated more than 1,500 flights and transported over 200,000 passengers. This dual-hub operating model enabled Jazeera Airways to sustain critical connectivity, supporting not only passenger travel, but also cargo movement, workforce mobility, and the continuity of business activity during an unprecedented period of disruption.

Jazeera Airways also established alternative hubs across five cities in Saudi Arabia and Egypt to position the airline for a strong recovery and upcoming Hajj operations, while maintaining its position as the market leader in Kuwait.

Marwan Boodai, Chairman of Jazeera Airways, said: "The first quarter of 2026 was significantly impacted by the geopolitical crisis that disrupted our operations and financial performance in March. Backed by our strong financial foundation, agile and resilient business model, together with strong Government collaboration and the extraordinary commitment of our people, we re-

strengthened rapidly to this unprecedented situation in our homeland. With a clear focus on keeping Kuwait connected, we successfully launched and executed Mission Barakahyeh again demonstrating Jazeera's unwavering commitment to Kuwait and its people as a national carrier."

Jazeera Airways maintained a resilient operational position supported by its agile and flexible business model. Load factor increased 2.3 percentage points from 78.7 to 81.0, reflecting sustained demand from key destinations across the network, while market share remained stable at 31%. The airline operated an average fleet of 23 aircraft.

Boodai emphasized: "As we move forward, we remain firmly committed to Kuwait, to our shareholders, to our customers, to our employees and to the communities we serve. The resilience demonstrated this quarter reinforces our confidence in our strategy and our ability to navigate challenges while continuing to deliver value and connectivity."

Q1 2026 Financial Highlights

- Operating revenue: KD 45.1 million, down 15.8%
- Operating profit: KD 2.2 million, down 68%
- Net loss: KD 1.1 million, compared to KD 4.7 million net profit in 1Q 25
- Passengers: 925,543 million, down 25.6%
- Load factor: Increased 2.3 percentage points, from 78.7 to 81.0

Positive Outlook

With the full return to direct operations from Kuwait, Jazeera Airways remains optimistic about the recovery in travel demand ahead of the summer season. The airline is offering over 2 million seats across its network, relaunching 11 destinations while introducing two new routes, including Milan Bergamo starting May 22 and London Luton, further expanding travel options for the peak holiday season.

Each winner received a prize of KD 1,000

Gulf Bank announces 120 new AlDanah winners



Group photo of the Gulf Bank team.



Draws conducted under the supervision of international auditing firms.

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: As part of its ongoing commitment to rewarding its customers, Gulf Bank held yesterday the first quarterly draw of 2026, in addition to the monthly draws for February and March. The draws took place at the Bank's Head Office under the supervision of international audit firms and were broadcast live across the Bank's official social media channels.

A total of 120 winners were announced during the draws, with each winner receiving a cash prize of KD 1,000. AlDanah Millionaire customers now look forward to the announcement of the KD 1,000,000 prize winner on 8 July, in addition to the May draw, scheduled for 10 June, and the June draw, scheduled for 8 July.

Last month, Gulf Bank announced 272 winners from AlDanah customers in the postponed 2025 draws, with total prizes amounting to nearly KD 3.3 million. These draws included the announcement of two new millionaires, further adding to the long list of millionaires created by Gulf Bank since the launch of AlDanah in 1998.

In line with its continuous efforts to enhance the AlDanah Millionaire experience, Gulf Bank will introduce a new draw structure starting September 2026, increasing the total value of prizes to KD 3,500,000. The new structure will include a grand annual prize of KD 1,500,000, an annual prize of KD 1,000,000, and five winners of

KD 200,000 each across five different draws throughout the year.

A More Rewarding Financial Future

Gulf Bank's AlDanah Millionaire account is one of Kuwait's leading prize linked savings accounts. Since its launch in 1998, the account has continued to encourage customers to build a more stable financial future.

Designed to promote a culture of saving, AlDanah Millionaire is suitable for all segments of society, from children to adults and customers of all nationalities. With a minimum deposit of KD 200, customers become eligible to enter all draws, including the KD 1,000,000 and KD 1,500,000 draws, giving them multiple opportunities to win throughout the year. Customers' chances of winning increase the more they save and the longer they maintain their balance, as part of a rewarding loyalty proposition that enhances the overall customer experience.

The account also offers customers full flexibility to deposit and withdraw funds at any time, while maintaining their eligibility to enter the draws.

AlDanah Millionaire is more than just a savings account. It is an integrated savings experience that combines financial discipline with rewarding opportunities, reflecting Gulf Bank's commitment to empowering customers to achieve their financial goals with confidence and long term sustainability.

India's gold tax rise opens GCC market opportunities

■ India's decision to raise import duties on gold and silver from 6% to 15% creates a significant price gap. Customers can now expect gold and jewellery in the GCC, to be approximately 12% more affordable compared to Indian markets.

■ With gold prices at or near all-time highs globally, the impact of the duty hike is amplified. The absolute monetary savings on each purchase are larger than ever, making it the most compelling time in recent memory to buy gold in the GCC rather than India.

■ India's Union Budget, effective February 2026, revised the duty-free import limit for NRIs travelling back to India. Women can now carry up to 40 grams and men up to 20 grams of gold jewellery, duty-free.

■ As higher import duties make it increasingly difficult to bring international jewellery into India, consumers there will find themselves largely limited to locally produced designs. Malabar Gold & Diamonds, with its extensive global sourcing network, offers customers in the GCC access to over 200,000 jewellery designs from over 20 countries, including Italy, Turkey, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, and China, spanning traditional craftsmanship, contemporary styles, and global fusion aesthetics.

■ In the GCC, gold purity and quality are actively monitored and regulated by the government, giving shoppers complete confidence and transparency in every purchase. Making charges across the GCC are also generally lower than in many other markets, adding further to the overall value proposition.

■ Shoppers at Malabar Gold & Diamonds benefit from the added assurance of lifetime jewellery maintenance across all global outlets and a guaranteed buyback policy, ensuring that every purchase is not just a buying decision but a sound, long-term investment.

■ The increased footfall and purchasing intent driven by this price differential is expected to give a strong uplift to the jewellery retail sector across the GCC, reinforcing the region's position as the world's premier gold shopping destination.

■ Mr. Shamal Ahamed, MD-International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds: "India's



Shamal Ahamed, MD-International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds

decision to increase gold import duties to 15% marks a significant moment for the GCC jewellery market. For smart NRIs, tourists, and savvy investors, the message is clear - there has never been a better time to buy gold and jewellery across the GCC. The price advantage of 12% compared to India is not a marginal difference; it is a transformational one. The recently revised duty-free allowance is a further incentive. A family of four travelling back to India can now collectively carry up to 140 grams of gold jewellery duty-free, and with NRI wedding season approaching in July and August, residents can enjoy massive savings by purchasing gold from the region. What also sets the GCC apart is the sheer variety on offer. With jewellery sourced from over 20 countries, shoppers here have access to over 200,000 designs to choose from. With the respective government ensuring strict gold purity standards, and the GCC offering some of the lowest making charges worldwide, customers already enjoy a major advantage. Add to that Malabar Gold & Diamonds' lifetime jewellery maintenance and guaranteed global buyback, and it's clear that there has never been a better time to buy gold in the GCC. At Malabar Gold & Diamonds, we are fully prepared to welcome this new wave of discerning shoppers and offer them the quality, variety, and value that only a world-class jewellery destination can deliver"

Main market drops

Boursa Kuwait ends flat

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Wednesday's trading session on a marginally lower note, with the general index slipping 2.20 points, or 0.03 percent, to close at 8,782.08 points. Total trading activity reached 452.8 million shares executed through 23,110 cash transactions, with a combined value

of KD 101.4 million (approximately USD 310.2 million).

The main market index recorded a sharper decline, falling 64.47 points, or 0.75 percent, to 8,567.50 points. Trading in this segment totaled 264.8 million shares across 12,496 transactions, valued at KD 40.6 million (around USD 124.2 million).

ALSAYER Group spreads happiness & joy to children at Al-Razi Hospital

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: ALSAYER Group, in collaboration with the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital and Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice, organized a heartfelt initiative at Al-Razi Hospital to bring happiness to young patients.

During the event, ALSAYER Group visited children and their families, spending quality time with them and creating moments of joy. Each child received specially prepared gift bags, filling the hospital with laughter and smiles, while reinforcing ALSAYER's compassion and care. The

initiative was not only about giving gifts, but also about offering emotional support and reminding families that they are not alone on their journey.

This effort reflects ALSAYER's philosophy of community commitment. The Group strives to be a responsible corporate citizen by dedicating its resources and expertise to social initiatives that raise awareness of health and environmental issues, while also nurturing cultural and social values.

Nehad Mohammad AlHaj Ali, Group Manager of the Corporate Excellence department in

ALSAYER Group, highlighted the importance of such initiatives: "We will always encourage giving back. It's about sharing time, care, and attention with those who deserve it most. By doing so, we set an example of promoting social welfare through educational, cultural, social, and health initiatives, and we are committed to doing even more." ALSAYER Group would continue to demonstrate its commitment to serving the community, spreading joy among children and promoting a culture of compassion and social responsibility.



ALSAYER supports children with hospital visit.

Film

Cannes flaunts star power despite Hollywood's retreat

Peter Jackson receives honorary Palme D'Or

CANNES, France, May 13, (AP) — The 79th Cannes Film Festival opened Tuesday with politics, artificial intelligence and the shifting priorities of Hollywood taking center stage at the film gathering on the French Riviera.

