



HH Amir, HH Crown Prince receive HH Prime Minister Page 2



Al-Arabi storms to Crown Prince Cup glory Page 16

## RENEWED WAR FEARS AS U.S., IRAN TRADE WARNINGS

# Kuwait blasts Saudi drone attack

Regional tensions spike after UAE nuclear site incident

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (Agencies): Kuwait on Monday strongly condemned a drone attack launched from Iraqi airspace targeting Saudi Arabia, describing it as a flagrant violation of international law and UN Security Council resolutions that threatens regional security and stability.**

In a statement, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed full solidarity with Saudi Arabia and support for all measures to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The condemnation followed Saudi

Arabia's announcement that its air defenses had intercepted and destroyed three hostile drones that entered its airspace from the direction of Iraq. Defense Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Turki Al-Malki said the Kingdom reserves the right to respond at a time and place of its choosing.

Gulf and Arab states issued similar denunciations. Bahrain labeled the attack a "heinous" and dangerous escalation, reaffirming support for Saudi Arabia and urging Iraq to prevent its territory from being used for hostile acts. The United Arab Emirates and Qatar also condemned the incident, stressing that it violates Saudi sovereignty and undermines regional stability. GCC Secretary-

General Jassem Al-Budaiwi said Saudi security is integral to Gulf security, reaffirming the bloc's full backing for the Kingdom.

In a separate development, Kuwait and several regional and international partners condemned a drone strike targeting an electricity generator outside the perimeter of the Barakah Nuclear Energy Plant in the UAE's Al-Dhafra region. Kuwait described the attack as a serious violation of international law and a threat to civilian infrastructure, reaffirming solidarity with the UAE.

Continued on Page 5



### Opinion

**Ahmed Al-Jarallah**

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

## Gulf states, cleanse your countries of sectarian traffickers

THE recent war was a severe test for the Arabian Gulf states, including Kuwait. It exposed hidden issues that were not obvious enough to the authorities, or rather issues that the authorities used to turn a blind eye to avoid stirring up sensitive matters. However, the truth is that this policy did not preserve the national security of the Gulf states.

For example, Kuwait, since its liberation in 1991, has experienced several problems stemming from the lack of decisive action on issues that were once considered minor or insignificant. Over time, it became clear that many of these issues lay at the core of the problem. The cells that have since been uncovered have not been ordinary; rather, they have encompassed security, political, and economic aspects.

Here, I am not referring to a specific segment of the population. Rather, we have witnessed groups openly declaring their intention to undermine ruling regimes, reshape the state entirely, and restructure society according to their own interpretations based on an outdated ideology that is no longer suited to the 21st century.

Therefore, the events of the war urgently call for the establishment of new standards to safeguard the national security of the Gulf states as a whole, as well as the development of a new security, political, and economic framework.

In this regard, several observations require careful examination, and the policy of turning a blind eye should be reconsidered.

Issues that may appear minor today could, in the future, develop into major problems.

In Bahrain, for example, authorities uncovered a large group involved in terrorist activities and in financing hostile entities. These individuals also used religious cover to advance their agenda. The response, therefore, involved drastic measures, including the revocation of citizenship and the issuance of strict sentences against the suspects.

A similar situation occurred in Kuwait, where a major plot targeting the very existence of the state itself was uncovered. This plot, which came to light in the context of recent war, posed an existential threat that transcended the Abdali Cell.

The UAE authorities uncovered an organization working on inciting sedition and financing Iranian proxies, as well as other groups designated as terrorist organizations in most Arabian Gulf states.

No Gulf state has been spared from the presence of these groups, which are not confined to any single religious doctrine or political ideology.

These entities are the result of the policy of turning a blind eye or favoritism based on tribal, sectarian, or doctrinal considerations. In contrast, the constitutions of the Gulf states clearly prohibit discrimination among citizens based on color, race, sect, or tribe, and emphasize equality among all citizens.

Perhaps there is a flaw in the national culture, or a lack of clarity regarding the foundations upon which the state is built.

Therefore, it has become imperative for the Gulf states to put an end to the issue of divided loyalties, so that loyalty is either complete to the nation or not at all.

On this basis, first, the relevant institutions must work to redefine important national concepts. Second, it must be emphasized that the Gulf states currently have an opportunity to eradicate these cells at their roots, based on the principle of strict justice.

Any tendencies that contradict the concept of the "nation-state" must be eliminated. Any attempt to prioritize narrow or questionable interests over the interest of society should be confronted and uprooted.

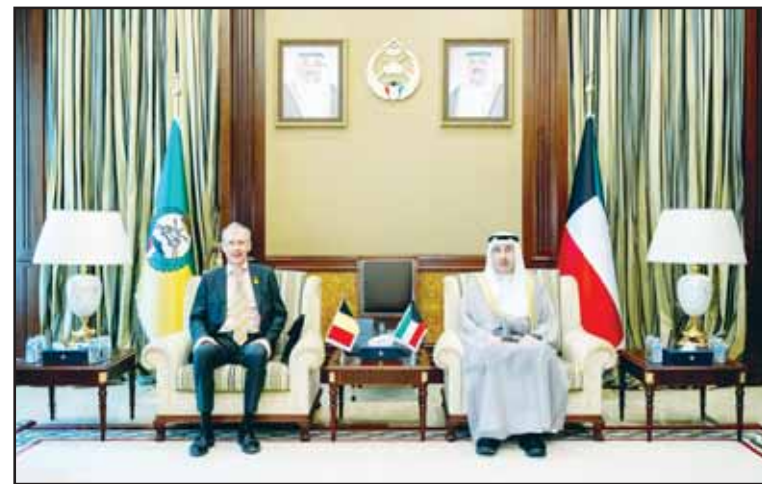
The battle facing the Arabian Gulf states is, in essence, existential and rooted in the matter of principle.

The loyalty of Gulf citizens should be fully directed towards the nation, in both spirit and body. Sectarianism and religious division within the Gulf, whether Sunni, Shiite, or otherwise, can become a destabilizing factor.

These individuals should not be allowed to enjoy Gulf national identity, lest they become a Trojan horse.

We have witnessed dangerous consequences over the recent years. Will we be bitten twice by the same snake?

Follow me on: @Ahmedaljarallah Ahmed aljarallah ahmed@aljarallah.com Scan QR code to visit the website: aljarallah.com



National Guard photo

Chief of Kuwait National Guard receives Belgian Ambassador to Kuwait.

### KNG chief, Belgian envoy hold talks

Chief of the Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah discussed with Belgian Ambassador to Kuwait Christian Dooms a number of mutual interest topics.

In a press statement Monday,

Kuwait National Guard said the discussions took place during Sheikh Mubarak's reception of the ambassador and his accompanying delegation, focusing on shared topics between both sides. (KUNA)



Ministry of Defense photo

Kuwait's Defense Minister receives Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait.

### Defense Minister hosts Chinese envoy

Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah discussed with Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Yang Xin a number of issues of mutual interest.

The Ministry of Defense said in a statement Monday that the meeting, held during the ambassador's reception, also included cordial exchanges. (KUNA)

### Racers busted

## Ride illegal, pay up to KD 1,000

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Traffic officers continued their intensive field campaigns in various areas, leading to the arrest of six individuals who were found to be illegally transporting passengers.

A security source explained to the newspaper that the traffic campaigns are in line with the efforts of the General Traffic Department at the Interior Ministry to maintain public safety and reduce violations on the roads.

He pointed out that the penalty for using a motor vehicle to transport passengers for hire without a permit is KD150 in case of settlement and imprisonment from one to three years, and a fine of KD600 to KD1,000 or one of these two penalties, if the case is referred to the court.

Also, traffic officers arrested two young men who were racing their vehicles on the road.

According to a security source, the traffic officers spotted the two young men committing the aforementioned traffic violation. The officers pursued and apprehended them, and then they were taken to the traffic police station, while their vehicles were impounded.

Continued on Page 5

### Day by Day

DEAR Minister of Electricity and Water, your announcement to reduce working hours from seven hours to six in an effort to lower electricity consumption is commendable.

However, what's more important than shortening working hours is the halting of electricity consumption in government facilities and ministries after official working hours end. A straight line is the shortest distance between two points.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

### \$32 million deal to power Kuwait digital shift

## 'Paperless Government' project gets green light

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Board of Directors of the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) approved, by a two-thirds majority during its meeting last Monday, the request of the Central Agency for Information Technology to directly contract with a global telecommuni-

cations company for the "Paperless Government" project.

The company is the authorized distributor for the services included in the framework agreement (AFA) (Google Cloud) for a period of three years, valued at \$32,423,594.

The project reflects the government's commitment to improving service delivery by utilizing the latest communications and infor-

mation technology. It contributes to one of the important programs in the development plan - building an interconnected and transparent government.

The project aims to digitize all government transactions and eliminate paper-based processes, thereby enhancing the efficiency of public services through an advanced, secure, and scalable digital infrastructure.

### Home, shop theft ring busted

## Kuwait nets 11 in drug sweep

KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (Agencies): The Drug Control General Department (DCGD) in the Criminal Security Sector at the Interior Ministry arrested 11 individuals in separate cases, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, the ministry revealed that those arrested included two Kuwaitis, one Egyptian, two Bangladeshis, one Indian, two Nepalese and three stateless. It attributed these arrests to the intensified security efforts to combat drugs and apprehend dealers and users.

The recent campaign led to the confiscation of various quantities

of narcotics and psychotropic substances, firearms, ammunition, alcohol and money suspected to be from drug trafficking. The seized items include 150 grams of liquid methamphetamine, 43 grams of methamphetamine, 41 grams of hashish, 80 grams of Lyrica, 210 Lyrica capsules, 202 grams of heroin, one gram of cocaine, 70 milliliters of synthetic cannabinoids, 507 Captagon pills, two rolled hashish cigarettes, six bottles of liquor, three jerrycans containing alcoholic substances, two weighing scales, a firearm, 39 rounds of live ammunition, a magazine and KD290 cash.

Continued on Page 5



NBK renews strategic partnership with the Ministry of Education and Nazaha to advance the 'Bankee' program for five more years

NCCAL hosts launch of 12 Sadaqa: Partnership & Cultural Kinship

### Newswatch

**KUWAIT CITY:** On behalf of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Al-Sabah family, the Amiri Diwan expressed sincere thanks and appreciation to all citizens and residents who offered condolences on the passing of the late Sheikh Fadhel Khaled Jaber Al-Fadhel Al-Sabah. (KUNA)

**BRUSSELS:** EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Kaja Kallas, affirmed on Monday that the European Union is working to deepen its cooperation with regional actors, foremost among them Gulf countries, to address the humanitarian and economic consequences of the Iran war.

Kallas told journalists upon her arrival at the EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting on development in Brussels, that the Union also continues to support United Nations efforts to assist those affected.

She warned that the war has contributed to rising energy prices, higher inflation, and a worsening fertilizer crisis, factors that could lead to famines in several countries. (KUNA)

### Sheikh Jaber Bridge tender advances

## Kuwait ramps up road upgrades

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Ministry of Public Works continues its comprehensive maintenance and road paving works in Omariya area within Farwaniya Governorate, as part of its infrastructure development and maintenance strategy.

The ongoing works include asphalt paving, resurfacing, and technical improvements, which will help im-

prove traffic flow, enhance road efficiency and boost the quality of services in the area.

This project is being implemented in accordance with the directives of Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Mohammed Al-Mashaan, who emphasized the importance of accelerating the pace of work while adhering to technical specifications and quality standards in project implementation.

Continued on Page 5



Ministry of Public Works photo

Road maintenance works in Omariya area.



**Prayer Timings**

Fajr	03:23	Asr	15:20
Sunrise	04:54	Maghrib	18:35
Zohr	11:44	Isha	20:03

## Cooperation with WHO vital: Sheikh Dr Salman

# Kuwait vows action on Arab health issues

GENEVA, May 18, (KUNA): Kuwait has reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to accelerating joint Arab health initiatives and unifying regional positions across international medical forums to bolster the resilience of regional healthcare systems against compounding humanitarian crises.

This came during the participation of Ministry of Health Undersecretary and head of the Kuwaiti delegation, Sheikh Dr. Salman Khalifa Al-Sabah, in the Executive Bureau meeting of the Council of Arab Health Ministers.

The high-level session convened on the side-

lines of the 79th World Health Assembly in Geneva.

The ministerial bureau deliberated on a spectrum of critical health priorities gripping the Arab world, spearheaded by the deteriorating health situation in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Delegates further strategized on maximizing pan-Arab coordination within the World Health Organization (WHO) and finalized the unified address of the Council of Arab Health Ministers to be delivered before the World Health Assembly.

The Executive Bureau also reviewed the comprehensive report and recommendations of the 24th meeting of the Arab Authority for Blood Transfusion Services, alongside the 15th Transfusion Medicine Conference, both previously hosted by Kuwait.

The council commended Kuwait's exempla-

ry organization of these specialized scientific fixtures, citing them as a testament to the Gulf state's proactive stewardship in expanding Arab medical cooperation.

Addressing the forum, Sheikh Dr. Salman Al-Sabah underscored the imperative of synchronizing regional health policies and establishing a cohesive Arab front at global assemblies.

He noted that such strategic solidarity is vital to reinforcing domestic health infrastructures amidst rapidly shifting global health and environmental dynamics.

The Undersecretary reemphasized Kuwait's dedication to supporting and optimizing cross-border medical frameworks.

He concluded that these cooperative efforts remain central to securing the long-term wellness of Arab populations and ensuring the sustainability of regional health sectors.



Sheikh Dr. Salman



HH the Amir HH the Crown Prince HH the Prime Minister

## HH Amir, HH Crown Prince receive HH Prime Minister

KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber A-Sabah received Monday His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also received on Monday His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

## PACA chief reviews departure, arrival procedures for pilgrims

KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (KUNA): Director General of Kuwait's Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Humoud Al-Sabah chaired a coordination meeting with Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs Dr. Suleiman Al-Suwailim to discuss preparations for the Hajj plan.



Sheikh Humoud

In a statement on Monday, the authority said that the meeting reviewed mecha-

nisms for facilitating departure and arrival procedures for pilgrims and enhancing coordination among relevant authorities to ensure smooth operations during the Hajj season.

The discussions also covered ways to further develop services provided to pilgrims and raise operational and organizational readiness at Kuwait International Airport to ensure the highest levels of comfort and organization.

Participants stressed the importance of continued joint coordination among all concerned entities to guarantee the best possible services for pilgrims during the Hajj season.

## KFAED's local, global donation totals KD 8.6 mln in ten grants

KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (KUNA): The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED)'s, total contributions to supporting the regional and international efforts and activities of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) amounted to approximately 10 grants as of October 2025, totaling KD 8.6 million (approximately USD 27.8 million).

This came in a statement to KUNA on Monday by the Fund's Acting Director General Waleed Al-Bahar, marking the tenth anniversary of the establishment of cooperation and strategic partnership between the KFAED and UNHCR.

Al-Bahar added that the partnership with UNHCR reflects Kuwait's unwavering commitment to supporting humanitarian causes worldwide, praising the UNHCR's efforts in improving the living conditions of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and their host communities around the world.

Since the start of cooperation with UNHCR in 2016, the two parties have reached more than one million forcibly displaced persons, providing assistance that contributes to improving their living conditions.

He stated that this partnership has resulted in the Fund providing grants to finance vital projects in the education, health, and energy sectors in countries such as Iraq, Bangladesh, Yemen, Sudan, Chad, and others.

Al-Bahar added that KFAED is proud to be part of the global humanitarian sys-

tem, expressing its belief that international cooperation is the best way to address growing humanitarian challenges.

He affirmed that the Fund will continue its close cooperation with other UN agencies and development partners to expand the scope of humanitarian work and empower communities to regain their resilience and recover from crises.

For his part, Dr. Khaled Khalifa, Advisor to the High Commissioner and UNHCR Representative to the GCC countries, stated in a press release issued by KFAED that previous grant agreements with the Fund have contributed significantly to achieving their intended goals, noting that their impact extends beyond their financial value.

Khalifa added that this partnership reinforces the principle of transitioning from the traditional donor-recipient model to a genuine partnership model based on integration, shared responsibility, and a unified vision for the future, describing these agreements as successful, practical, and highly impactful.

It is worth noting that the last collaboration between KFAED and UNHCR was in October 2025, when the Fund signed two grant agreements with UNHCR totaling USD 5.7 million to support humanitarian efforts in Sudan and Chad.



Al-Bahar

# Kuwait to build stable society, raise lifestyle

## Public sector launches expanded integration move

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (KUNA): Several ministries and government entities affirmed that the integrated government Family Protection Program is a national project unifying efforts through 83 initiatives to strengthen family stability and social protection systems.**

In a joint statement issued Monday, they said the program enhances institutional integration across state bodies and develops legislation, services, awareness, rehabilitation and digital programs for families, children and youth.

They added it aims to build a more stable society, improve quality of life, and preserve national identity and community values in Kuwait.

### Ministry of Justice

The Ministry of Justice said it is developing family legislation, enhancing early dispute prevention, approving premarital counselling programs, and expanding a fully electronic family court system with Microsoft, including consultation and e-documentation services.

The Ministry of Social Affairs said it is implementing nine initiatives covering youth rehabilitation, support for widows and divorcees, foster care, elderly services, NGO coordination, and qualification of social and psychological specialists to strengthen family stability.

The Public Authority for Disability Affairs said it is implementing five initiatives to enhance protection, care and support for persons with disabilities and their families, and improve rehabilitation to promote social inclusion and quality of life.

The Supreme Council for Family Affairs said it is implementing five initiatives supporting family and child policies and strengthening institutional coordination among relevant authorities.

Tasked by the Cabinet, it will monitor implementation and submit quarterly progress reports.

### Ministry of Interior

The Ministry of Interior said it is studying unifying juvenile police and community police into Family and Community Protection Police unit, while developing procedures for handling family cases and training on domestic violence and juvenile cases.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said it is aligning the program with relevant international agreements and highlighting Kuwait's efforts in family and child protection in international reports and forums.

The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs said it is strengthening family values through sermons, lectures and religious seminars on parenting and family reconciliation, alongside awareness programs and cooperation with charities to support needy families.

The Ministry of Education said it is developing curricula to raise family awareness and address bullying, school violence and cybercrime while empowering social and psychological specialists and improving early referral systems alongside launching national anti-bullying program.

### Ministry of Higher Education

The Ministry of Higher Education said it has included family-related topics in compulsory courses at Kuwait University and directed community service centers to run awareness programs and support applied research on family issues.

The Ministry of State for Youth

Affairs said it is reactivating youth centers as community prevention hubs and launching programs to promote family values prevent behavioral deviation and support leadership talent discovery and psychosocial support.

The Ministry of Health said it is enhancing mental health services, establishing family counselling clinics, and developing an integrated digital platform covering premarital screening, pregnancy, alongside unified child abuse detection protocols and remote psychological support.

### Ministry of Information

The Ministry of Information said it is launching nationwide media campaign to support the program raise awareness of its initiatives produce educational content promoting family values and while utilizing media platforms and targeting youth with messaging.

Authorities affirmed the program represents an integrated government approach to building a sustainable national family protection system through 83 initiatives implemented by 12 entities, with the Supreme Council for Family Affairs tasked with quarterly monitoring.

## MoCI shuts down 8 shops for selling imitation goods

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Capital Governorate Control Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in cooperation with the Hawally Governorate Criminal Investigation Department, closed eight shops after the confiscation of a large quantity of clothes and shoes with counterfeit international trademarks.

This action was taken upon completion of the surveillance of an individual selling counterfeit goods, thus, violating laws on the protection of intellectual property rights and trademarks.

Sources from the ministry stated that the campaign is aimed at stopping such illegal activities, which violate the rights of trademark owners and damage the reputation and standing of the country in international rankings related to combating counterfeiting and protecting intellectual property rights.

Sources confirmed that a report was filed regarding the operation and legal measures were taken against the violators, pending further investigation.

## Other Voices

### Tips to stay alive little more

By Ahmad alsarraf

British physician William Frankland, now 108, shared an important piece of advice that he believes everyone should follow.

"Don't disconnect from life. Keep doing your work, or any activity, for as long as you can. Death quickly reaches those who lose hope in life, stop learning, neglect themselves, or no longer feel valued.

The nervous system senses these feelings. Energy decreases, sleep deteriorates, and the body shifts into conservation mode, almost preparing itself for death.

Most people don't realize when disconnection begins. It is rarely a conscious choice. Instead, it happens gradually until it becomes routine and automatic. Work turns into obligation, and relationships become habit rather than a necessity. You may think you are present in everything, but in reality, you are not fully present in anything.

This is not necessarily clinical depression. It is the system operating without enough purpose to maintain genuine stimulation.

The opposite is also true. When there is purpose, commitment, and real human connection, the vagus nerve is activated, tension decreases, the body stabilizes, and the immune system responds differently."

Frankland treated his patients, even those over one hundred years old, not for money, but for purpose. To him, this was not simply motivation but it was a biological necessity to prevent aging based on a date on a calendar.

We begin to age when we no longer feel needed. That is why we should not isolate ourselves or withdraw from active life and meaningful connection with the world around us. We should never lose our curiosity or stop learning with enthusiasm and love. We should maintain a sense of purpose in life, connection with others, and a desire to keep fully living.

A life expert once said, "After sixty, the body does not forgive neglect, but it responds well to intelligent pampering."

During his years working in the



alsarraf

clinic, Frankland saw men and women in their seventies with the energy and spirit of youth, while others in their fifties appeared exhausted and worn down by life.

The secret is not only in genetics, but also in five golden rules that many older adults tend to overlook:

1. One of the biggest mistakes people make after the age of 60 is reducing their food intake under the pretext of poor digestion. In reality, muscles are in a constant race against time. Without enough high-quality protein at every meal, the body begins drawing the strength it needs from bones and muscles.

2. Do not rely entirely on your sense of thirst, especially as you grow older. With age, the brain's thirst mechanism becomes weaker. That is why drinking water should become a regular habit, not something done only to quench thirst. Water should be treated like essential medicine, taken consistently and at regular intervals.

3. Strength training is more important than walking. Walking is an excellent exercise, but on its own, it is not enough. After the age of 60, the body needs resistance training, even if it involves very light weights or simple bodyweight exercises. Strong muscles are the real protection against osteoporosis and sudden falls.

4. Vitamins D3 and K2 are an essential combination that is often overlooked. Many people talk about calcium, but calcium without D3 and K2 is like a traveler without direction. Instead of strengthening bones, calcium may accumulate in the arteries. True strength depends not only on what we consume, but on what the body properly absorbs and directs to the right place.

5. Let go of worry, and it will let go of us. In later years, hormones become highly sensitive to stress. Elevated cortisol levels caused by constant anxiety about children can negatively affect overall health. It is important to dedicate time to yourself, your hobbies, and positive social interaction. Mental health is the foundation that influences every function in the body.

Reaching the age of sixty or seventy does not mean entering the autumn of life. It can instead represent a stage of wisdom and inner strength.



email: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

## Safeguard assets entrusted: Audit Bureau

# SAB outlines frozen funds trustees duties

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Head of the State Audit Bureau (SAB), Essam Al-Roumi, has issued a decision outlining the duties of trustees responsible for frozen funds and the regulations governing the performance of their responsibilities, in accordance with a decision issued by the Attorney General.

Article 1 of Decision No. 74/2026, which was published on Sunday in the official gazette "Kuwait Al-youm", explains that frozen funds are "assets subject to a decision by the Attorney General prohibiting their disposal."

Article 2 stipulates that trustees appointed to manage frozen funds, pursuant to Article 24 of Law No. 1/1993, must adhere to the following regulations:

1. The trustee, in performing their duties, must fulfill all obligations stipulated for a trustee according to the provisions of Chapter Two of Part Three of Book

Two of Law No. 67/1980, provided that these obligations do not conflict with the provisions of this decision or any future decisions issued by the President of SAB.

2. The trustee is obligated to safeguard the funds entrusted to their management and must exercise the care of a reasonable person in this regard.

3. The trustee may not delegate their duties, in whole or in part, to another person except with the written permission of the Attorney General.

### Authority

4. The trustee's authority is limited to administrative tasks, and they may not undertake any action outside this scope except with the prior written permission of the Attorney General.

5. The trustee may not use the seized funds for their own benefit and is prohibited from dealing with persons whose funds have been seized.

