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## AMIR PATRONIZES CEREMONY HONORING KUWAIT'S NEW POLICE OFFICERS

— Details Page 2 —

# REPAIRS AND UPGRADES PAVE WAY FOR FLIGHT RESUMPTION

# Kuwait T1 airport reopens June 1

Aviation authority rolls out phased plan to restore full operations

**KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA):** The Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) announced Thursday the phased resumption of Arab and international airline operations at Kuwait International Airport's Terminal 1 beginning June 1, marking a key step toward restoring full air traffic following recent disruptions.

PACA Chairman Sheikh Engineer Hamoud Mubarak Al-Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah expressed deep appreciation to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah for their continued support of the civil aviation sector. He said this backing has played a vital role in advancing efforts to modernize Kuwait's aviation infrastructure.

Sheikh Hamoud noted that flight operations will resume in carefully planned phases under a comprehensive operational strategy designed to ensure full technical and logistical readiness. The plan prioritizes efficient air traffic flow and the highest standards of passenger safety, with ongoing assessments at each stage until full capacity is restored.

He added that the return of Arab and international carriers follows the completion of extensive repair

and development works across key airport facilities. These upgrades include improvements to infrastructure, systems, and overall operational readiness.

According to Sheikh Hamoud, all enhancements at the main passenger terminal (T1) have now been completed, featuring an updated design aimed at improving passenger movement while maintaining stringent safety and security standards.

He also highlighted a recent inspection visit by His Highness the Prime Minister to Terminal 1, where he reviewed progress and examined completed developments. The visit was attended by Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Salem Al-Sabah, along with senior officials from PACA.

During the visit, officials presented a comprehensive overview of repair, rehabilitation, and modernization efforts undertaken in response to recent Iranian attacks targeting Kuwait International Airport. The briefing also covered the operational plan for the return of foreign airlines and this year's Hajj flight program.

Sheikh Hamoud concluded by commending the coordinated efforts of all government entities operating at the airport, including the Ministry of Interior and the General Administration of Customs. He also praised PACA staff for maintaining operational continuity under exceptional circumstances.



### Opinion

**Ahmed Al-Jarallah**

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

## Stop the rogue state from tampering with international waterways

WHEN I published an article in Al-Seyassah newspaper in 1980, predicting the blockage of the Strait of Hormuz, I was not speculating. Rather, the developments at the time pointed in that direction, particularly during the height of the Iran-Iraq War, which created exceptional conditions in the Arabian Gulf and had a significant impact on the global economy.

At that time, the Iranian regime was still unstable and suffering from political and economic crises. Nevertheless, it set major strategic objectives, including the "export of the revolution" and the consideration of the Strait of Hormuz as a domestic rather than an international waterway.

As a result, the "Carter Doctrine" was issued in 1980, stating that "the United States will regard any attempt by a foreign power to gain control of the Strait of Hormuz and the Arabian Gulf region as an attack on its vital interests."

Today, what I had warned against has materialized. Iran has closed the Strait of Hormuz, disrupting global supply chains not only for energy but also for

food and other essential commodities.

This abnormal situation cannot continue. For nearly 84 days, the world has been held hostage by Iranian terrorism. Therefore, the international community, especially major powers, is obligated to bring it to an appropriate end. Countries such as China and Japan, among others, are now facing an unprecedented crisis, even more severe than the 1973 crisis.

What is happening in the globally vital Strait of Hormuz amounts to outright piracy, reminiscent of the Middle Ages. Is the world truly so weak in the face of a rogue state that has been practicing terrorism for 47 years, as if no one is able to stop it?

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Health situation stable in Kuwait; travel warning issued

# Kuwait steps up border checks amid Ebola alert

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 21:** Official spokesperson of the Health Ministry Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad on Thursday confirmed that efforts to implement preventive and precautionary measures at the borders have been intensified due to the Ebola outbreak in several African countries, even if no cases have so far

been recorded in Kuwait.

In a press statement, Al-Sanad disclosed that health monitoring and surveillance procedures for arriving passengers have been activated and intensified, such as the preventive assessment procedures at the entry points and the use of thermal screening systems in accordance with the health regulations.

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Left: Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer welcomes Gulf Cooperation Council Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi at Downing Street in London on May 20, 2026. Right: Britain's Minister of State for Trade Chris Bryant and Al-Budaiwi pose following a trade agreement signing ceremony at Downing Street.



## UK-GCC free trade deal unlocks new growth for Kuwait economy

**KUWAIT CITY, May 21:** The United Kingdom and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) on May 20th 2026 concluded talks on a modern and ambitious Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which will support goods exporters, services suppliers and investors in the UK and Kuwait.

This deal reflects the UK's commitment to long-term partnership with all six members of the GCC - Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE - and is founded upon our shared commit-

ment to open trade, mutual prosperity, and the long-term economic success of all our nations.

The UK's ties with the Gulf are deep, historic, and future-focused. As the first trade deal between the GCC and any G7 nation, the new agreement will provide significant new opportunities for business and collaboration between Kuwait and the UK.

The agreement also reflects our solidarity with our Gulf partners. The UK has unequivocally condemned Iran's reckless attacks

and worked with Gulf partners to support their self-defence, coordinating closely to find a long-term, sustainable solution. When the wider global environment is uncertain, this deal's rules-based framework provides the legal certainty and long-term stability that businesses on both sides need to plan, invest and grow with confidence, supporting jobs and raising living standards in the UK and across the Gulf.

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### 6-hour shift

## Gov't hours get a summer trim

**KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA):** The Civil Service Commission (CSC) on Thursday issued a circular to all government entities mandating one-hour reduction in the morning shift hours.

Under the new directive, the official workday is now set at six hours, while the broader framework of the regular working system continues to be enforced.

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## KD 510 million blow to money laundering ring

**KUWAIT CITY, May 21:** The Court of Appeals has concluded one of Kuwait's largest money laundering cases, involving a financial network accused of carrying out alternative money transfers and suspicious transactions exceeding KD 250 million, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

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Photo by Samer Shiger

Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology and acting Minister of Information and Culture Omar Al-Omar during the signing of a KD 825 million fixed-line telecommunications partnership with Bahrain's Beyon Group, in the presence of Minister of Finance Yaqoub Al-Rifai and officials, to develop Kuwait's national digital infrastructure and advance Vision 2035 goals.

KD 825m digital expansion

## Kuwait signs landmark deal to upgrade national telecom

By Mohammad Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 21:** Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology and acting Minister of Information and Culture Omar Al-Omar revealed that the commitment document for the fixed-line telecommunications network development project is one

of the largest strategic partnership agreements in the telecommunications and digital infrastructure sector in the country, with project investments exceeding KD 825 million.

Al-Omar made the statement at the ceremony for signing the commitment document between the Ministry

Continued on Page 5

### IRGC intruders face Kuwait trial

**KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA):** Kuwait Public Prosecution referred suspects belonging to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to court to stand trial.

The public prosecution, in a statement, said the IRGC members were arrested after infiltrating into the State of Kuwait's territories and sneaking into a restricted military area, and they were spotted by armed forces assigned with protection of this area.

IT said the armed forces arrested them inside the military area.

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## Call for strong Arab defense front amid regional 'threats'

K U W A I T

**CITY, May 21:** Arab and International Relations Council (AIRC) Chairman Mohammad Jassim Al-Saqr said the region is currently facing unprecedented challenges and existential threats, urging Arab leaders and institutions to fulfill their obligations by establishing a strong and unified Arab defense strategy, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Speaking after presiding over the 33rd virtual meeting of the AIRC



Al-Saqr



Al-Budaiwi

Board of Directors and Board of Trustees, Al-Saqr confirmed that members reviewed the volatile Arab landscape and the rapid changes affecting the region.

Several prominent personalities attended the meeting, such as GCC Secretary General Jassim Al-Budaiwi, AIRC Chairman and former head of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), Arab Parliament and Kuwait

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### 2 Europe and the diplomacy of understanding Gulf



### 4 Saudi Ambassador assumes Diplomatic Dean post

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### Prayer Timings

Fajr .....	03:21	Asr .....	15:20
Sunrise ..	04:52	Maghrib ..	18:37
Zohr .....	11:45	Isha .....	20:06

## First Deputy PM: Top level readiness, discipline, vigilance vital in current scenario

KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA): Under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, a graduation ceremony was held Wednesday for the 33rd specializing batch of Police College and the 15th batch of Women's Police Institute.

The event was held at the Saad Al-Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences in the presence of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

The National Anthem was played at the onset of the ceremony, followed by the recitation of verses of the Holy Quran.

Speaking at the event, Sheikh Fahad Yousef underlined that the graduation of this galaxy of specializing officers and non-commissioned officers demonstrates the security institution's commitment to creating qualified national personnel able to work with utter efficiency and preparedness, cementing pillars of security and stability under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince.

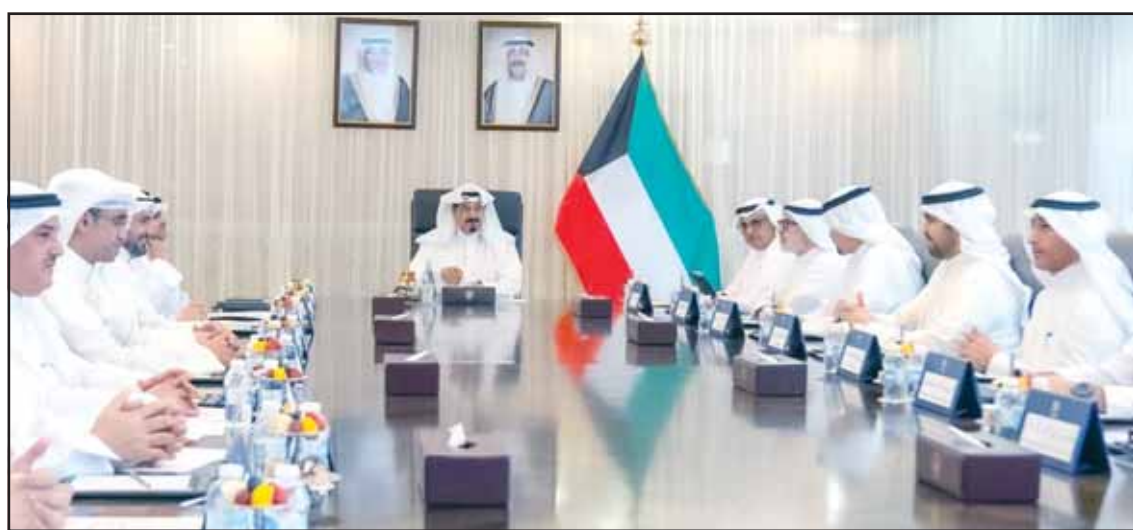
He warned that the ongoing situation requires the highest levels of readiness, discipline and vigilance, calling on new graduates to translate science, knowledge and field skills into tangible reality and to be role models for dedication and responsibility.

The ceremony witnessed the graduation of as many as 189 specializing officers of the Police College from Kuwait, Bahrain and Yemen and 165 officers and non-commissioned officers of the Women's Police Institute.



Amiri Diwan photo  
First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, senior-most officials from security departments graced the graduation ceremony.

## PM gets update on FATF requirements



PM Diwan photo  
His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the meeting on Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) observations and requirements.

KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chaired Thursday a meeting on Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) observations and requirements.

The meeting discussed ways to support integration and strengthen coordination and follow-up mechanisms among relevant government

entities, ensuring compliance with anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing frameworks and reflecting Kuwait's commitment to international standards within set timelines.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait, Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem, Minister of Commerce

and Industry Osama Boodai, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Also attending were Advisor to the Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikh Dr. Bassel Humoud Al-Sabah, Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and a number of representatives from relevant authorities.

## Trees, plants and green spaces help reduce pollution – official

KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA): Expanding green spaces and home gardening contribute positively to improving the urban environment amid accelerating climate change challenges, said Acting Director General of Kuwait's Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR), Engineer Salem Al-Hai.

In an interview with KUNA on Wednesday, Al-Hai said native and drought-resistant plants possess strategic advantages that make them ideal for enhancing Kuwait's urban environment due to their adaptation to the country's desert climate.

He noted that such plants can be irrigated using treated water and are highly tolerant of salinity while resisting local diseases and pests, reducing the need for pesticides. He added that they also help stabilize sand, reduce dust and moderate temperatures near the ground.

Al-Hai stressed that the authority plays a central role in vegetation restoration projects, noting that current legislation prohibits commercial nurseries from trading seeds and tubers of native wild plants to protect them, making the authority's nurseries the primary strategic source for supplying these species to major projects and private gardens.

He said the authority's nurseries pro-



Eng. Salem Al-Hai

vide plants such as Haloxylon salicornicum "Rimth," Lycium shawii "Awsaj" and Helianthemum "Raqrour," supporting sustainability and soil protection efforts across agricultural projects.

Al-Hai also highlighted recommendations encouraging the use of agricultural mulch to cover soil surfaces and reduce evaporation, explaining that it acts as an insulating layer protecting soil from direct sunlight while enhancing beneficial microbial activity.

He noted that urban plants not only improve air quality and reduce temperatures, but also enhance residents' psychological well-being by creating a sense of comfort and connection with nature, thereby improving quality of

life in Kuwait.

Al-Hai added that local markets offer several drought- and salinity-resistant trees, shrubs and ground cover plants that help prevent soil erosion and stabilize land, including Acacia saligna, Acacia tortilis, Ghaf and Parkinsonia trees, as well as shrubs such as Acacia victoriae, Acacia regens and Lysiloma watsonii.

He further said grasses and ground cover plants that contribute to soil stabilization, withstand drought and attract birds and pollinating insects include Eragrostis curvula, Vetiver grass and Ambrosia.

It is imperative to ratchet up national efforts aiming to fight climate change as part of broad commitment to the matter, Kuwait's Minister for Development and Sustainability Affairs Reem Al-Fulaij said on Wednesday.