The festival launched with a tribute to director Peter Jackson, handing the "Lord of the Rings" filmmaker an honorary Palme d'Or. He was introduced by actor Elijah Wood, who played Frodo Baggins in Jackson's fantasy franchise, one of many notable faces on the Cannes red carpet, including Bong Joon Ho, Joan Collins, Heidi Klum and James Franco.

"I've never figured out why I'm getting a Palme d'Or. I'm not a Palme d'Or sorta guy," said the shaggy haired New Zealand filmmaker.

Jackson was then serenaded with a rendition of the song "Get Back," a nod to his lauded 2021 documentary about The Beatles. The director sat stage right mouthing the lyrics.

Jane Fonda and Gong Li officially opened the festival, with Fonda declaring: "Cinema has always been an act of resistance."

It was a fitting observation for a film festival that has already seen politics take center stage. At the introduction of the jury that will decide the Palme d'Or, Cannes' top honor, jury members spoke bluntly about holding a film festival during a time of geopolitical conflict.

Paul Laverty, the Scottish screenwriter known for his films with director Ken Loach, pointed toward this year's Cannes poster, of "Thelma and Louise," while discussing attending Cannes during what he called "genocide in Gaza." Quoting "King Lear," he said: "Madmen lead the blind."

"Cannes has a wonderful poster," said Laverty. "Isn't it fascinating to see some of them like Susan Sarandon, Javier Bardem and Mark Ruffalo blacklisted because of their views in opposing the murder of women and children in Gaza? Shame on Hollywood people who do that."

The nine-member jury is being presided over by Park Chan-wook, the South Korean filmmaker of "Oldboy" and "No Other Choice," who said that politics and cinema go hand in hand.

"Art and politics are not concepts that are in conflict with each other," said Park. "One cannot disqualify a film on the pretext that it has a political message. Just as one cannot reject a film because it would not be



Director Peter Jackson, recipient of the honorary Palme d'Or, poses for photographers during the opening ceremony of the 79th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Tuesday, May 12, 2026. (AP)

political enough."

Other jury members include Chloé Zhao, Stellan Skarsgård, Ruth Negga and Demi Moore, who two years ago was celebrated in Cannes for her comeback performance in "The Substance."

Moore spoke about a topic that's already dominated conversation at this year's festival.

"AI is here, and so to fight it is to, in a sense, to fight something that is a battle that we will lose," she said. "So to find ways in which we can work with it, I think, is a more valuable path," she said. "Are we doing enough to protect ourselves? I don't know. My inclination would be to

say probably not."

What isn't at Cannes has been as buzzed about as much as what is. Hollywood is largely absent this year.

While recent blockbusters like "Top Gun: Maverick" and "Elvis" have touched down at previous incarnations, studio films this year have been either scared away by the possibility of a rocky reception or by the high cost of flying in A-listers to the Cote d'Azur. The closest thing in Cannes' slate is an anniversary celebration for "Fast & Furious."

Cannes artistic director Thierry Frémaux said Hollywood "is re-

shaping" in the midst of Paramount Skydance's proposed acquisition of Warner Bros. Discovery.

"I hope the studio films will come back," Frémaux told reporters on Monday.

Cannes has become better known for its lengthy standing ovations than its boos.

This year, a long list of big-name filmmakers will have center stage. Among the filmmakers set to unveil new movies are Pedro Almodovar ("Bitter Christmas"), James Gray ("Paper Tiger"), Na Hong-jin ("Hope"), Pawel Pawlikowski ("Fatherland") and Ryusuke Hamaguchi ("All of a Sudden").

If Cannes has waned as a global launchpad for studio releases, it has grown as a breeding ground for Oscar contenders.

Two years ago, Sean Baker's "Anora" won the Palme before winning best picture. Last year, Cannes selections like "Sentimental Value," "The Secret Agent" and "It Was Just an Accident" went on to play prominent roles in awards season.

More often than not, the specialty distributor Neon has been at the forefront of the Cannes-to-Oscars pipeline. Neon has backed the past six Palme d'Or winners, an unprecedented streak that it may be poised to extend. The company is attached to



Hirokazu Koreeda poses for photographers at the opening ceremony and premiere of the film 'The Electric Kiss' during 79th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Tuesday, May 12, 2026. (AP)



Jane Fonda poses for photographers at the opening ceremony and premiere of the film 'The Electric Kiss' during 79th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Tuesday, May 12, 2026. (AP)

more than a quarter of the 22 films in competition for the Palme d'Or.

While Cannes may be light on big Hollywood movies, it isn't lacking in stars. Set to appear over the next two weeks are Kristen Stewart, Barbara Streisand, Adam Driver, Javier Bardem, Michael Fassbender, Cate Blanchett, Rami Malek, Sebastian Stan, Sandra Hüller and many others.

How much any of this will serve as backdrop for "The White Lotus" remains to be seen. The fourth season of Mike White's acclaimed HBO series is based around a trip to Cannes. Last month, the show began shooting on the French Riviera.



Miri Ben-Ari appears during the opening ceremony of the 79th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Tuesday, May 12, 2026. (AP)



Jury president Park Chan-wook, second from left, along with jury members Ruth Negga, from left, Paul Laverty, Demi Moore, Laura Wandel, Diego Céspedes, Stellan Skarsgård and Chloé Zhao appear during the opening ceremony of the 79th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Tuesday, May 12, 2026. (AP)



Jacques Audiard poses for photographers at the opening ceremony and premiere of the film 'The Electric Kiss' during 79th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Tuesday, May 12, 2026. (AP)

Variety

LOS ANGELES: Director Eugene Yi has always been interested in the term Asian American and Pacific Islander and which ethnicities it includes.

"When we're talking about Asian Americans or Asian people in the U.S., oftentimes it's people who might look like you and me, and maybe not people who look like (New York City Mayor) Zohran Mamdani," Yi told The Associated Press. "Why is that when this term is supposed to be so capacious and so inclusive?"

So Yi, who is Korean American, was beyond excited when approached to helm a new HBO documentary dedicated to AAPI identity and community.

Timed for release during AAPI Heritage Month, "The A List: 15 Stories from Asian and Pacific Diasporas" drops Wednesday on HBO Max. It's the latest in "The List Series" created by Timothy Greenfield-Sanders. The franchise has previously produced documentaries on prominent Black, Latino and LGBTQ+ Americans.

In the documentary, Yi captures no-frills, intimate interviews conducted by journalist Jada Yuan with 15 people of AAPI heritage across industries. They include TV broadcaster Connie Chung, Democratic Sen. Tammy Duckworth and "Basement Bhangra" creator DJ Rekha. Actors **Sandra Oh**, **Kumail Nanjiani** and **Bowen Yang** - who are sometimes more associated with comical roles - also shared their thoughts about identity and belonging. (AP)



This combination of images shows actors, from left, Kumail Nanjiani, Sandra Oh, and Bowen Yang. (AP)

of the heavy metal band Black Sabbath, are singing the same tune when it comes to sparing dogs from medical experiments.

The unlikely pair came together Tuesday not for a most unusual duet, but instead to praise ongoing efforts to find new homes for roughly 1,500 beagles purchased from dog breeder and research facility Ridglan Farms outside of Madison.

Forget Black Sabbath's anti-war anthem "War Pigs." This day was all about the dogs - more specifically, the beagles.

"It was so profound to be able to hold each of these dogs in our arms and be able to assure them that their new life was starting," Gibson said. "Today was a very emotional day."

Both Gibson and Butler held beagles from Ridglan Farms that had been transported from the facility to the humane society on Tuesday. (AP)

NEW YORK: Harvey Weinstein's defense urged jurors Tuesday to acquit him and put an end to a #MeToo-era rape case that has gone to trial three times, while prosecutors pressed to void to restore a onetime conviction that got unwound.

Weinstein, the former Hollywood honcho who has been imprisoned on various sex crime convictions since 2020, watched quietly as the two sides made their closing arguments about whether he raped hairstylist and actor Jessica Mann in a New York hotel in March 2013.

"She has taken on a false narrative about all of this," Weinstein lawyer Marc Agnifilo said.

"She has absolutely no motive to lie. None," prosecutor Nicole Blumberg countered.

Jurors, who are expected to start deliberating Wednesday, will have to sift through the complexities of a yearslong relationship between Weinstein and Mann. (AP)

MADISON: Pop star Debbie Gibson and Terry "Geezer" Butler, co-founder

Music

Organizers tighten security amid boycott calls

Finland strengthens Eurovision title hopes as Israel advances



Essyla from Belgium performs the song 'Dancing on the Ice' during the first semifinal of the 70th Eurovision Song Contest in Vienna, Austria, Tuesday, May 12, 2026. (Inset): Essyla during the first semifinal of the 70th Eurovision Song Contest in Vienna, Austria. (AP)

VIENNA, May 13, (AP) — Ten countries including favorite Finland and contentious competitor Israel won places Tuesday in the Eurovision Song Contest final, while five nations were sent home after the first day of competition in the pop music extravaganza.

Host city Vienna has been bedecked in hearts and the contest's "United by Music" motto for a week in which singers and bands from 35 countries will compete onstage for the continent's musical crown. But divisions are clouding the contest's 70th anniversary edition, with five countries - Spain, Ireland, the Netherlands, Slovenia

and Iceland - boycotting to protest Israel's inclusion.