6. The trustee must refer to the

Attorney General regarding all requests submitted to them concerning the seized funds and the prohibition on their disposal.

7. The trustee must disclose any conflicts of interest between themselves and the seized funds, as well as between themselves and persons whose funds have been seized.

8. The trustee must submit to the Attorney General a detailed report of the tasks assigned to them every six months, unless the Attorney General decides otherwise. The report must include the financial position and supporting notes, as well as a statement of revenues and expenditures for the period covered.

The trustee shall submit a consolidated statement of both the trustee and the receiver from the date of assuming management until the end of the term.

The trustee shall submit to the Chairman of SAB a statement of cash flows and a comprehensive management report on the transactions related to the management of the seized funds, within 15 days

following the end of each term. The SAB shall notify the Attorney General and the trustee of any observations it deems necessary.

9. The trustee shall continue managing the funds until a ruling is issued in the case, a decision is issued to lift the freeze on the funds, or the Attorney General issues a decision relieving the trustee of their duties.

10. If the trustee wishes to terminate their appointment, or if their appointment ends for any reason, they must ensure that the work they have begun is completed to a point where there is no risk of harm to the funds under their management.

Article Three of the decision stipulates that the Chairman of SAB has the authority to issue decisions for amending, adding to, or cancelling any of the aforementioned regulations, whether they relate to general rules governing trustees or to specific cases of frozen funds, as required by the public interest or the interest of the funds under management.

# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## What can I possibly say if expats appreciate Kuwait?

"If other sincere and appreciative people, both Arabs and foreigners, praise Kuwait, what can I possibly say? Non-Kuwaitis speak with pride and love about Kuwait on social media, reflecting what a Kuwaiti citizen might also express," Kuwaiti citizen **Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"Ambassadors and residents in Kuwait often express their joy and heartfelt feelings, expressing their love and appreciation for the country. Those who have lived in Kuwait, which is known for its loyalty and generosity, convey these sentiments to their relatives and friends back home.

"Men and women who fear God in their speech unanimously express their love for Kuwait when reminiscing about the beautiful years of their lives after their residency ends and they return to their home countries.



Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber

"Mosque preachers in Europe, Africa, and Asia pray for Kuwait during Friday prayers. International media also reports on Kuwaiti financial and in-kind aid reaching countries around the world.

"Many loyal individuals, as well as all those with a heart that beats with truth and a tongue that speaks the truth, both expatriates and residents, speak about the kindness and generosity they have received in Kuwait.

"The ambassadors of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries consider their posting in Kuwait a fitting conclusion to their missions. Some foreign ambassadors prefer to return to work in Kuwait.

"What can I say when I see non-Kuwaitis defending Kuwait and its people on social media?

"It is a great source of comfort to hear such heartfelt and loving words from people of different nationalities. I would like to thank them for their sincere feelings.

"Should we simply echo their sentiments, or should we work harder to increase the number of those who love Kuwait?"

"Do not be surprised if you find harm where you have sown goodness. Some environments are not receptive to cultivation.

"Despite the return to normalcy, as announced by the government, military institutions remain on high alert to defend the homeland. I pray that God protects and grants them strength and victory, and that He protects Kuwait from all harm."

**Also:**

"I documented, to the best of my ability and with impartiality, the positions taken by some Palestinian political and academic figures during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait," columnist **Khaled Ahmad Al-Tarrah** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"Some of these positions included miscalculations and aligned with narratives that undermined Kuwait's legitimacy, despite the fact that Kuwait had embraced thousands of Palestinians politically, socially, and culturally for decades.

"I am not referring to the entire Palestinian people, nor am I questioning the justice of the Palestinian cause. Rather, I seek to shed light on the positions of individuals and leaders who chose to support the Iraqi invasion.

"The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), led at the time by Yasser Arafat, gambled on a political illusion by believing Saddam Hussein's claims and backing his invasion of Kuwait. That position constituted a grave political and moral error in contemporary Arab history.

"At that pivotal moment, Kuwait's suffering was not caused solely by the invasion itself, but also by the betrayal of some individuals who had lived and worked in Kuwait, benefited from its academic and social institutions, and then chose to support the aggressor, justify its actions, or remain silent at a time when neutrality and hesitation were unacceptable.

"This is the context of my article, 'Palestinian Treachery... As'ad Abdul Rahman as a Case Study,' which examines a specific example of a Palestinian academic who lived under Kuwait's protection and later adopted positions that conflicted with the political and moral loyalty owed to the country that had sheltered him.

"The article resonated widely from the very first hours of its publication, both in Kuwait and abroad. I received messages and comments from Kuwaitis expressing, in colloquial terms, a feeling that had been suppressed for years. These reactions did not reflect gloating or a desire for revenge, but rather a sense that national memory had finally found someone to record it, without reservation.

"The issue is not one of ethnic animosity, racial categorization, or a denial of the history of the Palestinian cause with all its cultural complexity. Rather, it is a call to assume intellectual and political responsibility, and to distinguish between the justice of the cause and the validity of particular

stances taken during the Iraqi invasion.

"What was later presented under the banner of 'scientific research' regarding allegations of human rights violations does not constitute true research. It should not be taken out of context or used as a tool for settling political scores or pursuing hidden agendas.

"According to the principles of scientific research, individual circumstances, ethnic affiliations, and personal biases must not place assumptions and claims over facts and realities.

"Wars breed violations and transgressions, but the fundamental issue was a clear act of aggression against the independent State of Kuwait, and this is the context in which all related events must be understood.

"The purpose of publishing and documenting is not to incite hatred, but to solidify awareness. National memory serves as a moral guarantee to prevent the repetition of mistakes, and ensure that loyalty is not replaced by empty rhetoric and that acts of betrayal are not obscured by sentiment or slogans.

"Kuwait, both its government and its people, remains a legitimate entity that endured the Iraqi invasion. Documentation is not an act of revenge, and the preservation of national memory is an inalienable right."

"It is clear that the administration of US President Donald Trump realizes that China has become the most influential player in Iran, both economically and politically, and that Beijing possesses real leverage that could help prevent a major escalation in the region," Saudi writer **Saleh bin Abdullah Al-Muslim** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"Therefore, one of the unstated objectives of Trump's visit to China is to encourage Beijing to pressure Tehran to avoid any steps that could lead to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz or threaten international shipping.

"Trump's visit to Beijing is expected to result in several unannounced understandings, the most important of which include continued trade escalation between Washington and Beijing, understandings on maritime and energy security, Chinese pressure on Iran to prevent escalation in the Strait of Hormuz, a tacit agreement to manage tensions rather than escalate them, and the reopening of security and economic coordination channels between the two superpowers.

"However, behind these understandings lies the greater truth - the US-China rivalry is no longer just a trade dispute, but a battle for global leadership in the coming decades.

"The United States seeks to maintain its international hegemony, while China is quietly working to promote a more multipolar global order. At the heart of this conflict lies the Arabian Gulf region, not only as a major source of energy but also as a testing ground for new international balances.

"Therefore, any development involving Iran or the Strait of Hormuz would not be merely a regional event, but a turning point that could reshape global economic, political, and security dynamics for years to come.

"The visit, the first by a US president to Beijing in years, is not merely a protocol visit, but an attempt to manage a sensitive phase of international tensions. The world today can no longer tolerate an open confrontation

between the United States and China, especially amid rising instability in the Gulf and the risk of escalation of the Iranian war.

"The world is witnessing a reshaping of major power balances, not only between Washington and Beijing, but also in the Middle East, where the war with Iran, global energy security, and the future of the Strait of Hormuz intersect with the economic and military struggle between the two superpowers.

"The world knows that the Strait of Hormuz is not just a maritime passage, but a vital artery of global energy. Any actual closure, or even a partial disruption, would likely lead to sharp increases in oil prices, global economic instability, and a potential new wave of inflation affecting both Western and Asian economies.

"This is precisely where Washington and Beijing's interests converge, despite their strategic rivalry, as China is the largest importer of Gulf energy.

"The United States does not want a global economic collapse in a sensitive political and economic period. Can China actually restrain Iran? The reality is that the Sino-Iranian relationship is not a full military alliance, as some assume, but rather a relationship based on mutual interests.

"China needs Iranian oil and access to Iranian markets, while Iran needs Chinese political and economic support to offset Western sanctions."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

## Minor son 'helps' father to deliver narcotics

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The General Department of Criminal Investigations has referred a 48-year-old man accused of drug trafficking to the Public Prosecution, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

The accused allegedly used his minor son as cover to avoid being stopped during security campaigns and having his vehicle searched. Investigators seized a quantity of drugs inside his car

before they could be delivered to customers.

According to a security source, the Investigations Department received information that the man was involved in drug dealing and frequently traveled with his minor son in the vehicle. Based on this information, an ambush was set up in Hawally, leading to his arrest. The accused confessed to drug trafficking. The minor was referred to the Juvenile Prosecution.

## Illegal food setup & delivery boys gang busted in joint security raid

Ardiya swoop uncovers illegal sweets factory

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Capital Security Command, represented by its support patrols, in coordination with Kuwait Municipality and the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN), carried out a security and inspection campaign in Bneid Al-Gar and discovered an illegal site being used as a food storage facility, restaurant, and workers' accommodation within a walled setback area (mulhaq) of a house, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

In an official statement, the Ministry of Interior explained that several expatriates, along with motorcycles used for delivery services and equipment used for preparing and selling food in violation of regulations, were found at the site.

Multiple violations were recorded, including operating a food establishment without a license and selling and distributing food products in breach of regulations. The necessary procedures were taken, and removal notices were issued for the site and the motorcycles found inside.

Those operating the site were detained and referred to the relevant authorities for legal action.

Meanwhile, the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) announced that its Capital Inspection Department, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and Kuwait Municipality, shut down an unlicensed grocery store operating on a dirt lot within the setback area of a house located in the Doha residential area, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

It revealed that citations were issued for several violations against those operating the store.

**Illegal sweets factory:** A security raid on a house in Ardiya uncovered the involvement of a confectionery brand in manufacturing its



A makeshift kitchen in the illegal food house in Bneid Al-Gar.

products at an unlicensed residential property, using food items, some of which were found to be expired, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

According to security sources, officers raided the house at the end of last week after receiving information that it was being used to prepare sweets and chocolates for the brand.

A number of workers were arrested at the site, including nine Asian women, along with large quantities of production materials, some of which were unfit for human consumption.

All seized items were confiscated for destruction, and serious citations were issued against the operator.

Some of the sweets and chocolates were displayed in a shop inside a shopping mall, while the majority were sold through delivery services.

### One injured in Qurain house fire

## Kuwaitis duped by woman offering housemaids

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Mubarak Al-Kabeer Investigations Department arrested an Asian woman accused of defrauding more than 25 Kuwaiti citizens by offering domestic workers through an Instagram account, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

According to security sources, the woman contacted individuals seeking domestic help via her Instagram account, sending them photos and contracts that suggested she was operating a licensed business. She requested transfers ranging

from KD 300 to KD 500 as a down payment. After the payments were made, victims discovered they had been blocked and all communication had been cut off.

Detectives, in coordination with the Cyber-crime Department, identified and arrested the suspect. Four mobile phones and several SIM cards used in the fraud were found in her possession.

During investigations, she confessed to exploiting high demand for domestic workers and

luring victims with offers priced at less than half the market rate.

In another development, firefighters from the Qurain and Al-Bairaq fire stations responded to a cooking gas leak in the kitchen of a house in Qurain on Sunday afternoon, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) stated that one individual sustained injuries in the incident and was referred to the medical team for treatment. Investigations were launched in this regard.

## Court rejects clarification request in ex-MP's case

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Court of Cassation, presided over by Judge Sultan Bourseli, rejected the request submitted by the lawyer of former MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei, which sought clarification of the court's ruling that sentenced him to four-year imprisonment, reports *Al-Jarida* daily.

The wording of the Court of Cassation's ruling in the case of former MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei had led to a misinterpretation in the execution of the sentence.

It was initially understood as upholding a two-year prison term, resulting in Al-Tabtabaei's release. However, the relevant authorities later determined that the ruling in fact upheld the lower court's ruling, which sentenced him to four-year imprisonment with hard labor.

After reviewing the ruling and confirming its correct legal interpretation, the relevant authorities proceeded to reinstate the sentence, concluding that his release was inconsistent with the final ruling.

## Report illegal additions to nationality files: Mol

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: As part of the strict implementation of the new Nationality Law, the Higher Committee for Kuwaiti Citizenship Investigation, chaired by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, continues, in cooperation with relevant authorities and the Nationality Investigation Department, to dismantle complex forgery cases that have accumulated over decades, revealing the exploitation of legal loopholes, reports *Al-Rai* daily.

According to informed sources, the Higher Committee stressed the importance of enforcing the new Nationality Law without exceptions or leniency, to protect national identity and purge nationality files of any cases of forgery or manipulation.

The new Nationality Law provides clear and decisive tools for dealing with forgery cases, whether by withdrawing citizenship from those who obtained it based on false information, or by revoking it from those who participated directly or indirectly in adding individuals to nationality files contrary to the truth.

The provisions of Article 14 of the new law have begun to be implemented, which stipulates the revocation of citizenship from anyone who intentionally adds to their own or another person's nationality file any person who is not their child or descendant, especially after the expiration of the grace period granted by the Ministry of Interior to rectify the situation.

The Ministry of Interior called on anyone with illegal additions to their citizenship file, or to the file of a family member, to voluntarily report them to the General Directorate of Citizenship and Travel Documents, with an exemption from the prescribed legal penalties.

The sources emphasized that failure to take advantage of this grace period will subject the files to full legal procedures stipulated in the new Nationality Law, including the revocation of citizenship according to the nature of each case and the results of investigations.

They clarified that the revocation of citizenship in this case is by decree and applies only to the individual, without affecting the biological children registered on the citizenship file.

The sources revealed the first revocation of citizenship (Article 1) from a citizen whose fingerprints proved he had added fictitious children.

They explained that the first fingerprint definitively denied paternity of two children registered on his file. The second fingerprint confirmed the biological relationship between the two children and a Gulf resident in Kuwait who turned out to be their brother. The extensive investigations, supported by evidence, official documents, and DNA testing, uncovered cases described as among the most serious and complex in the history of citizenship files, given their intricacy and the difficulty in linking the parties involved.

**Special Buffet**

**LARGEST SPREAD IN TOWN**

<b>Child Buffet</b>	<b>Adult Buffet</b>
<b>KD 3.450</b>	<b>KD 5.950</b>
EVERY THURSDAY DINNER ONLY 6 PM TO 11 PM	EVERY FRIDAY LUNCH & DINNER 12:30 PM TO 4:30 PM & 6 PM TO 11 PM
	HAWALLY ONLY EVERY SATURDAY LUNCH ONLY 12:30 PM TO 4:30 PM

AVAILABLE AT HAWALLY BRANCH  
BEIRUT ST, LULU AL WATAN COMPLEX, OPPOSITE CBK  
22626782 ☎ 22626783

AVAILABLE AT FAHAHEEL BRANCH  
1ST FLOOR, AL HOOR BUILDING  
BLOCK NO.11, BEHIND TO CENTERPOINT  
23911175 ☎ 23911174

# MoSA sets rules for 'Substitute Mothers'

## Psychological tests required

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Assistant Undersecretary for Social Welfare and Development at the Ministry of Social Affairs Iman Al-Enezi confirmed that the selection of 'substitute mothers' is based on certain conditions and criteria.**



Al-Enezi

In a statement to Kuwait TV, Al-Enezi pointed out that the 'substitute mothers' must be available to care for the children for five consecutive days a week and provide them with all the needs a child could have in a natural family, including attention, care, emotional

support and guidance towards proper upbringing and development.

She said the applicants for the project must undergo psychological evaluation by specialists. "After passing this stage, they should enroll in comprehensive training and rehabilitation programs to learn how to interact with children and understand their psychological and social needs. When children find a mother who provides affection and care, they begin to feel psychologically stable," she explained.

She disclosed that the project aims to ensure the psychological and social well-being of children and facilitate their smooth integration into society, in addition to providing the educational and developmental guidance and support they need.

She stressed that the project will have a positive impact on the children, as they will exhibit psychological stability and fully integrate into society, because the presence of a substitute mother gives the child a sense of security and support in various aspects of his daily, educational and nurturing activities.

## Artificial coral reefs host rich biodiversity

# Jaber Reserve thriving with marine life

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (KUNA):** The Kuwait Dive Team, affiliated with the Environmental Voluntary Foundation, announced the observation of extensive and dense growth of coral and sponges, along with the settlement of thousands of organisms including shellfish, oysters, echinoderms, algae, and numerous fish species in the artificial coral reef colonies of the Jaber Al-Kuwait Marine Reserve in southern Kuwait.

Mahmoud Ashkanani, the team's environmental projects manager, told KUNA on Monday that the Jaber Al-Kuwait Marine Reserve is part of the team's "Artificial Marine Reserves" project, the culmination of over 30 years of volunteer work in the field of coral reef conservation and development in Kuwait.

Ashkanani added that the project has achieved significant success by creating an environment similar to natural coral reef habitats, characterized by a high density and diversity of organisms, as well as a wide variety of colors.

He stated that this major environmental project began in 1996 with the installation of solid concrete blocks (breakwaters), which have since diversified in shape and size, reaching heights of up to three meters and depths of 7 to 17 meters, distributed across 20 locations.



KUNA photos

Left: Coral and marine organisms flourish. Right: Colonization of species settle in protected waters.

Ashkanani commended the Environment Public Authority (EPA) for its support, as well as the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), Mina Al-Ahmadi Port, and the Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) for their contributions to this significant environmental project.

He urged beachgoers and chalet visitors to preserve these protected areas and their endemic biodiversity by refraining from discarding fishing traps and nets around them, and to report any violations or encroachments on coral reef sites to the relevant authorities.

# Push to activate Jaber Al-Ahmad bus hubs

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18:** Municipal Council members Fahad Al-Abdajader and Abdullah Al-Enezi submitted a proposal to activate the designated public transportation hubs in Jaber Al-Ahmad City.

They suggested that the project should be implemented in coordination with the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW), which manages the ongoing development of the city.

They asserted that public transportation is vital in modern city management in order to ease the movement of residents and employ-



Al-Abdajader



Al-Enezi

They pointed out that the city is a mix of private residences, investment housing and commercial sectors, hence, the rising demand for reliable public transportation. They said multiple sites were earmarked for public transportation earlier, but they remain underutilized or inactive. They added it is now imperative to address this gap due to the rising population and intensified commercial activity in the city.

They stated that the main goals of their proposal are establishing an organized transportation system, eliminating haphazard parking by buses and private vehicles, and providing secure zones for employees and residents in the service and investment sectors of the city.

ees, address traffic congestion and improve the general quality of life.

# MoSA schedules general assemblies and elections for seven associations

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18:** The Department of Non-Governmental Organizations and the Department of Charitable Societies and Foundations at the Ministry of Social Affairs have scheduled general assemblies and elections for seven associations this week (five charities and two NGOs), in coordination with the boards of directors of public benefit

associations.

According to informed sources, the ministry is continuing to organize general assembly and election dates for all associations whose fiscal year has ended or whose board members' legal terms have expired.

Any association that fulfills its legal and regulatory requirements will have its general assembly and election dates scheduled immediately in the coming period.

## 6 communication channels activated

# MoSA expands citizen outreach

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18:** Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthar Al-Huwaila continues to receive citizens every Wednesday evening, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to informed sources, Minister Al-Huwaila's meetings with citizens are arranged via six direct and electronic channels for receiving requests, including:

1. The government's "Sahl" application as a unified digital platform
2. The Citizen Service Department



Dr. Al-Huwaila

through in-person visits to the ministry headquarters

3. If a citizen is unable to visit the ministry in person, they may send a WhatsApp message to 22484531 as a quick and interactive means of informal communication

4. Requests, complaints, and suggestions submitted by hand to the minister's office or the undersecretary's office

5. Personal meetings with the minister are available, allowing citizens to communicate directly without intermediaries, by prior appointment for those who wish to do so. Meetings with the undersecretary are also available.

6. The ministry's official X account where inquiries and complaints can be submitted.

## Residential demand remains strong

# Kuwait real estate deals rise 15% despite drop in transaction value

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18:** Real estate transactions in the second week of May showed mixed performance, during which the number of transactions increased by 15 percent compared to the first week, driven by the increased activity in the residential sector, according to the weekly statistics released by the Real Estate Registration and Documentation Departments at the Ministry of Justice.

However, the total value of transactions declined by 11.86 percent due to the sharp drop in commercial real estate deals.

The real estate market recorded 138 transactions from May 10-14, with a total value of KD62.63 million, compared to 120 transactions valued at KD71.06 million in the first week of the month.

The residential sector continued its positive performance, leading market activity in the second week and benefiting from sustained demand for private housing and residential properties.

The number of residential transactions increased to 103, valued at KD36.6 million, compared to 83 transactions valued at KD27.6 million in the first week -- 24 percent increase in the number of transactions and 32 percent increase in value.

The aforementioned figures revealed improvement in the appetite for purchasing private housing in spite of the continued caution related to high financing costs and anticipation of new regulatory or legislative changes.

This performance indicates that the residential sector remains attractive, as it is the most closely linked to actual demand and direct use, compared to other

real estate sectors that are more affected by investment and liquidity fluctuations.

The investment sector witnessed a slight decline in both the number and value of transactions. Total trading volume reached 32 deals worth KD24.78 million, compared to 34 deals worth KD28.46 million in the previous week -- 5.8 percent decrease in the number of deals and 12.9 percent decrease in trading value. It reflects continuous investor caution, considering the regulatory pressure and geopolitical changes related to financing and borrowing costs.

Despite this decline, the investment sector remains resilient compared to other sectors due to its reliance on operational and rental returns, which provide more flexibility in facing market fluctuations.

The commercial sector experienced the most significant decline, with its trading value plummeting by 98 percent and the number of transactions by 33.3 percent. Only two transactions were recorded with a total value of KD266,000, compared to three transactions worth KD15 million in the first week. It indicates continuation of less activity in this sector, which is highly sensitive to economic and legislative conditions.

The decline is also attributed to the increased financing cost and decreased risk appetite among investors, particularly the large transactions, following the execution of high-value deals in the previous week.

Regarding properties located along the coastal strip, one transaction valued at KD990,000 was recorded, compared to no transaction in the first week -- a manifestation of selective demand for coastal properties, considering that the number of deals is limited.

# PAM adds permit renewal to As'hal

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18:** The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) announced the launch of a service allowing the renewal of a partner's work permit through the "As'hal" portal, as part of its efforts to enhance digital services and simplify procedures for clients, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

PAM noted that partners can directly access the electronic portal to complete the work permit renewal process.



albander البندر  
hotel & resort فندق البندر



Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	Price
One night stay in a <b>Queen Bed Cabana for 2 persons</b> with inclusive of Breakfast	<b>BHD 46.000</b>
One night stay in a <b>Two Bedroom Chalet for 4 persons</b> inclusive of Breakfast	<b>BHD 102.148 / Net</b>
Weekends (Thursday & Friday)	Price
One night stay in a <b>Queen Bed Cabana for 2 persons</b> with inclusive of Breakfast	<b>BHD 53.361 / Net</b>
One night stay in a <b>Two Bedroom Chalet for 4 persons</b> inclusive of Breakfast	<b>BHD 119.173 / Net</b>

Terms & conditions apply

Tel: +973 17701201 - Ext. 351 | Email: reservation@albander.com | www.albander.com | @albanderhotelandresort

Continued from Page 1

## Kuwait blasts

Emirati authorities confirmed the incident caused no casualties or radiation impact. The Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation said safety systems remained intact, with no release of radioactive materials and no risk to the public or environment.

The UAE secured broad regional backing, with Arab foreign ministers condemning the strike as a dangerous escalation and reaffirming the country's right to defend its sovereignty. Oman called for dialogue and restraint, while Belgium and India voiced concern over the risks posed by attacks near nuclear facilities, stressing the need to protect critical infrastructure and avoid further escalation.

A drone strike sparked a fire on the edge of the United Arab Emirates' sole nuclear power plant on Sunday in what authorities called an "unprovoked terrorist attack." No one was blamed, but it highlighted the risk of renewed war as the United States and Iran signaled they were ready to fight again.