Kuwait remains firmly committed to a national roadmap that entails cutting down on greenhouse gas emissions until the year 2030, the minister said after presiding over talks involving an ad hoc committee devoted to the matter.

Ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP31) slated for November in the southern Turkish province of Antalya, the minister said that logistical preparations are already in place before the high-level gathering gets underway.



KUNA photo  
Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah discussed with Tanzania's Ambassador to Kuwait Saidi Massoro ways to boost cooperation in social and developmental fields.

## Kuwait, Tanzania discuss boost in social, dev. fields

KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah discussed on Thursday with Tanzania's Ambassador to Kuwait Saidi Massoro ways to boost cooperation in social and developmental fields.

In a press statement following the meeting, Dr. Al-Huwailah said the talks highlighted the ministry's key services and functions. These include supervising charities and civil society organizations, empowering women, addressing childhood issues, and supporting family and community programs, she added.

The two sides also discussed cooperation opportunities in the cooperative sector and product exchange.

## MoJ & FIU sign MoU to fight AML, terror

KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA): The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Kuwait Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) on cooperation and information exchange in combating money laundering and terrorist financing, to enhance institutional cooperation and integrate national efforts.

Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice Awatif Al-Sanad signed for the Ministry, while FIU Chief Dr. Hamad Al-Mukrad signed for the Kuwait Financial Intelligence Unit, according to a joint statement issued by the two sides on Thursday.

The memorandum aims to enhance coordination and exchange of technical expertise and information, supporting national efforts to combat financial crimes, improve institutional efficiency, and align with international standards while strengthening transparency, integrity, and protection of Kuwait's financial and legal systems.

# Kuwaiti MIAs prime concern – Asst. FM

Modern warfare turns deadly: Sheikha Jawaher

NEW YORK, May 21, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Sheikha Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah said her country was greatly concerned about the ordeal of people who went missing in action (MIAs), particularly in case of armed conflict.

"Kuwait, out of commitment to the principles of justice and human dignity, continues efforts to account for its own MIAs and do justice to their families," Sheikha Jawaher said.

She made the comments in an address to an open debate, convened on Wednesday evening by the UN Security Council on "protection of civilians in armed conflict" as part of the ninth edition of Protection of Civilians (PoC) Week 2026 (May 18-22).

The Kuwaiti senior diplomat said this edition of the PoC week coincided with unprecedented concerns and highly precarious global situation.

"The scope of armed conflicts reached alarming and horrible levels, putting civilians at the center of targeting and exacerbating the suffering of millions of people, including women



KUNA photo  
Kuwaiti Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Sheikha Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah leads the Kuwaiti delegation at the UN Security Council meeting.

and children," she said.

On behalf of Kuwait, Sheikha Jawaher regretted that over the past five years, the scope of conflicts expanded by 15 percent.

"Millions of civilians in the occupied Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and Somalia were rendered liable to killing, starvation, displacement and loss of basic services," she pointed out.

One of the emerging challenges in today's conflict is the employment of modern technology to produce more lethal weapons which led to indiscriminate killing of large number of innocent civilians and unnecessary destruction of civilian property, she cautioned.

Modern technology has recently been used in sinful Iranian attacks on vital civilian facilities and residential areas in Kuwait and other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Kingdom of Jordan, Sheikha Jawaher recalled.

Reiterating condemnation of the Iranian aggression, she affirmed GCC states' legitimate right to protect their sovereignty and national security.

Sheikha Jawaher urged the international community to hold Iran and its proxies in the region accountable for their crimes against civilians, and stand united against any infringement on the rules of the International Humanitarian Law.

## Mol, UAE teams participated in training

## KUNA Media Ctr ends news bulletin skills course

KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA): The Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Center for Development of Media concluded Thursday a training program titled "Skills in Handling News Bulletins," with participation from the staff of KUNA, Ministry of Interior (MoI), and National Media Council (NMC) of the United Arab Emirates.

Presented by KUNA Senior Editor Mohammad Abu Baker, the program (which ran from last Sunday) focused on managing news bulletins, news classification for websites, various journalistic techniques, news value criteria, and content creation for social media platforms, particularly X and Instagram.

In a statement to KUNA, Abu Baker highlighted the program's importance in equipping media professionals with specialized skills to improve news bulletins and adapt content for modern digital platforms, especially social media.

The program combined theoretical lectures with practical exercises, allowing participants to gain hands-on experience in preparing professional news bulletins and handling media content with accuracy and professionalism, he noted.

Abu Bakr underlined that such specialized training programs help refine journalists' skills, boost their professional capabilities, and enhance the overall quality of media output.



KUNA photo  
Participants of the course.

Established in December 1995, the KUNA Center for Development of Media is one of the region's leading media training institutions, having delivered hundreds of specialized programs aimed at developing media professionals and raising the standards of professional journalism.

## Other Voices

### Europe and the diplomacy of understanding Gulf

By Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri

FOR a long time, Europe's presence in the Gulf was seen mainly through official relations and the familiar files of politics, trade, and energy. Gradually, however, that presence has begun to move into a deeper space, one concerned with understanding Gulf societies from within.

The Gulf today is young, changing, and far more diverse than many outside observers assume. The GCC remains an essential regional framework, but serious engagement with the Gulf also requires attention to the distinct characters and unique experiences of each country.

This is where a different kind of diplomacy matters. It is a diplomacy that listens to society as well as governments, and pays attention to quiet transformations rather than only major headlines.



Al-Anjeri

In this context, I was invited last Wednesday to speak at a closed dialogue hosted by the European Union Delegation to the State of Kuwait, in the presence of 16 European ambassadors. The exchange touched on society, youth, culture, and the changing image of the Gulf in the world.

The value of such a meeting lies in the recognition that trust is not built through agreements alone, but also through calm, direct, and sustained dialogue.

It is only fair to note that this path did not begin from nothing. Former EU Ambassador to Kuwait Cristian Tudor helped establish an active and distinctive European presence, even during the restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic. Today, Ambassador Anne Koistinen is building on that foundation, widening the conversation through greater openness to culture, dialogue, and social understanding.

With its balanced diplomatic legacy, its tradition of quiet dialogue, and its long ability to build bridges without noise, Kuwait is well placed to serve as a calm and influential platform for deeper mutual understanding between the Gulf and Europe.

## Need to sustain family 'cohesion' at any price

"THE new framework for family protection represents a qualitative leap forward with the enactment of Decree-Law No. 11/2026 and the Cabinet's adoption of the government's Family Protection Program, which includes 83 initiatives involving 12 government entities to enhance family and social stability," columnist **Sheikh Eng. Fahad Dawood Al-Sabah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"This step sets matters on the right track, as the program primarily aims to support and regulate the family according to its needs while avoiding harmful outcomes such as divorce and family disintegration.

"The issue requires social and health-based solutions, based on the importance of the family as a continuous and sustainable social unit, not a fleeting whim that ends when desire fades.

"The multiplicity of challenges necessitates a comprehensive approach. Implementing these initiatives requires a deep understanding of how to prevent hasty reactions, through the study of rehabilitation and prevention measures, ensuring continuous protection, and, most importantly, fostering constructive family development.

"A comprehensive government system based on development and community awareness is essential. This development must be accompanied by improving the efficiency of the entities responsible for dealing with issues related to youth and children.

"If the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries share common challenges and strategic directions related to the family, the system of 'separate welfare initiatives' has already played its role, and today there is a shift toward comprehensive national strategies.

"This has led the Kuwaiti Family Protection Program to focus on implementation mechanisms and governance frameworks that align with the regulations adopted by GCC countries for family protection.

"This reflects an effort to unify the Gulf vision for family planning and protection at a time when various negative factors are affecting this important social unit, which in turn influences the economic and political stability of any country.

"Marital counseling is important because it helps prevent family breakdown, strengthens family cohesion, and contributes to building the family's national identity. This requires educational and interpersonal skills that cannot develop when emotions or personal desires dominate family life.

"Parents serve as role models for their children, teaching them social and practical skills that shape their outlook on life.

"The most important point in this context is the need to move away from the traditional approach in the region, which has often relied on 'reaction', intervening only after divorce or a case of domestic violence had occurred, through financial assistance or shelters.

"The new program approved by the Cabinet is based on a proactive approach, providing family counseling and awareness in educational institutions and youth settings.

"In the modern era, a nation's strength is not measured solely by its military capabilities or the robustness of its external security, but also by the structural cohesion of its smallest social unit - the family.

"This new program represents a significant step towards building a society capable of development and free from domestic violence, establishing a sound and productive system that contributes to national progress."

### Also:

"Culture is more than a written volume, a collection of memorized information, or a diploma displayed on a wall," Kuwaiti writer and lawyer **Abdullah Falah Al-Hajri** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"It is, at its core, the cultivation a person undergoes, the behavior reflected in their daily actions, and the moral principles expressed through their interactions with others.

"The true essence of culture is not measured by the amount of information one possesses, but by conduct, respect for others, and self-expression in different situations.

"Its manifestations include honoring our elders, showing kindness to the young, caring for the sick, preserving the dignity of the deceased, and recognizing the inherent worth of every human being in all circumstances.

"These core values form the foundation of a cohesive society built on empathy and mutual respect.

"When individuals are raised with these principles from childhood, they become deeply ingrained in their character, reducing the need for extensive behavioral regulation, as personal in-

tegrity becomes their chief advisor.

"Moreover, culture is not limited to social etiquette, as it also includes the proficiency of discourse and the grace of dissent.

"A cultured person chooses their language with precision, respects differing viewpoints, and engages in debate without resorting to mockery or disparagement.

"They direct criticism towards ideas rather than individuals, seeking improvement rather than offense, as refined dialogue reflects both moral integrity and intellectual maturity.

"Culture is also expressed through respect for laws, fulfillment of responsibilities, protection of public resources, and a spirit of cooperation.

"An enlightened individual looks beyond personal interest, accepts responsibility towards their society, and acts as a constructive influence. Consequently, culture is a vital factor in the stability and advancement of civilizations.

"While some may assume culture is innate, it is in fact shaped through upbringing, environment, and the presence of constructive role models.

"The family bears the primary responsibility for instilling these values, followed by educational institutions, society, and the media.

"When these influences come together to promote tolerance, respect, and cooperation, an aware generation emerges, equipped to build a better future.

"Refining a person's inner culture and character is more valuable than refining gold, for human life is of the highest worth. A person's virtue ultimately contributes to a virtuous society.

"True prosperity lies in principles rather than wealth, and in essence rather than appearance. Ultimately, life finds its true purpose when it is shaped by culture and when human relationships are based on mutual respect, kindness, and appreciation.

"Rather than a performance for others, culture is an authentic way of living, practiced both in public and in private.

"By cultivating this within ourselves and in our youth, we build a more humane and thoughtful society, better prepared to navigate life's challenges."

□ □ □

"Sometimes, while driving, you may realize you are going in the wrong direction and need to turn back or take an easier route," columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"This '180-degree turn' is a fundamental principle of life, used by individuals, societies, and even nations to avoid disastrous consequences.

"In 2007, a factory for producing the small, low-cost 'Nano' car was established in West Bengal, India.

"Officials later realized they had made a mistake in choosing the location and decided to relocate the factory to Gujarat. The move proved successful, and demand for the car increased. This success is a direct result of adopting a corrective '180-degree turn' policy.

"After gaining independence from Britain, India adopted a socialist economic model, but the results were disappointing. In 1991, it shifted toward a new economic policy, which proved to be remarkably successful.

"The same applies to other countries as well. In Britain, after World War II, British officials felt they were no longer able to maintain control over India and the rest of the British colonies, leading to a change in policy towards granting independence to these colonies.

"Winston Churchill emerged as a hero of World War II but suffered defeat in the 1945 elections after the war ended. This was attributed to the British public's desire for post-war reform and their perception that Churchill was not suited to lead such change in peacetime.

"The story of the eagle, drawn from nature, also offers insight into the process of transformation for the better, whether in the development of individuals or societies. An eagle's life span can reach up to 70 years. By the age of 40, its talons and beak are no longer effective for catching prey, and its wings become heavier, reducing its ability to fly.

"The eagle either dies at that stage or undergoes a transformation lasting around 150 days. In the latter case, it flies to the highest mountain peak and remains in its nest. There, it repeatedly strikes its beak against a rock until it breaks. It then waits for a new beak to grow, which allows it to shed its old talons. The eagle plucks out its old feathers, and after about five months, it is able to fly again and live out the remaining years of its lifespan.

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



Al-Sabah

## Kuwait heads for legislation, institutions reforms

KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA): Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority, better known as Nazaha, is partaking in the 17th session of the Implementation Review Group of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), held in Vienna, Austria, from May 18 to 22.

The event is meant to consider the performance of the UNCAC implementation

review mechanism, promote the exchange of information, best practices, and experiences, and identify the technical assistance needs to support States Parties' efforts in implementing the UNCAC.

Addressing the meeting, Yasmine Aba Al-Qaloub of Nazaha's International Cooperation Department underlined that the State of Kuwait attaches great importance

to the UNCAC Implementation Review Group as the key tool for assessing States Parties' compliance with the Convention.

She added that Kuwait's involvement in the review had significantly influenced its government's direction towards overhauling its legislation and institutional mechanisms.

## Blasts as army blows off Iraq war-time explosives

KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA): The General Staff of Kuwait Army announced that the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team from the Land Force Engineering Corps are handling shrapnel and explosive remnants in northern Kuwait from dawn until 12:00 p.m. Thursday.

In a statement, the General Staff affirmed that any explosion sounds heard during this period result from disposal operations.



Al-Rai photo

Municipality bulldozers demolishing unsafe buildings in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh.