Despite the absentee nations, thousands of ebullient fans from across Europe and beyond packed the Wiener Stadthalle arena for the first semifinal. Some had flags painted on their faces or clothes in national colors, others wore sequins and spangles for a contest that celebrates the kitschy, infectious power of pop.

Security is tight across the city, with police from across Austria deployed in the capital, and support from forces in neighboring Germany. Awareness of risk is high after a 21-year-old Austrian man ac-

cused of pledging allegiance to the Islamic State group pleaded guilty to plotting to attack a Taylor Swift concert in Vienna in 2024.

Acts from 15 countries performed their 3-minute songs onstage - often with eye-catching choreography and pyrotechnics - in a bid for votes from juries in participating nations and viewers around the world.

Israeli singer Noam Bettan was met with shouts of protests amid the cheers in the auditorium when he performed the rock ballad "Michelle," but was one of 10 acts voted into Saturday's final.

Finland, the favorite on bet-

ting markets, made the cut with "Liekinheitin," or "Flamethrower," a mashup of pop singer Pete Parkkonen's anguished vocals and violinist Linda Lampenius' fiery fiddling.

Joining them in the final are Greece's Akylas with party-rap track "Ferto," or "Bring It"; Serbian goth metal band Lavina with "Kraj Mene"; Moldovan folk-rapper Satoshi with "Viva, Moldova!"; and "Andromeda" by Croatian female ensemble Lelek.

Soulful Polish singer Alicja, Lithuanian performer Lion Cechach, Swedish singer Felicia and Belgium's Essyla also made the final. Estonia, Georgia, Montene-

gro, Portugal and San Marino were eliminated - despite a guest appearance by 1980s icon Boy George on singer Senhit's San Marino song, "Superstar."

Ten more finalists will be chosen in a second semifinal Thursday. The U.K., France, Germany and Italy automatically qualify for the final because they are among the contest's biggest funders. Austria, last year's winner, gets a place in the final as host country.

Long a forum for good-natured - and sometimes more pointed - national rivalries, Eurovision has found it hard to separate pop and politics in recent years. Russia was

expelled in 2022 after its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

The 2024 contest in Malmo, Sweden, and last year's event in Basel, Switzerland, saw pro-Palestinian protests that called for Israel to be expelled over the conduct of its war against Hamas in Gaza and allegations it ran a rule-breaking marketing campaign to get votes for its contestant.

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

But the EBU declined to kick Israel out, spurring five countries to announce in December that they would not participate this year.

Several pro-Palestinian demonstrations are planned during Eurovision week, including a musical event dubbed No Stage for Genocide. Its backers urged Eurovision performers to pull out of the competition.

"I think it is a moral obligation for each and every artist to take action and step away from the competition," said Congolese-Austrian activist Patrick Bongola.

Israel strongly denies committing genocide in Gaza. Demonstrations in support of the country's participation are also planned this week in Vienna.

The five-country boycott is a revenue and viewership blow to an event that organizers say was watched by 166 million people around the world last year. Bulgaria, Moldova and Romania have returned after skipping the event for artistic or financial reasons in recent years, but the number of participants, at 35, is still the lowest since 2003.

Jonathan Hendrickx, a media researcher at the University of Copenhagen, said any more boycotts will stress the structure of the contest and raise doubts about its future.

"They really are at their limits now, in terms of what they can handle with the current format," Hendrickx said.

Dean Vuletic, the author of "Post-war Europe and the Eurovision Song Contest," is confident Eurovision can weather the latest storms.

"If you look at the history of Eurovision, it's gone through so many crises, so many political challenges, so many geopolitical changes in Europe, and it's always managed to survive," he said.



Linda Lampenius and Pete Parkkonen from Finland perform the song 'Liekinheitin' during the first semifinal of the 70th Eurovision Song Contest in Vienna, Austria, Tuesday, May 12, 2026. (AP)



Palestinian singer-songwriter and video artist Bashar Murad sings during a United for Palestine anti-Eurovision concert in Brussels. (AP)



Akylas, second left, from Greece, performs the song 'Ferto' during the first semifinal of the 70th Eurovision Song Contest in Vienna, Austria. (AP)

People

Visit highlights the roots of children's resilience

Princess Kate returns to the global stage on Italy tour

LONDON, May 13, (AP) — Britain's Princess Catherine is set to make her first overseas trip since announcing her cancer was in remission, traveling to Italy for a two-day tour starting Wednesday focused on early childhood education that will undoubtedly receive widespread media attention.

The princess, commonly known as Kate, will travel to Reggio Emilia in northern Italy to learn about its child-centered approach to early education, which has become a focal point for educators around the world. The trip is part of what her office called an international "fact-finding mission" to explore different approaches to supporting young children and their carers.

The choice of destination for Kate's first trip abroad since her 2024 cancer diagnosis is no coincidence as early years development is the signature cause of the mother of three who will one day be queen.

"She wants to make a point that she is going to keep making this her cause," said Joe Little, managing editor of Majesty Magazine.

The Reggio Emilia approach is based on the idea that young children have many different ways of thinking, understanding and expressing themselves, and that teachers need to work with their students

to help them learn.

The visit will highlight the idea that the environment and human relationships that surround children are crucial to laying the foundations for a resilient and healthy future, Kensington Palace said in a statement.

"The Reggio Emilia approach clearly suits the narrative at the start of international operations," Little said.

The visit is part of her work with the Royal Foundation Centre for Early Childhood, which she founded in 2021 to increase public



Britain's Princess Kate is seen at the British Fashion Council at 180 Studios in central London. (AP)

understanding of the importance of supporting children in the first five years of life.

One of Britain's most popular royals, the Princess of Wales has proved to be adept at focusing attention on matters she cares about.

When Kate announced that she had completed chemotherapy treatment in a soft-focus, Insta-ready video, she ventured into realms not previously inhabited by the royal family, whose members traditionally shied away from talking about their health.

And she did it in a new way, using social media to share the fact that for all her wealth and privilege, her life had been upended by cancer, like so many others.

Then, later, when she announced she was in remission, she spent the day supporting other cancer patients at the hospital where she received treatment.

In a statement on social media, she offered her thanks to everyone who helped her and her husband, Prince William, as they navigated the ups and downs of treatment and recovery. She hugged patients at the Royal Marsden Hospital in London and described her own treatment as "exceptional."

"It is a relief to now be in remission and I remain focused on recovery," the princess, now 44, wrote in a note signed with her initial, C. "As anyone who has experienced a cancer diagnosis will know, it takes time to adjust to a new normal."

Her new normal involves becoming the go-to advocate for early years education, which refers to the learning and development of children from birth to five years of age.

There's lots to do in Britain, where advocates say there aren't enough spaces to go around and many teachers don't have the training they need.

Book

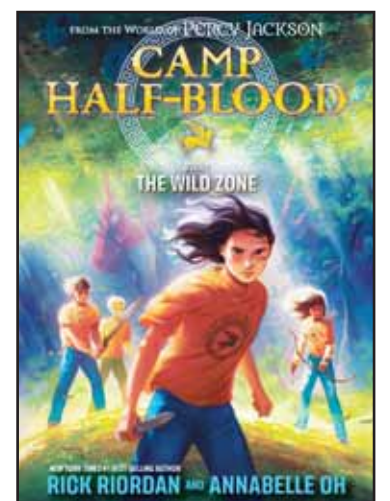
Camp Half-Blood novels from Riordan set to launch this fall

NEW YORK, May 13, (AP) — Starting this fall, fans of Rick Riordan's "Percy Jackson" books can discover some adventures that took place at the demigod training facility Camp Half-Blood when Percy himself wasn't around.

Random House Children's Books announced Tuesday that Riordan is collaborating with different co-authors on each of four "Camp Half-Blood" middle-grade novels set during the time between Riordan's first two Percy books, "The Lightning Thief" and "The Sea of Monsters."

Since "The Lightning Thief" was published in 2005, Riordan's "Percy Jackson" novels have sold more than 150 million copies worldwide and have been translated into dozens of languages. His books feature such beloved characters as Percy, the boy whose father is the Greek god Poseidon; best friend Grover Underwood and Annabeth Chase, daughter of Athena. Riordan said in a statement that working on the Emmy-winning Disney+ adaptation of his work stirred his curiosity about Camp Half-Blood.

"It made me wonder what was happening back at camp between the books of the original series, when Percy, Annabeth, and Grover weren't around," he said. "This new series gives me a chance to explore that idea, while opening up Percy's world by introducing a new group of demigod heroes, co-



This cover image released by Random House Books for Young Readers shows "The Wild Zone: Camp Half-Blood" by Rick Riordan and Annabelle Oh. (AP)

created with amazing authors who can write authentically about those heroes' backgrounds. It's been an incredible thrill!"

The first installment, "The Wild Zone," was written with Annabelle Oh and comes out Sept. 29. Kyle Lukoff, Jade Adia and Pablo Cartaya are working with Riordan on the second, third and fourth books, respectively. Each will be published six months apart.

Health

French patient critically ill and on an artificial lung

Africa CDC and WHO call for greater preparedness despite low hantavirus risk

ADDIS ABABA, May 13, (Agencies): The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) urged health authorities and the general public to remain alert and strengthen hantavirus surveillance measures despite the outbreak being categorized as low risk to public health in Africa.