There were no reported injuries or radiological release. The UAE, which has hosted air defenses and personnel from Israel, recently accused Iran of launching drone and missile attacks. Tensions have risen over the Strait of Hormuz, a vital energy waterway gripped by Iran, which is under a U.S. naval blockade.

"For Iran, the Clock is Ticking, and they better get moving, FAST, or there won't be anything left of them," U.S. President Donald Trump posted on social media shortly after a call with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, whose attack on Iran with the U.S. sparked the war on Feb. 28.

Trump has repeatedly set deadlines for Tehran and then backed off.

"Our armed forces' fingers are on the trigger, while diplomacy is also continuing," Mohsen Rezaei, a military adviser to Iran's supreme leader, said on state television.

The ceasefire remains tenuous, with diplomatic efforts for a more durable peace having faltered. And fighting has heated up between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon despite a nominal ceasefire there.

The UAE Defense Ministry said three drones came over its western border with Saudi Arabia, with the other two intercepted. It was investigating who launched them. Iran and allied Shiite militias in Iraq have launched drone attacks targeting Gulf Arab states in the war.

The attack, "whether carried out by the principal actor or through one of its proxies, represents a dangerous escalation," Anwar Gargash, a diplomatic adviser to the UAE president, said on social media.

Saudi Arabia condemned the attack, and later said it had intercepted three drones that entered from Iraqi airspace.

The \$20 billion Barakah nuclear power plant was built by the UAE with the help of South Korea and went online in 2020. It is the only nuclear power plant in the Arab world and can provide a quarter of the energy needs in the UAE, a federation of seven sheikhdoms that is home to Dubai.

The UAE's nuclear regulator said the fire

didn't affect plant safety and "all units are operating as normal." The International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, said the strike caused a fire in an electrical generator and one reactor was being powered by emergency diesel generators.

It's the first time the four-reactor Barakah plant has been targeted in the war. Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis rebels, whom the UAE has battled as part of a Saudi-led coalition, claimed to have targeted the plant while it was under construction in 2017, which Abu Dhabi denied.

The UAE signed a strict deal with the U.S. over the nuclear power plant, known as a "123 agreement," in which it agreed to forego domestic uranium enrichment and reprocessing of spent fuel to ease any proliferation concerns. Its uranium comes from abroad.

That's very different from the nuclear program in Iran that is at the heart of long-running tensions with the United States and Israel.

Iran insists its program is for peaceful purposes, but it has enriched its uranium close to weapons-grade levels and is widely suspected of having had a military component to its program until at least 2003. It has often restricted the work of U.N. inspectors, including since the 12-day war with Israel last year.

Israel is widely believed to be the only nuclear-armed country in the region, but has neither confirmed nor denied having atomic weapons. Iran struck near Israel's Dimona nuclear facility during the war.

Nuclear plants have increasingly been targeted in wars in recent years, including during Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine that began in 2022. During the Iran war, Tehran repeatedly claimed its Bushehr nuclear power plant came under attack, though there was no direct damage to its Russian-run reactor or any radiological release.

Israel is coordinating with the U.S. about a possible resumption of attacks, said two people familiar with the situation, including an Israeli military officer. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were discussing confidential military preparations.

Speaking to his Cabinet on Sunday, Netanyahu said "our eyes are also open" when it comes to Iran, and "we are prepared for any scenario."

On Iranian state TV, presenters on at least two channels appeared armed during live programs.

One of them, Hossein Hosseini, received basic firearms training from a masked member of the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard. Hosseini mimed firing a shot at the flag of the UAE.

On another channel, Mobina Nasiri said a weapon had been sent to her from a gathering in Tehran's Vanak Square. "From this platform, I declare that I am ready to sacrifice my life for this country," she said.

## Kuwait ramps

Meanwhile, the ministry is preparing for a tender for the management, operation and maintenance of Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Bridge. It had earlier contacted the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) regarding the issuance of the tender.

However, in its meeting held on May 13, CAPT decided to postpone its decision until it receives a letter from the ministry outlining the amendments discussed within five working days.

The tender covers several activities, such as maintenance of the concrete superstructure of the bridge, marine works, ship berths, land-based construction (on the mainland and islands), building, maintenance, operational and administrative activities, and emergency response.

The project consists of two bridges spanning Kuwait Bay – the main bridge and the Doha Link Bridge, incorporating advanced electrical, mechanical and fire protection systems.

## Ride illegal,

The source affirmed that traffic officers operate throughout the country to track down violators, including reckless drivers, and then take legal measures against those proven to have committed violations.

## Kuwait nets

The ministry confirmed that legal measures were taken against the suspects, who were referred to the concerned authorities for investigation and other procedures.

It added that the intensive security campaigns will continue to track down drug dealers and users, while affirming its commitment to strictly enforce the law to protect the society.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Ministry of Interior arrested on Monday a criminal gang specialized in thefts involving breaking into homes and commercial branches and stealing cash amounts, as part of ongoing security efforts to combat crime and track down perpetrators of theft cases.

The ministry said in a press statement that the case began after a report was received regarding an unidentified masked individual breaking into a branch of Al-Sulaibiya Cooperative Society by smashing the glass door and stealing cash from the premises.

It added that security teams immediately launched investigations and technical follow-up operations, including reviewing surveillance camera footage, which led to identifying and arresting the suspects.

According to the statement, the suspects confessed to committing the crime and directed security personnel to the face covering used during the robbery, which was later found on top of a house in Al-Sulaibiya area.

Investigations also revealed the suspects' involvement in five other unidentified theft cases carried out using the same method, the ministry said, noting that legal procedures were being completed ahead of referring them to the competent authorities.

The ministry reaffirmed its continued efforts to pursue outlaws, apprehend criminals and take strict legal measures against them to preserve public security and protect property.

# MEWRE KD186mn energy and water deals under SAB review

By **Mohammad Ghanem**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The State Audit Bureau (SAB) reviewed 15 contracts of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, with a total value of around KD186.291 million, from April 27 to May 14.

These contracts include those awarded through direct contracting and were not tendered through the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) as per the standard procedures.

Within the abovementioned period, SAB carried out pre-audit oversight pro-

cedures for the contracts.

If SAB has comments regarding any of these contracts, the ministry is obligated to respond to them, in line with its commitment to cooperate with oversight bodies to ensure the proper procedures are followed from the initial tendering process until the approval of SAB.

Through the implementation of the contracts, the ministry will increase the strategic reserve of fresh water, modernize the electricity and water networks to be fully prepared for the summer when energy demand increases, and raise the operational efficiency of the networks, including the stations.

## Urgently Required For Local Recruitment

Reputed company is looking for the following positions for KOC Projects on urgent basis :

Sr.	Category	Require Numbers	Salary
1	Senior Mechanic	2	474
2	Mechanic	10	260
3	Instrument Engineer	1	1215
4	Instrument Technician	5	320
5	Instrument Analyzer Technician	2	540
6	Instrument Workshop Technician	2	320
7	Instrument Fitter	5	200
8	Senior Electrical Technician	1	466
9	Electrician	1	275
10	Cable Jointers Mate	1	140
11	Industrial Hygienist & Safety Officer	5	400
12	Scaffolder/Rigger	3	140
13	Spray Painter	1	140
14	Mechanic (Rotating Machinery)	1	270
15	Chargehand - Mechanical (Survey)	1	650
16	Senior Condition Monitoring Technician	1	850
17	Condition Monitoring Technician	2	320
18	Senior Technician Reliability	1	483
19	Technician Reliability	1	235
20	Senior Electrical Technician - Planning	1	450
21	Electrical Technician - Planning	1	320
22	Safety Engineer	1	1000
<b>Total</b>		<b>49</b>	

### Documents Required :

1. CV, Education Certificates, Experience Certificates, KOC Approvals, Work Permit & Passport copies
2. Candidates with KOC experience are preferred.
3. The candidate should have a minimum of 5 years of experience in Oil & Gas.
4. Interested Candidates please send in your updated CV to : [jobs@abjengineering.com](mailto:jobs@abjengineering.com) /Contact Number: 22391811 / 22391810-Ext: 4036 / 4037
5. Shortlisted Candidates will be contacted for Interviews.



**Hala Industrial Co.**  
— Custom Wooden Solutions —



## Crafted Storage. Engineered Precision

- ✓ Premium Natural Wood
- ✓ Custom-Made Dimensions
- ✓ Factory Direct Quality

☎ **60660817 - 66448545**  
 📷 **Hala\_Industrial**  
 ✉ **hala@halakw.com**

Subhan Industrial - Block 10 - Street 5 - Plot 151

## America

**4 eject safely in Idaho Navy jets crash:** All four crew members ejected safely after two Navy jets collided and crashed Sunday during an air show at the Mountain Home Air Force Base in western Idaho, officials said.

The collision involved two US Navy EA18G Growlers from the Electronic Attack Squadron 129 in Whidbey Island, Washington, said Cmdr. Amelia Umayam, spokesperson for Naval Air Forces, US Pacific Fleet.

The aircraft were performing an aerial demonstration when the crash occurred, Umayam said in a statement. The four crew members from both jets safely ejected and the crash was under investigation, she said. (AP)



**Teenagers arrested in Austin shootings:** Two teenagers were in custody and a potential third suspect was being sought following at least 10 random weekend shootings in Austin, Texas, that left four people injured, city officials said Sunday.

Driving around the city in stolen vehicles, the suspects fired at two fire stations, apartment buildings and houses during a string of robberies and shootings from Saturday afternoon to Sunday morning, Austin Police Chief Lisa Davis said.

The two boys, ages 15 and 17, were apprehended after they were pulled over in a stolen car and attempted to run. A third person who had been in the car also ran and remained at large. Davis said it was unknown if that person was involved in the shootings.

She said the firearm that was used in the shootings had earlier been stolen by the 15-year old, and that



This still image taken from video shows a plume of smoke rises above the plain near Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, where two Navy jets collided at an air show on Sunday. (AP)

the 17-year old was wanted for a separate firearm theft. (AP)



**Oakland crash kills 3:** Three people were killed and several others were injured after a driver crashed into a parked car and pedestrians late Saturday night in Oakland, California, authorities said.

The crash happened shortly after 11 p.m., according to officials. Oakland police said the driver, whose name was not released, is under 18 and was arrested.

Three people were pronounced dead at the scene, and three other pedestrians were taken to hospitals, where their conditions ranged from critical to stable, police said. The driver was also taken to a hospital for treatment, police said. (AP)

## Letlow and Fleming make runoff

## Cassidy loses Louisiana Republican primary

BATON ROUGE, La., May 18, (AP) — US Sen Bill Cassidy was decisively defeated in Saturday's Republican primary in Louisiana, unable to convince voters that he deserved another term five years after voting to convict President Donald Trump during an impeachment trial over the Jan. 6 attack on the US Capitol.

He finished behind US Rep Julia Letlow, who capitalized on the power of Trump's endorsement as the president continues purging his party of people he views as disloyal, and John Fleming, the state treasurer. Letlow and Fleming will compete in a runoff on June 27.

The result was the latest example of Trump's unrivaled power over the Republican Party as he approaches the twilight of his second term with persistent inflation, sagging approval ratings and dissatisfaction over the war with Iran. Unlike some other senators who declined to run again after crossing Trump, Cassidy pushed hard for reelection and spent nearly double the combined amount of his opponents.

But none of that was enough for Cassidy to qualify for a runoff, let alone win a third term.



Sen Bill Cassidy, R-La., speaks to supporters during an election night watch party on May 16, in Baton Rouge, La. (AP)

"Our country is not about one individual," he told supporters after his loss. "It is about the welfare of all Americans, and it is about the Constitution."

Letlow, on the other hand, swiftly embraced Trump's central role when she spoke at her victory party. "I want to say thank you to a very

special man who you all know, the best president this country has ever had, President Donald Trump," she said while flanked by her two young children.

Asked about Cassidy's vote at the impeachment trial, Letlow called it "a sign that he had turned his back on the Louisiana voters."

## Trump has been trying to overhaul US elections

## White House promotes program to check voter eligibility, critics fear midterm purge

TOPEKA, Kansas, May 18, (AP) — Even as Democratic officials fight the effort in court, the Trump administration has run millions of voter registrations through government databases to determine their eligibility in a process that critics worry could end up purging valid voters from the rolls before the November elections.

At least 67 million registrations, primarily from Republican-controlled states, have gone through a beefed-up verification program at the US Department of Homeland Security, and tens of thousands of those have been flagged as potential non-citizens or people who have died. Some states allow only a month for people to prove their eligibility and others suspend it immediately.

The scanning of state voter rolls at the national level is part of a broader effort by Republican President Donald Trump to federalize certain election functions and promote his messaging that elections are marred by non-citizen voting, even though instances of that are rare. Voting and civil rights advocates say the DHS system is error-prone and can mistakenly flag people who are eligible to vote.

"If a voter is wrongly removed, by the time they learn about it and correct it, they may miss their opportunity to vote in that election," said Freda Levenson, a lawyer with the American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio. The group is challenging an Ohio law requiring monthly checks with the DHS system.

Voters such as 29-year-old Anthony Nel have been caught in the middle. The native of South Africa, who became a citizen more than a decade ago, was flagged as a potential non-citizen when Texas ran its voter file through the DHS verification system. Nel's local election office in Denton, north of Dallas, temporarily canceled his registration last fall while he was waiting for a new passport to replace an expired one.

"I'm like, 'You should know that I'm a citizen, that the passport exists,'" he said in an interview.

Trump has been trying to overhaul US elections, including calling for a federal list of verified voters, and his Department of Justice has pushed states to hand over unredacted voter information for mass checks through the DHS program known as SAVE.

The Justice Department has sued states that refuse, saying the government is trying to ensure that they are complying with federal law and have accurate voter lists. States already take a number of steps to maintain the accuracy of their voter rolls.

SAVE, short for Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements, was created under an immigration law mandating that DHS help federal, state and local agencies prevent government benefits from going to noncitizens. US Citizenship and Immigration Services, an arm of DHS, said more than 1,300



Marylou Zschach fills out her ballot at her polling place at the Burbank Early Childhood School in Columbus, Ohio on May 5, during the primary election. (AP)

agencies use it.

At least 25 states have used SAVE to check their voter rolls since April 2025, after the Trump administration significantly expanded its search abilities, and 60 million registrations were checked in a year's time, according to Citizenship and Immigration Services. That figure does not include an additional 7.4 million registrations from North Carolina, where Republicans control the state election board, that were recently run through the system.

Citizenship and Immigration Services said in an emailed statement that it is "committed to helping eliminate voter fraud" to restore Americans' trust in their elections.

"SAVE is one of the most important tools states have to verify voter information," Kansas Secretary of State Scott Schwab, a Republican, recently told a US House committee examining how states keep voter rolls clean.

Schwab's endorsement is notable because he once was publicly skeptical that noncitizens represented a significant voter fraud threat.

Citizenship and Immigration Services said the 60 million voter registration

checks identified about 24,000 potential noncitizens. U.S. Assistant Attorney General Harmet Dhillon, who runs the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, said during a recent Fox News interview that those checks also identified about 350,000 people who appear to have died.

North Carolina's State Board of Elections said its check had identified another 34,000 registered voters who are potentially deceased.

Even if all those eventually were verified as ineligible, they would represent small percentages of total registered voters. The figure for noncitizens would be about 400 for every 1 million registrations. Some 384,000 people identified as potentially deceased in about 67 million registrations is a fraction of 1%.

Some voters have been mistakenly flagged.

In Dallas, election officials recently canceled the registration of Domingo Garcia, a 68-year-old lawyer and voting rights activist, without explanation. He has been voting regularly for 50 years, most recently in the state's March 3 primary, and suspects that officials concluded he was deceased.

"I should not have been on any lists," he said.

Voting rights advocates have filed at least six federal lawsuits over SAVE checks, either against the Trump administration or states using the program.

Nel, a 29-year-old college administrator, is a plaintiff in one of them, filed recently in the District of Columbia against the Justice Department. It alleges an "illegal and unprecedented quest" by the administration for "millions of Americans' confidential voter data."

Lawyers also argue that eligible voters will be disenfranchised by hits from outdated or incomplete data.

Nel came to the United States from South Africa with his parents at age 8. His parents became citizens when he was 16, making him a citizen, as well. He said he has voted regularly since he was 18.

Yet he received a letter in October in a white envelope that looked to him like junk mail. It told him he had been identified as a potential noncitizen through a SAVE check of Texas' 18 million voter registrations. He had 30 days to prove otherwise - a deadline he missed because of the time it took to get a new passport.

"It's clear that this process that they've put into place for this doesn't work," he said.

Republican officials said the administration does not portray SAVE searches as foolproof. Instead, it identifies registrations that should be further investigated, they said.

In Kansas, Schwab's office is still investigating its list of flagged registrations and has yet to disclose the number of hits of potentially ineligible voters from a SAVE check of the state's 2 million registrations.



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Services on May 18, a residential building is seen damaged after a Russian strike on Dnipro, Ukraine. (AP)

## Russia unleashes another aerial barrage on Ukraine as war's long-range strikes escalate

KYIV, Ukraine, May 18, (AP) — Russia targeted eight regions of Ukraine in its latest nighttime drone and missile barrage, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Monday, with local authorities reporting that the strikes wounded more than two dozen civilians, including three children.

Russian forces fired 524 attack drones and 22 ballistic and cruise missiles, Zelenskyy said. The city of Dnipro and the surrounding central region of Ukraine bore the brunt of the attack, officials said.

The barrage continued a recent spiral of long-range strikes that have grown in scale following a May 9-11 ceasefire that US President Donald Trump said he asked Zelenskyy and Russian President Vladimir Putin to observe but which had little impact. There is no sign a peace deal is taking shape despite US diplomatic efforts to end Russia's invasion.

Russia hammered Ukraine over several days last week, flattening a Kyiv apartment building where 24 people died.

One of Ukraine's largest drone strikes on Russia killed at least four people, including three near Mos-



In this photo provided by the Press Service of Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War on May 16, Ukrainian soldiers hold a flag of National Guard after returning from captivity during a POW exchange between Russia and Ukraine at the Ukrainian Belorussian border. (AP)

cow, and wounded a dozen others, authorities said Sunday.

In more than four years of war, Ukraine has built up its own long-

range capabilities. It has been hitting oil facilities that represent a vital part of the Russian economy, as well as other targets deep inside Russia, making the Russian public take notice. That has increased the pressure on Putin, whose army is struggling to make progress on the battlefield and who claimed earlier this month, without providing evidence, that the war is approaching its end.

On Sunday, the Russian Defense Ministry said that more than 1,000 Ukrainian drones had been shot down or jammed in the previous 24 hours, with around 80 on their way to Moscow.

In another significant enhancement of Ukraine's long-range arsenal, Defense Minister Mykhailo Fedorov said Monday that the country has developed its first glide bomb - a powerful weapon that has regularly been deployed to devastating effect by Russia.

The Ukrainian version carries a 250-kilogram (550-pound) warhead and is designed to strike fortifications, command posts and other targets dozens of kilometers (miles) behind the front line, he said. Ukrainian pilots are currently training with the weapon under combat conditions.

## Council of Europe states agree on migration and deportation declaration

BRUSSELS, May 18, (KUNA) — The 46 member states of the Council of Europe announced on Friday that they had reached an agreement on a text responding to the wishes of some governments to facilitate the deportation of convicted foreign nationals without facing criticism or accusations of human rights violations, while granting European governments broader discretion in expulsion and deportation decisions.

The declaration was adopted during a meeting of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers held in the Moldovan capital Chisinau. The ministers called on the European Court of Human Rights to "attach great importance to the assessment of national authorities" in cases involving foreign nationals subject to deportation orders, arguing that these authorities are "in principle better placed to assess local conditions and needs" compared to international courts.

The text also urged the European Court of Human Rights to show a clearer understanding of the specific characteristics of national legal sys-



Moldova's President Maia Sandu, (center), Secretary General of the Council of Europe Alain Berset, (right), and Moldova's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mihai Popsoi attend the 135th Ministerial Session of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in Chisinau, Moldova on May 15. (AP)

tems and traditions when reviewing decisions taken by domestic authorities in such cases.

European Commissioner for Migration Magnus Brunner welcomed the adoption of the declaration, describing

it as "an important step to strengthen the security of individuals and fundamental rights," highlighting the need to balance migration management with the protection of rights enshrined at the European level.

## Modena attack raises integration concerns amid migration debate, says Italian minister

ROME, May 18, (AP) — Italy's interior minister said Monday that a car-rammage and stabbing attack in the northern city of Modena cannot be dismissed as an isolated act, warning it highlights deeper challenges around integration and social distress.

Despite ruling out terrorism, Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi said investigators must still fully examine the factors behind the attack.

Eight people were wounded, four critically, when a 31-year-old man - an Italian citizen of Moroccan descent - drove into pedestrians Saturday before crashing into a shop window.

Italian authorities said the suspect, identified as Salim El Koudri, attempted to flee and slightly wounded a bystander with a knife before being overpowered by passersby and



Blood is seen next to a destroyed car on a street of Modena, Italy on May 16. (AP)

detained by police. Prosecutors arrested him on charges including massacre and aggravated injury. A court ruling on whether to validate his detention was expected later Monday.

In an interview with daily Il Giornale, Piantedosi said the man is not suspected of a terrorist act, pointing instead to what he described as "a real and serious issue of social distress" and mental health concerns.

5 suspected anti-govt armed members killed in clashes with troops

## Philippine Senate convenes as impeachment court to try VP as political storm rages

MANILA, Philippines, May 18, (Agencies): The Philippine Senate convened as an impeachment court Monday for the trial of Vice President Sara Duterte over criminal charges, in a time of deep divisions that erupted into an exchange of gunfire last week in the chamber.

The House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly to impeach Duterte last Monday over alleged unexplained wealth, misuse of state funds and a public threat to have the president assassinated if she herself were killed due to their political disputes.

The vice president, who has announced her plan to seek the presidency in 2028, has denied the charges but has refused to answer the allegations in detail.

Her father, former President Rodrigo Duterte, has been detained by the International Criminal Court on charges of crimes against humanity. The charges stem from anti-drugs

crackdowns he ordered while in power that killed thousands of mostly petty suspects.

Ahead of the impeachment trial, 13 of 24 senators led by allies of the Dutertes suddenly wrested the presidency of the Senate last Monday, leaving the outcome of the trial in question.

The vice president has blamed President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., her former ally and running mate in the 2022 election, for "kidnapping" her ailing father, referring to his arrest and transfer to the international court in The Hague last March.

The escalating disputes between the country's two top leaders reflect the deep divisions that have long plagued the rambunctious Asian democracy.

One of the senators, Ronald dela Rosa, served as Rodrigo Duterte's national police chief and enforced his bloody crackdowns on illegal drugs. The ICC has named dela Rosa



Philippine senators take oath as they convene as an impeachment court for the trial of Vice President Sara Duterte at the Philippine Senate on May 18, in Pasay, Philippines. (AP)

as a co-conspirator and unsealed a warrant for his arrest last Monday.

That same day, Dela Rosa, who was

absent from the Senate for months for fear of arrest, suddenly showed up in the chamber to enable Sen. Alan Peter

Cayetano, a key ally of the Dutertes, to gain a slim majority and capture the Senate presidency.

Dela Rosa told reporters he came out of hiding and went to the Senate using Cayetano's van but was nearly arrested by National Bureau of Investigation agents. He dashed into a stairway and ran to the Senate plenary hall, where Cayetano and other allies placed him under the chamber's "protective custody."

A tense standoff between the Senate's security personnel and government agents positioned in an adjacent government building escalated into an exchange of fire Wednesday night with the Senate personnel firing what their chief, Mao Aplasca, said were warning shots. Marcos appealed to the public to remain calm in a late-night call on national TV.

Cayetano later said that dela Rosa had disappeared from the Senate. Authorities said they were investigating the possibility that the ex-

change of fire may have been instigated to enable dela Rosa's escape.

**Also:**

**MANILA:** Five suspected anti-government armed members were killed in a series of clashes with government troops in Negros Occidental province in the central Philippines on Saturday, the Philippine army said Sunday.

The military said fighting erupted between soldiers and members of the New People's Army at around 6 am Saturday, and two more encounters followed later in the day at around 2 p.m. and 5 p.m., according to the military.