## Demolition of 37 unsafe building in 'Jleeb' begins

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The Safety Management Team at Farwaniya Municipality has begun demolishing 37 dilapidated buildings in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The operation is part of a field campaign aimed at removing unsafe structures and addressing hazardous sites to ensure public safety.

The Kuwait Municipality confirmed that specialized teams implemented all necessary precautionary measures before starting demolition work, including evacuating the buildings, disconnecting electricity, and fully cordoning off the sites to prevent pedestrians and vehicles from approaching or parking nearby.

The demolition work is being supervised by site manager Eng. Mubarak Al-Watari. So far, five buildings have been demolished by their owners, while the removal of the remaining structures continues according to the approved schedule set by the Safety Management Team.

## Traveler carrying KD 3,000 or more to face law: KGAC

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC) issued an advisory for travelers to fully abide by the financial disclosure protocols to avoid legal problems or processing interruptions at the borders.

The administration pointed out that these transparency measures are vital for streamlining travel procedures and ensuring passenger protection.

As part of a public awareness initiative, officials clarified that anyone carrying cash or negotiable instruments valued at KD3,000 or more – or the equivalent in any foreign currency – must file a declaration at the customs.

They warned that attempting to circumvent these requirements by splitting funds among relatives or in different pieces of luggage is a punishable offense.

Customs authorities stressed the necessity of honesty regarding carried funds and advised travelers to keep supporting documents that verify the legal source of their money.

## Radiation inspection at border vital – customs

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The General Administration of Customs (GAC) affirmed that radiation inspection devices used at customs ports are among the most important tools supporting inspection operations, as they provide speed and accuracy that help streamline procedures and save time and effort for both travelers and inspectors, while fully adhering to radiation safety and security standards, reports Al-Anba daily.

In an official statement, GAC explained that its cooperation with the Radiation Protection Department is based on three main pillars – ensuring that employees and inspectors are not exposed to radiation hazards, verifying that all radiation devices operating at customs ports are officially licensed by the Radiation Protection Department, and equipping all ports with radiation detection gates to prevent the entry of any unauthorized radioactive materials.

The radiation inspection system includes three types of devices – large scanners for inspecting containers and trucks, medium-sized devices for cars, parcels, and goods, and small devices used for inspecting personal belongings and individuals.

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**KFF shuts 57 shops:** The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) carried out inspection campaigns in the Capital, Farwaniya, and Ahmadi Governorates to identify buildings and facilities violating fire safety and prevention regulations, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The campaign led to the administrative closure of 57 industrial facilities and shops, as well as the issuance of 562 warnings to other establishments that failed to meet safety requirements.

## Patrol police nab Arab expat in drug peddling

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: Hawally security officers apprehended an Arab in Salmiya for drug possession with intent to sell.

A security source disclosed that the officers were patrolling in Hawally Governorate when they noticed a man, who appeared confused while attempting to hide bags at a vacant lot in Salmiya.

The source confirmed that a thorough search ensued, resulting in the discovery of 16 bags containing methamphetamine, hashish and Tramadol pills.

The suspect and the seized items were referred to the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) at the Ministry of Interior for legal action.

## Death upheld for 'narco' trafficker

Wife-killer sent for mental check

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The Second Circuit of the Court of Appeals, headed by Judge Nasr Salem Al-Haid, with Judges Mutaib Al-Aradhi and Saud Al-Sanea serving as members, referred a man convicted of murdering his wife in the Al-Mutlaa desert to a specialized psychiatric committee to assess his mental state. The defendant had previously been sentenced to death by the Criminal Court.

According to the case files, the defendant assaulted his wife in a dark desert area in Al-Mutlaa before running her over with his vehicle to ensure her death.

In a separate case, the same court upheld a five-year prison sentence and a KD 5,000 fine against a group of Egyptian nationals convicted of manipulating and falsifying electricity and water bills by illegally accessing the automated system of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy. The court also upheld the acquittal of a businessman and a security guard who were accused of being accomplices.

In addition, the court upheld the death sentence against a Turkish national convicted of smuggling 102 grams of cocaine and 22.4 grams of psychotropic substances with intent to traffic and use them. He was arrested by customs inspectors at Kuwait International Airport in coordination with the Drug Control General Department.

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**Citizen acquitted:** The Ninth Circuit of the Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Hamad Al-Wazzan, with Judges Abdulaziz Al-Namash and Ahmed Nour Al-Huda as members, acquitted a Kuwaiti citizen of charges of possessing and using intoxicants and driving under the influence, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This ruling is the first of its kind following the amendment of the new Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Law.

Defense lawyer Bashar Al-Nassar argued the case by challenging the validity of the arrest and search procedures, as well as all subsequent procedures.

According to Public Prosecution investigations, a First Lieutenant officer at a checkpoint reported seeing the accused stop his vehicle before the checkpoint and throw away a bottle containing a suspicious liquid. A prior record of drug use was also found, leading to his arrest and the search of his vehicle, during which materials and paraphernalia suspected of being used for drug consumption were discovered.

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**Funds fraud rejected:** The Misdemeanor Court acquitted a young man of charges of fraud and misappropriation of KD 5,000 from a woman, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The defendant was accused of deceiving the complainant into believing he would generate profits by purchasing mobile phones on installment plans and then buying them back from her for cash.

Defense lawyer Mohammad Al-Yabsi insisted that the elements of fraud were not established, stressing that the case reflected a legitimate business arrangement between the parties.

## Arab minor hits, kills Asian expat in 3-vehicle accident

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: An Asian expatriate born in 2009 died from severe injuries after being struck by a vehicle while crossing the road, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to security sources, when the Ministry of Interior's Operations Room received a report of a fatal accident in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, officers from the Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh Police Station rushed to the scene and carried out an investigation.

The findings indicated that the incident involved a three-vehicle collision. The first vehicle was a sedan driven by an Indian expatriate born in 1982.

The second was a sedan driven by a Bangladeshi national born in 1980. The third vehicle was an SUV driven by an Arab minor born in 2012. The SUV had overturned and struck the victim while he was crossing the road.

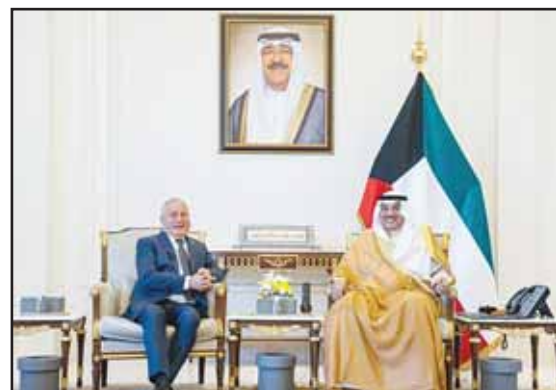


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Crown Prince Diwan photo  
His Highness the Crown Prince receives outgoing Tajikistan's Ambassador to Kuwait.

## Crown Prince receives outgoing Tajik envoy

KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Thursday outgoing Tajikistan's Ambassador to Kuwait and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Dr. Zubidullo Zubaydov, on the occasion of the end of his tenure in the country.

The meeting was attended by Head of His Highness's Diwan Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and several senior officials.



PM Diwan photo  
His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister with Ambassador Zubaydullo Zubaydov.

## Kuwait's PM receives outgoing Tajik envoy

KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Thursday outgoing Tajikistan's Ambassador to Kuwait and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Dr. Zubaydullo Zubaydov, on the occasion of his tenure in the country ending.

Kuwait pays tribute to outgoing diplomat Zubaydov

# Saudi Ambassador assumes Diplomatic Dean post

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: Ambassador of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to the State of Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad expressed gratitude for the trust bestowed on him through his appointment as Dean of the Diplomatic Corps.

In a statement issued Thursday, Prince Sultan bin Saad reaffirmed his commitment to work with all ambassadors in ways that benefit their respective countries and strengthen cooperation within the diplomatic corps.

He thanked Ambassador of Tajikistan and former Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Zubaydullo Zubaydov for his service in Kuwait.

He also extended his gratitude to the ambassadors of Palestine, the Comoros, Yemen and Nicaragua for nominating and supporting his appointment as dean.

He expressed his eagerness to continue working with all ambassadors in a manner that serves the interests of their countries and the diplomatic corps in general.

He added "the Kuwaiti government, represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, spares no effort in easing the work of diplomatic missions and removing hindrances to the work of embassies. This cooperation is in line with the commitment of Kuwait to support diplomatic efforts and strengthen relations with various countries to ensure that diplomatic work is carried out in an atmosphere of cooperation and understanding. Kuwait is my second home. I do not feel like an ambassador in a foreign country, as I live among my family and brothers. This indicates the depth of the fraternal and historical relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the State of Kuwait."



Saudi Envoy at farewell ceremony for Tajikistan Ambassador and outgoing Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Kuwait.

He expressed his appreciation for the warm greetings he received from members of the diplomatic corps, following his appointment as dean, considering it a reflection of their noble character and affection.

He thanked outgoing Zubaydov for his dedication and great contributions during his tenure in Kuwait.

He pointed out that the diplomatic environment in Kuwait is known for the highest level of cooperation and understanding, while confirming his aspiration to continue coordinating with his fellow ambassadors to serve their interests and support diplomatic work in general.



Cake-cutting ceremony during the farewell ceremony for Tajikistan Ambassador and outgoing Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Kuwait.



Diplomats honoring the outgoing Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan at a farewell ceremony.



Diplomats and guests gather at a farewell ceremony held in honour of the Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan.



Photos by Rezk Tawfiq

# Kuwait joins UN call on war rules

89 countries reaffirm commitment

NEW YORK, May 21, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Ambassador Sheikh Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah participated in a media campaign at the UN on Wednesday, stressing the pressing need to respect international humanitarian law.

On this occasion, Jordan's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Walid Obeidat, read out a joint statement on behalf of 89 countries during the media event, organized by the founding states of the Global Initiative to Galvanize Political Commitment to International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The Jordanian ambassador began his remarks by stating that civilians are suffering "unacceptable conditions" in some 130 armed conflicts around the world, facing the devastating consequences of attacks, including those involving explosive weapons.

He sounded the alarm about the erosion of respect for international humanitarian law - the rules of war - which demands an immediate political response, emphasizing the rules of war, which are originally designed to minimize harm to civilians, are indispensable and binding on all parties to armed conflict.

Obeidat elaborated that the Global Initiative to Galvanize Political Commitment to International Humanitarian Law (IHL) was launched in September 2024 to reaffirm commitment to international humanitarian law.

Earlier, Kuwait Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Sheikh Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah and President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Mirjana Egger discussed enhancing cooperation in humanitarian work and civilian protection.

Sheikha Jawaher Al-Sabah met with Egger on Tuesday at the headquarters of Kuwait Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York, on the sidelines of the 9th annual Protection of Civilians Week, held from May 18 to 22 at the UN headquarters.

Continued from Page 1

## UK-GCC

Trade in goods and services between both countries currently stands at £5.2 billion, supporting jobs, investment and economic growth. Across the GCC as a whole, the deal is projected to boost bilateral trade by nearly 20%, adding £15.5 billion annually. The UK-GCC deal will help strengthen these trade and investment ties, unlocking fresh opportunities for businesses, entrepreneurs, and communities in both countries.

The agreement provides certainty and confidence to Kuwait, helping to cement the UK's position as a key investment destination for GCC investment.

Kuwaiti businesses will be able to export to the UK more quickly and cheaply. The agreement cuts red tape, simplifies customs procedures and removes tariffs on all current exports to the UK at entry into force of the agreement.

With UK exports of food and drink to Kuwait valued at £56.5million annually, the agreement provides greater access to some of the UK's most iconic products, making it easier and cheaper for Kuwaiti consumers to access high-quality food such as smoked salmon, cheddar cheese and chocolates.

In addition, there are many benefits for Kuwait's services businesses and professionals, with the GCC and UK agreeing to lock-in rules and regulations on doing business. This guaranteed market access will be supported with groundbreaking commitments on the free flow of financial data, supporting fintech, banking, and insurance firms to expand into the UK.

On business travel, the deal establishes frameworks for recognising professional qualifications, making it easier for engineers, lawyers, accountants, and other skilled professionals to work across borders. Streamlined visa processes and the

longest business stay commitments ever agreed by the GCC will support professionals travelling between Kuwait and the UK.

**UK Business and Trade Secretary Peter Kyle said:**

"Today's agreement marks a significant step forward in our partnership. By working together, we are opening new opportunities for trade, investment, and innovation that will benefit businesses and communities across our nations."

**British Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, Qudsi Rasheed states:**

"The conclusion of negotiations on the UK - GCC Free Trade Agreement marks an important milestone in the longstanding relationship between the United Kingdom, Kuwait and the wider Gulf region. For more than 250 years, the UK and Kuwait have enjoyed a strong trading partnership which continues to grow. This agreement reflects the UK's commitment as a trusted long-term partner to Kuwait, building prosperity and opportunity together."

**UK Country Trade Director to Kuwait, Naz Demir says:**

"The agreement opens an exciting new chapter in the UK - Kuwait economic relationship. It will make trade quicker, simpler and more cost effective, creating new opportunities across sectors including professional services, technology, healthcare, food, investment and infrastructure. We look forward to continuing to work closely with our Kuwaiti partners to help businesses and investors benefit from these new opportunities."

**Statistics sources:**

Trade in goods and services sourced from: ONS UK total trade: all countries Q4 2025

Exports of food and drink sourced from: HMRC Overseas Trade Statistics February 2026



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Continued from Page 1

**Stop the**

Iran's continued interference not only threatens the Gulf states but also the entire world. The United States acted in its military campaign, with the support of Israel, in June 2025 and again in February 2026.

Realistically, the long truce has deviated from its intended course, transforming into a war of attrition that is straining the nerves of the global economy and contributing to multiple crises, which will undoubtedly have significant negative repercussions worldwide, including rising inflation.