During a joint technical briefing, Yap Boum II, head of emergency preparedness and response division at Africa CDC, called for efforts to strengthen surveillance and remain prepared for any emergency, though no hantavirus cases have been recorded across the continent.

Highlighting that hantavirus prevention starts with simple daily actions and the critical importance of early detection and medical attention, he urged health authorities and the public to stay alert for symptoms, such as fever, headache, muscle aches, fatigue or difficulty in breathing.

The call followed a cluster of hantavirus infections identified on an international cruise ship, MV Hondius, which departed Argentina for Spain's Canary Islands, carrying 147 individuals.

While the outbreak's overall public health risk in Africa remains low, recent events highlight the importance of vigilance, early detection and effective risk communication, according to experts.

"While the current global risk assessment remains low, our collective responsibility is to ensure that countries are not caught unprepared," said Marie-Roseline Belizaire, director of emergency preparedness and response at the WHO Africa regional office.

"Preparedness should not be equated with panic. It means ensuring the surveillance and response systems remain alert, technical teams are equipped to identify and manage potential cases, and that response measures are timely, proportionate



A sign with a drawing of the rodent that transmits Hantavirus and information on preventive measures is posted at the Ramon Carrillo Zonal Hospital in Bariloche, Argentina on May 12. (AP)

and guided by risk," Belizaire added. The experts further emphasized the vital need to maintain clean liv-

ing spaces, store food securely, seal entry points to prevent rodent access and use gloves and disinfectant

when handling rodent waste.

The briefing provided an overview of hantavirus epidemiology, transmission pathways, clinical presentation and prevention strategies to African health authorities and professionals, outbreak responders, surveillance teams, and other stakeholders.

Hantaviruses are carried by rodents and can cause severe disease in humans. People usually get infected through contact with infected rodents or their urine, droppings or saliva.

Meanwhile, a French woman infected in the deadly hantavirus outbreak on a cruise ship is critically ill and being treated with an artificial lung, a doctor at the Paris hospital caring for the sickened passenger said Tuesday. The outbreak has now reached 11 total reported cases, 9 of which have been confirmed.

Three people on the cruise died, including a Dutch couple that health officials believe were the first ex-

posed to the virus while visiting South America.

The French passenger hospitalized in Paris has a severe form of the disease that has caused life-threatening lung and heart problems, said Dr. Xavier Lescure, an infectious disease specialist at Bichat Hospital.

He said the woman is on a life-support device that pumps blood through an artificial lung, providing it with oxygen and returning it to the body. The hope is that the device relieves enough pressure on the lungs and heart to give them some time to recover. Lescure called it "the final stage of supportive care."

With the evacuation of all passengers and many crew members completed, the MV Hondius is now sailing back to the Netherlands, where it will be cleaned and disinfected.

The director of the World Health Organization said confirmed and suspected cases have only been reported among the cruise ship's passengers or crew.



A technician draws blood at a women's clinic in Jackson, Miss, on Dec 17, 2021. (AP)

PCOS renamed to PMOS in global shift for women's health

WASHINGTON, May 13, (AP): A hormonal condition affecting 1 in 8 women around the world just got a new name in hopes of improving care. It is now called polycystic ovary syndrome instead of polycystic ovary syndrome.

Researchers and supporters of the change said the old name, often shortened to PCOS, is inaccurate. It reduced a complex hormonal or endocrine disorder to a misunderstanding about cysts and a focus on ovaries, contributing to missed diagnoses and inadequate treatment, said the Endocrine Society, a global group of physicians and scientists.

"The thought behind that is that

one, there's no cysts in the ovary, so it's very confusing," said Dr. Melanie Cree, one of the authors of the Lancet article and a pediatric endocrinology expert at the University of Colorado Anschutz. "The hope was that with a more comprehensive and accurate name change, that it would start to enable and push better care."

The name change - made after 14 years of collaboration between experts and patients - was published in The Lancet on Tuesday.

The condition is characterized by fluctuations in hormones that can affect weight, metabolic and mental health, the reproductive system and the skin.

'Ambivalent wording is a good sign'

Health advice all over social media. Here's how to vet claims

WASHINGTON, May 13, (AP): Health and wellness advice is available in abundance on social media - from trendy to informative to straight-up disinformation - and you're far from alone in seeing it.

A new survey by the Pew Research Center finds that about 4 in 10 US adults - and around half of those under 50 - get health information from social media or podcasts.

Researchers also looked at the social media profiles of 6,828 health and wellness influencers with at least 100,000 followers. Only about 4 in 10 list a background as a health professional. About one-third called themselves coaches, about 3 in 10 described themselves as entrepreneurs and about 1 in 10 cited their own life experience, like being a parent.

Despite the wide range of expertise, about half of people who get health and wellness information from influencers said the influencers help them better understand their own health, while about one-third said it hasn't made much difference. About 1 in 10 said it made them more confused.

Experts say a bit of skepticism is key to interacting with posts about fitness, mental health and personal health. Here are their tips on how to be a smarter consumer.

Experts said the biggest green flag is when an influencer's credentials are easy to find on their profile. Beware the fill-in-the-blank "coach" who can't prove their training.

Courtney Babilya, a certified medical exercise specialist and personal



Young people use their phones to view social media in Sydney on Nov 8, 2024. (AP)

trainer who has more than 430,000 followers on Instagram, has seen this with maternity content: "Someone has a baby and suddenly they're a pregnancy coach."

"We have to be careful with people who have an experience in one thing and suddenly become a 'coach' on that," she said.

Coach is a business model, not a sign of training. Babilya shares her own experience dealing with chronic illness online, but keeps it separate from her professional advice.

"You do have an obligation to make sure that you are not giving someone a false idea or spreading a message that isn't going to be applicable to everyone," she said.

If it brings up big emotions, pause. For people who can't access care or feel unheard by their doctors, an offbeat opinion could feel like a long-sought answer. The Pew survey found 53% of uninsured people got health information from social media, compared to 38% of those who were insured.

But people who are trying to share good medical information online are not trying to incite fear or surprise, said Dr. Fatima Daoud Yilmaz, an OB-GYN at Stony Brook Medicine in New York, whose popular "Feminine Aisle" video series rates drug store products.

Even if the person has expertise, ask yourself: Are they speaking out-

side the scope of their knowledge? Is what they're saying in line with scientific consensus?

"All opinions are not created equal when it comes to something such as health or medicine or science," said Daoud.

Look out for exaggerated or definitive claims, especially in the first few seconds of the video when influencers are trying hard to grab your attention, added Babilya.

Ambivalent wording is a good sign, said Nedra Glover Tawwab, a practicing therapist and author. In her videos on boundaries and mental health, she couches with "maybe," "sometimes," "perhaps," rather than diagnosing her 1.8 million followers on Instagram.

If you feel like you've found a diagnosis online, that is your sign to seek out a professional, Tawwab said.

People on social media are making money - for some, it is their livelihood.

"It doesn't mean that all of the information that they put out is biased, but it should tell consumers of that information to take it with a grain of salt because they do have financial incentive to be pushing information like this," Daoud said.

Babilya's platform is now a full-time job, and the way she helps support her family. Taking partnerships and brand deals was not an easy decision, but one that makes her work sustainable.

Babilya said she prioritizes being upfront with her audience and making sure her ads are transparently labeled.

Health

China-United States collaboration in health sciences benefits world

BEIJING, May 13, (Xinhua): China-US cooperation in the health sciences has demonstrated resilience in recent years, with vibrant collaboration among researchers and research institutions from both sides.

A recent example is the joint study carried out by Chinese and American researchers that achieved a breakthrough in the anti-aging sector.

A joint research team comprising researchers from China-based Sinopharm International's subsidiary Sinopharm Seragon, Tsinghua University, and US-based Seragon, published preclinical trial data on the novel longevity drug SRN-901 in the journal Drug Design, Development and Therapy.

According to the study, mice treated with SRN-901 showed a one-third extension in median remaining lifespan, a 70-percent slowdown in aging speed, a 30.53-percent reduction in tumor incidence and a decrease of 46 percent in overall mortality risk, with significant rejuvenation in external appearance including skin, fur and musculoskeletal systems.

At the genetic level, SRN-901 significantly upregu-



Meyerhardt

lated beneficial pathways related to DNA repair, mitochondrial autophagy and cellular autophagy, while downregulating pro-aging signaling pathways such as inflammatory responses and apoptosis. It effectively suppressed molecular signatures associated with aging-related diseases including Alzheimer's disease.

This represents one of the latest collaborative achievements by the two countries' researchers, and bears full testament to the strong, enduring vitality of China-US cooperation rooted in the shared interests of global human health.

A report issued in November 2025 by Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, a Washington, DC-based think tank, noted that co-authored publications in health sciences involving Chinese and American researchers have increased significantly over a 10-year period.

Jeffrey Meyerhardt, chief clinical research officer at the institute, said China's medical service standards are among the world's most advanced. The institute hopes both sides will join hands to conduct academic research and clinical cooperation, with the core purpose of supporting each other to provide high-quality medical services for global patients.

David Read, vice president of medical oncology at the institute, said cancer is a global health challenge, and that medical care should know no borders.