Government troops recovered several firearms and explosives from the encounter sites, including a machine gun, rifles, a grenade launcher and a hand grenade.

Local authorities said at least 180 families from three affected villages were evacuated to safer areas amid the fighting.

### Asia

**Strong quake in south China kills 2:** A 5.2 magnitude earthquake struck south China's Guangxi region early Monday, killing two people, toppling buildings and triggering the evacuations of thousands, state media reported.

Four others were injured, while more than 7,000 residents were evacuated from Liuzhou city.

The search for several missing residents wrapped up around midday Monday, after the last trapped person, a 91-year-old man, was found alive in good condition, authorities said.

Images aired by state broadcaster CCTV showed excavators clearing debris. At least 13 buildings collapsed, while landslides triggered by the quake blocked roads to the area, according to CCTV. (AP)

**1 dead, 9 missing in China truck accident:** One worker died and nine remain missing after a pickup truck fell off a bridge in southwest China on Saturday, state media reported.

The truck, carrying a total of 15 people, was transporting workers to a sweet potato farm in the southern Guangxi region.

Five people were rescued, authorities said. Search and rescue efforts continued Sunday for the remaining nine missing people. (AP)

**2 dead in New Zealand helicopter crash:** Two people were killed in a helicopter crash on Sunday morning in the Southern Alps of New Zealand, police said.

Emergency services were alerted to the crash on the South Island at about 9:50 a.m. local time, a police statement said, noting the helicopter was a chartered craft carrying members of a hunting group.

The dead were the only occupants onboard at the time of the crash in Mount Aspiring National Park.

Three other members of the hunting group were located on the ground and brought to safety, the statement noted. (Xinhua)

**'Divers found bodies of 4 in Maldives cave':** Italy's Foreign Ministry said Monday rescuers have located the bodies of four Italian divers believed to be deep inside an underwater cave in a Maldivian atoll.

The searches had resumed on Monday after being suspended following the death of a local military diver during a perilous mission to try to reach them.

Five Italian divers are believed to have died while exploring a cave at a depth of about 50 meters (160 feet) in Vaavu Atoll on Thursday, according to Italy's Foreign Ministry. The recreational diving limit in the Maldives is 30 meters (98 feet).

The body of one Italian - a diving instructor - was found earlier outside the cave.

Three Finnish divers had arrived in the Maldives Sunday to draw up a fresh plan in the search for the bodies of the other four, who were believed to be inside the cave system. (AP)



This image released by the Maldives President's Media Division, shows a coast guard boat and other vessels deployed to search for the four missing Italian divers near Alimathaa Island, Vaavu Atoll, Maldives on May 15. (AP)

## Nigeria, US forces kill over 20 Islamic State group militants in new offensive

LAGOS, Nigeria, May 18, (AP): The Nigerian military said Monday that a new operation with US forces has killed more than 20 Islamic State group militants in northeastern Borno state.

The operation in Metele followed the weekend killing of Abu Bakr al-Mainuki, deputy leader of the group's local West African "province," marking a new development in the military cooperation. It was the first successful targeting of a senior militant leader by Nigeria's security forces after well over a decade of insurgency by armed groups including Boko Haram.

The US military said no US or Nigerian forces were harmed in Sunday's strikes in the community near the borders with both Niger and Chad.

Nigerian military spokesperson Samaila Uba said efforts "in close coordination" with the US military were ongoing to "disrupt terrorist networks, remove them from the battlefield and deny the terrorists any safe haven within Nigeria."

The US and Nigeria entered a military cooperation last year following a diplomatic row after US officials asserted that a "Christian genocide" was occurring in the country that's largely divided between Christians in the south and



A student from an orphanage school that was abducted with others by gunmen in late April, is photographed following his release in Lokoja, Nigeria on May 7. (AP)

Muslims in the north. Nigeria's government rejected the accusation, and analysts said it simplifies a complicated situation in which people are often targeted regardless of their faith.

In February, the US sent troops to Nigeria in what was deemed a mostly advisory and training role, but analysts say the weekend operation showed the cooperation has advanced to active US involvement.

**Also:**

**ABUJA, Nigeria:** A wave of militant attacks on schools in Nigeria

over the past week has left more than 80 children missing, local officials and a rights group said Sunday, the latest in school abductions in the West African country where the government is battling an array of jihadi and other armed groups.

The attackers targeted a primary school in the conflict-battered state of Borno, in Nigeria's northeastern corner, sometime between Wednesday and Thursday. The militants abducted 42 children there, in the Askira Uba and Chibok areas.

## Peru's electoral board confirms June 7 presidential runoff with Fujimori, Sánchez

LIMA, Peru, May 18, (AP): Peruvian electoral authorities confirmed on Sunday the official results of the first round of the presidential elections in early April, with Keiko Fujimori and Roberto Sánchez advancing to the runoff on June 7.

The final vote count was released Friday, but it had to be confirmed by Peru's National Elections Board to set the second round as none of the candidates received more than half the valid votes.

The 50-year-old congresswoman Fujimori, the daughter of the late President Alberto Fujimori and candidate for Fuerza Popular, gathered 2.8 million votes, or 17.19% of the total. She reached a presidential runoff for the fourth time.

Sánchez, of Juntos por el Perú party and a former foreign trade minister under former president Pedro Castillo, got 2.015 million votes, or 12.03%.

Both beat 33 other candidates with promises to put an end to surging crime, the top priority for Peruvians whose country's mining-driven economy has proved resilient to political instability.

More than 70% of voters did not choose either Fujimori or Sánchez in the first round, meaning both candidates will have to form coalitions if they hope to win in the runoff.

Peru has been embroiled in a long political crisis that has seen eight presidents come and go in nearly a



Presidential candidate Keiko Fujimori of the Popular Force party gives a statement flanked by Luis Galarreta, left, and Miki Torres at her headquarters in Lima, Peru on May 17. (AP)

decade of clashes between Parliament and the executive branch, and protests that left 50 demonstrators dead between 2022 and 2023.

Many of the contenders responded to the crime concerns with wide-ranging proposals, including building megaprisons, restricting food for prisoners and reinstating the death penalty for serious crimes.

Peru's economy, however, has defied both crime and the political instability stemming from a revolving door of presidents, having had three since October alone. Aided by

its status as world's second largest copper producer, the country posted more than 3% growth in 2024 and 2025.

Now in her fourth bid for the presidency, Fujimori has promised to crack down on crime with an iron fist, but she has also defended laws that experts say make it difficult to prosecute criminals. The laws, which her party backed in recent years, eliminated preliminary detention in certain cases and raised the threshold for seizing criminal assets.

### Strikes by warring parties targeted civilian infrastructure

## Drones making Sudan war even deadlier for civilians: experts

CAIRO, May 18, (AP): Drone warfare has become the deadliest threat to civilians in Sudan's conflict and both the military and the rival paramilitary Rapid Support Forces are being supplied by a number of countries in the Middle East and beyond, experts say.

"Armed drones have now become by far and away the leading cause of civilian deaths," or over 80% of conflict-related deaths, United Nations human rights chief Volker Türk said, calling for measures to prevent their transfer to Sudan. Drones killed at least 880 civilians between January and April.

The war in Sudan began in April 2023 and has killed at least 59,000 people, displaced some 13 million and pushed parts of the country into famine.

In recent weeks, the RSF has carried out drone attacks on Khartoum International Airport and other areas near the capital, which the army seized control of last year.

Analysts say foreign-supplied advanced drone technology enables the warring parties to expand strikes on densely populated areas, complicating peace efforts and raising fears of a broader proxy conflict.

"On the battlefield, drones have emerged as a force multiplier, enabling ground offensives and weakening enemy defenses," said Jalale Getachew Birru, East Africa senior analyst at the US-based Armed Conflict Location & Event Data project.

Both the army and RSF use drones to secure contested territory, disrupt mobilization efforts and spread insecurity in areas controlled by rivals, he said.

At least 2,670 people, including combatants and civilians, were killed in 2025, marking a 600% increase in drone-related deaths and an 81% increase in drone attacks compared to the previous year, ACLED found.

Drone strikes by the warring parties have targeted civilian infrastructure including hospitals, dams, schools, markets and displacement camps.

Most of the civilian deaths in drone attacks have occurred in the Kordofan region in the central Sudan, according to Türk.

On May 8, drone strikes in South Kordofan and near the city of el-Obeid in North Kordofan reportedly killed 26 civilians. More than 70 people were killed in drone attacks on densely populated areas in Kordofan earlier this year, according to the Sudan Doctors Network.

Last Tuesday, a Sudanese rights group, the Emergency Lawyers, said nine drone attacks on civilian vehicles had killed at least 36 people over the past 10 days across seven provinces.

The group blamed both the army and RSF and said some drones use visual monitoring technology capable of distinguishing targets, raising concerns that the attacks may not have been indiscriminate.

The paramilitary RFS began only last year to use drones widely, said Gabriella Tejada, research as-

sociate at The Soufan Center.

The army and RSF are competing to obtain new drone models, particularly from China, but the RSF is modifying drones and "increasingly competing to acquire newer, more sophisticated models, with the UAE likely supplying them," Tejada said. The United Arab Emirates has denied supplying drones to the RSF.

Nathaniel Raymond, executive director of the Humanitarian Research Lab at the Yale School of Public Health, said the RSF is backed by external technology, particularly from the UAE, with satellite imagery showing its use of Chinese-made CH-95 and FH-95 drones that are roughly the size of small aircraft.

In areas such as el-Fasher city in North Darfur, where at least 6,000 people were killed over three days last year, RSF drones shut down communications of civilians "crying for help" and target them where a signal is detected, Raymond said.

The RSF couldn't have seized the city without these capabilities, he added.

"The sophistication of how they use drones in el-Fasher is unique because it's the first time you've seen this layered, hunter-killer concept of operations to kill people, basically in a kill box or trapped inside a wall, in this case to prevent them from crying for help," Raymond said of the city, where UN experts said the violence indicated "hallmarks of genocide."



In this satellite photo provided by Planet Labs PBC, the area around the headquarters of the Sudanese military's 6th Division in el-Fasher, Sudan, is seen on Oct. 26, 2025. (AP)

Reaffirming its commitment to youth empowerment and sustainable community development

## Gulf Bank honors winners of INJAZ Kuwait's 2026 company program competition



Mubarak Al Enezi at the judging panel.



Dari AlBader and Laila Al-Mutairi, CEO of INJAZ, in a group photo with the winners.

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: As part of its ongoing commitment to youth empowerment and social responsibility, Gulf Bank honored the winners of the "Best Student Company of the Year 2026" award, in the High School Students' category during the closing ceremony organized by INJAZ Kuwait, under the theme "Watan Al Injaz." The event was attended by sponsors, students, parents, volunteers, and school teachers.

On this occasion, Mr. Dari AlBader, General Manager of Corporate Affairs at Gulf Bank and Board Member of INJAZ Kuwait, said: "We extend our sincere congratulations to the students who won the Best Student Company of the Year 2026 award. We also commend INJAZ Kuwait for its vital role in organizing this annual competition and creating a meaningful platform for young people to learn, innovate, and lead."

He added: "At Gulf Bank, we take pride in our long-standing partnership with INJAZ Kuwait, which spans more than 20 years. Through this partnership, we have supported numerous youth-led ideas and student companies, some of which have grown to become part of Kuwait's wider business and entrepreneurial ecosystem."

AlBader emphasized that Gulf Bank's support for youth is a core pillar of its corporate social responsibility strategy and its broader sustainability agenda. He noted that empowering young people with practical

■ Gulf Bank is committed to equipping youth with the skills required for the future labor market and entrepreneurship - Dari AlBader

knowledge, professional skills, financial literacy, and entrepreneurial capabilities directly contributes to building a more resilient and future-ready society. This commitment is also aligned with Gulf Bank's 2030 Strategy, Kuwait Vision 2035, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those focused on quality education, decent work and economic growth, and partnerships for sustainable development.

He further highlighted that the Company Program has gained strong popularity among ambitious students, as it provides them with a unique hands-on experience in establishing and managing a real student company, with the support and guidance of leading institutions, including Gulf Bank.

AlBader also noted that the successful partnership between Gulf Bank and INJAZ Kuwait has contributed to training thousands of young people during the 2025/2026 academic year, across different educational stages

and up to recent graduates. This was achieved through various development programs, including the INJAZ Internship Expo, Company Program, How to Start, INJAZ Talks, field visits, and several workshops.

Gulf Bank volunteers also played a key role in supporting participating students throughout INJAZ Kuwait's programs this year. Their contribution included career guidance, mentoring student groups, supporting participants in the Company Program, and sharing practical experience to help students strengthen their leadership and business skills. In addition, Mr. Mubarak Al Enezi, Senior Manager, Talent Acquisition in Gulf Bank's Human Resources Department, participated as a member of the competition's judging panel.

The Company Program teaches high school and university students the fundamentals of entrepreneurship and business creation. It equips them with leadership, management, and financial literacy skills, while giving them the opportunity to establish and operate a student company. Participants go through the full journey of building a business, starting from developing a business plan and feasibility study, forming a team, and raising capital, to creating and selling a product or service. The program concludes with an annual local competition that evaluates the participating student companies.

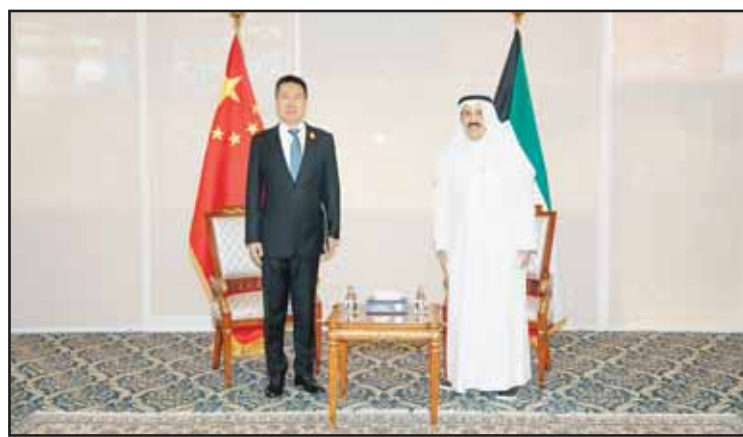
## Kuwait, China strengthen economic ties

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Minister of Finance Dr. Yaqub Al-Sayed Youssef Al-Rifai on Monday met with Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the State of Kuwait Yang Xin and his accompanying delegation.

They confirmed the deep and strong historical relations between Kuwait and China in various fields, particularly economic, trade and investment, during the meeting.

This is an affirmation of the commitment of the leadership of the two friendly countries in strengthening and developing the relationship to better serve mutual interests and attain benefits, in line with Kuwait Vision 2035 and the Belt and Road Initiative.

They also reviewed the role of China as a strategic partner in implementing several major development projects in Kuwait through Chinese



Finance Minister meets Chinese Ambassador.

companies.

They exchanged views on proposals and action plans, including joint efforts to convene the seventh meeting

of the Kuwaiti-Chinese Joint Committee and opportunities for cooperation regarding international financial and development institutions.

Starting at KD 3.19/month only with a 24-month subscription

## Zain teams up with WHOOP to bring performance-driven wearable insights

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Zain Kuwait is partnering with WHOOP, the human performance company, to offer customers access to its advanced wearable and membership experience through Zain Plus or Shabab plans. The collaboration reinforces Zain's continued commitment to delivering innovative, digital lifestyle-driven experiences that go beyond connectivity and add meaningful value to customers' everyday lives.

As Kuwait's most awarded 5G network, Zain continues to expand the value it delivers beyond connectivity by introducing global lifestyle and technology experiences that enhance customers' everyday lives. Through its partnership with WHOOP, Zain is giving customers access to advanced wearable insights that support smarter training, better recovery, stress awareness, and improved daily performance.

WHOOP is a 24/7 wearable fitness tracker and health coach designed to help users better understand their bodies and build healthier habits over time. By monitoring key metrics such as sleep, recovery, daily strain, heart rate variability, resting heart rate, and sleep cycles, WHOOP delivers personalized insights that help Zain customers train smarter, recover better, manage stress, and wake up ready to take on the demands of the day.

The partnership further strengthens Zain's role as a digital lifestyle enabler, bringing customers innovative products and services that support the way they live, move, work, and perform. Guided by its purpose of "Better Lives, Lasting Connections", the company continues to evolve beyond traditional telecom offerings and introduce innovative experiences that combine connectivity, technology, well-being, and everyday convenience.

Zain Plus gives customers a simpler way to own the latest devices, with convenient installment options designed to make technology more accessible. Through Zain Plus, customers can get a WHOOP device with a 24-month subscription starting at KD 3.19/month only.

The WHOOP One membership offers profes-



sional-grade fitness insights, including sleep, strain, and recovery insights, personalized coaching, VO2 Max, heart rate zones, and women's hormonal insights. The WHOOP Peak membership builds on this with advanced recovery and performance analytics, stress monitoring, health and longevity tracking, and deeper behavioral insights for optimization.

In addition, customers eligible for Shabab plans, Zain's postpaid voice plans designed for young customers aged 21 to 24, can get WHOOP One with a tailored mix of connectivity and entertainment benefits, including 500GB of 5G internet, 500 local minutes, access to two streaming platforms, and a 24-month WHOOP subscription.

With this launch, Zain continues to introduce partnerships that enrich the customer experience and bring global innovations closer to the Kuwait market. This partnership with WHOOP adds a new dimension to Zain's digital lifestyle ecosystem, empowering customers with data-driven insights that help them make better decisions for their health, fitness, recovery, and performance.

### Other Voices

## Are we still living our own lives? Or are we living everyone else's?

By Hala Bader Al Humaidhi

There was a time when people used to compare themselves to only the people they knew personally, family, neighbors, colleagues, friends. Today, we scroll past people's lives thousands of times. Their trips, their accomplishments, their beautiful faces, their expensive meals, their careers, their happy moments. They are on the screen continuously in front of us. And many of us are now feeling that we are lagging behind in our lives. We now call that FOMO, the fear of missing out. However, this FOMO is not missing out on the latest party or an opportunity. This is something different. It is the fear that our life is not interesting.

It is difficult to be still. Resting is not productive. Staying home is not enough. Not even living our own days is enough. Sometimes we do not feel happy enough if we do not take a picture of ourselves when we are happy and share it online. Many people do not live their lives anymore; instead, they live them through the fear of what they would lose.

What is even more painful to witness is how guilty people feel if they decide to do something



Hala Al Humaidhi

for themselves. To not attend to everything. To not connect to everyone. To not respond to every message, to not be at every event or trend. It is as if the world is now running, and if you are not keeping up with the latest developments, then you will lose your life. But who started the race anyway?

Social media has not made anyone insecure; it has only made it stronger. We are given a constant reminder of other people's highlights, not reality. We only see others' lives that look perfect,

while behind the scenes, everyone else is experiencing life with its stress, pressure, uncertainty, loneliness, and exhaustion. And if you do not believe me, no one's life is perfect, not on the screen either. Behind every perfect picture is a human being who is afraid, disappointed, struggling, and fighting their own battles.

The greatest cost of this age of FOMO is not the loss of time but the loss of presence in our own lives. It is when you are always watching everything and never actually experience what is right there in front of you. When you are always trying to participate in everything, sometimes you lose connection to yourself. Now, maybe it is a revolutionary way to be in touch with yourself. To say:

I do not need to be there for everything.

I do not have to please everyone.

I do not have to prove I am living an exciting life.

True happiness might be much quieter than what we were taught growing up. Maybe it is just living your own life, without constantly thinking that we should be living someone else's lives.

### Main 50 outperforms

## Bursa Kuwait slips as premier market weighs

KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (KUNA): Bursa Kuwait ended Monday's session on a negative note, with the general index declining by 17.68 points, or 0.20 percent, to close at 8,681.09 points.

Trading activity saw 419.6 million shares change hands across 22,523 cash transactions, with a total value of KD 94.2 million (around USD 306.9 million).

In contrast, the main market index posted gains, rising 54.20 points, or 0.64 percent, to reach 8,541.47 points.

A total of 246.3 million shares were traded through 12,358 transactions, valued at KD 36 million (approximately USD 117.5 million).

The premier market index weighed on overall performance, falling 33.88 points, or 0.37 percent, to close at 9,161.30 points.

Trading in this segment amounted to 173.3 million shares across 10,165 deals, with a total value of KD 58.2 million (about USD 190 million).

Meanwhile, the Main 50 Index outperformed, climbing 143.23 points, or 1.53 percent, to settle at 9,526.04 points.

The index recorded trading volume of 177 million shares through 8,706 transactions, valued at KD 26.9 million (roughly USD 87.8 million).

## ABK offers Eidiya cash at all branches except Al Khiran Branch in celebration of Eid Al Adha

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced the availability of Eidiya cash at its branches across all governorates in Kuwait, excluding Al Khiran branch, in celebration of the upcoming Eid Al Adha holiday.

The Bank confirmed its readiness to welcome customers wishing to obtain Eidiya during official working hours, noting that its employees will spare no effort in delivering a convenient banking experience that reflects ABK's commitment to its customers and its participation in the joy of Eid.

On this occasion, Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, extended her greetings to everyone on the occasion of Eid Al Adha, saying, "Providing Eidiya is not merely a banking service we offer; it is an authentic Kuwaiti tradition and part of our identity that we take pride in. Given the significant sentimental value



Johair Marafi, General Manager - Retail Banking



Marafi added, "The Eidiya service reflects our commitment to remaining close to our customers during their special occasions and supporting them in preparing for Eid with ease and convenience. Customers will be able to obtain all cash denominations, ensuring flexibility and convenience throughout the festive period."

She further stated, "We have directed all branch teams to provide the necessary support and ensure swift customer service during branch visits. The most in-demand Eidiya denominations will be made available during this period to further enhance the customer experience and share in this cherished occasion."

Reinforcing its long-standing commitment to advancing financial literacy and banking awareness across Kuwait's schools

# NBK renews strategic partnership with the Ministry of Education and Nazaha to advance the 'Bankee' program for five more years



Representatives from NBK, the Ministry of Education and Nazaha pose for a group photo following the renewal of their strategic partnership for the 'Bankee' program.



Isam Al-Sager, Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei and Rana Al-Fares



Officials and representatives during a meeting marking the renewal of the strategic partnership for the 'Bankee' program.



Signing the partnership renewal agreement.

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Further reinforcing its steadfast commitment to investing in human capital and advancing financial literacy, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) announced the renewal of its cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Education and Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) to continue implementing the "Bankee" program for an additional five years. The renewal reflects the depth of the strategic partnership among the three entities and the alignment of their roles in fostering a generation grounded in financial awareness and strong ethical values.

The signing ceremony was attended by Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, Minister of Education; Dr. Rana Al-Fares, Chairperson of Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha); and Mr. Isam Al-Sager, Vice Chairman and Group Chief Executive Officer of National Bank of Kuwait, alongside senior officials and executives from the Ministry of Education, Nazaha, and NBK, underscoring the significance of this institutional collaboration in supporting Kuwait's educational framework and strengthening societal awareness.

The "Bankee" program represents Kuwait's largest national initiative dedicated to financial literacy for elementary school students, delivering a comprehensive educational model that integrates core economic principles — including earning, spending, saving, and financial obligations — with fundamental ethical and behavioral values such as honesty, integrity, responsibility, respect for public funds, adherence to the law, and teamwork.

The renewal of this agreement builds on the program's successful journey since its inception, during which it has firmly established itself as one of Kuwait's most prominent and sustainable national initiatives, combining financial awareness with values-based education while delivering a meaningful and lasting impact both within and beyond the educational ecosystem.

Commenting on the occasion, Isam Al-Sager said: "At NBK, we firmly believe that investing in future generations is fundamentally an investment in Kuwait's future. Guided by this conviction, we remain committed to advancing impactful initiatives that contribute to shaping a generation equipped to make responsible financial decisions and aligned with the country's long-term sustainable development aspirations."

"The 'Bankee' program represents an advanced model for integrating education, financial awareness, and values-based learning. Its impact extends beyond strengthening financial knowledge to embedding the principles of integrity, transparency, and responsibility, values we are committed to reinforcing through our close partnership with the Ministry of Education and Nazaha," he added.