Prolonging the crisis would give the Iranian regime additional time to rebuild its military strength and revive its regional proxies, ultimately advancing Iran's expansionist project based on destabilizing other countries, as seen in Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen.

The draft resolution on freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz was submitted to the Security Council, where it received 137 votes in favor, securing a comfortable international majority against this rogue state. Why, then, is the world not taking any action against it?

If the threat of a nuclear program is Iran's way of blackmailing the world, then it seems that the world has come under the mercy of a group of madmen who disregard the international community.

Therefore, the international community must work together to dispose of this terrorism; otherwise, the current ongoing miscalculation may encourage other countries to follow a similar path.

If this happens, the world will live in a nightmare for decades to come. Indeed, the threat of nuclear weapons would transform from a deterrent against war into a tool in the hands of some countries to impose their expansionist agendas and dictate their conditions. Is this what the world wants?

When I raised concerns about the fate of the Strait of Hormuz in 1980, it was driven by a desire to prevent what is happening today.

**Kuwait steps**

He underscored the need to avoid traveling to these countries -- Uganda, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo -- as a precautionary measure.

He stressed that the health situation in the country is stable, while affirming the ongoing coordination,

monitoring and tracking of epidemiological developments.

He also confirmed the readiness of public health teams and rapid response units to deal with new developments.

He called on the public to obtain information only from official sources and strictly comply with preventive health guidelines like maintaining personal hygiene, avoiding contact with suspected cases, and seeking medical advice once symptoms emerge after traveling.

**KD 510 million**

Following joint investigations by the State Security Service, the General Department of Criminal Investigations, and the Financial Investigations Unit, the court sentenced several defendants - both citizens and expatriates - to prison terms ranging from three to seven years and imposed fines totaling KD 510 million.

The defendants were convicted of establishing and operating a money laundering network through delivery companies and exchange offices used to carry out illegal financial transfer operations.

The ruling also ordered the closure of the companies' offices and an exchange office found to have been involved in the illegal financial activities, in addition to publishing the verdict in the official gazette.

According to the investigations, the defendants exploited commercial entities to conduct alternative money transfers outside the formal banking system in an attempt to conceal the source and nature of the funds.

**Kuwait signs**

of Communications, Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP), and the Bahraini company, Beyon, which was selected as the winning investor for the project.

He emphasized that signing the commitment document, a long-term partnership for 50 years, reflects the dedication of the country to build a sustainable digital infrastructure managed according to modern operating models and to keep pace with the rapidly evolving demands of the digital economy and future services.

He pointed out that this is not just a traditional technological project, as it is a long-term national investment in the digital future of the country and its ability to keep up with the fast growth in digital services and cloud computing.

He stated "today, we are not only signing an agreement to develop the telecommunications network, but also establishing a digital infrastructure that will form the backbone of future government services, economic sectors, and upcoming technology investments, aligning with the objectives of Kuwait Vision 2035 for a more diversified and competitive economy."

He said the project has significant economic and developmental dimensions by creating quality job opportunities for Kuwaiti talent and enabling citizens to participate in the ownership of the project company in the future through a public offering, thus, strengthening the concept of community partnership in major national projects.

He expressed his gratitude to the Ministry of Finance, KAPP, and the technical, legal and advisory teams for their efforts in preparing and evaluating the project, while welcoming Beyon as a strategic partner with advanced regional expertise in developing and managing telecommunication networks and digital infrastructure.

On the other hand, Asma Al-Mousa, acting Director General of KAPP, underscored the importance of the project as it signals a qualitative leap in the digital transformation process and a means of strengthening the digital infrastructure of Kuwait according to the highest international standards and specifications.

Al-Mousa added that the project is a new and successful model for partnership projects in Kuwait, given its close connection to the digital economy and technological development.

She indicated that the project has national and social dimensions, as it focuses on qualifying and training national talent in the communications and information technology sector. "It also allocates at least 65 percent of the jobs in the project company to Kuwaiti citizens, as stipulated in the partnership agreement. It includes allocating 50 percent of the shares for public subscription to citizens, thus, enhancing their participation in development projects and supporting the culture of saving and investment," she elaborated.

Sheikh Abdullah bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Beyon Group, affirmed that this is a long-term strategic project and the pillar for achieving the goals of the New Kuwait 2035 vision.

He explained this is accomplished through building a modern digital infrastructure that contributes to accelerating the pace of digital transfor-

mation. "Kuwait is witnessing today the path of growth and prosperity, thanks to the wise guidance of the leaders of both countries and their contribution to driving development and progress in various vital sectors. The project raises the readiness of Kuwait to keep pace with technological advancements and future digital services, and supports the transition towards a knowledge-based and innovation-driven economy. Beyon Group has vast experience in implementing fiber optic network expansion projects in several markets, including Bahrain, Jordan and the Maldives," he disclosed.

Also present at the signing ceremony were Minister of Finance Yaqoub Al-Rifai, Chairman of the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority Khaled Al-Zamil, acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Communications Eng. Meshaal Al-Zaid, and Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the State of Kuwait Salah Al-Maliki.

**Call for**

National Assembly Mohammad Jassim Al-Saqr, First Deputy Chairman and former Vice President and Prime Minister of Iraq Dr. Iyad Allawi, former Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister of Qatar Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al Thani, former Ambassador and Chairman of the King Faisal Center Turki Al-Faisal, former Prime Minister of Lebanon Dr. Fouad Siniora, and Council Director General and former Kuwaiti diplomat Mohammad Al-Sallal.

Al-Saqr stressed the need to focus on overhauling the Arab system, modernizing its mechanisms, and strengthening integration and coordination among member states to maintain national security and protect joint achievements. He indicated that the ongoing crises require a unified Arab front and sturdier frameworks for collective action.

The meeting tackled how fragmentation weakens the Arab position, hindering the ability to protect supreme interests and resist external schemes that threaten sovereignty, independence and national resources.

Attendees strongly denounced the brutal Iranian and Israeli attacks on Arab nations, considering such acts as grave violations, including territorial occupation, civilian massacres, and the destruction of infrastructure and cities, which threaten the stability of Arab states and violate the United Nations Charter and international law.

Meanwhile, Al-Budaiwi talked about the strategies to counter "blatant aggression and hostile actions" by the Iranian regime and its proxies. He said these practices target vital infrastructure and economic resources, posing a significant risk to regional security.

Al-Budaiwi pointed out that while the GCC prioritizes wisdom and restraint, member states are committed to take the necessary measures to protect their interests and maintain national security.

He affirmed that the GCC fully supports diplomatic efforts toward a political resolution to the Iranian conflict in order to protect the region from the devastating impact of war on energy security and the global economy.

He also confirmed the dedication of the GCC to raise military readiness and expand defense agreements, emphasizing that the security of the Arabian Gulf is indivisible and essential in maintaining regional stability.

**Gov't hours**

In a press statement, the CSC revealed that the circular is an official notification to government bodies about the recent resolution regarding the official summer work schedule.

For institutions with flexible schedule, the CSC specified an arrival period of 7:00 am to 8:00 am, indicating the employees may clock in anytime within this period and then clock out once they completed six hours of service. All existing regulations governing the standard morning shift remain effective.

The CSC clarified that this adjustment does not apply to legally mandated shift work systems.

Furthermore, employees already benefiting from reduced work hours under certain regulations will maintain their fixed four-hour workday.

It was also highlighted that the evening shift should not start before 5:00 pm. Personnel under this schedule are granted a 30-minute grace period at the beginning of the shift, which cannot be used at the end.

The 15-minute end-of-shift grace period for female employees remains in effect, as well as all other standard evening shift protocols.

Government entities must strictly follow the rules and regulations stated in the decision regarding official work hours.

This temporary schedule takes effect on June 1 until Aug 31, after which the morning and evening shifts will return to the original duration.

**IRGC intruders**

"The sovereignty of the state, safety and security of its territories are solid foundations of the constitution and law, which should not be tolerated or undermined, and the constitution and law stipulate their protection," it said.

The crimes in question entail the violation of national sovereignty and borders, in addition to a land incursion and the targeting of military sites and attempts to kill members of the Kuwaiti armed forces, it said.

These acts, which include and are not limited to the infiltration into restricted military zones, constitute a "grave violation" of Kuwaiti laws dealing with the protection of national interests and zones under the control of the Kuwaiti armed forces.

On the intricacies behind the incident, it is said that members of the IRGC were detained after their illegal incursion into Kuwaiti territory and attempted infiltration into a military zone as part of a premeditated scheme, while military personnel acted promptly to arrest the intruders.

Upon their arrest, the suspects were found to be in possession of firearms and communication devices, with the former meant to be utilized for the targeting of national sites and key military facilities, it added.

On the progress of ongoing investigations, Kuwait's General Department of Criminal Evidence is currently conducting thorough examinations of the weapons that confiscated from the suspects in a bid to understand the circumstances and motives behind their intentions.

The sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security of Kuwait are fundamental principles that will not be compromised or diminished under any circumstances, it emphasized, saying that Kuwait reserves the right and obligation to protect its national interests.

On May 3, Kuwait's defense ministry said that the armed forces has foiled an infiltration attempt into the country's territorial waters, with ministry spokesman Colonel Saud Al-Atwan revealing that four individuals attempted to enter Kuwait illegally by sea before being apprehended.

Kuwait's interior ministry has said that the suspects are naval officer Amir Hossein Abdulmohammad Zaraei, naval colonel Abdolsamad Yedaleh Qanavati, naval captain Ahmad Jamshid Gholam Reza Zolfaqari and first lieutenant Mohammad Hossein Sohrab Foroughi.



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## Alabama's Senate race heads to runoff

## Trump's false claims '20 election casting shadow over Georgia's GOP runoffs

ATLANTA, May 21, (AP) — For Donald Trump, it seems the 2020 presidential election is never over. That's especially true in Georgia.

The Republican president's years of false claims that his defeat to Democrat Joe Biden was due to widespread fraud have shadowed many elections since in the presidential battleground. The issue is almost certain to play a role in a four-week runoff campaign as GOP voters choose nominees for governor, secretary of state and the US Senate.

Among the contenders: one of Trump's alternate electors in his attempt to overturn Biden's win in the state, a Trump acolyte who won his first congressional race while saying Trump won in 2020 and a secretary of state hopeful who echoes Trump's conspiracy theories as he vies to become Georgia's top elections official.

To be clear, Georgia's presidential votes were counted three times, including once by hand, and each one affirmed Biden's victory.

The primary came amid continued legal and political wrangling over how elections are managed in Fulton County - home to heavily Democratic Atlanta. Trump's questioning of the Georgia results and longtime criticism of Fulton County elections were supercharged earlier this year when the FBI searched the county's election office, seizing ballots and records from 2020.

The primary election's first-round results showed that siding with Trump, even on his election lies, is good politics within the GOP. Georgia candidates who opposed Trump's efforts in 2020 got trounced. But some conservatives worry that misplaying the issue - or emphasizing it at all - could backfire with the general electorate in November.

"We're going to look stupid," warned Debbie Dooley, an early tea party organizer who supported Trump from the outset of his first presidential campaign. "What are you going to say - Trump won, and he was always the president? It serves no purpose."



Georgia gubernatorial candidate Burt Jones speaks during a primary election night watch party on May 19, in Jackson, Ga. (AP)

She said Republicans should instead focus on the economy, and that any mention of election procedures should look to "securing future elections, looking forward."

Whether Trump sees it that way

is another question. The president already has endorsed Burt Jones, one of his 2020 alternate electors, in the governor's race. Dooley, who is backing Jones, said she wouldn't be surprised if Trump comes to Georgia

to campaign - and air his 2020 grievances again.

"I don't know if the president gets it or not," she said.

Jones was a state lawmaker in 2020 when he joined Trump's cause to overturn Biden's 11,779-vote margin in Georgia. He parlayed that loyalty into winning the lieutenant governor's office in 2022 and getting Trump's early endorsement in his bid for a promotion. On Tuesday, he won about four out of 10 Republican votes.

Trump and Jones don't revisit the details, but Trump has praised Jones multiple times on his Truth Social platform for his loyalty while Jones has promoted "election integrity."

Jones' runoff rival, billionaire and political newcomer Rick Jackson, is among the Republicans who does not talk much about the 2020 election. But he spent a slice of the \$83 million he invested in his own campaign on an ad attacking outgoing Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, another GOP candidate for governor who resisted

Trump's urging to help find "find 11,800 votes" to reverse Biden's victory in 2020.

In the ad, a child is shown asking his mother why she chose the name Brad. The mother replies that her second choice was "Judas" - in the New Testament account, the name of the disciple who betrays Jesus to Roman authorities. The full name "Brad 'Judas' Raffensperger" appeared on the screen at the end of the spot.

## Also:

**MONTGOMERY, Ala:** The runoff field for a US Senate seat was set Wednesday in Alabama, a state that also will have a high-profile race for governor this fall and congressional seats that could be scrambled amid a wave of Republican redistricting.

Former Navy SEAL **Jared Hudson** advanced Wednesday to a June 16 runoff against U.S. Rep. **Barry Moore** for the Republican nomination for the state's open U.S. Senate seat. The Democratic Senate field was set in Tuesday's primary.

## Eastern US sweats through another hot day before rain, cold move in

PHILADELPHIA, May 21, (AP) — The eastern US sweated through a second day of early-season heat Wednesday, with some schoolchildren being sent home while others stayed in sweltering classrooms.

Philadelphia shifted to remote learning for students at 57 schools, saying that while the district has made progress, a number of them continue to have inadequate air conditioning.

The heat sneaked up on some Philadelphia residents and had them concerned about electricity bills before summer has even set in, said Lauren Authur, who lives in the city.

"Today has been like a heat-wave," Authur said, "and when you have little children, you use more of your air conditioning than anything to try to prevent them from being sick."

"It honestly got hot sooner than we expected it to be," she said.