Climate



A fisherman tries to navigate while surrounded by an invasive plant called a water hyacinth, also known as Eichhornia crassipes on April 30, on the outskirts of Nueva Venecia, Colombia. (AP)

Invasive plant threatens livelihoods in Colombia's largest coastal wetland

NUEVA VENECIA, Colombia, May 13, (AP): Leaning over the side of a small speedboat, Jhon Cantillo scoops up a thick clump of bright green vegetation, holding it up before gesturing toward the horizon, where the plant spreads across the waters as far as the eye can see.

From above, the plant forms dense, almost carpet-like mats that stretch across the surface. Up close, its long strands extend deep below the water, with roots reaching toward the lagoon bed, making it difficult to remove completely.

The scenes are unfolding in Colombia's Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta, a vast coastal wetland on the Caribbean coast about 30 kilometers (19 miles) from the city of Santa Marta. What was until recently a lifeline for fishing and transport is now being choked by dense vegeta-

tion, turning it into what he describes as an unfolding environmental crisis.

"What we're seeing here today is a problem. One that affects not only movement or fishing, but the community as a whole," said 32-year-old Cantillo, a local environmental and social leader from Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta.

Over the past year, residents say the fast-growing invasive plant native to Asia - Hydrilla verticillata - has spread rapidly across the wetland after first appearing around mid-2025. The dense vegetation, which some locals refer to as "horse tail," is choking fishing routes, clogging waterways and restricting access to areas where residents collect water, while driving up costs in communities that rely almost entirely on the lagoon for their livelihoods.

The Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta is one of Colombia's most important fishing ecosystems, serving as a nursery for many species.

In Nueva Venecia and Buenavista - two isolated fishing communities built almost entirely on wooden stilts over the water - large swaths of open water are now covered by the invasive plant. The communities themselves are largely informal and exist outside many basic state services.

Nueva Venecia - the older of the two, founded in 1847 as a fishing settlement - is home to roughly 4,500 people living in about 500 colorful houses. Buenavista, which emerged in the 1950s, has around 1,150 residents and 163 similarly vibrant homes, where residents travel between houses, shops and schools by small boats or canoes.

Dengue cases rise in Sri Lanka amid monsoon risk: officials

COLOMBO, May 13, (Xinhua): Sri Lanka has recorded 27,754 dengue cases and 14 deaths so far this year, with infections reported from all 25 districts, health officials said on Tuesday.

The National Dengue Control Unit said the number of confirmed cases has increased compared with 2025. The highest number of infections has been reported from the Western Province, while Matara, Galle, Ratnapura, Kalutara and Kandy have also recorded significant case numbers during the first four months of 2026.

Community Medical Specialist Priscilla Samaraweera of the National Dengue Control Unit said at a media briefing held at the health ministry that the start of monsoon rains could further increase transmission.

Officials said breeding has increased more in schools, workplaces, religious institutions and government and private institutions than in households. Improper waste disposal was identified as a key factor contributing to the spread of dengue, emphasizing the need for strict public cooperation in prevention.



This 2003 photo provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows a female Aedes albopictus mosquito acquiring a blood meal from a human host. Dengue, a tropical illness caused by a virus, is spread by Aedes mosquitoes, a type of warm weather insect that is expanding its geographic reach because of climate change, experts say. (AP)

Gujarat pacers raze Hyderabad for 86 runs

Rabada, Holder lead pace demolition in 82-run rout

AHMEDABAD, India, May 13, (AP): Gujarat Titans dismissed the batting powerhouse of Sunrisers Hyderabad for its lowest score of 86 runs for fifth straight win in the Indian Premier League.

Pacers Kagiso Rabada (3-28) and Jason Holder (3-20) did a lot of damage while Prasad Krishna took 2-23 in his return game to bowl out Hyderabad in 14.5 overs in Gujarat's 82-run victory.

Half centuries from Sai Sudharsan (61) and Washington Sundar (50) earlier carried Gujarat to 168-5 on a difficult pitch where fast bowlers picked up 14 of the 15 wickets.

"We knew if we bowled well, we would always be in the game," Gujarat captain Shubman Gill said. "The way Sai and Washi batted, getting us close to 170, and then the way we bowled in the power-play, kudos to both of our bowlers. It is all about being consistent and being ruthless."

The four-pronged Gujarat pace attack rolled over Hyderabad. Mohammed Siraj and Rabada rocked Hyderabad early in the chase when Travis Head was dismissed in Siraj's first over for a four-ball duck and Rabada picked up three wickets in his unchanged spell of four



Gujarat Titans' Washington Sundar plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Gujarat Titans and Sunrisers Hyderabad, in Ahmedabad, India. (AP)

overs with the new ball. Rabada with a six over extra cover onto his stumps, and Ishan Kishan gave wicketkeeper Jos Buttler one of his four catches when Rabada found the outside edge in

the fourth over.

Ravichandran Smaran, playing in only his third game of the season, offered a regulation catch to Gill at mid-on as Hyderabad lost four wickets for 32 runs inside the batting powerplay.

Heinrich Klaasen (14) became the second batter after Sudharsan to cross the 500-run mark this season. Klaasen was one of Holder's three victims that effectively ended Hyderabad's hopes.

Rashid Khan, who was introduced into the attack in the 15th over, capped a perfect home game for Gujarat when he had Praful Hinge stumped by a busy Buttler to seal the victory.

Gujarat also had a nervy power play against the pace of Hinge (2-17) when Gill couldn't control a swipe against the bowler and Buttler got an edge while attempting a leg side scoop over the wicket-keeper's head.

But Sudharsan waited for loose deliveries to hit five fours and two sixes overall in his sixth half century of the season. Sundar smashed seven fours and a six in his 33-ball knock.

"Thought they (Gujarat pacers) bowled really well," said Hyderabad captain Pat Cummins, who top-scored for his side with 19 off nine balls and also took 1-20 in his four overs. "Our batting has been fantastic, so not reading too much into that. Guys have gone really well (and) this happens in T20 cricket."

Dirt to grass transformation begins

SoFi Stadium scrambles to green World Cup stage

INGLEWOOD, Calif., May 13, (AP): With 30 days to go until its first match, Los Angeles is ready with transportation and food for the World Cup. The playing surface? Not just yet.

The U.S. men open at SoFi Stadium (to be known as Los Angeles Stadium) against Paraguay on June 12, the first of eight matches to be played at the NFL stadium in Inglewood.

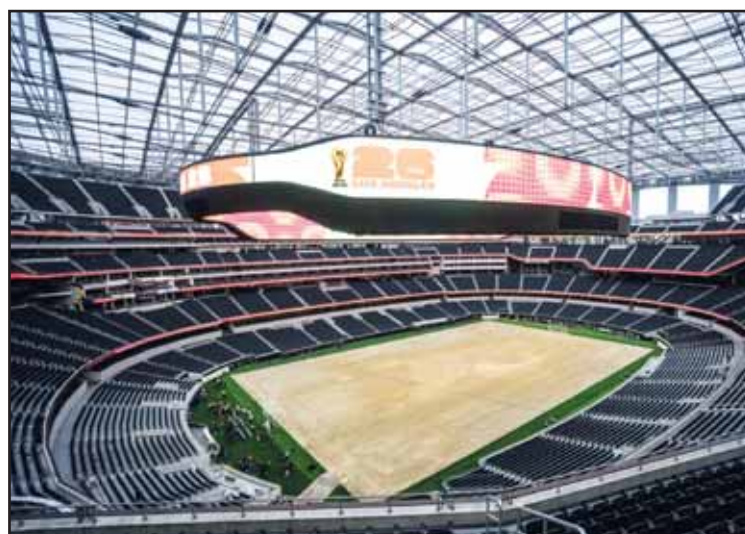
The field was all dirt on Tuesday. That changes Wednesday, when sod arrives after a 1,600-mile trip in refrigerated trucks from Washington state. It'll be installed over two days.

"This surface is the players' stage," said Otto Benedict, senior vice president of facilities and campus operation for SoFi Stadium.

Construction on the field began April 13 after the stadium hosted a Monster Jam event in which 12,000-pound trucks competed in racing, skills and freestyle competitions.

The stadium modified the field shared by the NFL's Los Angeles Rams and Los Angeles Chargers in two phases. Auxiliary space and wider dimensions were created by removing corner seats to meet FIFA specifications, and a sophisticated irrigation system was installed to maintain the grass.

"To be the place where the energy first ignites, where the home crowd gets to set the tone for the rest of the tournament is a respon-



A general view shows SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, Calif. during a media event for the upcoming FIFA World Cup soccer tournament. (AP)

sibility we don't take lightly," Benedict said.

Construction, landscape, grass and engineering crews were applauded by local World Cup organizers and community ambassador Magic Johnson, who pointed out his suite where he'll be watching.

"When you think about the financial impact it's going to have on Los Angeles, it's going to be amazing," said Johnson, who is a co-owner of LAFC in Major League Soccer and the Washington Spirit of the National Women's Soccer League.

Already coming down was signage advertising the stadium's usual sponsors.



Menu offerings for the upcoming FIFA World Cup soccer tournament, are displayed during a media event at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, Calif. (AP)

Tours of the stadium during the tournament are being sold for \$86.50. Still available are premium seating, suites and hospitality packages.

Fans can choose from a variety of

food and drink options. Among the items on display Tuesday was salsa verde aguachile with lime marinated shrimp, kettle cooked crispy pickles, stone fruit panzanella, spiced lamb rack, smoked salmon mousse, petite beef burgers, tune poke and aged ribeye cap with bordelaise and mashed potatoes.