Al-Sager further emphasized that the Bank places significant importance on closely monitoring the program's implementation on the ground through regular visits to both public and private schools, ensuring the achievement of its objectives and maximizing its impact. He noted that the program has witnessed remarkable engagement from students and received wide praise from parents, who have observed its positive influence on their children's behavior and financial awareness.

Moreover, he noted that, since its launch four years ago, the program has successfully reached more than 50,000 students across over 104 schools throughout Kuwait, with the active participation of more than 12,000 teachers, reflecting the breadth of its reach, the depth of its impact, and its role in empowering educators and enhancing their ability to deliver financial literacy concepts through modern

- **Al-Tabtabaei:** "Bankee" continues to shape a more enlightened generation while reinforcing students' understanding of the importance of safeguarding Kuwait's resources and achievements
- **Al-Fares:** The program advances financial awareness and instills values among future generations as a key pillar of corruption prevention
- **Al-Sager:** At NBK, we believe that investing in future generations is an investment in Kuwait's future
- The "Bankee" program represents a pioneering model for integrating education, financial literacy, and values-based development
- The Ministry of Education and Nazaha continue to play a pivotal role in the program's success and long-term impact
- We look forward to further expanding the horizons of this strategic partnership and continuing to enhance the program

and interactive approaches.

Al-Sager also commended the pivotal role played by both the Ministry of Education and Nazaha in the success of the program, emphasizing that this trilateral collaboration has represented a fundamental pillar in achieving its objectives through integrating financial awareness with the promotion of integrity and transparency values, contributing to the development of a more aware, responsible, and values-driven society.

Concluding his remarks, Al-Sager said: "At NBK, we look forward to further expanding the horizons of this strategic partnership with the Ministry of Education and Nazaha, while continuing to enhance and evolve the program's content in line with the latest developments in financial and educational concepts, in a way that strengthens its integration with educational curricula and reinforces its long-term impact."

Emphasizing the significance of the initiative, Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, Minister of Education, emphasized that the renewal of the strategic partnership between the Ministry of Education, the "Bankee" program, and Nazaha reflects the Ministry's commitment to supporting national initiatives that contribute to shaping students' awareness and strengthening the system of positive values and behaviors within the educational environment.

He noted that the program has delivered tangible educational outcomes over recent years through interactive content and impactful activities that have strength-

ened financial literacy concepts while reinforcing the values of honesty, integrity, discipline, responsibility, and respect for public funds. The program has also contributed to developing students' decision-making abilities and fostering positive behavioral practices through practical and engaging learning experiences.

He added that such initiatives contribute to shaping well-rounded student personalities, strengthening the values of national loyalty and belonging, and reinforcing students' awareness of the importance of safeguarding the nation's resources and achievements, while preparing a more aware generation capable of navigating future developments and challenges.

Al-Tabtabaei further noted that the Ministry of Education places significant importance on purposeful educational initiatives that align with students' evolving needs and broader societal changes through the adoption of modern and relatable approaches that help instill the values of transparency, commitment, and responsible conduct, positively influencing students' everyday behavior.

Furthermore, he emphasized that collaboration between educational institutions, national institutions, and private sector organizations represents an effective model of social responsibility and strengthens joint efforts aimed at preparing conscious generations equipped with the values, knowledge, and skills needed to contribute positively to serving the nation and supporting the sustainable development journey.

Meanwhile, Dr. Rana Al-Fares emphasized that instilling ethical values and strengthening financial awareness from the early stages of education represent fundamental pillars in corruption prevention and in preparing a generation that is more conscious of its responsibilities toward public funds and national interests.

She added that the continuation of the "Bankee" program reflects an integrated partnership between the public and private sectors, contributing to the advancement of sustainable development objectives and reinforcing Kuwait's efforts to promote the values of integrity and transparency.

The "Bankee" program is built on innovative educational content centered on interaction and practical application, contributing to simplifying financial concepts and enhancing students' understanding of them, while instilling sound financial behaviors from an early age that support financial inclusion objectives and contribute to preparing a more aware and financially independent generation.

The program also reflects the effective integration of roles among national institutions by advancing financial awareness while supporting Nazaha's broader efforts to promote the values of integrity and transparency and foster a culture of corruption prevention. This positions the program as a comprehensive educational model that contributes to shaping responsible citizens who uphold the rule of law and safeguard their nation's resources.

Furthermore, the "Bankee" program forms part of a broader series of community initiatives launched by NBK aimed at supporting the education sector, promoting a strong culture of financial literacy, and preparing a generation capable of addressing future economic challenges with confidence and competence.

NBK continues to reinforce its leading position as Kuwait's largest contributor to corporate social responsibility initiatives through the launch of diverse, innovative, and sustainable programs that serve all segments of society, with a strong focus on supporting education and empowering youth, driven by its belief that investing in education is fundamentally an investment in Kuwait's future.

## Big tech, loose rules drive AI hype risks

### Companies are hyping AI the same way they talked up sustainability, but there are ways to fix that

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.



By **Suvrat Dhanorkar**

Georgia Institute of Technology

Across corporate earnings calls, investor presentations and marketing pitches, "artificial intelligence" has become the buzzword of choice. Yet a troubling pattern lies under the hype. Many claims vastly overstate actual AI sophistication, misleading people about true capabilities, future outcomes and potential harms.

A case in point is the recent 600% share price surge of Allbirds, after the once-trendy sustainable footwear business issued a vague announcement in April 2026 that it would pivot to AI. In the coming months, the company plans to rename itself NewBird AI and give up its status as a public benefit corporation.

As a scholar who studies corporate sustainability, I see parallels between this "AI washing" phenomenon - when companies oversell the benefits of AI while glossing over the risks - and the greenwashing trend in the recent past, when companies claimed to commit to sustainability but didn't enact fundamental change. Widespread deception was rampant, with businesses spending far more on green marketing than on actual sustainability improvements. And those efforts often backfired on both the companies and the communities they served. Even more worrisome: AI washing's rapid rise and widespread adoption will likely eclipse the greenwashing trends.

AI washing is thriving because companies and policymakers ignore four important principles. These shortfalls, in the past, also characterized greenwashing.

First, AI guidelines lack standardization. By 2019, 84 sets of AI ethics principles and guidelines had already been published. By 2023, this number had exploded to more than 200 - a mess of voluntary frameworks from companies, research institutions and public organizations.

Making matters worse is that the U.S. currently relies on fragmented AI rules, with most being voluntary. The Trump administration has generally sided with Big Tech to push back efforts at state or federal regulation. At a global level, one of the few exceptions is the European Union AI Act, perhaps one of the most comprehensive frameworks, but its implementation won't be fully phased in until 2027 or later.

In the early 2000s, corporate sustainability faced a similar credibility crisis. Every company measured sustainability differently, making comparisons impossible and greenwashing easy. The breakthrough came only when standardized, industry-specific metrics allowed meaningful benchmarking. Initiatives such as the Global Reporting Initiative and Sustainability Accounting Standards Board established common metrics for measuring environmental impact, social responsibility and quality of governance, known by the shorthand ESG.

When companies must report carbon emissions using the same methodology, for example, or disclose labor conditions using identical categories, investors can compare performance, identify laggards and allocate capital accordingly. This push made comparisons possible and deception harder, although it still wasn't foolproof. For example, a 2023 United Nations Environment Programme report on the fast-fashion industry found that many companies continue to make "vague and inflated" sustainability claims.

Second, there are no comprehensive frameworks in the U.S. that require businesses to judge how AI affects them in a material way and publicly disclose those impacts. Examples of AI-driven material impacts include whether algorithmic bias shapes business outcomes, or whether decisions on how to use AI systems carry significance for shareholders and the public.

Instead, AI governance remains dominated by the narrow inner circle of companies that build the AI systems, while affected communities rarely have a say in determining which AI impacts are material enough to warrant public attention. For example, Big Tech companies like Google, Microsoft, Apple, NVIDIA and others adhere to their own AI governance guidelines, with relatively little public input.

The development of sustainability principles offers some examples of how to build these frameworks. The EU's Corporate

Sustainability Reporting Directive requires over 50,000 companies to formally evaluate which sustainability topics are material to their stakeholders, and then disclose that information. These efforts try to ensure that accountability is clear across entire supply chains.

While nowhere nearly as comprehensive, U.S. regulations such as the 2010 Dodd-Frank financial reform and California's law requiring reporting on statewide greenhouse gas emissions provide a similar blueprint that U.S. policymakers could build on if they chose.

A third problem is the general lack of third-party verification, making AI washing trivially easy. Effective disclosure means reporting all material impacts - not just cherry-picked successes.

In practice, AI audits can vary dramatically in rigor, scope and methodology. One auditor might conduct extensive testing across demographic groups, analyze decision-making and validate the quality of training data. Another might simply review documentation and accept company explanations at face value. Given the variety of AI auditing models out there, different auditors may use incompatible methodologies, making results impossible to compare. If companies adopted third-party accreditation systems to assess how they use AI, they would help ensure the accountability that self-reported claims cannot match.

By contrast, there was reasonable progress in this respect as companies adopted ESG principles. For example, institutions such as the Carbon Disclosure Project and Global Reporting Initiative have a network of partners that offer independent verification. These providers, certified under international standards, verify corporate sustainability data against rigorous criteria. That way, they provide the assurance that lets companies show the progress needed to unlock sustainable finance and mitigate legal risks. Third-party audits are far from perfect, but they offer a clear path for improvement.

The fourth principle is robust enforcement. Early ESG initiatives relied on reputational pressure and stakeholder goodwill - things that corporations routinely ignored when profits were at stake. When change came, it was because regulations established legal liability and financial penalties.

These consequences changed how corporations assess risk and continue to shape sustainability practices today. Volkswagen's 2015 "Dieselgate" scandal, for example, cost the company over US\$30 billion in fines, settlements and criminal charges after U.S. regulators found that the carmaker was cheating emissions tests. BP faced billions in penalties and liabilities for the 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster, the biggest oil spill in the history of marine oil drilling operations.

The current enforcement gap in AI creates a predictable dynamic. The expected value of AI washing - like potential investment gains, competitive advantage, and market valuation increases - far exceeds the expected cost in terms of penalties and risk of detection. Until enforcement imposes consequences that exceed benefits, AI washing will persist as a rational business strategy rather than a risk to a business's reputation.

Fortunately, investors are beginning to step up. The Federal Trade Commission, for example, launched Operation AI Comply in 2024, targeting deceptive AI claims, although this effort has been partially scaled back by the current Trump administration.

Until businesses address these four principles, AI washing will continue. Without standards and audits, even well-intentioned companies can't know if their work meets adequate rigor. Without assessments of material impact, some groups of consumers or shareholders will be hurt. And without liability, even thorough auditors won't be able to identify whether a business's claims about AI are truthful.

These principles, applied broadly, also help explain why greenwashing persists. For example, the lack of universal reporting standards continues to leave some gaps, with data-quality issues persisting even as reporting frameworks emerged. More fundamentally, political buy-in for ESG has diminished significantly, particularly in the U.S., where over 150 bills were introduced across multiple states by 2023 to disincentivize firms from adopting ESG. Major financial institutions - including JP Morgan, State Street, BlackRock and PIMCO - have retreated from their earlier climate commitments amid political pressure as well as antitrust concerns.

This trend shows that even well designed accountability measures require durable political support to succeed. After all, corporate sustainability took more than 25 years to develop from an initial framework to mandatory standards, and it still remains a work in progress. AI, by contrast, is advancing exponentially in terms of its reach and societal impact. There may not be 25 years to catch up - but at least there are lessons from the recent past. (AP)

Enhancing SME financing, investment portfolio

# KFH unveils annual sustainability report reinforcing ESG leadership

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) launched its Sustainability Report for 2025, marking a year of consolidation, resilience, and strategic progress for the Group.

The report highlights KFH's integrated sustainability and carbon footprint reporting across economic, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) dimensions, supported by oversight from the Board Governance and Sustainability Committee and dedicated sustainability functions across the Group.

The report outlined that KFH has further strengthened its support for SMEs, recording a 2.8% increase in cash financing to KD 157.2 million, while its investment portfolio expanded by approximately 40% to reach USD 21.1 billion, reflecting a strategic focus on sovereign investments and high-quality liquid sukuk. It also highlighted the KFH's continued advancement in green and sustainability sukuk investments, with USD 1.221 billion allocated to sustainable and green sukuk—reflecting a 30% year on year increase in ESG aligned investments.

The report emphasized KFH's continued commitment to placing people at the center of its success through strategic investment in human capital. It also emphasized strengthening sustainability awareness through targeted training programs. The report further stated that KFH promotes innovation through collaboration with FinTechs, startups, and SMEs, while advancing gender inclusion—where women represented 24.05% of the workforce—and reinforcing social responsibility through more than 200 CSV initiatives aligned with Kuwait Vision 2035 and supported by measurable impact metrics.

KFH has achieved Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certifications for several of its branches, bringing the total number of LEED Gold-certified branches to five from early 2026. In addition, the KFH Auto showroom was awarded the Gold Level Sustainability Assessment Certificate (GSAS), making KFH the first bank in Kuwait to attain this distinction.

KFH is steadily expanding its portfolio of environmentally friendly premises as a key pillar of its 2026 sustainability strategy and its "Keep it Green" campaign. This effort is rooted in the integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles across its operations, with the goal of aligning with Kuwait Vision 2035 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By embedding sustainability into its infrastructure development and operational practices, KFH is reinforcing its commitment to responsible growth while enhancing the environmental performance of its facilities.

## KFH Chairman Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq

In his message, KFH Chairman Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq said that building on strong foundations from previous years, 2025 reflected consolidation, resilience, and strategic progress. During the year, KFH strengthened its governance frameworks, enhanced operational efficiency, and leveraged synergies across its regional and international presence. This progress was recognized through prestigious international and regional awards, including World's Best Islamic Bank 2025 by Global Finance magazine and Bank of the Year – Kuwait 2025 by The Banker magazine, recognizing excellence in financial performance, innovation, and customer-centric growth.

Al-Marzouq stated that in 2025, KFH reinforced its financial strength and sustained its position as the largest private-sector institution in Kuwait by market capitalization, while supporting its long-term ambition to rank among the world's top 100 banks. He emphasized that sustainability remains a fundamental pillar of KFH, fully aligned with its mission, values, Kuwait Vision 2035, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

He noted that KFH's approach to sustainable banking is grounded in strong governance and prudent risk management. Throughout 2025, the Group enhanced its governance framework through integrated risk systems,



KFH Chairman Hamad Al-Marzouq



KFH Group CEO Khaled Al-Shamlan

- **Al-Marzouq:** Sustainability Remains a Fundamental Pillar of KFH and Is Fully Aligned with Our Mission
- **Al-Shamlan:** Sustainability Serves as a Central Driver of Strategy and Operations



KFH Sustainability Report

adoption of international best practices, and continued transparency and accountability.

Al-Marzouq highlighted that digital transformation was a key enabler of sustainable growth in 2025. KFH expanded its digital banking capabilities, automation initiatives, and customer-centric solutions, improving

operational efficiency and customer experience while supporting responsible resource utilization. During the year, the Group expanded its digital ecosystem to deliver more than 200 services online, reinforcing financial inclusion and positioning KFH as a regional leader in digital Islamic banking.

He further emphasized that financial inclusion and human capital development remain central to KFH's sustainability agenda. Across multiple markets, the Group continued to provide inclusive financial solutions, support small and medium-sized enterprises, and invest in national talent. KFH also strengthened its commitment to diversity, inclusion, and women's empowerment by fostering a supportive work environment that enables professional growth, leadership development, and equal opportunities, alongside a growing culture of innovation across the Group.

Environmental responsibility remains a priority for KFH. In 2025, the Group advanced its environmental initiatives, building on its carbon footprint reporting and green finance programs. KFH continued to promote Shari'a-compliant sustainable finance solutions and climate-related initiatives aligned with global environmental efforts.

Al-Marzouq added that KFH reaffirmed its role through impactful social responsibility initiatives spanning education, health, youth empowerment, environmental preservation, and support for vulnerable groups. Through strategic partnerships, the Group continues to deliver long-term value and positive impact across the communities it serves.

Looking ahead, KFH remains confident in its ability to navigate evolving economic and sustainability challenges while creating shared value for shareholders, customers, employees, and society, guided by clear governance, innovation, and responsible banking.

## KFH Group Chief Executive Officer Khaled Yousef Al-Shamlan

Meanwhile, KFH Group Chief Executive Officer Khaled Yousef Al-Shamlan said that sustainability continues to serve as a central driver of KFH's strategy and day-to-day operations. He noted the Group's commitment to embedding ESG considerations across its business while maintaining full alignment with Islamic Shari'a principles, translating sustainability priorities into measurable impact.

Al-Shamlan stated that KFH's sustainability strategy integrates economic, environmental, social, and governance objectives across core banking activities, including risk investment decision-making. He emphasized the Group's continued focus on responsible capital deployment that supports sustainable development outcomes.

He added that supporting the transition toward a low-carbon economy remains a priority, with continued progress in green finance solutions, environmentally responsible practices, and partnerships that support climate action and environmental preservation.

Digital transformation, he said, remains a cornerstone of KFH's sustainability journey. In 2025, KFH enhanced its digital capabilities through expanded online services, process automation, and advanced technologies, enabling seamless end-to-end digital solutions. Customers performed more than 600 million e-transactions during the year, reflecting KFH's leadership in future-ready banking.

Al-Shamlan noted that people remain at the heart of KFH's success. In 2025, the Group continued investing in human capital by promoting diversity, inclusion, equal opportunity, women empowerment, and national talent development. KFH secured nine global awards for human resources excellence and continued to strengthen sustainability awareness through targeted training and knowledge-sharing initiatives.

He concluded by emphasizing the importance of accelerating sustainability integration across operations, products, and services, with priorities including stronger ESG performance, expanded sustainable finance offerings, digital innovation, and continued positive social impact.

Al-Sayer highlights role of banks in sustainable growth

## Warba Bank, Minister discuss sustainability cooperation

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: A delegation from Warba Bank, led by Chairman Hamad Mosaed Al-Sayer and CEO Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem, met with Dr. Reem Ghazi Al-Fulaj, Minister of State for Development and Sustainability. The meeting focused on strengthening collaboration on sustainability initiatives and supporting the country's long-term development plans.

The two parties discussed key areas related to the role of sustainability in economic development, alongside exploring ways to enhance public-private partnerships in alignment with the state's future development plans.

### Public-Private Partnerships:

Chairman Hamad Mosaed Al-Sayer stated that sustainable development is now a strategic priority for financial institutions due to its direct impact on building a resilient economy capable of adapting to global shifts.

"Warba Bank believes in the importance of cooperation between the public and private sectors to drive development and create initiatives that deliver long-term economic and social value," Al-Sayer said. He added that the banking sector plays a pivotal role by adopting responsible initiatives and integrating sustainability across its operations and services.



Her Excellency the Minister accompanied by Chairman Hamad Al-Sayer and CEO Shaheen Al-Ghanem.

Al-Sayer noted that the meeting underscores the importance of ongoing coordination between government entities and private institutions. He emphasized that building effective partnerships supports national development goals and improves the effectiveness of development initiatives.

### Sustainability Within Corporate Strategy:

CEO Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem confirmed that Warba Bank continues to integrate sustainabil-

ity into its corporate strategy by developing programs that support social responsibility, governance, and innovation.

"Warba Bank is keen on building effective partnerships with various official bodies and national institutions," Al-Ghanem said. "This facilitates the exchange of expertise, contributing to sustainable development goals on both economic and social levels."

The bank said it will continue supporting national development

initiatives through sustainable practices and innovation, in line with Kuwait's vision for a diversified and sustainable economy.

### About Warba Bank:

Warba Bank is a leading Islamic bank in Kuwait with a strong focus on Sharia-compliant digital banking. With one of the largest shareholder bases in the country, the bank continues to deliver innovative financial products and services, reinforcing its position as a digital-focused institution.

Asia stocks pull back from highs

## Global shares fall as oil jumps on Iran tensions

HONG KONG, May 18, (AP): World shares mostly retreated and oil prices jumped on Monday after U.S. President Donald Trump warned Tehran that the "clock is ticking" as U.S.-Iran negotiations over a permanent end to the war stall.

U.S. futures fell and markets in Japan and South Korea pulled back from their records. In early European trading, Britain's FTSE 100 edged up 0.1% to 10,205.31. France's CAC 40 lost 0.9% to 7,883.42, and Germany's DAX dropped 0.1% to 23,925.82.

During Asian trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 fell 1% to 60,815.95, a decline led by technology-related stocks. It reached all-time intraday high levels last week above 63,000.

The yield on the 10-year Japanese government bond surged to as high as 2.8%, its highest level since the late 1990s. That's part of a broader shift toward higher yields as the Bank of Japan gradually raises interest rates and higher energy costs raise expectations of rising inflation. The yield was around 2.55% just one week ago.

Seoul's Kospi climbed 0.3% to 7,516.04 after trading lower earlier in the day. It crossed the 8,000 mark for the first time on Friday, supported by buying of technology shares driven by the boom in artificial intelligence, but later declined partly on profit-taking by investors.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 1.1% to 25,675.18.

The Shanghai Composite index edged 0.1% lower to 4,131.53, after China reported weaker-than-expected economic data for April.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 declined 1.5% to 8,505.30.

Taiwan's Taiex dropped 0.7%, while India's Sensex fell less than 0.1%.

Oil prices rose after Trump warned Iran in a social media post that "the Clock is Ticking, and they better get moving, FAST, or there won't be anything left of them" following a call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Trump has set deadlines for Iran and then backed off, so investors have remained cautious about the situation in the Strait of Hormuz and how it is impacting global energy flows, including oil and gas. The strait is still mostly closed, and the U.S. has also imposed its own sea blockade on Iranian ports since last month.

A drone strike over the weekend on a United Arab Emirates' nuclear power plant added to worries over a potential escalation in the conflict.

Brent crude, the international standard, gained 0.7% to \$110.05 per barrel. It was trading at roughly \$70 a barrel in late February before the start of the Iran war. Benchmark U.S. crude was trading 1% higher to \$106.49 per barrel.

"Re-escalation risks are increasing," ING commodities strategists Warren Patterson and Ewa

Manthey wrote in a research note. While there has also been a pick up on shipping activities over the past week around the strait, they said, "this can change quickly."

The pair also noted that the oil market was reacting to the lack of tangible results on the Iran war after last week's widely-watched summit between Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing, even as the White House said both the U.S. and China had agreed that the Strait of Hormuz must remain open.

U.S. officials had hoped that Beijing could use its influence, given its economic ties with Iran, to help broker a peace agreement and reopen the strait. Trump said last week in an interview that Xi told him China "would like to be of help" in negotiating an end to the war. So far it's been unclear how Beijing might do that.

The yield on the U.S. 10-year Treasury was at around 4.60%, up from 4.47% last Thursday and sharply higher than the nearly 4% level it was holding at before the Iran war.

On Friday, the benchmark S&P 500 dropped 1.2% from the record it set the day before. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 1.1% and the technology-heavy Nasdaq composite lost 1.5%.

In other dealings early Monday, the U.S. dollar rose to 158.82 Japanese yen from 158.62 yen. The euro was trading at \$1.1645, up from \$1.1622.

## Trump drops \$10 bln IRS lawsuit amid fund reports

WASHINGTON, May 18, (AP): President Donald Trump on Monday withdrew his \$10 billion lawsuit against the Internal Revenue Service over the leak of his tax returns amid reports that his administration was considering the creation of a fund to compensate his political allies who believe they have been wrongly investigated and prosecuted.

Democrats and government watchdogs immediately pledged to fight what they called a "corrupt" and unprecedented resolution, warning that the arrangement would unjustly enrich people close to the president with taxpayer dollars and open the door to meritless claims of political persecution.

Trump's lawyers disclosed the dismissal of the case in a filing Monday in federal court in Florida, where the president sued earlier this year. The filing did not disclose the terms of any resolution, but ABC News first reported last week that Trump was prepared to drop his lawsuit as part of a deal that would create a \$1.7 billion fund to pay allies of the president who believe they were mistreated by the Biden administration Justice Department.

If established, the fund would represent not only a highly unorthodox resolution but also a further demonstration of the administration's eagerness to reward allies who before Trump came to power were investigated and in some cases charged and convicted. Most notably, the president on his first day back in office pardoned or commuted the sentences of supporters who rioted at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. His Justice Department since then has approved payouts to supporters entangled in the Trump-Russia investigation and investigated and prosecuted some of his perceived adversaries.