The National Weather Service said another day of record heat was expected from the mid-Atlantic to New England before a cold front brings rain later in the week. Daily high temperature records were broken Tuesday in Portland, Maine, at 92 degrees Fahrenheit (33 degrees Celsius), and in Boston at 96 (35.5 Celsius).



School children stand on an East River walkway during a heat advisory, in the Brooklyn borough of New York on May 19. (AP)

Temperatures were expected to plunge as low as 45 Fahrenheit (7 Celsius) in Portland and 50 (10 Celsius) in Boston as soon as Thursday.

In Boston's Dorchester neighborhood, officials at one high school set up fans, passed around bottled water and allowed students to wear shorts and T-shirts instead of their usual uniforms.

"The heat outside feels like it's manageable because of the wind but inside it feels just tight and burdening because we also have to

go through quizzes, exams, there is no excuse," student Ariolainy Baez told CBS News.

A heat advisory was in effect for portions of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island through Wednesday evening.

In Maine, temperatures soared again Wednesday for Portland, and the small town of Fryeburg also sizzled a day after setting its own local heat record. Authorities advised people to use caution when outside.

## Harvard faculty votes to make it more difficult for undergraduates to earn A's

BOSTON, May 21, (AP) — At Harvard University, earning straight A's is about to get harder.

Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences announced Wednesday that it would limit the number of A grades awarded to undergraduates, adopting one of the most ambitious efforts by a major university to curb grade inflation. The decision was made by faculty vote earlier this month.

The move comes after top grades became so common that some Harvard faculty argued they no longer reliably distinguished exceptional work. More than 60% of all grades awarded to undergraduates in recent years were in the A range, according to university data cited by faculty members who supported the measure.

Harvard Psychology Professor Joshua Greene, who served on the faculty subcommittee that developed the proposal, said the reform is intended to reduce what he called "the tyranny of the perfect transcript." If straight A's become less common, students may feel freer to take risks and focus on learning rather than preserving a perfect record.

"The Harvard faculty voted to make their grades mean what they say they mean," members of the faculty subcommittee that proposed the changes said in a statement.



The gates of Harvard Yard at Harvard University on Sept 30, 2025, in Cambridge, Mass. (AP)

They said the reform would ensure that "a Harvard A grade will now tell students, as well as employers and graduate schools, something real about what a student has achieved."

Harvard is not the first elite university to confront grade inflation. Princeton University adopted a policy in 2004 to limit A-range grades to 35% of those awarded, though it abandoned the system a decade later after criticism that it disadvantaged students in competition for jobs and

graduate school admission.

Harvard government professor Alisha Holland, co-chair of the faculty subcommittee that developed the proposal and a former Princeton student, said Harvard designed a narrower policy that limits only A's - not A-minuses - in hopes of avoiding a significant impact on students' GPAs. Holland said faculty viewed the change as a "pro-student reform" intended to restore meaning to Harvard transcripts.

## Montenegro at 20: After breaking with Serbia and joining NATO, EU next frontier

PODGORICA, Montenegro, May 21, (AP) — Montenegro marks 20 years of independence from a union with Serbia this week, celebrating a two-decade transformation that has already brought the Balkan country into NATO. Now it is eyeing its next milestone: full integration into the European Union.

Speaking to The Associated Press amid national festivities, President Jakov Milatovic described NATO membership as a key milestone and said he is confident the country of 623,000 people will fulfill its ambitious agenda of becoming the next member of the 27-member EU in 2028.

The motto "28 by 28" has even been inscribed on one of the planes of the national airline.

"We can achieve it," Milatovic said from the presidential office in Podgorica, the capital. "I am optimistic about it."

Concerts and various celebrations are being held in the capital Podgorica this week and other towns in Montenegro, which is known for its stunning Adriatic Sea coastline and towering mountains.

Montenegro is considered a front-runner for EU membership among the six countries in the Western Balkans, which are at different stages of the process. Several other countries, including Ukraine, hope to join one day as well.

The EU has formed a working group to draft an accession treaty for Montenegro - a signal that membership remains within reach.

EU officials are expected to reiterate the message at a meeting in the coastal Montenegrin town of Tivat in early June with the leaders of the Western Balkan candidate nations. The others are Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo.

Milatovic noted that support for the EU in Montenegro is very high, at around 80%. But the country must also finish democratic and economic reforms, and how quickly it does so, is "now is entirely up to Montenegro," he added.

There was far less unity when the country 20 years ago chose to leave the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro - itself one of several successor states of Yugoslavia.

Split between the backers of independence and those backing the union with Serbia, Montenegro held a referendum on May 21, 2006, to



Montenegro's President Jakov Milatovic gestures during an interview with The Associated Press in Montenegro's capital Podgorica on May 19. (AP)



Pedestrians walk on a street decorated with national flags in Montenegro's capital Podgorica on May 18. (AP)

choose its future path after a decade of wars and NATO bombing in 1999 aimed at stopping the war in Kosovo. The result: 55.5% chose independence.

Splitting from the joint state was divisive given that Montenegro has historically close ties with Serbia and because about a third of Montenegrins consider themselves Serbs. Montenegro and Serbia share the same Orthodox Christian religion, speak similar languages and hold centuries-old alliances.

The independence drive was led by Montenegro's longtime leader Milo Djukanovic, who steered the country into NATO and away from another historic Slavic ally - Russia.

"Twenty years ago, the citizens of Montenegro took decision-making into their own hands, and that was the basis of our development," the president said.

"The major progress probably happened when the country became a part of NATO in 2017," he added. "Being a part of NATO for a small country like Montenegro is very important because NATO is indeed a security guarantee for our independence and statehood."

A candidate since 2010, Montenegro still faces many challenges on its EU road, former European integration minister Jovana Marovic said. A key priority involves strengthening state institutions.



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Service, firefighters put out a fire in a building following a Russian air attack in Dnipropetrovsk region, Ukraine, on May 21. (AP)

## Ukraine's drones hit another refinery deep inside Russia as long-range strikes escalate

KYIV, May 21, (AP) — Ukrainian drones smashed into another Russian refinery overnight, starting a fire that produced huge clouds of black smoke, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Thursday, in what appeared to be the latest long-range attack on Moscow's vital oil industry.

The drones targeted the Syzran oil refinery, located more than 800 kilometers (500 miles) inside Russia, Zelenskyy said on social media, where he posted a video of the aftermath.

It was not possible to verify the video or independently confirm the attack. The governor of Russia's Samara region, Vyacheslav Fedorishchev, said that two people were killed by Ukrainian drones in Syzran but he didn't mention the refinery. Russia's Astra news outlet said that Ukrainian drones struck the Syzran refinery owned by oil and gas giant Rosneft.

Ukraine has expanded its mid- and long-range strike capabilities, deploying eye-catching drone and missile technology that it has developed domestically as it battles to defeat Russia's 4-year-old invasion. Ukrainian weaponry and expertise are now

sought by other countries, whereas earlier in the war Kyiv had to plead for massive foreign military aid.

Ukrainian drones hit another refinery the previous day, Zelenskyy said, as attacks on Russian oil assets that play a key part in funding the invasion have become almost daily occurrences.

"Overall, our long-range plan for May is being carried out largely in full," Zelenskyy said in a social media post late Wednesday. "The key targets are Russian oil refineries, storage facilities, and other infrastructure tied to these oil revenues."

The escalating attacks have hurt Moscow's revenue at the same time as it feels the economic pinch of international sanctions. With some attacks reaching more than 1,500 kilometers (900 miles) into Russian soil, the strikes have contributed to some Russians feeling unsafe due to the war and heaped pressure on Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Ukraine's new reach has also helped it push Russian troops back along parts of the front line, with Ukrainian forces making their most significant battlefield gains since 2024, according to the Institute for

the Study of War.

"Ukraine's intensified midrange strike campaign against Russian logistics, military equipment, and manpower since early 2026 has also degraded Russian forces' ability to conduct offensive operations across the theater and has also likely supported recent Ukrainian advances," the Washington-based think tank said in an assessment late Wednesday.

Ukraine has slowed Russia's battlefield advance and is gradually regaining the initiative along the front line, Defense Minister Mykhailo Fedorov said, partly due to Russian forces being denied access to Starlink satellite services to steer its drones toward targets.

"Russia has since not been able to find a full replacement (for Starlink), giving Ukraine a critical battlefield advantage," Fedorov told reporters. He spoke on Saturday but his comments were embargoed till Thursday.

Fedorov said in February he had asked Elon Musk's SpaceX to help deny Russia use of the service in Ukraine. Starlink is a global internet network that relies on around 10,000 satellites orbiting Earth.



Mountaineers participate in a training session at the Khumbu Icefall as they prepare for their ascent to the summit of Mount Everest, Nepal on May 2. (AP)

### Record 274 climbers scale Mt Everest in single day

Hundreds of climbers scaled Mount Everest in a single day, setting a new record with 274 successful ascents, officials said Thursday.

The climbers took advantage of the clear weather on Wednesday, said Rishi Ram Bhandari of the Expedition Operators Association Nepal. It was the highest number of climbers to reach the summit on a single

day from the popular route on the southern face of the peak, which is located in Nepal.

The peak can be scaled from either the southern side in Nepal or northern face in China's Tibet. On May 22, 2019, Nepal's side had 223 and the Chinese side had 113 climbers on the summit. Chinese authorities, however, have closed the route this year. (AP)

## US test fires mobile rocket system near Mt Fuji in rapid 'shoot and scoot' drill

GOTEMBA, Japan, May 21, (AP): US Marines test fired a dozen rockets from a mobile launcher on Wednesday at a range in the foothills of Japan's iconic Mount Fuji, in an exercise to keep sharp on weapon that is a growingly important component of the American military's arsenal.

The High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) is a launcher mounted on the back of a military truck that can be rapidly brought out from concealment, fire its rockets, then move quickly to a new location to avoid counter-battery fire. The so-called "shoot and scoot" tactics are becoming increasingly important with the proliferation of drones over the battlefield, which make static positions more vulnerable.

The system has been used by US forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, and most recently US Central Command said it was employed in the opening attack on Iran where it launched a new precision-guided rocket that could reach targets hundreds of miles away.

That is particularly meaningful in the Pacific, where the US hopes to deter a possible Chinese invasion of the island of Taiwan, which China claims as its own and has not ruled



US Marines conduct a live-fire training of the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, short for HIMARS, at Camp Fuji, in Gotemba, southwest of Tokyo on May 20. (AP)

out taking by force. HIMARS systems with the latest missiles could easily reach targets in the Taiwan Strait between Taiwan and mainland China, if deployed on Japanese or other islands nearby.

The HIMARS is generally equipped with shorter-range rockets, however, and the exercise at the US military's Camp Fuji, about a two-

hour drive from Tokyo, involved only dummy projectiles.

The exercise, only the second time the HIMARS was tested at Camp Fuji, was done in close coordination with Japanese military forces. A public road that ran between where the rockets were fired and where they landed was closed as a precaution during the exercise.

### Some farmers turn to nighttime work

## Heat wave empties roads and markets in north India

NEW DELHI, May 21, (AP): Roads and markets have emptied during afternoons and some farmers have switched to nighttime work to avoid scorching temperatures as a heat wave grips large parts of India.

The India Meteorological Department forecast maximum temperatures Thursday of around 45 degrees Celsius (113 Fahrenheit) in the capital, New Delhi, where authorities have opened temporary "cooling zones" to help people cope.

The weather department warned conditions will likely persist across several northern regions in the coming days, with temperatures staying well above seasonal averages. Authorities urged people to stay indoors during the hottest hours and take precautions against heat-related illnesses.

India declares a heat wave whenever temperatures are above 40 C (104 F) in the plains and 30 C (86 F) or more in its hilly regions.

The extreme heat has disrupted daily life across several northern states.

In some parts of Uttar Pradesh state, India's most populous, roads and markets have closed in the afternoons as people stayed indoors while some traders shifted work to early mornings. Farmers began working at night because daytime conditions became unbearable.

The heat also disrupted schools, with authorities in several areas announcing early summer vacations and suspending classes as the maximum temperature shot up to 48.2 C (118.8 F) on Tuesday in the city of Banda.

Health authorities urged people to avoid going outdoors during peak after-

noon hours, stay hydrated and seek medical help if they experience symptoms such as dizziness or high fever.

In New Delhi, residents and tourists sought relief from the heat inside cooling shelters set up across the capital. The shaded space provides air coolers, fans, drinking water and oral rehydration solutions to help people deal with the extreme heat.

Inside one tent on Wednesday, people rested beside air coolers as officials distributed cups of water mixed with rehydration salts.

"We had come here for outing. But it is too hot here. The cooling system here is good for us," said Basharat Ahmad Malla, a 25-year-old tourist.

Climate experts say India's rising temperatures are part of a broader global pattern linked to climate change.

India has faced more frequent and intense heat waves in recent years, with all of its warmest years on record occurring in the last decade.

"India has warmed considerably as a result of anthropogenic (human-made) climate change in the last decade compared to previous years. Northwestern India has warmed much faster than many other parts of the country," said Anjal Prakash, author of several United Nations climate reports and professor of public policy at Pune-based Flame University.

Prakash said India is accustomed to summer heat but "climate change is loading the dice towards extreme and pervasive episodes like those we see now."



School children use cotton towels over their heads to protect themselves from the scorching afternoon heat as they walk through a parched field on the outskirts of Jammu, India on May 20. (AP)

### 'We can't live here anymore'

## Drones, bullets and cartel warfare fuel invisible displacement crisis in Mexico

TULA, Mexico, May 21, (AP): When bombs fell from the sky and bullets ricocheted off her concrete floors, 74-year-old María Cabrera and her family fled into the night-cooled mountains of central Mexico with only the clothes on their backs.

A week later, Cabrera picks through the charred scraps of her life, salvaging pots, woven cloths and a small wooden cross. She knows that it's the last time she'll return to her home of 60 years.