Desserts include a World Cup trophy made of chocolate mousse, raspberry, chocolate crunch and chocolate sponge and a soccer ball filled with vanilla mousse, peach, strawberry crunch and vanilla sponge.

Metro debuted special edition TAP cards featuring three FIFA-themed designs, 17 country-specific designs, four FIFA collector cards, including a light-up card, and a collector's box.

"We want to provide a system that is safe, fast and fun," Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins said.

Metro is working with 11 other transit lines in the region to offer direct-to-stadium bus service for \$3.75 roundtrip from 15 park-and-ride lots in Los Angeles and Orange counties. Reserved parking lots range in price from \$55 to more than \$100. Fans can access 300 dedicated buses to every match in an effort to avoid disrupting service to Metro's regular riders.

The official FIFA Fan Festival will be held June 11-14 at Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum with big screens showing games. Ten fan zones around Los Angeles County will host activities and watch parties.



In this file photo, Australia's Sophie Molineux, center, celebrates with teammate the wicket of New Zealand's Suzie Bates during the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup match between New Zealand and Australia at Holkar Cricket Stadium in Indore, India. (AP)

Hamilton earns surprise call-up

Molineux to steer Australia at women's T20 World Cup

MELBOURNE, Australia, May 13, (AP): Australia has announced its first World Cup women's cricket squad since the retirement of Alyssa Healy, with Ashleigh Gardner confirmed Wednesday as one of two vice-captains after being overlooked for the captaincy earlier this year.

Healy announced in January that she planned to retire following a series against India. Healy ended her one-day international career in March with a score of 158 when Australia comfortably beat India.

Spinner Sophie Molineux will lead the Australia squad for the Twenty20 World Cup in England and Wales from June 12 to July 5. The tournament features 12 teams competing in 33 matches across seven venues, with the final at Lord's.

New Zealand is the defending champion after having beaten South Africa by 32 runs in the United Arab Emirates in 2024. In 2023, Australia won its sixth title and third in a row by defeating South Africa in South Africa by 19 runs.

Australia opens this year's tournament on June 13 against South Africa at Old Trafford.

Left-arm fast bowler Lucy Hamilton surprisingly replaced Darcie Brown, who has 34 wickets in 41

T20 matches. Grace Harris and all-rounder Annabel Sutherland return to the squad.

Australia selector Shawn Flegler praised Molineux for making an immediate impact as captain following Healy's retirement.

"These squads are never easy to select but we're confident with the balance and stability we've got across the group. It's an experienced group and one we believe is capable of winning the World Cup," Flegler said.

He said Brown was "unlucky to miss out."

"The decision was based on the conditions we're expecting and the makeup of the side," Flegler added. "With at least six right-arm pace options in the mix and raw pace expected to be less effective, we opted to go with Lucy Hamilton, who offers something different as a left-arm quick."

Australia squad: Nicola Carey, Ashleigh Gardner (vice captain), Kim Garth, Lucy Hamilton, Grace Harris, Alana King, Phoebe Litchfield, Tahlia McGrath (vice-captain), Sophie Molineux (captain), Beth Mooney, Ellyse Perry, Megan Schutt, Annabel Sutherland, Georgia Voll, Georgia Wareham, Tahlia Wilson (traveling reserve)

Six players, team doctor banned

Georgian rugby hit by massive doping scandal

DUBLIN, May 13, (AP): Six players from Georgia's rugby team have been handed long bans - including one for 11 years - for their involvement in a urine-swapping scheme to cheat anti-doping tests in one of the sport's biggest corruption scandals.

The case was described by World Rugby as "the most extensive anti-doping investigation ever undertaken in rugby."

It's resulted in Georgia's entire anti-doping agency being replaced with new staff as the World Anti-Doping Agency checks if other sports were affected in the former Soviet nation.

Former captain Merab Sharikadze was given the 11-year ban, while Giorgi Chkoidze was banned for six years, and Lasha Khmaladze, Otar Lashkhi and Miriani Modebadze received three-year suspensions. Lasha Lomidze was banned for nine months.

Nutsa Shamatava, the national team's doctor, was banned for nine years for her role in the scandal, where she provided advance notice of upcoming out-of-competition doping controls to players in group chats.

Georgia had been a rugby success story. It has the top-ranked men's team in Europe outside of the Six Nations, and attracts big crowds to home games, bucking a trend of rugby struggling to put down roots outside its traditional heartlands.

World Rugby said it discovered irregularities in urine samples in the run-up to the



In this file photo, Georgia's Merab Sharikadze during the Rugby World Cup Pool C match between Georgia and Portugal at the Stadium de Toulouse in Toulouse, France. (AP)

men's Rugby World Cup in France in 2023 and alerted the World Anti-Doping Agency. Three of the six players were named in the World Cup squad. A fourth withdrew "on medical grounds" before the tournament, World Rugby said at the time.

Their joint investigation found the six players "engaged in swapping of urine samples to avoid the risk of testing positive for substances

that they believed were prohibited, the former men's first team doctor provided advance notice of testing and other members of staff arguably were or ought to be have been aware that such advance notice was provided," read a summary in the independent report of the case.

World Rugby said the investigation revealed no evidence that the urine samples were substituted to conceal the use of performance-enhancing substances.

Instead, the governing body said there was "credible evidence" to support assertions by the six players that they concealed cannabis and a painkiller, tramadol.

The Georgia Rugby Union accepted a misconduct charge. World Rugby added, and agreed to an undisclosed financial penalty and to implement "a roadmap of various reforms and measures in its anti-doping training and education to mitigate the risk of any future issues of this nature arising."

WADA said the Georgia government has "withdrawn its recognition" of the national anti-doping agency after its employees were accused of helping to provide advance notice of tests. A new body is being set up with "entirely different personnel," WADA added.

Other sports could come under scrutiny, too. "We are now in the next phase of this investigation as we assess whether the issues in Georgian rugby go beyond that of one sport," said Günter Younger, WADA's director of intelligence and investigations.

Best of the Rest

Gutierrez scores late penalty: Amanda Gutierrez converted a penalty kick in stoppage time and the Boston Legacy came from behind to beat the Orlando Pride 2-1 on Tuesday night.

Pride player Luana was called for a handball in the box after a VAR check eight minutes into stoppage time. Gutierrez converted the penalty, beating goalkeeper Anna Moorhouse.

It was the Legacy's second straight home victory. Orlando went up 1-0 in the 14th minute when Marta converted a penalty kick. It was the Brazilian's 15th career regular-season goal from the spot to lead the league. She went to the right of Legacy goalkeeper Casey Murphy. (AP)

Mexico City's F1 track to get \$12m upgrade: Mexican Grand Prix organizers have announced an investment of 202 million pesos (around \$12 million) in the Autódromo Hermanos Rodríguez track.

Mexico City will host the F1 race on Nov. 1 as part of an agreement signed in April 2025 that guarantees races until 2028. "This investment represents our commitment to preserving the Autódromo Hermanos Rodríguez as a world-class venue," Federico González Compeán, managing director of the Mexican GP, said Tuesday. "Ensuring its international (certification) and continuing to raise its technical standards is fundamental for Mexico to remain part of the Formula 1 calendar for years to come." (AP)

Spurs dismantle Wolves for slim series lead

Wembanyama unstoppable

SAN ANTONIO, May 13, (AP): Victor Wembanyama atoned for his first career ejection with another huge performance, finishing with 27 points, 17 rebounds, five assists and three blocks as the San Antonio Spurs beat the Minnesota Timberwolves 126-97 to take a 3-2 lead in their second-round series.

At 22 years old, Wembanyama is the third-youngest player in NBA history to post that stat line in a playoff game, trailing only Magic Johnson (20) and Luka Doncic (21).

"I was fresh, feeling good," Wembanyama said. "Honestly, it's hard to tell. It was just Game 5. Obviously, I'm going to be excited (and) to have butterflies. So, excitement is not something abnormal at this point in the playoffs."

Keldon Johnson had 21 points, De'Aaron Fox added 18 and Stephon Castle had 17 as San Antonio moved a game away from the Western Conference finals. The Spurs can advance to face Oklahoma City with a victory in Game 6 on Friday in Minneapolis.

Anthony Edwards, who was limited to eight points in the first half, finished with 20 points for Minnesota. Julius Randle and Jaden McDaniels added 17 points apiece.

Wembanyama returned after being ejected early in the second quarter of Minnesota's 114-109 victory Sunday during Game 4 in Minneapolis. Wembanyama received a Flagrant 2 foul after elbowing Naz Reid in the throat.

Both teams continued to hammer each other, with Reid receiving a technical foul for pushing Wembanyama in the back on a Minnesota free throw with 2:24 left in the first half.

"I felt like, to start the game, we knew it was going to be physical," Castle said. "So, just making that a point of emphasis and trying to keep them off the offensive glass. I feel like we started the game off well and that's where our runs came from. But obviously they're a good team. They're going to go on their own run. So, just try not to hang our head when that does happen and be able to respond and spark another run for ourselves."

The foul by Reid fired up Wembanyama, not that he needed any additional motivation.

Wembanyama was 6 for 8 from the field and 2 for 3 on 3-pointers in scoring 18 points in the opening quarter.

"I think it's super important for us the way we start the game, because it sets the tone," Wembanyama said. "Now the challenge is to do it for 48 minutes."