"This case is nothing but a racket designed to take \$1.7 billion of taxpayer dollars out of the Treasury and pour it into a huge slush fund for Trump at DOJ to hand out to his private militia of insurrectionists, rioters, and white supremacists, including those who brutally beat police officers on January 6, 2021, and sycophant accomplices to his election stealing schemes," Rep. Jamie Raskin, the top Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee, said in a statement.

Trump's attorneys suggested in their court filing seeking to dismiss the case that the resolution would not be reviewable by a judge. But a group of 93 members of Congress filed a brief teeing up a challenge.

It was not immediately clear who precisely will stand to benefit from the reported fund but its creation reflects Trump's long-running claims that the Justice Department during the Biden administration was weaponized against him.

He has cited as proof the since-dismissed criminal charges he faced between his first and second terms of conspiring to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election he lost and of retaining classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida. Several aides of his were also prosecuted, as were hundreds of Trump supporters who stormed the U.S. Capitol in an effort to halt the certification of election results on Jan. 6, 2021.

Merrick Garland, who served as attorney general during the Biden administration, has repeatedly denied allegations of politicization and has said his decisions followed facts, the evidence and the law. His Justice Department also investigated Biden for his handling of classified information and brought separate tax and gun prosecutions against Biden's son Hunter.

Nonetheless, Trump's current Justice Department has actively pursued the president's retribution campaign and grievances, bringing criminal charges against some of his political opponents and initiating a wide-ranging investigation that aims to establish a years-long conspiracy between law enforcement and intelligence officials to destroy Trump's political prospects and keep him in power.

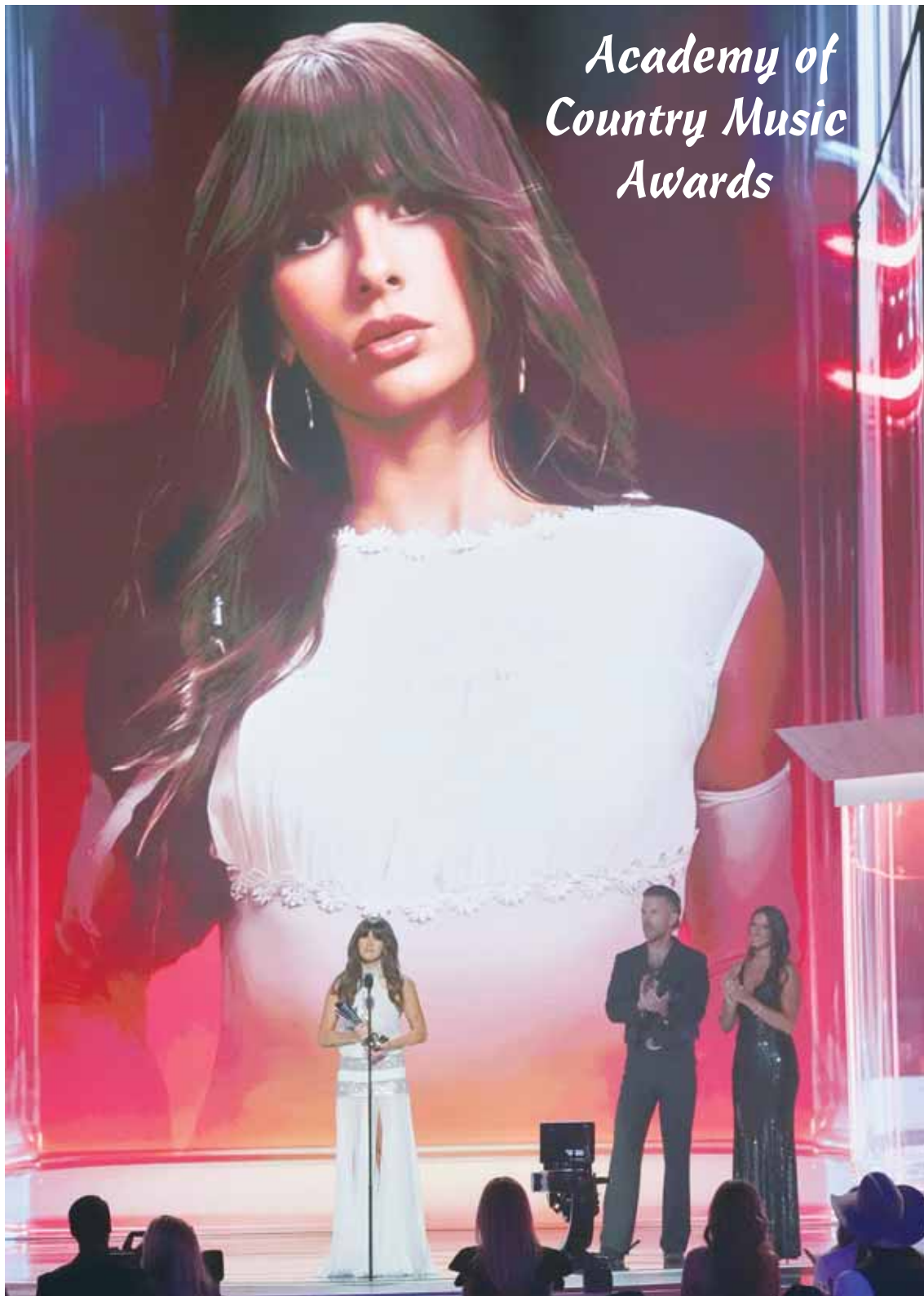
No charges have been brought in that investigation and it is not clear that any ever will be.

Trump filed a lawsuit earlier this year in a Florida federal court, alleging that a previous leak of his and the Trump Organization's confidential tax records caused "reputational and financial harm, public embarrassment, unfairly tarnished their business reputations, portrayed them in a false light, and negatively affected President Trump, and the other Plaintiffs' public standing."

The president's sons, Donald Trump Jr. and Eric Trump, are also named plaintiffs in the suit.

In 2024, former IRS contractor Charles Edward Littlejohn - who worked for Booz Allen Hamilton, a defense and national security tech firm - was sentenced to five years in prison after pleading guilty to leaking tax information about Trump and others to two news outlets between 2018 and 2020.

The outlets were not named in the charging documents, but the description and time frame align with stories about Trump's tax returns in The New York Times and reporting about wealthy Americans' taxes in the nonprofit investigative journalism organization ProPublica. The 2020 New York Times report found Trump paid \$750 in federal income tax the year he first entered the White House, and no income tax at all some years, thanks to reported colossal losses.



Ella Langley accepts the award for female artist of the year during the 61st annual Academy of Country Music Awards on Sunday, May 17, 2026, at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. T.J. Osborne looks on from right. (AP)



Joybeth Taylor, from left, Miranda Lambert, and Ella Langley pose in the press room with the awards for 'Song of the Year' and 'Single of the Year' during the 61st annual Academy of Country Music Awards on Sunday, May 17, 2026, at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. (AP)



Riley Green poses in the press room with the award for music event of the year on Sunday, May 17, 2026. (AP)

## Film



This image released by Lionsgate shows Jaafar Jackson as Michael Jackson in a scene from 'Michael.' (AP)

## 'Michael' moonwalks past 'Prada 2' to reclaim crown

LOS ANGELES, May 18, (AP): After two weeks trailing "The Devil Wears Prada 2," the Michael Jackson biopic "Michael" reclaimed the No. 1 spot at the North American box office with \$26.1 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday.

The Lionsgate movie is in rarefied territory, having brought in \$703.9 million worldwide and counting. It still has a way to go to surpass the current reigning champion of musical biopics: "Bohemian Rhapsody." The Queen movie grossed over \$910.8 million worldwide.

There were also several newcomers in the mix this weekend, including the relationship horror movie "Obsession," the Guy Ritchie action pic "In the Grey" and the revenge saga "Is God Is," but the holdovers continued to draw the largest crowds. The power dynamics are poised to shift when "Star Wars: The Mandalorian and Grogu" hits theaters next weekend.

Disney and 20th Century Studios' "The Devil Wears Prada 2" took second place in its third weekend with \$18 million, bringing its domestic total to \$175.9 million and worldwide earnings to \$546.2 million.

"Obsession" topped the newcomers, exceeding ex-

pectations with an estimated \$16.1 million from 2,615 theaters. YouTube breakout Curry Barker wrote and directed the thriller in which a hopeless romantic gets more than he bargained for when his crush returns his affections. The film received positive reviews from both critics (94% on Rotten Tomatoes) and audiences (A- CinemaScore). Perhaps more notable is that Barker made the film for \$750,000. Focus Features acquired it out of the Toronto International Film Festival last fall for around \$15 million.

Fourth place at the box office this weekend went to "Mortal Kombat II," which fell 65% in its second weekend to \$13.4 million in domestic ticket sales. Globally, it has made \$101.2 million from 80 markets.

Amazon MGM Studios had three movies in the top 10, including "The Sheep Detectives" in fifth place, "Project Hail Mary" in seventh place and "Is God Is" rounding out the top 10.

"The Sheep Detectives" enjoyed a slight 33% drop from its first weekend, taking in an additional \$10.2 million and bringing its running total to \$30.5 million. "Project Hail Mary," which is now available to rent or buy at home, brought in another \$3.4 million in its ninth weekend in theaters.

Johnson rides off with entertainer crown

# Langley steals ACM spotlight



Cody Johnson performs 'Travelin' Soldier' during the 61st annual Academy of Country Music Awards on Sunday, May 17, 2026, at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. (AP)

Cody Johnson won entertainer of the year, but it was Ella Langley's night from the start. The first honor of the Academy of Country Music Awards Sunday was for the coveted song of the year, given to Langley for the crossover hit "Choosin' Texas," presented to her by Michael Bublé.

"I'm not at a loss for words very often," said Langley in her speech. "Thank you to the fans. I don't know why you latched on to this song but thank you for doing it."

Less than an hour later she was back on stage, winning single of the year for the same smash.

She also joined Riley Green shortly thereafter, as their duet "Don't Mind if I Do" took home music event of the year.

And then she received her fourth on-stage trophy of the night for female artist of the year. "I'm trying to get to say something but I can't," she said while her voice cracked. "I would not be standing up here without the encouragement of so many women."

But it was Johnson who took home the top prize of entertainer of the year. "They say that music is the sound of emotion," Johnson said in his speech. "I get to convey that through this thing that God gave me called music." That was shortly after he was awarded the title of male artist of the year. Then he dedicated his entertainer of the year award to Luke Combs.

It was a night that promised appearances from the greatest names in contemporary country music and delivered on it. The show started with Lainey Wilson - who took home the top prize of entertainer of the year for the last two years - opening with "Can't Sit Still," her latest single, an anthemic stopper about ambition.

It was an exciting way to kick off the 61st annual awards ceremony at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. That's a noted departure from the Ford Center at The Star in Frisco, Texas, just north of Dallas, where the ACM Awards were held the last three years.

Performances followed fast and fierce from there: Miranda Lambert, the most-decorated artist in ACM Awards history, performed "Crisco." Then Thomas Rhett and Jordan Davis teamed up for "Ain't A Bad Life."

Avery Anna performed her new song "Bang Bang," a country-rock reimagining of the Nancy Sinatra classic "Bang Bang (My Baby Shot Me Down)." Green tackled "Change My Mind" and Zach Top nailed his



Michael Bublé presents the song of the year award during the 61st annual Academy of Country Music Awards on Sunday, May 17, 2026, at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. (AP)



The Red Clay Strays accepts the award for group of the year during the 61st annual Academy of Country Music Awards on Sunday, May 17, 2026, at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. Ryan Fitzpatrick, left, and Andrew Whitworth look on from right. (AP)

hit "Honky Tonk Till It Hurts."

Little Big Town did "Hey There Sunshine"; The Red Clay Strays nailed "Demons in Your Choir."

Host Shania Twain walked out to her 1997 single "Man! I Feel Like a Woman!," congratulating Lainey on her wedding that took place last Sunday.

"What a time this is for country music!" Twain said in her intro speech, which quickly became reflective: She talked about winning her first ACM Award 30 years ago; she said she had her first top 10 hit at age 30.

### Women of country

"Make it loud for all our heroes," she cheered, directing her attention to the women of country. It made sense: This is Twain's first time hosting. She's taken over for Reba McEntire, who has hosted the show 18 times.

Group of the year was awarded to The Red Clay Strays; duo of the year went to none other than Brooks & Dunn.

"I don't know why y'all aren't getting sick of us," Kix Brooks joked, "But we love y'all."

The ACM festivities actually began ahead of Sunday's event. Before the show, a few trophies were handed out. Langley was named artist-songwriter of the year, Jessie Jo Dillon was named songwriter of the year, becoming the first artist to win three times in a row. Stephen Wilson Jr. was awarded visual media of the year for "Cuckoo." Anna and Tucker Wetmore were presented with new female and new male artist of the year, respectively.

Back on stage, Wetmore tackled "Brunette"; Parker McCollum and

Lee Ann Womack dueted "Killin' Me" from McCollum's 2025 self-titled album.

Kacey Musgraves brought her cheeky wit to the ACM Awards stage with "Dry Spell," performing atop a washing machine and in a grocery store; Langley performed "Be Her" acoustically.

Carter Faith's "If I Had Never Lost My Mind" was a standout vocal performance. She was followed by Johnson's emotive "Travelin' Soldier" and Kane Brown's "Woman."

Album of the year was a hyper-competitive category, but ultimately, it went to McCollum for his self-titled release. He beat Morgan Wallen's blockbuster "I'm the Problem," Top's "Ain't In It for My Health," Green's "Don't Mind if I Do" and first-time nominee Faith's "Cherry Valley." That's no small feat.

Then two more final performances: Dan + Shay doing "Say So," dedicated to Ben Vaughn, the late Warner Chappell president and CEO. It was followed by Blake Shelton's powerful cover of "The Gambler," most famously performed by Kenny Rogers and written by the late great Don Schlitz, the storied country music songwriter who died last month.

The song, which was recorded by Rogers in 1978 and certified five times platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America, opened doors for country music in the '70s, a track that was not only a huge genre hit but also a pop crossover one.

The 2026 ACM Awards streamed on Prime Video and the Amazon Music channel on Twitch, as well as the Amazon Music app. (AP)



Blake Shelton performs 'The Gambler' during the 61st annual Academy of Country Music Awards on Sunday, May 17, 2026, at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. (AP)



Keith Urban presents the award of the year during the 61st annual Academy of Country Music Awards on Sunday, May 17, 2026, at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. (AP)

Books

Kuwait-based Indian journalist Chaitali Banerjee Roy unveils book at Kuwait National Library

# NCCAL hosts launch of Sadaaqa: Partnership & Cultural Kinship

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) hosted the official launch of *Sadaaqa: Partnership & Cultural Kinship – Conversations with Pioneering Indians & Kuwaitis*, authored by Chaitali Banerjee Roy, at the National Library of Kuwait on Sunday, 17 May 2025.

The book was officially released by Dr Mohammed Al Jassar, Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, and H.E. Paramita Tripathi, Ambassador of India to Kuwait, in the presence of the author, diplomats, cultural figures, members of the ruling family including HE Sheikh Salem Ali Al Sabah, Padmasri Sheikh Shaikha Al Sabah, Sheikh Souad Al Sabah, intellectuals, members of the media, and distinguished guests from Kuwait and the international community.

The event celebrated the deep-rooted partnership, civilisational links, and cultural kinship between India and Kuwait. *Sadaaqa*, meaning friendship, began as an audio-visual cultural project in January 2022. It has now taken the form of a book that preserves stories of migration, trade, entrepreneurship, memory, hospitality, shared values, and cultural exchange.

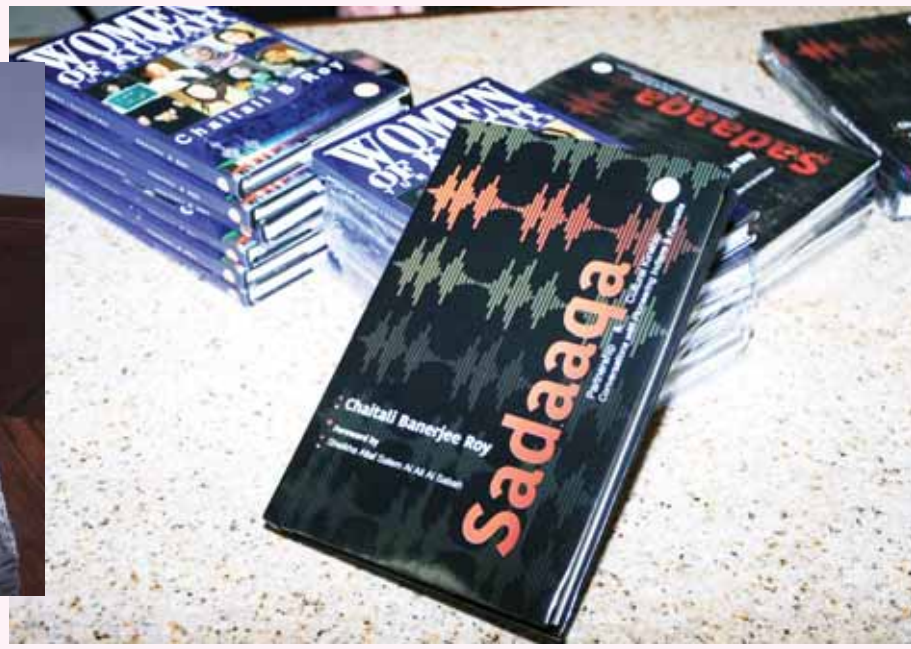
Authored by renowned cultural journalist, broadcaster, and documentarian Chaitali Banerjee Roy, the book presents an interesting collection of conversations with pioneering Indians and Kuwaitis whose lives and work reflect the enduring relationship between the two countries. The foreword has been written by Sheikh Altaf Salem Al Ali Al Sabah, noted anthropologist, and one of Kuwait's leading voices in heritage and cultural preservation.

In his address, Dr Mohammed Al Jassar welcomed the gathering and described the occasion as a celebration of "a profound human and cultural bond deeply rooted in history." He said the book documents the historic ties between Kuwait and the Republic of India, a relationship that has gone beyond mutual interests to embody "cultural kinship" and social harmony.

The event was attended by H.E. Paramita Tripathi, Ambassador of India to Kuwait, along with several ambassadors and members of the



Author Chaitali Banerjee Roy during the launch of *Sadaaqa*.



Copies of *Sadaaqa* displayed during the book launch at the Kuwait National Library.



Cultural figures and diplomats gather at Kuwait National Library for official launch.

diplomatic community. Also present were leading Kuwaiti cultural personalities and several of the individuals featured in the book.

Ambassador HE Mrs Paramita

Tripathi appreciated Ms Roy for her efforts in authoring such a book, which brings out the deep historical, cultural, and people-to-people ties between India and Ku-

wait, shaped over centuries through trade, culture, familial ties, and mutual trust. Referring to the different stories of people in the book that present a wide spectrum of con-

nections and experiences, Ambassador Tripathi described the book as a timely tribute to the invaluable contribution of the one million-strong Indian community to Ku-

wait's development, the friendship that exists between the two peoples and the enduring strength of India-Kuwait bilateral relations.

*Sadaaqa* features a wide range of well-known personalities whose stories highlight different dimensions of India-Kuwait ties. These include Sheikh Souad Al Sabah, whose love for India and Mumbai inspired the first episode of the *Sadaaqa* audiovisual series; Sheikh Halah Bader Al Mohammed Al Sabah, known for her deep engagement with India's luxury travel sector; Padma Shri Sheikh Shaikha Al Sabah, the first Kuwaiti to receive one of India's highest civilian honours for her contribution to yoga; Dr Lubna Al Qadi, a noted social scientist with deep personal and intellectual connections to India, and Tony Jashanmal, whose family's commercial history in the Gulf dates back to the First World War era.

The book also documents the journeys of pioneering Indian families and entrepreneurs in Kuwait and the Gulf, including Dhiraj Oberoi of Kiteco, one of Kuwait's oldest locally made food manufacturers; Ravi Kohli of Dawat, whose family was associated with the early Indian school movement in Kuwait; and Kuldeep Singh Lamba, who built Al Mailem into one of Kuwait's major automotive companies, S KWadhawan, founder of Samara Group of Companies, a leading automotive spare parts distributor in the Middle East.

In her remarks, Chaitali Banerjee Roy expressed gratitude to NCCAL and Dr Al Jassar for supporting the project and hosting the launch. She described herself as "an example of how Kuwait can embrace an expatriate," adding that her work was driven by a passion for learning and a desire to give something meaningful back to a country that had given her so much.

Roy recalled arriving in Kuwait in 2001, homesick and unsure of how she would adapt to life in a new country. She said the seeds of *Sadaaqa* were planted in the apprehension that many stories of this shared history could disappear if they were not documented. *Sadaaqa: Partnership & Cultural Kinship* is published by Har-Anand Publications, New Delhi.



Photos by Rezk Tawfiq

Diplomats, cultural icons, dignitaries and guests attend unveiling of 'Sadaaqa'.

Destinations

## Boulevard Park welcomes H.E. Paramita Tripathi, Ambassador of India to Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Boulevard Park, represented by Mr. Zain Alaabdin Marafie, General Manager of Al Salmiya Group for Enterprise Development, welcomed H.E. Mrs. Paramita Tripathi, Ambassador of India to Kuwait, accompanied by a diplomatic delegation from the Indian Embassy, during an official visit to Boulevard Mall and Park. The visit included an introductory tour showcasing Boulevard's key facilities and services.

During the tour, the delegation explored the park's diverse facilities, including the sports fields, most notably the cricket field spanning an area of more than 14,000 square meters, in addition to the entertainment and family-oriented facilities and green spaces that have contributed to establishing Boulevard Salmiya as one of Kuwait's prominent destinations, located in the heart of Salmiya.

The visit also highlighted the environmental aspects that distinguish Boulevard Park, including the facilities dedicated to teaching children about planting and the importance of environmental sustainability (Botanical Garden), reflecting Boulevard Park's commitment to promoting environmental awareness and providing an interactive and educational experience for visitors.

Mr. Zain Alaabdin Marafie, General Manager of Al Salmiya Group for Enterprise Development, stated that the visit of H.E. Mrs. Paramita Tripathi reflects the importance of Boulevard Park as one of Kuwait's leading destinations, emphasizing the management's commitment to continuously developing the facilities and enhancing the environmental and entertainment aspects



Indian diplomatic delegation tours park's cricket field.

within the park.

Marafie added that opportunities for cooperation in the fields of environmental sustainability and greening initiatives at Boulevard were also discussed during the visit, reflecting a shared interest in supporting environmental initiatives and enhancing green spaces.

For her part, H.E. Mrs. Paramita Tripathi, Ambassador of India to Kuwait, expressed her admiration for the high

level of organization and the diverse facilities offered at Boulevard Park, praising the family-friendly atmosphere and green surroundings that make the park a distinctive destination for visitors in Kuwait.

This visit comes as part of strengthening communication with diplomatic and community entities and highlighting the diverse facilities and experiences offered by Boulevard Park.



Indian envoy visits botanical facilities.



Indian envoy visits entertainment areas.

Burundi takes measures to counter virus

## Congo announces 3 Ebola treatment centers as it grapples with new outbreak

DAKAR, Senegal, May 18, (Agencies): The Congolese health minister announced the opening of three treatment centers in the eastern Ituri region as the country grapples with an outbreak of a rare variant of Ebola virus that has no approved therapeutics or vaccines.

"We know that the hospitals are already under stress because of the patients," Samuel Roger Kamba said during a visit to Bunia, the capital and largest city in Ituri, on Sunday. "But we are preparing to have treatment centers at all three sites in order to be able to expand our capabilities."

The World Health Organization declared the Ebola disease outbreak a public health emergency of international concern, after more than 300 suspected cases and 88 deaths in Congo and two in neighboring Uganda. Although the outbreak is centered in Ituri, cases have been reported in the capital, Kinshasa, and in Goma, the largest city in eastern Congo.

The WHO Regional Office for Africa said on X that a team of 35 experts from the WHO and the Congolese Ministry of Health had arrived in Bunia, the capital of Ituri province, along with 7 tons of emergency

medical supplies and equipment.