"Oh God, why have you abandoned me," she said through heartbroken sobs, wandering past burned ashes of what was once her mattress in a small room with a collapsed roof and a melted refrigerator just through the door. "How are we going to rebuild? We don't have money, we don't have anything."

She joined a growing number of people displaced in conflict-torn regions of Mexico forced to flee their homes. Experts have described the phenomenon as an invisible crisis with long-term humanitarian consequences - there are few official figures on the number of displaced people, who have almost no resources to turn to once violence forces them to leave.

Cabrera fled her small town Friday after years of mounting cartel violence in Tula. This town of around 200 native Nahuatl people is among many in the central state of Guerrero ravaged by decades of fracturing rival criminal groups warring for territorial control.

Last week, a group known as Los Ardillos attacked her town and a handful of others with drone-fired explosives, opened fire on local community police forces, killed livestock and burned homes like Cabrera's to an undistinguishable crisp.

Cabrera carefully handed bags of belongings to soldiers escorting a small group of families returning home to gather their things. She prayed as armed men in camouflage loaded her possessions into the back of a truck. As she wandered through her garden for the last time, she begged forgiveness from the dogs and chickens she was forced to leave behind.

"We don't want to abandon them," she said. "But we suffered through everything. We can't live here anymore."

A local human rights group, Indigenous and People's Council of Guerrero-Emiliano Zapata, or



Mexican police patrol an area after armed attacks by local criminal groups forced dozens of residents to flee in Tula, Mexico on May 15. (AP)

CIPOG-EZ, estimated that at least 800 people, including children and the elderly, were forcibly displaced along with Cabrera, and three community police officers - groups often formed to protect themselves in the wake of state absence - fighting back against the mafia were killed.

The official numbers are far lower: Mexico's government said Tues-

day that only 120 people were forced to flee and confirmed no deaths. One community leader sleeping at the basketball court on Friday told a local government official that in their town alone they estimated around 280 people had been forced to flee.

Some families ran into the mountains, not looking back. Hundreds sought shelter under a local bas-

ketball court, hoping that it might be safe to eventually return home. Others - some wounded by gunfire - boarded cars, buses and trucks, scattering to different regions of Mexico.

Videos published on social media this week show groups of crying women and children pleading for help.

The images pushed the government to deploy 1,200 military and police officers to the region. Officials say they have provided aid to those displaced, largely contained the violence, established a "safe corridor" for humanitarian aid to enter and paved the way toward defusing the region's convoluted conflict.

"What we do not want is a confrontation that would affect the civilian population. Above all, we must preserve people's lives," Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said at a news conference last week.

Critics say that it was the latest example of government inaction and efforts to downplay the depth of the displacement crisis in Mexico. Unlike Colombia, Mexico doesn't have a comprehensive registry of displaced people. Government figures are often cited as be-

ing insufficient by entities like the UN refugee agency, human rights groups and researchers documenting the crisis.

A 2025 government National Survey of Victimization and Public Security Perception estimated that nearly 250,000 households were forced to flee their homes in 2024 alone to protect themselves from crime.

Between 2024 and 2025, the Ibero-American University documented at least 44,695 people who had fled their homes to other parts of Mexico. Many more migrate to the U.S.

In a May report, the university noted that forced displacements are on the rise in Mexico at a time when Sheinbaum's government has sought to highlight security gains - like sharp dips in homicides - in an effort to offset threats by the Trump administration to take military action on Mexican cartels.

"There's no more life in these communities," said Prisco Rodríguez, a local representative for CIPOG-EZ. "The government says people have already returned to their houses, but there's no one here. People don't say where they're going out of fear ... and the majority never appear."

## United States raises pressure on Cuba with indictment of former president Castro

MIAMI, May 21, (AP): Federal prosecutors on Wednesday announced criminal charges against former Cuban President Raúl Castro in the 1996 downing of civilian planes flown by Miami-based exiles as the Trump administration escalated pressure on the island's socialist government.

The indictment accuses Castro of ordering the shootdown of two small planes operated by the exile group Brothers to the Rescue. Castro, who turns 95 next month, was Cuba's defense minister at the time. The charges, which were secretly filed by a grand jury in April, included murder and destruction of an airplane. Five Cuban military pilots were also charged.

"For nearly 30 years, the families of four murdered Americans have waited for justice," acting Attorney General Todd Blanche said in Miami at a ceremony coinciding with Cuban independence day to honor those killed. "They were unarmed civilians and were flying humanitarian missions for the rescue and protection of people fleeing oppression across the Florida straits."

Asked to what lengths American authorities would go to bring Castro to face charges in the US, Blanche said: "There was a warrant issued for



Jason A. Reding Quiñones, US attorney for the southern district of Florida, speaks flanked by Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche, (left), and Sen. Ashley Moody, R-Fla., after federal prosecutors announced charges against former Cuban President Raul Castro in the 1996 downing of civilian planes operated by Miami-based exiles, on May 20, in Miami. (AP)

his arrest. So we expect that he will show up here, by his own will or by another way."

Asked what will happen next for Cuba, President Donald Trump said, "We're going to see." He added that the US is ready to provide humanitarian assistance to a "failing nation."

The charges pose a real threat, ob-

servers said, following the capture by US forces in January of former Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro to face drug charges in New York.

"He's going to have to keep his head pretty low from now on," said Peter Kornbluh, a specialist on the US-Cuba relationship at the National Security Archive at George Washington University.

## Nine deportees from US arrive in Sierra Leone under third-country agreement

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone, May 21, (AP): Nine migrants deported from the United States landed in Sierra Leone on Wednesday, the West African country said, in the latest example of the Trump administration's widely criticized deals with African and Latin American nations to take third-country deportees.

Five migrants are from Ghana, two from Guinea, one from Senegal and one from Nigeria, the ministry of information said. The deals have raised questions about respect for the migrants' rights.

The ministry's statement said the new arrivals "have been checked into their hosting facilities, are comfortable and receiving the necessary support." It said 24 deportees were initially expected but didn't provide details.

Alma David, an immigration lawyer with the US-based Novo Legal Group who has helped deportees, said the lower number might be explained by the fact that several deportations were halted shortly before the flight left the United States.

According to court documents seen by The Associated Press, a US federal judge halted a woman's deportation to Sierra Leone after the government failed to let her seek protection under the Convention Against Torture, as required by law.



Sierra Leone's Foreign Minister Timothy Kabba addresses the High-Level Security Council meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, Sept. 23, 2025. (AP)

Sierra Leone's foreign minister, Timothy Kabba, told local media Wednesday the government has agreed to temporarily receive migrants deported by the Trump administration, saying it only accepts West African nationals and the agreement is supported by a \$1.5 million grant from the US government.

The ministry of information said in a Facebook post Monday that Ken-

vah Solutions," a private contractor, was hired to handle the deportees housing, food and healthcare.

It said deportees are expected to be sent home or transferred within 14 days, or up to 30 days in exceptional cases.

The program is capped at 25 deportees per month and 300 per year, according to the ministry. It did not specify the duration of the arrangement.

## Kuwaiti oil price down to \$123.28 pb

KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by 34 cents to reach USD 123.28 per barrel on Wednesday, compared to USD 123.62 pb the previous day, according to the Kuwait Petroleum

Corporation (KPC) on Thursday. In global markets, Brent crude dropped USD 6.26 to reach USD 105.02 pb, and US West Texas Intermediate decreased USD 5.89 to reach USD 98.26 pb.

# Business

## Global Accessibility Awareness Day: Zain launches first-of-its-kind Digital & Policy Accessibility Audit in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: To mark Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD) on 21 May, Zain Kuwait is undertaking a Digital and Policy Accessibility Audit, the first strategic audit of its kind in the country, marking a major step in advancing accessibility across the company's digital platforms, customer touchpoints, communications, and internal HR policies.

The audit is being conducted by AxessAll, a specialist accessibility consultancy with certified experts in digital accessibility, inclusive policy review, and bilingual accessibility practices. Its technical and regional expertise will support Zain in ensuring that the audit is both globally benchmarked and locally relevant to the Kuwait market.

The initiative reflects Zain's commitment to ensuring that its services, platforms, and workplace practices are accessible to all, including persons with disabilities in alignment with its We ABLE 2030 vision. The audit is designed to assess, measure, and strengthen accessibility across Zain's external and internal ecosystem in Kuwait, supporting the company's long-term goal of delivering more inclusive digital experiences and fostering an equitable work environment for current and future employees.

The audit covers a comprehensive scope that includes Zain's Kuwait-based public website, native mobile applications on iOS and Android, social media channels, user-facing digital communications, and key HR documentation across the employee lifecycle. This includes recruitment materials, contracts, employee handbooks, leave policies, and other internal documents that shape the employee experience.

**Nawaf Al-Gharabally, CEO of Zain Kuwait, said:** "Digital accessibility is no longer a technical enhancement, it is a responsibility that shapes how people connect, work, learn, and participate in everyday life. Through this first-of-its-kind audit in Kuwait, we are taking a structured and measurable step to ensure that our platforms, services, communications, and workplace practices are designed with everyone in mind. This initiative reflects our belief that true digital leadership is measured not only by innovation, but by how inclusive, usable, and empowering that innovation is for all members of the community."

**Al-Gharabally added:** "As Kuwait continues to accelerate its digital transformation, accessibility must be embedded from the beginning. This audit will give us a clear baseline, practical insights, and a roadmap for continuous improvement, enabling our teams to strengthen every digital touchpoint and policy that shapes the customer and employee experience. It also brings Zain's purpose of 'Better Lives. Lasting Connections.' to life by turning our commitment to disability inclusion into tangible action that supports a more equitable, connected, and future-ready Kuwait."

**Ahmed Abdelhady, Director of Accessibility and Digital Inclusion at AxessAll, commented:** "At AxessAll, our work with Zain is one of the partnerships I am most proud of, as it reflects a shared seri-



Zain Kuwait CEO Nawaf Al-Gharabally



Director of Accessibility and Digital Inclusion at AxessAll, Ahmed Abdelhady

- **Nawaf Al-Gharabally:** "Digital leadership is measured not only by innovation, but by how inclusive and empowering that innovation is for everyone"
- **Ahmed Abdelhady:** "Our work with Zain reflects a shared seriousness about accessibility that is rare to find"
- Six-month audit will assess Zain's website, app, social media content, customer communications, and HR policies

ousness about accessibility that is rare to find. Zain's commitment to digital accessibility is not a checkbox, nor a one-off audit, it is a genuine and strategic priority. Zain's ambition is clear: to ensure that every user, regardless of ability, can navigate its digital and client-facing services seamlessly, independently, and without barriers. This ambition extends across all markets where Zain operates within the MEA region, going well beyond the GCC."

He added: "This is what real inclusion looks like. What makes Zain's approach especially remarkable is not only the scale of the initiative, but also the determination behind it. Zain is moving with purpose, positioning itself as a genuine leader in accessible and inclusive telecommunications, with a clear ambition to be among the most inclusive mobile operators in the world. AxessAll is proud to be Zain's strategic partner in embedding accessibility across all digital services and customer experiences. Because when accessibility is



taken this seriously, it does more than improve services, it changes people's lives."

As part of the audit, Zain's digital platforms will be assessed against 86 success criteria under the WCAG 2.2 standard, with a

focus on areas such as alternative text, captions, color contrast, accessible design, keyboard navigation, and screen reader compatibility.

Manual testing will also be conducted using assistive technologies such as VoiceOver, TalkBack, JAWS, and NVDA, with special attention to Arabic language accessibility, right-to-left directionality, and localized language tagging.

The initiative is guided by leading global and national frameworks, including WCAG 2.2 Level AA, Kuwait Disability Law No. 8 of 2010, ISO 14289 for accessible PDF documents, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and ILO Convention 159 on vocational rehabilitation and employment for persons with disabilities.

The six-month audit will produce a clear roadmap for continuous improvement. Key deliverables include a baseline accessibility scorecard with a 0-100 index for each platform, developer-ready technical logs to support remediation, an accessibility checklist for social media and campaigns, an inclusive HR policy matrix, and a 12-month follow-up process to review evidence, track progress, and verify successful implementation.

This announcement builds on Zain's February 2026 commitment to the Arab Inclusive Employment and Entrepreneurship Compact, launched by UN-ESCWA in partnership with the International Labour Organization. Through this commitment, Zain pledged to progressively advance disability inclusion in the workplace through inclusive policies, accessible recruitment, reasonable accommodation, accessible digital and physical environments, accountability mechanisms, and greater transparency around inclusion efforts.

The initiative's alignment with Zain Group's wider WE ABLE 2030 vision is clear, embedding disability inclusion across the company's operations, products, services, talent practices, and community engagement. By launching this audit in Kuwait, Zain is translating the Group's regional vision into local action, ensuring accessibility is addressed not as a stand-alone initiative, but as a core part of how the company designs, communicates, serves customers, and empowers employees.

Through this first-of-its-kind audit, Zain Kuwait is setting a new benchmark for corporate accessibility in the local market, reinforcing its role as a national digital leader and advancing a more inclusive future where no one is left behind.



Warba Bank calls for stronger audit role amid global risks.

Hamadah highlights proactive internal audit

## Warba highlights internal audit's role in strengthening institutional resilience

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: Warba Bank emphasized the role of internal audit in strengthening institutional resilience and business continuity amid rapid global geopolitical and economic shifts. Hanan Ghanem Hamadah, Acting Chief Internal Auditor at Warba Bank, noted that these evolving dynamics require key sectors to redefine institutional readiness and strengthen their crisis response capabilities.

Speaking at a panel discussion titled "Building Institutional Resilience: The Evolving Role of Internal Audit During Geopolitical Crises," organized by the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), Hamadah joined internal audit experts from Kuwaiti banks and the oil sector to highlight internal audit's increasing role in managing emerging risks across sectors tied to economic stability.