The Timberwolves opened the third quarter on a 14-2 run to tie the game at 61 after trailing by 18 points in the first half. Minnesota tipped away three attempted alley-oop passes to Wembanyama before they reached the 7-foot-4 post.



San Antonio Spurs forward Victor Wembanyama (1) grabs a rebound over Minnesota Timberwolves forward Julius Randle (30) during the second half of Game 5 of an NBA basketball second-round playoffs series in Minneapolis. (AP)

The Spurs recaptured a double-digit lead in the third spurred by Johnson's block on Rudy Gobert's attempted dunk followed by his short jumper after bodying Edwards under the rim.

"We went away from what was working," Timberwolves coach Chris Finch said. "Our defense just cratered. We gave up 30 points. I think, in the last six minutes of the third quarter. A lot of it was just ball contain, ball contain stuff."

San Antonio held its opponent under 100 points for the fifth time in 10

games this postseason.

"I thought we did a good job of having resistance early in the clock," Spurs coach Mitch Johnson said. "They've shown as the series has gone on, they've tried to play faster at times and they're tough when they get downhill. I think when we've had better starting spots, more connectivity at the start of possessions, I think it's really helped us be on a string and be organized and connected defensively."

Coaches square up to each other

Southampton advances to playoff final as spying controversy lingers

LONDON, May 13, (AP): Southampton brushed off a spying controversy to advance past Middlesbrough after extra time in the Championship playoffs and get to within one win of a return to the Premier League.

In a heated second leg that saw both coaches square up to each other at one point, Southampton rallied for a 2-1 victory at its home stadium at St. Mary's and seal a win on aggregate by the same score. The decisive goal - scored by Shea Charles when his cross curled into the bottom corner - came with four minutes left of extra time.

The two games were played under a cloud, with Southampton having been charged by the English Football League with a breach of its regulations following accusations that unauthorized filming of Middlesbrough's training took place last week.

The EFL requested that an independent disciplinary commission undertake a hearing "at the earliest opportunity" but Southampton asked for more time to complete an internal review into the issue, meaning any punishment would likely be meted out before the playoff final with Hull on May 23.

That final is the richest one-off game in world soccer, with



Southampton's Ross Stewart, center partially obscured, scores their first goal of the game during the EFL Championship play off semifinal soccer game between Southampton and Middlesbrough in, Southampton, England. (AP)

the winner assured a windfall of at least 200 million pounds (\$270 million) in future earnings via things like prize money and broadcast revenue in the Premier League.

Tensions between Southampton and Middlesbrough boiled over at the end of the first half when

the respective coaches - Tonda Eckert and Kim Hellberg - got in each other's faces on the touchline while being spoken to by the referee. After the first leg, which finished 0-0, Hellberg said he "couldn't believe my eyes or ears" when he heard about the spying allegations and accused South-

ampton of trying to "cheat."

Following another first-half exchange - between Middlesbrough's Luke Ayling and Southampton's Taylor Harwood-Bellis - the BBC and Sky Sports reported that Ayling accused Harwood-Bellis of using discriminatory language.

More than twice any other player

Messi tops MLS earnings with \$28 mln total compensation

NEW YORK, May 13, (AP): Lionel Messi more than doubled his salary to \$25 million in his new contract with Inter Miami and earns more than twice as much as the second-highest-paid player in Major League Soccer, Los Angeles FC's Son Heung-min.

Messi's new contract includes \$25 million in base salary and \$28,333,333 in guaranteed compensation, the MLS Players Association said Tuesday in its first release of 2026 salaries. He earns more than the payrolls of 28 of the other 29 MLS teams.

Miami's \$54.6 million payroll is more than \$20 million higher than LAFC, which is second at \$32.7 million, and nearly five times as much as Philadelphia's league-low \$11.7 million. Miami's payroll is up from \$46.8 million at the start of last season.

Toronto cut payroll to \$21.4 million from \$34.1 million at the start of 2025, and LAFC boosted its spending to \$32.7 million from \$22.4 million.

Total league compensation was \$631 million and the average guaranteed compensation of \$688,816 on April 16 was up 8.9% from \$632,809 as of last Oct. 1.

Messi's initial MLS contract, agreed to in July 2023, included a \$12 million base salary and annualized guaranteed compensation of \$20,446,667. Messi agreed last October to a three-year contract through the 2028 season, then led the team to its first MLS title.



Messi

An attacker who turns 39 next month, Messi is captain of defending World Cup champion Argentina and is expected to play in his sixth World Cup. Messi has 59 goals in 64 regular-season games with Miami, including nine in 11 matches this season. He led MLS with 29 regular-season goals last season and won his second straight MVP award.

His salary figures are for his MLS contract and include any marketing bonus and agent's fees but do not account for any additional agreements with the team or its affiliates, or for any performance bonuses.

Son is second at \$10,368,750 in base salary and \$11,152,852 in total compensation, the same as his figures last season. The 33-year-old winger joined LA last August.

Midfielder Rodrigo de Paul, who signed with Miami last summer, is third at \$7,569,000 in salary and \$9,688,320 in total compensation, followed by Atlanta winger Miguel Almirón (\$6,056,000, \$7,871,000), San Diego winger Hirving Lozano (\$6 million, \$9,333,333), New York Red Bulls winger Emil Forsberg (\$5,405,000, \$6,035,625), Nashville forward Sam Surridge (\$5.27 million, \$5,933,000), LA Galaxy midfielder Riqui Puig (\$5,125,000, \$5,792,188), Vancouver attacker Thomas Müller (\$5,000,004, \$5,152,504) and Chicago winger Jonathan Bamba (\$5 million, \$5,581,806).

Cincinnati defender Miles Robinson topped MLS players in contention for spots on the U.S. World Cup roster at \$3.5 million in base salary and \$3.95 million in total compensation, followed by New England goalkeeper Matt Turner (\$1,776,136, \$1,942,886), Seattle midfielder Cristian Roldan (\$1,645,000, \$1,766,000).

Florentino Pérez seeks another term

Edgy president calls for new elections at Madrid

MADRID, May 13, (AP): An edgy Real Madrid president Florentino Pérez confronted journalists in a rare news conference on Tuesday and claimed he was the victim of an "organized campaign" to unseat him.

Pérez called for new club elections and told his opponents to present themselves and challenge him and his board of directors.

"I want to talk about all those I believe are behind this campaign ... some people are moving in the shadows to run for elections. Well, let them run," he said. "This is the opportunity I am giving them."

Usually calm and soft-spoken, Pérez appeared agitated and got into discussions with the media during the hastily scheduled news conference at the club's training center, two days after Madrid lost 2-0 at Barcelona and saw its Catalan rival clinch its second straight Spanish league title.

"I made this decision because of this absurd situation of campaigns against the interests of Real Madrid and especially against me," the 79-year-old Pérez said. "The results haven't been the greatest, but that has happened other times before. But they are taking advantage to attack me."

He said the campaign against him was being "orchestrated by bad journalists and non journalists," and named a few newspapers and journalists.

"Some journalists and people want to destroy Real Madrid," he said. "I'll always defend the interest of the Madrid members."

The president spoke after a meeting of the club's board of directors.

Madrid has endured a second consecutive season without a major trophy, despite having

France star Kylian Mbappé in the squad.

Pérez did not speak in detail about the team's results, saying his appearance was solely to defend Madrid club members from attacks. He did not want to talk about a potential coaching change when asked about the possibility of José Mourinho returning next season.

"I share the frustration that this year we haven't been able to win anything," he said. "I am the first to want to win everything. Let me remind you that, under my presidency, we have won 66 titles in soccer and basketball: 37 in soccer and 29 in basketball."

Pérez said the leak of the fighting between players during training last week - which led to Federico Valverde and Aurélien Tchouaméni being fined 500,000 euros (\$586,000) each - was worse than the actual fight itself.

"It's not the first time that players fight with each other," Pérez said. "It happens almost every season. But someone leaked it for the first time. And we know who it was. It should have



Real Madrid president Florentino Pérez gives a press conference in Madrid. (AP)

stayed within the club." He gave no further details.

Pérez dismissed rumors that he was tired of the job, or sick, saying they had been spread by his detractors.

"They said I have cancer and that it was terminal," he said. "It was the most undignified thing that has ever happened to me. They said I didn't go out, that I couldn't walk."

Pérez is a highly successful businessman from the construction sector who is in his seventh term in two different stints as Madrid president. His current term would end in 2029.

"I want to assure those who are concerned about me that I continue to preside over Real Madrid and my company every single day," he said.

Pérez spoke for more than an hour while answering questions.

"I could stay here all afternoon," he said at the end. "I had a really good time."

Pérez said he will take "an important dossier" to UEFA about rival Barcelona and its payments of millions of euros to a company that belonged to José María Enríquez Negreira, the former vice president of Spanish soccer's refereeing committee.

Barcelona has consistently denied any wrongdoing or conflict of interest, saying it paid for technical reports on referees but never tried to influence their decisions in games. Negreira has also denied any wrongdoing.

"Three years ago, we learned about a corruption case known as the Negreira Case," Pérez said. "There are no precedents in the history of world soccer. It is the biggest scandal in history and a case that remains unresolved and ongoing."