Ebola is highly contagious and can be contracted via bodily fluids such as vomit, blood, or semen. The disease it causes is rare, but severe and often fatal.

Health authorities say the current outbreak, first confirmed on Friday, is caused by the Bundibugyo virus, a rare variant of the Ebola disease that has no approved therapeutics or vaccines. Although more than 20 Ebola outbreaks have taken place in Congo and Uganda, this is only the third time that the Bundibugyo virus has been detected.

Dr. Gabriel Nsakala, a professor of public health who has been involved in past Ebola outbreak responses in Congo, said treatments for viral infections like Ebola are often directed at symptoms.

He said Congo has extensive experience managing Ebola outbreaks, but response efforts could be complicated by the unusual strain.

The Bundibugyo virus was first detected in Uganda's Bundibugyo district during a 2007-2008 outbreak that infected 149 people and killed 37. The second time was in 2012, in an outbreak in Isiro, Congo, where 57 cases and 29 deaths were reported.



People wait near an ambulance at a hospital in Bunia, Congo on May 17. (AP)

ed. The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention said the first cases were reported in Mongwalu health zone, a high-traffic mining area in Ituri.

Ituri is in a remote eastern part of Congo, with poor road networks, and is more than 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) from the nation's capital, Kinshasa. Eastern Congo has been

grappling with a humanitarian crisis even before the new outbreak has been confirmed.

The agency said there's also a risk of further spread due to intense population movement and attacks by armed groups that have killed dozens and displaced thousands in parts of Ituri in the past year.

"The outbreak is currently occurring in provinces marred by crisis including

insecurity, presence of armed actors or de facto authorities with large displacement, weak health systems and insufficient availability of services," the WHO said on Monday. It added that since January 2025, there have been 44 attacks on health care facilities in Congo and 742 incidents affecting humanitarian workers.

The WHO's emergency declaration is meant to spur donor agencies and countries into action. By the agency's standards, it shows the event is serious, there is a risk of international spread and it requires a coordinated international response.

Jean Kaseya, director-general of the Africa CDC, told Sky News on Sunday that he is in "panic mode" due to a lack of medicines and vaccines as deaths rise, but there are some candidate treatments anticipated in the coming weeks.

Rwanda closed its land border with Congo on Sunday, the U.S. State Department said on social media. Associated Press reporters tried to cross the border on Sunday and Monday morning, but were informed it was closed except for holders of international flight tickets. Rwandan authorities have not replied to a request for comment.

Also:

**BUJUMBURA:** Following an outbreak of the Ebola virus in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the Burundian government has announced measures to counter the deadly disease, the health minister said Saturday evening in a press release.

"The situation is particularly concerning for the region because affected zones are located at less than 400 km, with regular flows of mobility between both countries, notably via Bujumbura-Goma axis through air and road connections," said Burundian Public Health Minister Fidele Nkezabhazi.

"In regard to the geographical proximity, cross-border mobility and previous epidemiological experiences, Burundi is considered a high risk country for the introduction of the Ebola virus disease," noted Nkezabhazi.

He announced measures taken to prevent the Ebola virus from entering Burundi including the strengthening of surveillance on entry points through the identification and the supervision of priority entry points, the setting up of temporary structures for screening, sanitary control including temperature taking as well as training health agents.



The MV Hondius cruise ship arrives at the Port of Rotterdam, Netherlands on May 18. (AP)

## Hantavirus-stricken cruise ship docks in the Netherlands for disinfection

ROTTERDAM, Netherlands, May 18, (AP): The cruise ship hit by a deadly hantavirus outbreak has docked at the Dutch port of Rotterdam for disinfection, wrapping up a troubled journey that put international health authorities on alert.

The MV Hondius was still carrying 25 crew members and two medical personnel as it reached Europe's largest port on Monday morning, after all the passengers disembarked already.

An Associated Press journalist saw people board the boat via pier wearing white hazardous materials suits. A short distance from where the ship docked, authorities had set up white containers along the water in between a line of windmills.

The crew will now go into quarantine, with those who cannot be immediately repatriated spending their time in quarantine in these containers.

"Luckily so far the crew has suffered no symptoms," Yvonne van Duijnhoven, the director of public health in Rotterdam told The Associated Press. Crew members will be tested upon arrival and then weekly for the duration of their quarantine.

The outbreak on the ship has reached at least 11 cases, nine of which have been confirmed. Three passengers have died, including a Dutch couple who health officials believe were the first exposed to the virus while visiting South America.

The Public Health Agency of Canada said one of the four Canadians in isolation after leaving the ship had tested positive Sunday and it would share information on the case with the World Health Organization.

After everyone on board has disembarked, the ship will be decontaminated based on Dutch public health guidelines, a process that will take about three days, according to van Duijnhoven.

She stressed that the risk to the public is very low. "We have very strict protocols to prevent virus going from the ship towards the outside world," she said. Public health officials will inspect the vessel before it is allowed to sail again.

The MV Hondius has spent the past six days sailing from the Canary Islands, where the remaining passengers were escorted off the vessel by personnel in full-body protective gear and boarded flights to more than 20 countries to enter quarantine.

The port was asked by Dutch authorities last week if they could take in the vessel. "I think it's unacceptable to say no, you're not welcome in the biggest port of Europe," the port's harbor master, René de Vries, told AP.

Some two dozen passengers and crew are already in quarantine in the Netherlands after arriving in the country on a series of flights over the previous two weeks.

## A 'super El Niño?' Why it's too early to forecast one with certainty, but not too soon to prepare

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

By Pedro DiNezio  
University of Colorado Boulder

Talk of a "super El Niño" developing in 2026 is gaining momentum, with concerns rising that this climate pattern could bring extreme rainfall, heat, drought and destructive flooding around the world.

The signals appear to be in place: The tropical Pacific is warming along the equator, and computer models point toward extreme conditions by the end of the year.

However, forecasting El Niño is not like predicting next week's weather. Forecasts for El Niño typically aren't reliable before late spring - not because scientists don't understand the system, but because we understand its limits.

As an ocean-atmospheric scientist who studies El Niño, I spend a lot of time thinking about what scientists can forecast confidently - and what remains uncertain. Here's what we know about the current event, what we still don't, and why many regions should begin preparing now, even if a strong, or "super," El Niño never fully materializes.

The starting point for any El Niño forecast is the heat stored beneath the surface of the eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. Computer models use data about those conditions to simulate how ocean temperatures will evolve over the coming months, and how they affect weather patterns

around the world.

Right now, an exceptionally large reservoir of warm water sits beneath the surface there. In principle, this ocean heat should be a reliable signal of El Niño developing. In practice, what happens next depends heavily on what the atmosphere does.

The warm reservoir was shaped by a burst of wind activity in early 2026. Normally, the Pacific trade winds blow from east to west along the equator, pushing warm water toward Asia and leaving cooler water near South America. But in April, a pair of cyclones straddling the equator caused the wind direction to reverse. This short-lived reversal triggered a downwelling Kelvin wave - a pulse of energy beneath the ocean surface moving eastward along the equator.

That subsurface pulse has now reached the eastern Pacific, helping fuel intense warming off South America. At the ocean surface, this can resemble the early stages of a strong El Niño.

But there is a catch. For El Niño to develop fully, the ocean and atmosphere need to lock into a feedback loop: Warmer surface waters weaken the trade winds, triggering more downwelling Kelvin waves that push warm water eastward and reinforce the warming. But that loop doesn't engage automatically. It requires repeated bursts of eastward winds to sustain the process.

Until that feedback loop takes hold, the ocean-atmosphere system is in an unpredictable phase. It might tip into a super El Niño. It might not.

Spring is precisely when forecasts are most uncertain. Impressive early

signals can fade if the winds don't cooperate.

There's a further complication: When models detect strong subsurface warming, they can simulate a stronger feedback loop than actually develops.

The result is that models can look too confident - even alarming - despite the system not being locked in. As of mid-May 2026, the wind patterns needed to amplify the warming have not clearly emerged.

We've seen this scenario play out before. In both 2014 and 2017, forecast models were pointing toward strong El Niño conditions by midyear. In both cases, the anticipated wind patterns never fully materialized and El Niño either stayed weak or returned to a neutral state. The early signals were real, but the expected follow-through didn't happen.

The current forecasts for 2026-27 still span a wide range in mid-May - from expecting weak to strong El Niño conditions.

How the winds behave in the coming weeks will determine what develops. If trade winds weaken again at the right moment, it could tip the system into self-sustaining warming - the kind that's hard to stop.

As of mid-May, long-range weather forecasts weren't showing strong eastward wind bursts on the horizon that could strengthen El Niño. In fact, quite the opposite was expected for the second half of May: a burst of winds blowing in the opposite direction. A full month without major eastward wind activity would be a meaningful brake on ocean warming. (AP)



A barge on the Ohio River moves past the Mountaineer Power Plant, a coal-fired power plant near New Haven, W.Va on March 13. (AP)

## White House aims to roll back limits on toxic wastewater from coal-fired power plants

HARRISBURG, Pa., May 18, (AP):

The US Environmental Protection Agency moved to roll back limits that require coal-fired power plants to prevent the release of toxic heavy metals into streams and rivers through polluted groundwater, saying a three-year-old rule is unduly costly for the energy industry at a time when energy demand is spiking.

It is the latest step that President Donald Trump's administration has taken to pull back regulations on coal mining and coal-fired power and empower fossil fuels as a primary energy source to feed the rapid growth of artificial intelligence data centers.

In its proposed rule, the EPA said a 2024 rule under President Joe Biden misjudged the effectiveness and cost of the regulation, and had the effect of shutting down coal-fired power plants at a time when energy demand is spiking.

Changing the rule is critical to making electricity more affordable and reliable, while advancing the economy, EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin said in a statement.

"The AI and data center revolution is creating an electricity and baseload power demand that cannot be met under the overly restrictive policies of past administrations," Zeldin said. "The Trump EPA will continue doing its part to address these burdensome regulations on the coal-fired power plant sector that hold American communities back from



Environmental Protection Agency administrator Lee Zeldin, testifies to the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on Interior, Environment and related agencies on the budget request for the EPA, on Capitol Hill on May 13, in Washington. (AP)

the new opportunities presented by this new 21st century energy reality."

In 2024, the EPA strengthened wastewater rules over coal-fired power plants that keep coal ash - a byproduct of burning coal - in unlined, uncovered dumps that leach toxic heavy metals such as mercury, arsenic and selenium into groundwater.

In the rule, the EPA required plant owners to report whether the groundwater was contaminated and, if so, pump and treat the contaminated groundwater before discharging it

into streams and rivers, Thom Cmar, an attorney for environmental advocacy group Earthjustice, said.

The EPA initially had given power plant owners until Dec. 31, 2029, to meet the new limits.

The EPA said the rule proposed Thursday, if finalized, would reduce power generation costs by as much as \$1.1 billion a year. Coal and power industry trade associations cheered the EPA's move. Environmental groups slammed it as a public health danger and giveaway to the coal-power industry.

## Slow-growing breast cancer cells linked to late relapse, says study

SYDNEY, May 18, (Xinhua): Scientists in Australia have identified a hidden mechanism explaining why some breast cancer can return many years after successful treatment, offering a potential new target to prevent relapse.

Researchers at Australia's Garvan Institute of Medical Research have mapped the drivers of breast cancer cells that resist therapy by growing extremely slowly rather than entering a completely dormant state, said a Garvan Institute statement released Tuesday.

The research revealed rogue cells that change their programming to allow them to divide at a remarkably slow pace, meaning they could form microscopic tumours that silently develop in distant organs, evading detection for decades, the statement said. This research addresses a major challenge for patients with estrogen receptor-positive breast cancer, where the possibility of relapse can linger for years after being declared cancer-free, it said.

Relapse is known to occur when dormant cancer cells in

bone or other organs "wake up" and metastasize. The new research, published in Nature Communications, identifies a parallel pathway in which stealthy cells form secondary tumours, suggesting new approaches to prevent metastasis.

Though slow-growing, these cancer cells are far from harmless. Once their "micrometastases" become detectable or disrupt vital organs like the brain or bone, they can turn into life-threatening, chemotherapy-resistant relapses, researchers said.

They found that some cells naturally divide very slowly under treatment, inadvertently protecting themselves. As therapy eliminates fast-growing cells, these slow-growing survivors remain and can later cause relapse.

The team identified a cellular communication channel known as the Rac1 pathway as a key driver of these slow-growing cells' survival and movement. They demonstrated that blocking this pathway could effectively shrink the cancer.

Ireland blows Scotland away with seven first-half tries

# England powers past France for historic Women's Six Nations title

BORDEAUX, France, May 18, (AP): England won a record eighth consecutive Women's Six Nations title and fifth successive Grand Slam after beating host France 43-28.

Unbeaten France with home advantage in Bordeaux and backing from its largest ever home crowd was expected to seriously threaten England's relentless domination of the championship. But it struggled in the set-pieces.

England, with only six survivors from its Rugby World Cup champion team last September, ultimately cruised to the six-try victory enhanced by Zoe Harrison's unerring right boot. Harrison landed six of seven goalkicks and 29 of 31 in the tournament.

The English extended their world record winning streak to 38 matches - and 68 from 69 games since 2019 - which won't be challenged again until September when they host No. 2-ranked New Zealand and No. 3 Canada in the WXV.

England was at its most vulnerable in years with more than a dozen regulars out injured or pregnant. But players new or not capped in three years melded superbly with world-class performers such as first-time captain Megan Jones, Ellie Kildunne, Amy Cokayne and Sadia Kabeya.

Coach John Mitchell, who took over the Red Roses in autumn 2023 and has yet to oversee a loss, believed the number of missing players made winning their 22nd Six Nations from 31 championships harder than winning the World Cup.

"It was great to win a World Cup at home but what we've navigated through this tournament, the youth coming through, the mates at home becoming mums or going through rehab ... these girls are so brave," he said. "They're unbelievably driven."

Kildunne was named player of the match after scoring two tries along with Jess Breach. Cokayne touched down in all five tests and Kabeya notched 27 tackles and had seemingly as many carries.

A patient England weathered a ferocious French start to lead the winner-takes-all finale 26-7 by halftime.



England's captain Megan Jones holds the trophy aloft after her team won the Six Nations rugby union match between France and England in Bordeaux. (AP)

While England is a fast starter, France is renowned as a fast finisher and fought back to trail only 29-21 with a quarter to go.

But that's as close as France got in front of a record home crowd of 35,062. Eventually, chief playmaker Pauline Bourdon Sansus, the only survivor of France's last win over England in 2018 - also England's last defeat in

the championship - came off but her scrumhalf replacement, Alexandra Chambon, was sin-binned.

England, after conceding nine tries in its previous two matches, restricted the best defensive team to four tries, two by Bourdon Sansus, and Jones was proud.

"We've adapted so well," Jones said. "We faced so much adversity. This group is so resilient, I'm so proud of

them. We asked for a good defensive set because everyone was doubting our defense and we fronted up and we showed what England's about."

The final standings repeated 2025. France was runner-up for a seventh straight year. Ireland was third after thrashing Scotland 54-5 in Dublin, and Italy was fourth after condemning Wales to an unprecedented third straight wooden spoon.

Riding the wave of a sensational Women's World Cup, Six Nations total attendance was 279,760, easily surpassing the previous record of 188,128 in 2024. New attendance records were set in England, France, Ireland, Italy and Scotland, boosted by record TV viewership and on-line engagement.

Ireland celebrated a crowd of 31,294, more than three times its previous home record, in its first standalone test at Aviva Stadium.

The Irish finished a dream first half at 47-0. With 92% territory and nearly 80% possession they scored seven tries, two by player of the match Aoife Wafer. Ireland added only one more try but didn't allow Scotland into its 22 until the 77th minute.

"The first half was the best version of us," coach Scott Bemand said.

Wales spent the week focused on fixing its third quarter slump. It didn't sink in at Cardiff Arms Park.

Italy, down 19-17 at halftime, used breakdown turnovers and its powerful forwards to give tries to Francesca Sgorbini and Vittoria Ostuni Minuzzi and control finally at 29-19.

Despite losing winger Francesca Granzotto to the sin-bin for a tip tackle, Italy secured victory when the pack walked a maul 15 meters and laid on a try for player-of-the-match flyhalf Veronica Madia with 11 minutes left.

The win was a fitting retirement gift for lock Valeria Fedrighi, playing her 10th Six Nations. Fedrighi is the only Italian beside Martin Castrogiovanni to win league titles in England and France.

Italy finished with seven tries to four by Wales, which suffered a 10th straight loss in the championship.



Denny Hamlin celebrates in Victory Lane after winning the NASCAR All-Star auto race at Dover Motor Speedway in Dover, Del. (AP)

## Jones powers to podium in Dover chaos

## Hamlin holds off Briscoe, wins NASCAR all-star race

DOVER, Del., May 18, (AP): In the debut of the All-Star Race at Dover Motor Speedway, the Monster Mile lived up to its billing as one of NASCAR's most treacherous tracks.

Even for winner Denny Hamlin, surviving Dover was a high-wire act for the \$1 million prize.

Rebounding from a qualifying spin to start from the pole position, Hamlin steered clear of trouble on Sunday for his second NASCAR All-Star Race victory. He led the final 30 laps and outduelled Joe Gibbs Racing teammate Chase Briscoe while avoiding the eight caution flags that involved 23 of 36 drivers in the field, which was inverted after the first 75-lap segment.

"It makes it a lot easier when you've got a car this fast," said Hamlin, whose No. 11 Toyota led a race-high 103 of 200 laps in the last segment. "We strive to be No. 1, and we did it today. It really challenged us to have to go through traffic, but I definitely like the invert. Obviously, it caused some chaos there and took out some good cars, but overall, it's a typical All-Star Race when that stuff happens."

Briscoe finished 0.887 seconds behind Hamlin with a No. 19 Toyota that was heavily damaged in a practice crash Saturday.

"It was obviously a really fast car," Briscoe said after his career-best second in the All-Star Race. "I'm just proud of our group. I

knocked the wall down in practice, and we basically rebuilt the whole car. So for them to be able to just get the car back to where it was competitive, it says a lot about the guys."

It's the third consecutive win on the 1-mile oval for Hamlin, who won points races at Dover in 2024 and last year. He also started from the pole when he won the All-Star Race in 2015 at Charlotte Motor Speedway. At 45, Hamlin became the second-oldest winner of the All-Star Race after Mark Martin (who was 46 in 2005).

Erik Jones, who was involved in a nine-car crash to end the first segment, completed a top-three sweep by Toyota, followed by Austin Dillon and rookie Connor Zilisch.

Several crashes during the first two 75-lap segments collected more than half the 36-car field. There were 19 drivers locked into the 200-lap dash for \$1 million, but Chase Elliott and Ross Chastain still were eliminated because their cars could not be repaired, and backups weren't allowed.

The field was narrowed to 26 cars for the final segment. Kyle Larson, Ryan Blaney, Kyle Busch, Brad Keselowski, Bubba Wallace and Christopher Bell started the last stage with cars that were damaged and slower than the rest.

Larson retired from the race with 60 laps remaining because of a power steering failure.

# Rai wins PGA Championship to end England's century-long wait

Woad claims second LPGA crown

NEWTOWN SQUARE, Pa., May 18, (AP): Aaron Rai shifted into high gear Sunday and pulled away from a world-class field with one amazing shot after another until he became the first English-born player in more than a century to capture the PGA Championship.

Rai, who dreamed of being a Formula 1 driver until he turned to golf as a boy, was three shots behind and approaching the turn at Aronimink Golf Club when he delivered a performance worthy of a major champion.

He made a 40-foot eagle putt on the par-5 ninth during a stretch when he one-putted seven straight greens to take the lead.

And on the closing holes when the contenders needed him to stumble, Rai holed a birdie putt of some 70 feet across the 17th green for the clincher.

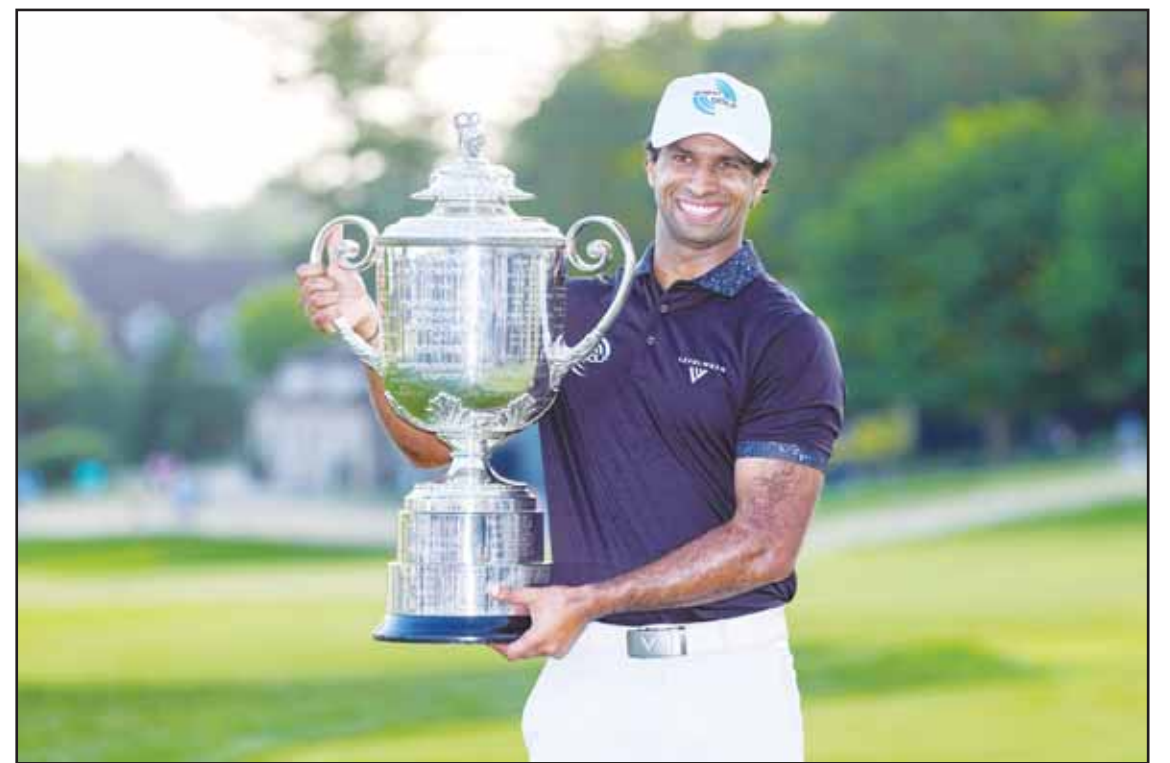
The 31-year-old Rai closed with a 5-under 65.

Jon Rahm, Rory McIlroy, Xander Schauffele, Justin Rose, they all had their chances and until they were undone by untimely mistakes or failure to get good looks at birdie. McIlroy, who closed with a 69, played the par 5s in even for the week and he chopped up the reachable par-4 13th for a bogey.

Rai, who finished at 9-under 271, is the first player from England with his name on the Wanamaker Trophy since Jim Barnes in 1919, the second edition of this major and the first after World War I.

He wound up winning by three shots over 54-hole leader Alex Smalley and Rahm, who had his best finish in a major since defecting to LIV Golf at the end of 2023. Rahm shot 68.

Lottie Woad held off Haeran Ryu on a gusty Sunday afternoon at Maketawah Country Club in the Kroger Queen City Championship.



Aaron Rai, of England, holds the Wanamaker Trophy after winning the PGA Championship golf tournament at Aronimink Golf Club in Newtown Square, PA. (AP)

Three strokes ahead of playing partner Amanda Doherty and four ahead of Ryu entering the round, Woad closed with a 1-under 69 for a two-stroke victory. The 22-year-old English player finished at 12-under 268.

Ryu had a double bogey on the par-4 13th in a 67. Nelly Korda shot a 67 to tie for eighth at 5 under after winning in her previous two starts. She began the day nine strokes back after a third-round 72.

Woad won for the second time on the LPGA Tour, following a victory last year in the Women's Scottish Open in her professional debut. The former Florida State star also won the European Tour's Irish Open last summer as an amateur.

Miyu Yamashita has third at 9 under after a 64.

Cole Sherwood won the Colonial

Life Charity Classic for his first Korn Ferry Tour victory.