### The Evolving Role of Internal Audit:

Hamadah explained that the concept of internal audit has shifted significantly from a traditional, compliance-focused oversight function to becoming a strategic partner. In this capacity, it supports executive management and boards of directors in forecasting risks, assessing institutional readiness, and improving the effectiveness of governance, risk management, and compliance (GRC) frameworks.

"Successive global health, economic, and geopolitical crises have proven that the institutions best equipped to sustain operations and recover are those with flexible control systems, clear proactive plans, and an adaptable corporate culture," Hamadah stated. She added that internal audit plays a direct role in assessing organizational preparedness for contingency scenarios by reviewing business continuity plans, testing crisis management strategies, and ensuring frameworks are in place to restore critical operations efficiently.

### Proactive Planning and Emerging Risks:

Hamadah pointed out that modern institutions no longer rely on reactive ap-

proaches after a crisis occurs. Instead, they adopt a proactive methodology based on scenario analysis, identifying operational gaps, and enhancing inter-departmental coordination to mitigate potential threats.

She added that current geopolitical challenges have introduced wide-ranging operational and strategic risks, notably supply chain disruptions, market volatility, cyber threats, and compliance risks. "These variables demand more agile internal audit departments that utilize advanced analytics and digital tools for proactive risk assessment," Hamadah said. "Digital analytics serve as early warning indicators, supporting decision-makers with accurate, timely data to improve crisis response times."

### Integration and Global Standards:

Hamadah stressed the importance of integration between internal audit, risk management, and corporate compliance to build a resilient institutional framework. She noted that strengthening internal collaboration supports a balance between strict regulatory compliance and operational agility, while providing independent assurance to stakeholders, regulators, and shareholders regarding the effectiveness of the bank's internal controls.

Hamadah said building institutional resilience is a strategic necessity to protect stakeholder interests and maintain financial stability. She affirmed that the Kuwaiti banking sector, guided by the regulatory directives of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK), continues to adopt international best practices in governance, and emphasized that the next phase requires further investment in developing national talents and technical readiness.

### 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.

## URC wins Souq Sharq tender, consortium secures Al-Muthanna

## Kuwait signs Souq Sharq, Al-Muthanna deals

KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Finance Dr. Yaqoub Al-Rifaei on Wednesday stressed commitment to deepening financial sustainability and ideally using public real estate as per relevant legal and regulatory frameworks.

This came in a speech by Minister Al-Rifaei during his attendance and patronage of the signing ceremony for the contracts of the (Waterfront Project - Phase 3 "Souq Sharq") and the Al-Muthanna Complex projects, with the winners of the public tender attending.

This step reflects the fact that the State of Kuwait is confidently moving towards maximizing the benefit from its real estate assets.

The United Real Estate Company (URC) won the public tender for the (Waterfront Project - Phase 3 "Souq Sharq"), while the tender of Al-Muthanna Complex project was won by the consortium of Al-Muthanna Real Estate Development Company, which includes Beyout Holding, Arkan Real Estate Co., National Investments, Real Estate House, and Osoul.

The minister stated that the signing of the two project contracts comes in the context of the state's direction towards upgrading its real estate assets and maximizing its revenues, thus promoting confidence in the investment environment and supporting the national development process.

He stressed that the Ministry of Finance commits itself to carry on advancing the public asset management system and enhancing the investment environment in a way that fulfills the state's expectations of sustainable developments.



Souq Sharq Phase 3, Al-Muthanna contracts signed. Photos by Rezk Tawfiq

For his part, United Real Estate Company CEO Mishary Al-Muhailan said that the significance of the Souq Sharq project extends beyond its role as a commercial center; it also plays an essential role in revitalizing trade, tourism, and entertainment and bolstering Kuwait's urban landscape and capitalizing on its exceptional loca-

tion between Seif Palace and Kuwait Towers.

He underlined United Real Estate Company's commitment to providing a fresh experience that would create new memories for families and visitors, thus solidifying Souq Sharq's status as an integral part of Kuwait's heritage.

All Share Index gains 0.75%

## Boursa Kuwait end session higher

KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Thursday's trading session higher, with the All Share Index gaining 65.25 points, or 0.75 percent, to settle at 8,712.05 points. Trading activity saw 450.3 million shares exchanged through 24,793 transactions, with a total value of KD 112.5 million (approximately USD 344.2 million).

The Main Market Index outperformed, rising 118.64 points, or 1.40 percent, to reach 8,599.62 points. A total of 287.5 million shares were traded across 13,631 transactions, valued at KD 50.2 million (USD 153.6 million).

The Premier Market Index also recorded gains, advancing 75.29 points, or 0.63 percent, to close at 9,188.08 points, with

162.8 million shares traded through 11,162 transactions, totaling KD 62.2 million (USD 190.3 million).

Meanwhile, the Main 50 Index climbed 113.54 points, or 1.20 percent, to 9,542.99 points. Trading volume reached 257.9 million shares across 11,383 transactions, with a total value of KD 44.4 million (USD 135.8 million).

## Oman-Kuwait Duqm Refinery secures ESG Silver Award

MUSCAT, May 21, (KUNA): Duqm Refinery and Petrochemical Industries Company (DRPIC) won the Silver Award in the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) category at the Oman Sustainability Week Awards 2026, held in Muscat.

DRPIC's CEO Abdullah Al-Ajmi told KUNA on Wednesday that this achievement reflects the refinery's commitment as a strategic joint venture between Kuwait and Oman, to further solidify sustainability practices and responsible operations in accor-

dance with the best international standards.

In a statement to KUNA, Duqm Refinery said that its participation in Sustainability Week underscores the growing role of DRPIC as one of the most prominent strategic projects in Oman's energy and refining sector, established in strategic partnership with Kuwait.

The award reflects the ongoing progress made by Duqm Refinery across various sustainability areas, as it continues to implement impactful initiatives and proj-

ects that support operational efficiency, promote sustainability and innovation, contributing to long-term value and supporting the future of the energy and downstream industries in Oman.

The Duqm Refinery, located in Oman, officially opened in February 2024 as a joint venture between Oman Integrated Energy Group (OQ) and Kuwait Petroleum International (Q8), each holding a 50 percent stake, with a refining capacity of 255,000 barrels per day and operates at 110 percent capacity.

## EU growth slows, inflation rises amid oil price surge

FRANKFURT, May 21, (AP): The European Union's executive commission cut its growth outlook and predicted higher inflation due to sharply higher energy prices from the war in Iran - but said the economy will avoid an outright recession.

"As a net energy importer, the EU's economy is highly susceptible to the energy shock caused by the conflict in the Middle East," the commission said in a statement Thursday. The rising cost of fuel "means higher household bills and surging business costs that reduce profits for many industries."

The commission's spring forecast lowered the outlook for growth in the 21 countries that use the euro to 0.9% for this year, from 1.2% in its autumn forecast, and to 1.2% from 1.4% for 2027. Inflation is now expected to reach 3.0% for 2026, up from the earlier forecast of 1.9%.

The new inflation figure exceeds the inflation goal of 2% set by the European Central Bank, and higher inflation expectations have led to

predictions the ECB will raise its interest rate benchmarks this year to combat inflation.

Oil prices rose sharply after risk of Iranian drone and speedboat attacks closed off most ship traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, the sea passage for about a fifth of the world's oil and natural gas. On top of that, news of the war has shaken consumer confidence, which fell to a 40-month low amid mounting fears of job losses and higher inflation.

Still, the commission said the economy will continue to show modest growth and avoid an outright recession.

It warned however that a downside scenario of a prolonged period of higher energy prices would push growth lower and inflation higher.

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### Slashing taxes on food

## UK unveils measures to tackle rising living costs

LONDON, May 21, (AP): The British government is offering cheaper chocolate and discounted entry to theme parks as it seeks to ease a cost-of-living squeeze and win back voters.

Treasury chief Rachel Reeves on Thursday announced modest handouts to help alleviate rising costs sparked by the Iran war, including a reduction in import tax on cookies, chocolate and about 100 other supermarket products.

U.K. inflation fell to 2.8% in April, down from 3.3% in March, but is expected to spike again on the back of higher prices for fuel, heating gas and electricity.

To ease the impact, the government has postponed a planned increase in fuel duty and given truckers a yearlong reprieve from road tax to help offset soaring gasoline prices due to the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a key oil transit route.

But Reeves did not commit to broader support for household heating bills.

She announced measures designed to boost the summertime economy, including free bus travel for children in August. During the summer, tax on tickets for attractions including zoos, theme parks and museums will be slashed from 20% to 5%.

Reeves said she would pay for the

cost-of-living support by closing tax loopholes for oil and gas companies with overseas operations.

"This summer I want every family to be able to enjoy themselves," Reeves said. "As the war in Iran pushes prices up at home, my economic plan is the right one. I will continue to make the right choices, to protect households and businesses, and build a stronger and more secure Britain."

The announcements came as Prime Minister Keir Starmer tries to keep calm and carry on while rivals in the governing Labour Party seek to oust him after a set of disastrous local election results.

The last two weeks have been devastating for Starmer, who led the party to a landslide victory less than two years ago. Scores of Labour lawmakers have called for him to resign, and he is widely expected to face a leadership challenge. Greater Manchester mayor Andy Burnham is aiming to win a seat in Parliament in a June 18 special election, and then challenge Starmer for the prime minister's job.

Starmer insists he will not resign and will fight for his job. Under U.K. political rules, whoever took over from Starmer as party leader would also become prime minister, without the need for a national election.

### Inflation & war cloud job outlook

## US jobless claims fall as layoffs remain low

WASHINGTON, May 21, (AP): Fewer Americans filed for jobless aid last week as layoffs remain low despite a number of uncertainties that continue to cloud the economy.

U.S. applications for unemployment benefits for the week ending May 16 fell by 3,000 to 209,000, the Labor Department reported Thursday. That's fewer than the 213,000 new applications analysts surveyed by the data firm FactSet had forecast.

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

Despite historically low layoffs, the labor market appears to be stuck in what economists call a "low-hire, low-fire" state. That's kept the unemployment rate low at 4.3%, but left many of those out of work struggling to find new employment.

Though U.S. employers delivered a surprising 115,000 new jobs in April, the Iran war has injected a large degree of uncertainty about the broader U.S. economy and labor market.

The Strait of Hormuz, where one-fifth of the world's oil travels through, remains closed. Since the beginning of the war in late February, oil prices have spiked more than 50% and the average price for a gallon of gas in the U.S. has climbed to \$4.56 from less than \$3. Besides hitting consumers' pocketbooks, those higher costs can discourage businesses from hiring.

Data from the U.S. government last week revealed that inflation at the consumer level rose 3.8% from April 2025, the biggest jump in three years. Food prices are also up, but may not yet fully reflect rising energy costs due to the Iran war, analysts say.

Another report last week showed that wholesale prices shot up 6% from a year ago, the highest point in more than three years. The Labor Department's producer price

index - which tracks inflation before it hits consumers - shot up 1.4% from March to April, the biggest monthly gain in more than four years.

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

Lower interest rates can boost the economy and hiring, but also tend to stoke inflation, leading a number of Federal Reserve policymakers to say they are willing to consider an interest rate hike this year.

On top of that, the recent artificial intelligence boom and the investment required to develop it could alter or even replace some jobs.

A number of high-profile companies have cut jobs recently, including Verizon, UPS, Amazon, Disney and Walmart.

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

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

The Labor Department's report Thursday showed that the four-week moving average of jobless claims, which softens some of the weekly volatility, inched down by 1,500 to 202,500.

The total number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits for the previous week ending May 9 grew by 6,000 to 1.78 million.



Amal Al-Sayer and Manal Al-Mattar with the winners of the KALD Award for Outstanding Student for the Academic Year 2025-2026

In line with its strategic partnership with the KALD

## National Bank of Kuwait sponsors the fifth edition of the KALD Persevering Student Award 2025-2026

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: As part of its ongoing commitment to supporting educational and humanitarian initiatives, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) sponsored the KALD Persevering Student Award ceremony for the 2025-2026 academic year, reaffirming its strategic partnership with the Kuwait Association for Learning Differences (KALD).

The ceremony was held at NBK's headquarters, where a distinguished group of persevering students with learning differences were honored in recognition of their exceptional efforts, determination, and progress in their academic journeys.

The award embodies a meaningful educational message aimed at promoting a culture of perseverance and diligence, strengthening students' self-confidence, and fostering positive attitudes toward learning. It also encourages students to continue striving for excellence despite the challenges they may face.

The event also highlighted a number of inspiring success stories, showcasing students who demonstrated remarkable resilience and determination, reaffirming that commitment and hard work can open new pathways toward a brighter future within a supportive and empowering learning environment.

■ **Al-Mattar:** NBK remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting KALD's persevering students, empowering them to showcase their talents and achieve their aspirations

■ **CSR** is a deeply embedded pillar of NBK's strategy, reflecting a sustained institutional commitment rather than short-term initiatives

"We firmly believe that investing in people, particularly at early stages of education, is fundamental to building a strong and sustainable society. In this context, we take pride in our longstanding partnership with KALD, which plays a pioneering educational and humanitarian role in supporting students with learning differences, in alignment with our sustainability vision where education remains a core pillar," she added.

Al-Mattar emphasized that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) represents a deeply embedded and enduring pillar of NBK's strategy, as the Bank continues to support educational and social initiatives that contribute to community development and enhance quality of life. Particular focus is placed on education, child development, and empowering future generations to confidently navigate evolving challenges.

KALD is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting students with learning differences in private education schools across Kuwait. It aims to develop their academic, social, and psychological capabilities through awareness programs, training initiatives, and targeted activities for students, their families, and educators.