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Spain's Igor Arrieta Lizarraga celebrates on the podium winning the fifth stage of the Giro d'Italia cycling race, from Praia a Mare to Potenza, Italy. (AP)

Sports

Kuwait opens Gulf Games campaign with strong showing

Six bronze won

DOHA, May 13, (KUNA): Kuwait athletes opened their Gulf Games campaign in Doha with six bronze medals, highlighted by strong performances in swimming and taekwondo.

Swimmer Saud Al-Shamroukh claimed bronze in the 800-meter free-style, while Khalid Al-Otaibi secured bronze in the 200-meter individual medley. Mohammed Al-Otaibi added another medal in the pool after finishing third in the 200-meter butterfly.

In taekwondo, Esraa Malallah earned Kuwait's first medal of the Games with bronze in the women's under-67 kg category, while Abdulwahab Batti captured bronze in the men's under-80 kg division.

Meanwhile, billiards player Suleiman Ghuloom advanced to the semi-finals of the 10-ball competition and is set to face a Saudi opponent on Wednesday.

In women's 3x3 basketball, Kuwait edged Oman 13-12 before narrowly losing to Qatar 14-13, with both results enough to secure a semi-final berth. The men's team, however, suffered defeats against Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Qatar.

The fourth Gulf Games, running from May 11 to 22 in Doha, feature around 1,400 athletes from the six Gulf nations competing across a wide range of sports including handball, athletics, swimming, taekwondo, shooting, volleyball, padel, fencing, boxing, karate, billiards, equestrian, bowling, and 3x3 basketball.

Kuwait's Sulaiman Ghuloom secured third place in the 10-ball singles event of the snooker competition at the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Games in Doha.

The result raised Kuwait's tally at the Games to six bronze medals, according to delegation chief Abdullah Shaaban, who praised the determination and competitive spirit shown by Kuwaiti athletes throughout the tournament.

Shaaban noted that the athletes successfully completed their preparations despite the geopolitical challenges facing the region.



Esraa Malallah and Abdulwahab Batti celebrate with the national flag as their coach looks on.



A Kuwaiti celebrates on the podium.

'It will be a great success'

World Cup preparations on track, says FIFA official

BEIJING, May 13, (Xinhua): FIFA Secretary General Mattias Grafstrom said that preparations for the 2026 FIFA World Cup remain on track, while also expressing optimism about the tournament's expansion to 48 teams.

The 2026 World Cup, which will be co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico, is scheduled to kick off on June 11 and will be the first edition featuring 48 teams instead of 32.

"The preparations are going very well. We're very excited. Only a few days left for the tournament to start," Grafstrom said during his visit to China.

"The first World Cup with 48 teams, I think it will be a great success. 16 more teams will have the opportunity to enjoy the World Cup experience," he added.

The expanded format is expected to give more nations access to football's biggest tournament, particularly from Asia, Africa and North America, although it has also drawn debate over fixture congestion, player workload and the overall balance of the competition.

Grafstrom said the wider participation could have a significant long-term impact on football development.

"The impact of the World Cup on a country, on its grassroots football, professional level, and fan base is truly difficult to quantify," he said. "We're very much looking forward to seeing this tournament in the United States, Mexico and Canada, it's going to be very exciting. And I'm sure it will create a lot of passion all around the world, and in China, of course." During his visit to China's National Football Youth Training Center, Grafstrom also praised China's five-tier youth academy system, which covers national, regional, city and county levels.

"China is such a big country, you have the national center, but



In this file photo, the FIFA World Cup Trophy is displayed during the FIFA World Cup 2026 playoff draw in Zurich, Switzerland. (AP)

you need to work in the regions as well, and also in the cities and the counties," he said. "I really want to congratulate the Chinese Football Association and the government of China for setting up this structure." Grafstrom also expressed hope that China's youth teams would qualify more regularly for FIFA tournaments.

"China has qualified for the U-17 Women's World Cup yesterday, and there will be a big game for the men's under-17 team tonight," he said.

"Now we have the under-17 World Cup every year, both for the boys and the girls. I think this is a great tool as well to motivate the kids to have the opportunity to participate every year in the World Cup. So we hope to see China there, both the boys and the girls." "And of course, we will be working closely and also investing in the development of the game here together with the CFA. And we are very excited about it, this is the main reason for our visit," he added.

Best of the Rest

Curaçao rehires Dick Advocaat: Dutch veteran Dick Advocaat is coming back to take Curaçao to the World Cup and set a record as the oldest-ever coach in the tournament's 96-year history.

The 78-year-old Advocaat's return three months after he resigned citing a family health issue was confirmed by the Curaçao soccer federation, one day after Fred Rutten left the job.

"Discussions between (the federation) and Dick Advocaat regarding the further details of this appointment are currently ongoing," it said, with "the aim of ensuring stability, clarity, and continuity around the national team." When Curaçao makes its World Cup debut against Germany on June 14 in Houston, Advocaat will be seven years older than Otto Rehhagel was at 71 coaching Greece at the 2010 World Cup. It will also be Advocaat's third World Cup with a third different team: His native Netherlands in 1994 and South Korea in 2006. (AP)

Betis returns to Champions League: Real Betis is back in the Champions League after a 20-year absence.

The Spanish club beat Elche 2-1 at home in the Spanish league to seal fifth place and the final Champions League spot.

Betis last played in the Champions League in the 2005-06 season, when it finished third in its group behind Liverpool and Chelsea.

With two rounds remaining, Manuel Pellegrini's Betis opened a seven-point gap to sixth-place Celta Vigo, which earlier Tuesday lost 3-2 to Levante at home.

Cucho Hernández put Betis ahead in the ninth minute and Pablo Fornals scored the winner in the 68th after Héctor Fort had equalized for Elche shortly before halftime.

Elche, which played a man down from the 49th after Léo Pétrot was sent off, stayed close to the relegation zone. (AP)



Sulaiman Ghuloom celebrates after securing the bronze medal in 10-ball singles event of the snooker competition at the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Games in Doha.

Race goes down to the wire

Ronaldo title dream delayed by derby heartbreak

RIYADH, May 13, (AP): For Cristiano Ronaldo, winning a first league title in Saudi Arabia isn't coming easy.

The Portugal superstar was a matter of seconds away from securing the victory needed to clinch the Saudi Pro League with Al-Nassr, with his team leading fierce rival Al-Hilal 1-0 in the eighth and final minute of stoppage time. With Ronaldo looking nervous on the bench - the 41-year-old striker had been substituted by that point - and some Al-Nassr fans hardly able to watch, Al-Hilal sent a long throw-in into the area and Al-Nassr goalkeeper Bento, in an attempt to catch the ball, fumbled it backward and into his own net.

The match finished 1-1, the title race was still alive and Ronaldo looked distraught as he sat in the dugout, consoled by teammates.

"The dream is close," Ronaldo wrote in a post to his more than 100 million followers on X after the match. "Heads up, we have one more step to take!"

Al-Nassr hasn't won the Saudi league since 2019, more than three



Cristiano Ronaldo drives past two defender during the Saudi Clasico between Al-Nassr and Al-Hilal.

years before Ronaldo joined the club in a game-changing signing for the country as it looked to become a major player in world soccer.

That drought is still likely to end,

despite the derby drama.

Al-Nassr leads Al-Hilal by five points and will guarantee winning the league by beating relegation-threatened Damac at home in the

final round on May 21.

Al-Hilal has two games remaining, the first against Neom on Saturday. Win that and the second-place team will be two points behind Al-Nassr heading into the final round.

By then, Ronaldo - the five-time world player of the year - might have won his first major trophy with Al-Nassr, which faces Japan's Gamba Osaka in the Champions League Two final in Riyadh on Sunday.

After the club season finishes, Ronaldo will head to a sixth World Cup with Portugal - and is free to play in the team's first game after FIFA, in a rare move, deferred two games of a three-match ban for his red card in a qualifying game. He has said this will definitely be his last attempt at winning the biggest prize in soccer, but it remains unclear for how long he will continue playing.

Ronaldo still has one more year remaining on his deal with Al-Nassr and is closing in on 1,000 career goals.

Reyna pleased with landmark goal in Germany ahead of team selection

White ruled out of World Cup with medial ligament damage

LONDON, May 13, (AP): Arsenal defender Ben White is out of contention for the World Cup after sustaining medial ligament damage.

The Premier League leader confirmed the injury and said the England international would be out for the rest of the season.

"Our medical team are now managing Ben's recovery and rehabilitation programme," Arsenal said in a statement. It said the aim was for White to be ready for the start of its preseason preparations.

White was injured in the first half of Sunday's 1-0 win against West Ham.

He returned to the national team in March fol-

lowing a near four-year absence after walking out on the squad midway through the last World Cup. He played in friendly games against Uruguay and Japan and was in contention to be part of coach Thomas Tuchel's squad for the World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

White is one of a number of high-profile players to sustain injuries ahead of this year's tournament staged in June and July.

Gio Reyna says he's happy to score a goal which ended a year-long scoreless run as he tries to make

his case for a spot on the United States' roster for the World Cup.

Reyna scored on a first-time shot off a pass from Rocco Reitz in his team Borussia Moenchengladbach's 3-1 loss to Augsburg in the Bundesliga. It was the American attacking midfielder's first club goal since January 2025, when he was still at Borussia Dortmund.

"It's been a little while but in the end I'm just happy to score," Reyna told reporters. "In the end it didn't matter too much but more than that it was good to get a good chunk of minutes and I felt like I had a pretty good performance overall."