Sherwood shot a 4-under 66 to finish at 16-under 264 at The Woodcreek Club, a stroke ahead of Zac Blair (64).

Sherwood had a 64 in the third round. He played at Vanderbilt.

Kyle Westmoreland was third at 14 under after a 66.

Leonie Harm closed with a 4-under 69 for a one-shot victory over Casandra Alexander in the Amundi German Masters, winning on home soil for her first Ladies European Tour title. ... Pablo Ereno shot a 6-under 66 and won the Catalunya Challenge in a playoff with a par on the second extra hole to beat Hamish Brown on the Challenge Tour.

Cole Anderson won the PGA Tour Americas' Diners Club Peru Open with a bogey on the first hole of a playoff with Patrick Flavin. Anderson

egled the par-5 14th in a closing 7-under 65 en route to his first tour title. Flavin shot 70 to match Anderson at 21 under.

Gerhard Pepler closed with a 7-under 65 for a two-shot victory in the Kit Kat Cash & Carry Pro-Am on the Sunshine Tour in South Africa.

Shiho Kuwaki closed with a 5-under 67 for a one-shot victory over Chia Yen Wu in the Sky RKB Ladies Classic on the Japan LPGA.

Shinsil Bang rallied from 3 down with four to play and won the Doo-san Match Play in 19 holes on the Korea LPGA when Eunwoo Choi bogeyed the last three holes.

Fiona Xu of New Zealand won the Copper Rock Championship in Hurricane, Utah, on Saturday for her second career Epon Tour title. She finished with a 4-under 68 for a three-stroke victory.

Mukhtar hat trick fires Nashville past LAFC

## Messi dazzles as Miami strikes first home win

MIAMI, May 18, (AP): Lionel Messi had a goal and assisted on another as Inter Miami won its first game at Nu Stadium, 2-0 over the Portland Timbers.

German Berterame also scored for Inter Miami, which had three draws and a loss at its new 26,000-seat stadium before Sunday's victory.

Messi opened the scoring with his 13th goal of the season in the 31st minute. Luis Suárez sent a pass inside to Telasco Segovia, who flicked a pass on to Messi, who beat Portland goalkeeper James Pantemis from 12 yards.

Inter Miami padded the lead on Berterame's goal in the 42nd minute. Messi dribbled past two defenders and centered to Berterame, who converted inside the left post.

The Timbers had the first scoring threat when Inter Miami goalkeeper Dayton St. Clair deflected Cole Bassett's shot from the edge of the large area in the 11th minute.

The familiar singing, cheering, flag waving and drum beating from Inter



Inter Miami midfielder Lionel Messi controls the ball during the second half of an MLS soccer match against the Portland Timbers, Sunday in Miami. (AP)

Miami's organized supporters' groups "La Familia" were absent until late in the match. The groups reportedly are upset that the players have not acknowledged their presence in the new stadium and remained silent as a form of protest before they began singing in the 85th minute.

The match was the first between the teams since Portland coach Phil Neville was fired as Inter Miami's coach in 2023, shortly before Messi started playing for the Herons.

Neville is close friends with Inter Miami co-owner David Beckham and told reporters after the Timbers got to South Florida late last week that he was aware Messi choosing Miami would likely mean a coaching change. The club has had four coaches since, including two interim bosses, all of them from Messi's native Argentina.

Meanwhile, Hany Mukhtar scored three goals, his first hat trick since 2023, and Nashville SC beat Los Angeles FC 3-2.

Rahim strikes a superb 137 off 233

## Bangladesh surges ahead in 2nd test

SYLHET, Bangladesh, May 18, (AP): Mushfiqur Rahim hit a record-breaking century as Bangladesh set Pakistan a daunting 437 runs for victory in the second cricket test on Monday.

Rahim struck a superb 137 off 233, smashing 12 fours and one six to help Bangladesh post 390 in the second innings. Litton Das, followed his first-innings 126 with an elegant 69.

Mushfiqur's 14th century saw him surpass Mominul Haque to become country's most prolific test centurion.

The task Pakistan faces is stark: no other team in test cricket history has ever won a match chasing more than 418 runs.

"To chase 437 runs, you have to be brave and play positive cricket. In cricket, anything is possible, and there is a possibility for both teams," Pakistan bowling coach Umar Gul said.

"We have two days left, we are mentally prepared that there is enough time. If we bat through the full duration, there is a chance to win because we aren't just looking for a draw. We are prepared for the chase."



Rahim

Pakistan batted two overs on Day 3 without scoring a run before bad light forced an early stump.

Khurram Shahzad, who claimed 4-86, trapped skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto lbw with a sharp inswinger in the fourth over for Pakistan's only success in the morning session after the hosts resumed at 110-3.

Das and Rahim frustrated the Pakistan attack, negotiating the disciplined bowling with equal resolve.

They added 123 runs for the fifth wicket to put Bangladesh in control.

Pacer Hasan Ali undid Das with a short-pitched delivery to break the stand but by then Bangladesh's lead had surged close to 300.

Shahzad removed Mehidy Hasan Miraz for 19 to give Pakistan a glimmer of hope to get back into the game. But Mushfiqur found another reliable partner in Taijul Islam to keep Pakistan bowlers frustrated.

He raised century off 178 balls by steering Mohammad Abbas through the gully region for a boundary. Sajid Khan dismissed Taijul for 22, ending his 77-run stand with Mushfiqur.

"From what we have seen that the wicket is still good," Taijul said. "But the target we set gives us psychological edge. When the opposition sees such a target, many thoughts come into their minds. Still we have to stay disciplined."

## SPORTS

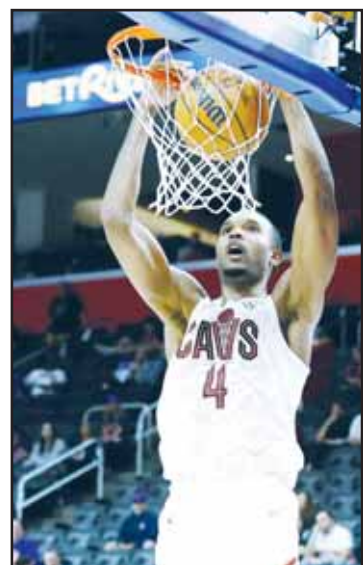
# Cavaliers rout Pistons to reach East finals

Mitchell scores 26

**DETROIT, May 18, (AP):** Donovan Mitchell scored 26 points, Jarrett Allen and Sam Merrill each added 23 and the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Detroit Pistons 125-94 in Game 7 to advance to the Eastern Conference finals.

The fourth-seeded Cavaliers ousted the East's top seed and will face the third-seeded New York Knicks. Game 1 of that series tips off Tuesday in New York.

Evan Mobley had 21 points and 12 rebounds for the Cavaliers, who advanced to the conference finals for the first time since 2018 and the ninth time in team history. It's their



Cleveland Cavaliers center Evan Mobley dunks against the Detroit Pistons during the second half of Game 7 in a second-round NBA basketball playoffs series in Detroit. (AP)

deepest run since LeBron James' final season with the franchise.

"We didn't just come here just to win a goal," Mitchell said about making the conference finals for the first time in his career.

"Even last year, when we lost to Indiana, we had our goals set on getting to the (NBA) Finals. We're just one step closer. It's been almost a decade of running into the same issue. ... As a team, we can breathe a little bit, but the same token, we can only breathe for about 12 hours, and then get right back to it."

Daniss Jenkins scored 17 points, and Cade Cunningham and Duncan Robinson each finished with 13 for the Pistons, who fell one win shy of their first conference finals appearance since 2008 after forcing the deciding game with a Game 6 victory Friday night.

"That game sucked," said Cunningham, who was held 16 points under his playoff average. "Being back home, wanted to get this win in front of our fans. It reminded me of last year, losing on home court. It's not a great feeling."

The Cavs dictated the pace from the opening tip and never allowed the Pistons to gain traction, then blew open a convincing Game 7 performance when Mitchell scored 15 in the third quarter.

Detroit was outscored in the paint 58-34 and made only 35.3% of its field goal attempts, compared to Cleveland's 50.6%.

"When we play with force, it's really a key. Like, force on both ends with our talent, we're really hard to beat," Cleveland coach Kenny Atkinson said. "The question we got to answer, we talked about it a lot, is we can't have force letdowns like Game 6, where we were not the forceful team. But tonight we were, that was a whole difference, our force on both



Cleveland Cavaliers guard Dennis Schroder (8) drives against Detroit Pistons guard Marcus Sasser during the second half of Game 7 in a second-round NBA basketball playoffs series in Detroit. (AP)

ends."

Cleveland capitalized on cold shooting by the Pistons in the opening quarter, turning missed shots into transition baskets while building an early advantage. The Cavs led 31-22 going to the second, and after Detroit

had the first two baskets, Cleveland quickly seized control with a 24-9 run. The Pistons' offensive struggles only deepened and the Cavs continued to shoot efficiently as they built a commanding 64-47 lead into halftime.

The Cavs kept rolling in the second half and led by as much as 35 points. The closest the Pistons were able to get in the half was within 17 in the third quarter.

"We knew that start was monumental, the start that they knew that

we were here, and that we were going to give them some problems," Atkinson said. "The beginning of the game, that was key, and then coming out of halftime was the same message: 'We got to win this first five minutes to put them on their heels.'"

**Top seed now 17-0 on clay this year entering French Open**

## Sinner wins historic Italian Open title to match Djokovic Masters sweep feat

ROME, May 18, (AP): Italian tennis fans had waited for this moment for a half century.

For Jannik Sinner, though, it wasn't just about becoming the first Italian man to win the Italian Open since Adriano Panatta 50 years ago.

The top-ranked Sinner's 6-4, 6-4 victory over Casper Ruud in Sunday's final on the red clay of the Foro Italico also made him only the second man after Novak Djokovic to win all nine Masters 1000 events - the biggest tournaments outside the Grand Slams.

"There's no better place to complete this set," Sinner said. "For an Italian, it's one of the most special places we play tennis in. To win at least once in my career means a lot to me."

Djokovic completed the career set in 2018 in Cincinnati at age 31 - and then went on to win each event at least twice. Sinner is 24, and with his only real rival, Carlos Alcaraz, currently sidelined due to a right wrist injury, seemingly nobody can beat him.

"Welcome to the exclusive club, Jannik," Djokovic wrote on Instagram.

Sinner extended his winning streak to 29 matches. He hasn't lost since getting beat by Jakub Mensik in the Qatar Open quarterfinals on Feb. 19. And he's now 17-0 on clay this year entering the French Open, which starts next Sunday.

Sinner celebrated calmly as usual, revealing a wide smile when he landed an inside-out forehand on the line on his first championship point, then held his hands over his head in apparent relief. Then he waved to the crowd, which included 1976 champion Panatta sitting in the front row.

"Adriano, after 50 years we've won back a very important trophy," Sinner told the 75-year-old Panatta, who participated in the trophy ceremony.

Roland Garros is the only Grand Slam that Sinner hasn't won: He has two Australian Open titles and has won Wimbledon and the U.S. Open once each.

Sinner's triumph - with Italy President Sergio Mattarella in attendance - came after he lost last year's final in Rome to



Jannik Sinner, of Italy, poses with his trophy after defeating Casper Ruud, of Norway, 6/4, 6/4 in the final match to win the Italian Open tennis tournament, in Rome. (AP)

Alcaraz in his first tournament back after a three-month doping ban. That defeat came a day after Jasmine Paolini in 2025 became the first Italian woman to win the Rome singles title in 40 years - when she also claimed the doubles trophy with partner Sara Errani.

With many of Sinner's fans dressed in orange - his theme color, which matches his curly hair - the capacity crowd of 10,500 on Campo Centrale created a soccer-style atmosphere with chanting and loud cheers for the player who has become far and away Italy's most popular athlete.

After several key points, the crowd erupted into a cheer of "Ole, Ole, Ole, Ole; Sin-ner, Sin-ner." Then there was more chanting during the trophy presentation.

Angelo Binaghi, the president of the Italian tennis federation, suggested that even if there was a 25,000-seat center court in Rome - bigger than the U.S. Open's Arthur Ashe Stadium, the world's largest tennis arena - it would have been full.

**14th player in NBA history to achieve the feat**

## Gilgeous-Alexander wins back-to-back MVPs

OKLAHOMA CITY, May 18, (AP): He's the best player on the best team. And the voters say he's the best player in the league, too.

Again. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander of the reigning NBA champion Oklahoma City Thunder won the NBA's Most Valuable Player on Sunday for the second consecutive year. He became the 18th player to win at least two MVP awards and the 14th to win them in back-to-back fashion.

"Basketball's obviously a team sport," Gilgeous-Alexander said Sunday night in a celebration at the Thunder practice facility, surrounded by teammates - all in new Burberry trenchcoats, a gift from the now two-time MVP. "All the numbers, all the accolades, everything that I do on the court, if we win 10 games I wouldn't be in this conversation. So, thank you guys so much. I love you guys."

The win for Gilgeous-Alexander, who is Canadian, marks the eighth consecutive time that the NBA's MVP was born outside the U.S. The run started with Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo (born in Greece, of Nigerian descent) in 2019 and 2020, then Denver's Nikola Jokic (Serbia) in 2021 and 2022, Philadelphia's Joel Embiid (born in Cameroon but has since become a U.S. citizen) in 2023 and Jokic again in 2024.

And in 2025 and 2026, SGA is the MVP. The coats were just one part of the massive haul of pre-



Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, center, poses with teammates in Burberry trench coats he bought during a news conference after he was named the NBA basketball MVP in Oklahoma City. (AP)

sents Gilgeous-Alexander shared with teammates Sunday; there were personalized golf bags, gift baskets and very pricey watches - which he handed to each teammate.

"Who he is has never changed," Thunder coach Mark Daigneault said. "I think he's touched up the edges on his game and on his leadership and on his perspective, just like anybody else that's coming of age."

Jokic was second and San Antonio's star French center Victor Wembanyama placed third.

Gilgeous-Alexander got 83 of a possible 100 first-place votes. Jokic

received 10 and Wembanyama got five. Luka Doncic of the Los Angeles Lakers was fourth in the voting and Cade Cunningham of the Detroit Pistons was fifth.

Cunningham got two first-place votes - the first by a U.S.-born player since 2021.

Jaylen Brown of the Boston Celtics was sixth, and Kawhi Leonard of the Los Angeles Clippers and Donovan Mitchell of the Cleveland Cavaliers tied for seventh with one fifth-place vote apiece.

International players went 1-2-3 in the voting for the fifth straight season.

**Sevilla avoids relegation despite loss to Real**

## Barcelona wins in Lewandowski's farewell

MADRID, May 18, (AP): Spanish champion Barcelona capped a perfect season at home - 19 wins in 19 La Liga matches - with a 3-1 victory over Real Betis as Robert Lewandowski bid an emotional farewell to Camp Nou.

Barcelona announced that the 37-year-old Lewandowski was leaving after four seasons.

Antoine Griezmann also said goodbye to Atletico Madrid's fans at the Metropolitan stadium before he moves to the United States to play in Major League Soccer. Atletico beat Girona 1-0.

Two goals by Raphinha and one by João Cancelo kept Barcelona perfect at home in the Spanish league. The Catalan club had already clinched its second straight league title two rounds ago.

There is one round of matches left.

Lewandowski helped Barcelona win three Spanish league titles in four seasons, including this campaign, and one Copa del Rey, while scoring an impressive 119 goals in 192 appearances.

It was an emotional farewell for the Poland striker, who after the match was thrown into the air by his teammates. They also lined up and applauded Lewandowski as he went toward the locker room.

"It has been an honor to play



Barcelona's Robert Lewandowski is thrown into the air by his teammates after his last game for the club at the end of the Spanish La Liga soccer match between FC Barcelona and Real Betis in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

for this club," Lewandowski said. "We've enjoyed some great moments in these four years. I am very proud of everything we have achieved together. Today I say goodbye, but I will always carry Barcelona in my heart. Thank you so much, fans. Once a Barça fan, always a Barça fan."

Griezmann is Atletico's all-time leading scorer.

The French forward apologized again to fans for having left Atletico to play for rival Barcelona.

"I didn't realize how much I loved you here. I was very young. I made a mistake, I reconsidered, and we did everything we could to come back and enjoy it again," he said.

Atletico coach Diego Simeone praised the 35-year-old Griezmann.

"Griezmann is possibly the best one to have ever played here," Simeone said. "He's an extraordinary guy, a genius. He's the most game-changing player that we've

coached here."

Sevilla avoided relegation despite a 1-0 loss to Real Madrid at home.

Vinícius Júnior scored for Madrid, which had already sealed second place.

Kylian Mbappé started for Madrid three days after saying coach Alvaro Arbeloa had made him the team's fourth-choice striker. He came off the bench in the win at Oviedo on Thursday in what was his return from an injury layoff.

It was a tight relegation fight coming into Sunday's matches and Sevilla secured its salvation thanks to other results. Alaves also guaranteed more top-tier soccer next season with a 1-0 win at already relegated Oviedo.

Five teams will enter next weekend's final round looking to avoid the drop: Levante, Osasuna, Elche, Girona and Mallorca.

Levante moved closer to safety with a 2-0 win over Mallorca and is 15th with 42 points, the same number of points as 16th-place Osasuna and 17th-place Elche.

Osasuna lost 2-1 to Espanyol at home, while Elche beat 10-man Getafe 1-0.

Inside the relegation zone are 17th-place Girona (40 points), second-to-last Mallorca (39) and Oviedo (29).

**ARAB TIMES**  
Kuwait's No.1 English Newspaper

**For Subscriptions and Complaints**

Please Call

**51508991**  
**51526559**





Al Arabi striker header is saved by Kuwait Club goalkeeper during the final of the Crown Prince Cup. (KUNA)

# Sports

## Al-Arabi storms to Crown Prince Cup glory

Ten-man Kuwait Club collapses



Left: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah waves to the crowd during the Crown Prince final match between Al-Arabi and Kuwait Club. Right: Crown Prince hands over the trophy to Al-Arabi.

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Al-Arabi celebrated a major success after defeating Kuwait Club 3-0 in the Crown Prince Cup final at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium, securing its 10th title in the competition's history.**

The result was heavily influenced by Kuwait Club being reduced to ten men late in the first half following Mehdi Berrhama's red card, after which Al-Arabi took full control and went on to seal a comfortable victory.

Kuwait Club started with Saud Al-Houshan in goal. The defence included Mehdi Berrhama, Ali Hussein, Arsen Zola, and Sami Al-Sanea. The midfield featured Idrissa Doumbia, Reda Hani, Mohammed Marhoon, and Amro Abdel Fattah, while Mohammed Daham and Yassin Khennissi led the attack.

Al-Arabi lined up with Suleiman Abdulghafour in goal. The defence consisted of Mohammed Khaled, Nabil Marmouk, Leonardo Sheldon, and Abdulwahab Al-Owaidi. The midfield was made up of Ali Aziz, Kamel Al-Aswad, Abdullah Al-Qarzai, and Anayo Iwuala, with Youssef Majed and Zaid Qunbar in attack.

The match began evenly, with both sides cautious



Al-Arabi players celebrate with the trophy after winning the Crown Prince Cup.

and relying on quick transitions in the early stages. Kuwait Club created the first chance through Mohammed Marhoon, whose effort went over the bar inside the opening minute. Al-Arabi responded through Iwuala, who shot wide in the 7th minute

before missing a clear one-on-one opportunity that was saved by Al-Houshan in the 18th minute.

Despite its efforts, Kuwait Club struggled to break through, while Al-Arabi remained compact and competitive against the AFC Challenge

League champion and reigning Crown Prince Cup holder.

Iwuala again threatened in the 27th minute from distance but failed to hit the target. The turning point came in first-half stoppage time when Kuwait Club were reduced to ten men after Berrhama was sent off for a foul on Youssef Majed, who was through on goal.

In the second half, Kuwait Club made a change, bringing on Ahmed Al-Dhafiri for Sami Al-Sanea, and started brightly, with Amro hitting the side netting in the 47th minute.

Al-Arabi opened the scoring in the 54th minute when Mohammed Khaled headed in from a free kick awarded after a foul on Iwuala. Kuwait Club nearly responded in the 61st minute, but Ali Aziz failed to convert his chance.

Both teams made substitutions, but Al-Arabi doubled its lead in the 81st minute through substitute Ali Khalaf, who finished a cross from Kamel Al-Aswad.

In stoppage time, Zaid Qunbar added a third goal to complete a 3-0 victory for Al-Arabi.

### Referees:

The match was officiated by Guatemalan referee Mario Escobar, assisted by Abdulhadi Al-Anzi and Ali Awad. Yusuf Nassar was the fourth official, while VAR duties were handled by Benjamin Pine-da, assisted by Ali Karam.

## Kuwait Club signs Kuzmanovski ahead of Asian Club Handball Championship

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Kuwait Club strengthened its squad ahead of the 28th Asian Men's Club League Handball Championship by signing Macedonian star Filip Kuzmanovski as the team's fourth foreign professional for the continental tournament set to take place in Kuwait from June 6-15 at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex.**

"The Whites" already boast a strong foreign lineup featuring Qatari Frankis



Macedonian star Filip Kuzmanovski

Marzo, Montenegrin Vladan Lipovina, and Portuguese international Victor Iturriza. Portuguese player Angel Hernandez, currently loaned to the Saudi league, could also return to join the squad if required.

The tournament draw placed host side Kuwait Club in Group B alongside Bahrain's Al-Najma, Saudi Arabia's Al-Khaleej, and Qatar's Al-Arabi in what promises to be one of the competition's toughest groups. Meanwhile, fellow Kuwaiti representatives Burgan Club were drawn into Group A with Sharjah of the UAE, China's CHA, and Qatar's Al-Duhail.

Kuwait Club decided to cancel its overseas training camp due to commitments involving military personnel and student players, choosing instead to hold a local camp that began yesterday and will continue until the championship opener.

Burgan, on the other hand, has launched its training camp in Cairo as part of preparations for its first appearance on the Asian stage. The team is expected to play several friendly matches against Egyptian league clubs during the camp.

Elsewhere, Qadsia SC confirmed the departure of international player Nasser Boukhadra after the expiration of his contract, ending a successful spell in which he delivered standout performances for "The Yellow."

Medal tally reaches 44

## Kuwait keeps momentum rolling at Gulf Games



Kuwait's stars celebrate on the podium with officials.

KUNA photos

DOHA, May 18, (KUNA): Kuwait continued its strong showing at the 4th Gulf Games in Doha 2026, adding two gold medals, one silver, and four bronze medals on the sixth day of competition, which runs through May 22. The latest achievements raised Kuwait's overall tally to 44 medals, including eight gold, 15 silver, and 21 bronze.

Track and field athlete Eisa Al-

Zankawi delivered one of the standout performances by winning gold in the discus throw event. Bronze medals were also secured by Bader Al-Suwaid in the men's 1500m race, Abdullah Shaker in the decathlon, Amal Al-Roumi in the women's 1500m event, and Sheikha Al-Saqhan in shot put.

In bowling, Faisal Al-Saleem captured gold in the Masters competition, while fellow Kuwaiti Mustafa

Al-Mousawi claimed silver.

Kuwait's padel teams also impressed, with the women's national team recording its second victory after defeating Qatar 3-0, while the men's team edged Bahrain 2-1.

Kuwait Olympic Committee Director General retired Major General Mohammed Saeed Al-Khalaf praised the delegation's performances, expressing pride in the results

achieved despite the challenges and interruptions that affected preparations in recent years.

Al-Khalaf said the current edition of the Gulf Games has been exceptional for Kuwait, noting that the national teams surpassed expectations by winning medals across a variety of sports, including bowling, shooting, athletics, fencing, billiards and snooker, and taekwondo.

ARAB TIMES

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY IN FREE KUWAIT

Published by: Arab Times Publishing House

Editor-in-Chief  
**AHMED AL JARALLAH**

Editorial Office:  
Tel: 24826912 - Airport Road, Shuwaikh  
P.O. Box: 2270, 13023 Safat, Kuwait  
E-mail: arabtimes@arabtimesonline.com

Advertising:  
Tel: 99659717 - 50232062  
E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

Annual Subscriptions:  
Individuals KD 30, Companies & Official Departments KD 45  
Airmail charges extra for overseas  
Tel: 51526559 - 51508991