Commenting on this occasion, Manal Al-Mattar, EVP - Head of Group Corporate Communications at NBK, said: "At NBK we take great pride in continuing our support for the KALD Persevering Student Award and in celebrating the achievements of our students who have proven that challenges are no barrier to ambition. This support reflects our deep belief in the capabilities of this valued group and our commitment to empowering them to showcase their talents and realize their aspirations."

## ABK provides clients with travel safety tips to help avoid fraud risks & stay prepared for emergencies

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: As part of its ongoing awareness initiatives under the Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association's 'Let's Be Aware' campaign, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) continues its efforts to promote financial literacy and protect customer rights.

On this occasion, the Bank shared a set of essential guidelines and recommendations for customers travelling during the holiday season, aimed at equipping them with the knowledge needed to manage their accounts and banking cards safely, while avoiding cyber risks and fraud attempts that may occur abroad.

ABK advised customers to ensure that SMS notifications or mobile app alerts are activated in order to monitor purchase transactions instantly, and stressed the importance of never sharing card PINs or OTP verification codes with any third party.

When making card payments overseas, customers are encouraged to choose the local currency of the country they are visiting instead of Kuwaiti dinars, in order to avoid



high exchange rates that may be imposed by foreign point-of-sale terminals.

The Bank also emphasised the importance of securing mobile phones with passwords or facial recognition features, avoiding the use of public Wi-Fi networks for banking transactions, and refraining from using ATMs located in dark streets or small shops. Customers are encouraged to use ATMs operated by reputable banks and located inside bank branches, while also checking the machines for any suspicious devices that may be installed to steal data.

ABK further urged customers to



ensure that their contact information and personal details are updated to guarantee uninterrupted receipt of security and verification messages.

The Bank noted that customer awareness remains the first line of defence against fraud, and reaffirmed its commitment to providing customers with the tools needed to protect their funds anywhere in the world. In cases of card loss or suspected unauthorised transactions, customers should immediately block their cards through the Bank's mobile application or by contacting the 24/7 callcentre.

Customers were also advised not to interact with suspicious links and to rely only on official websites and applications when making payments. ABK encouraged customers to visit its branches or mobile application before travelling to review and adjust their card withdrawal and spending limits to avoid interrup-

tions while abroad.

In addition, the Bank recommended that when downloading local applications specific to the country of travel, such as train transportation, food delivery, or taxi booking apps, customers should pay as guests and delete their card details immediately after completing transactions, while avoiding the activation of automatic card-saving options on untrusted platforms.

ABK also encouraged customers to issue digital cards through its mobile application and use them for online shopping or purchasing tickets and event bookings during travel. These cards can be set with limited spending amounts, helping to protect customers' primary accounts.

The 'Let's Be Aware' campaign is a comprehensive awareness initiative aimed at highlighting customer rights and responsibilities, introducing banking services, and promoting financial security principles to support financial inclusion and empower all segments of Kuwaiti society to successfully manage their banking and financial affairs.

## House of Light & Africa Agricultural Contracting launch strategic collaboration to deliver an integrated outdoor living experience

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: House of Light has announced the signing of a strategic cooperation agreement with Africa Agricultural Contracting, in a move aimed at delivering a more integrated experience for both companies' customers. The partnership combines specialized lighting solutions with landscape and greenery development to enhance the aesthetic and functional value of residential projects and outdoor spaces.

This collaboration reflects the evolving needs of customers who are increasingly seeking comprehensive solutions that combine high-quality design with ease of execution. By integrating complementary services, the partnership offers homeowners and project owners a more seamless and efficient experience, saving time and effort while providing a complete vision for outdoor spaces in all their elements.

Under the agreement, customers of both companies will benefit from specialized solutions that include landscape design and development, as well as thoughtfully designed lighting systems that highlight architectural and natural features, enhance the visual appeal of outdoor environments, and provide exclusive offers and benefits to clients of both companies.

This partnership further reinforces House of Light's commitment to strengthening the role of lighting as an essential element in design quality and spatial experience, particularly in outdoor areas. Lighting is no longer viewed as a mere finishing touch, but as a key component in defining the visual identity of a space and achieving the ideal balance between functionality and visual comfort.

On this occasion, Mr. Mohammad Eissa, CEO of House of Light, stated: "We are delighted to collaborate with Africa Agricultural Contracting, driven by our belief in the importance of raising awareness and appreciation for landscaping and greenery. At the same time, we aim to enhance understanding of the true role lighting plays in highlighting the beauty of these spaces and increasing their value. We believe that exceptional spaces are not created by a single element, but through the thoughtful integration of design, nature, and lighting an



approach that directly enhances both the customer experience and the overall quality of the environment."

For his part, Mr. Salah Al-Awadhi, Executive Director of Africa Agricultural Contracting, emphasized that this partnership represents a significant step toward delivering added value to customers. He noted that the collaboration with House of Light enables the company to offer a more integrated experience that combines landscape development with specialized lighting solutions, resulting in a higher standard of quality and beauty in residential and outdoor projects.

This collaboration reflects a growing trend toward the integration of specialized disciplines to deliver more advanced and comprehensive solutions to clients, in line with the aspirations of the local market for projects that combine quality, aesthetics, and execution efficiency.

# What's On

## SPOTLIGHT

Got a birthday or event?



Share your story and snapshots with Arab Times!  
Email your write-up and photos to  
arabtimes@arabtimesonline.com  
We'll feature it on our What's On page!

Mango Mania offers exotic varieties, family fun in Kuwait

## LuLu Hypermarket unveils 'Mango Mania 2026' in Kuwait



Photos during the event.

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: LuLu Hypermarket officially launched its much-awaited seasonal promotion, Mango Mania 2026, at its Al-Rai outlet, bringing together an exciting celebration of the world's most loved fruit for shoppers across Kuwait.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by H.E. Paramita Tripathi, Ambassador of India to Kuwait, along with senior management representatives from LuLu Hypermarket and officials from the Indian Embassy in Kuwait.

As part of the campaign, LuLu Hypermarket is offering attractive promotions and special deals on mangoes across all its outlets, reaffirming its commitment to providing customers with premium-quality seasonal produce at exceptional value.

Mango Mania 2026 highlights the richness and diversity of mangoes from

around the world, featuring more than 70 varieties sourced from multiple countries. Customers can explore an extensive collection of premium and exotic mangoes, including popular varieties such as Alphonso, Badami, Mallika, Totapuri, Rajapuri, Kesari, Malgova, and Imam Pasand, alongside rare and highly sought-after selections like the Yemen Galpatur.

A special highlight of the festival is the extensive showcase of Indian mango varieties, celebrated for their rich flavour, vibrant colour, unique aroma, and superior quality, offering customers an authentic and refreshing seasonal experience.

In addition to fresh mangoes, the festival presents a wide range of mango-inspired culinary delights, including juices, smoothies, halwa, payasam, salads, curries, and pickles. Customers can also enjoy an assortment of mango-based desserts such as

mousse cakes, trifles, tarts, pastries, muffins, and mango Swiss rolls, creating a complete mango-themed gastronomic experience.

Enhancing the festive atmosphere, the event features engaging installations and family-friendly attractions, including mango-themed displays, selfie booths, and specially curated décor designed to enrich the shopping experience.

As part of the opening celebrations, LuLu Al-Rai also organized interactive activities for children, including a Mango Cake Decoration Contest, adding a lively and family-oriented spirit to the occasion.

With its vibrant mix of exotic varieties, culinary creativity, and interactive experiences, Mango Mania 2026 promises to deliver a unique seasonal celebration of the "King of Fruits" for shoppers across Kuwait.

Leadership and resilience take center stage

## The ICAIKC organizes leadership panel on women empowerment

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India Kuwait Chapter (ICAIKC) successfully hosted an inspiring and thought-provoking leadership panel discussion titled "Endless Inspirations: Breaking Stereotypes, Celebrating Strength, Grace & Leadership" on Wednesday, 20 May 2026, at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa, Kuwait. The event brought together an enthusiastic gathering of professionals, entrepreneurs, business leaders, and distinguished guests from across Kuwait for an evening of meaningful conversations and powerful insights.

The evening commenced with networking and registrations, followed by a warm welcome by Event Host CA Sweta Chipra, who set the tone for an engaging discussion centered around leadership, resilience, and the limitless potential of women shaping industries and communities.

Opening the event, Chairman CA Rohit Agarwal highlighted the importance of creating platforms that amplify diverse voices, challenge stereotypes, and inspire the next generation of leaders to lead with confidence, courage, and purpose.

The panel featured an exceptional lineup of accomplished women leaders, including Ms. Sara Akbar, CEO of OilServ; Ms. Thuraya Al-Baqsmi, renowned artist and writer; Dr. Ameera Al-Hassan, Head of Mission at UN Habitat Kuwait & GCC; Ms. Balsam Al-Ayoub, prominent Kuwaiti entrepreneur; and Dr. Areezou Harraf, author and Vice Chair of AmCham Kuwait. The session was expertly moderated by

cultural journalist, writer, and broadcaster Ms. Chaitali B Roy.

Through candid conversations and personal experiences, the speakers shared compelling perspectives on leadership, overcoming barriers, embracing authenticity, and redefining success in today's evolving world. Their stories resonated deeply with the audience, leaving behind powerful lessons on perseverance, purpose, and impact.

As a token of appreciation, Chairman CA Rohit Agarwal, along with Vice-Chairman CA Venkat Ramana Badida, presented mementos to the distinguished speakers in recognition of their valuable contributions and inspiring presence at the event.

The evening concluded with a heartfelt Vote of Thanks by CA Nishajalan, who expressed sincere gratitude to the speakers, moderator, attendees, and organizing team for making the event a memorable success. Special appreciation was extended to CA Aditya Dhanukaand Ms. Chaitali B Roy for curating an impactful and enriching session featuring such eminent panelists.

The Chapter also acknowledged the continued support of its annual sponsors - National Bank of Kuwait, STC Kuwait, Al Mulla Exchange, and Protiviti - for consistently supporting the Chapter's professional and community-driven initiatives.

The ICAI Kuwait Chapter remains committed to fostering impactful leadership and knowledge-sharing platforms that promote professional excellence, inclusivity, diversity, and meaningful community engagement.



Photos during the event.

Future-focused engineering solutions

## Tamilnadu Engineer Forum – Kuwait launches curtain raiser for TICE 2026

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The Tamilnadu Engineer Forum – Kuwait (TEF Kuwait) successfully conducted 3rd Technical Seminar and the Curtain Raiser for the forthcoming 17th Technological Innovations Conference & Exposition (TICE) and 10th Engineering Excellence Awards (EEA) on 18th May 2026 at Hyatt Regency Al Kout Mall, Kuwait. The event served as a precursor to the highly anticipated 17th Technological Innovations Conference & Exposition (TICE) and 10th Engineering Excellence Awards (EEA), scheduled to be held on 15th October 2026 at the Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel, Kuwait.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Rajendra Kannan, President TEF Kuwait stated that TICE organized by TEF has become one of the premier events in Kuwait, bringing together global pioneers and innovators to showcase cutting-edge technologies while creating a dynamic platform for networking, knowledge sharing, and collaboration. He further encouraged engineers, professionals, and technology enthusiasts to actively participate in the upcoming 17th TICE and make full use of the opportunity to learn, connect, and innovate together. In his address, Mr. Agnel Stanley, General Secretary TEF Kuwait highlighted the remarkable journey of TEF – Kuwait and reflected on the successful evolution of both TICE and EEA over the years, emphasizing their role in promoting technological advancement, engineering excellence, and professional collaboration within the community.

The event was elegantly anchored by Mr. Suresh Anand and Ms. Mythili, who guided the sessions seamlessly.

The first session of the Technical Seminar, titled "Engineering Excellence: SchuF's Customised valve solutions" was conducted by Mr. Abdul Gomaz, Managing Director of SchuF ME and Mr. Vignesh Vijayasankar, Sales Manager – SchuF ME. The session highlighted advanced customised valve technologies, industrial applications, and innovative engineering solutions for the process industries.

The Curtain Raiser event was graced by the Chief Guest, Mr. Omar Ahmad Al-Molhem, Manager HSE – KNPC & A/

Manager HSE – KIPIC, who appreciated TEF Kuwait's continuous efforts in promoting technical knowledge sharing and professional development among engineers in Kuwait.

The event also featured keynote addresses and special speeches by distinguished guests including Mr. Christopher Buck, KBR – Manager Projects, Dr. Abdulhadi Al-Huwailah, Team Leader – Production Operations (WK), KOC, Mr. Sabah Al-Shammari, Executive Director – Golden Palm Petroleum Services, Mr. Jasem Al-Nouri, Deputy Managing Director – Sales & Marketing, Nouri Industrial Est. Co., and Mr. Nasser B Al-Hajri, Team Leader – Associated Gas Operations (N&W), KOC.

During the Curtain Raiser ceremony, TEF Kuwait officially introduced the upcoming 17th TICE & 10th EEA, highlighting the forum's vision towards encouraging innovation, engineering excellence, industrial collaboration, and sustainable technological growth. During the seminar, the official logos for the flagship events TICE and EEA were also unveiled. The second session of the Technical Seminar, titled "Data Driven Journey with Cordant Asset Health" was conducted by Mr. Walid El-Said, Senior Sales Manager – Baker Hughes Cordant Solutions. The session highlighted advanced digital solutions, asset performance optimization and data-driven approaches that support operational reliability and efficiency in the energy and industrial sectors.

The event concluded with networking interactions, appreciation of sponsors and patrons, and a dinner gathering that provided an excellent opportunity for participants to connect and exchange professional experiences.

TEF Kuwait expressed heartfelt gratitude to all sponsors, speakers, dignitaries, volunteers, and participants for their valuable support and contribution towards the grand success of the event. The enthusiastic participation once again reflected TEF Kuwait's strong commitment towards empowering the engineering community in Kuwait through technical and professional initiatives.



Photos during the event.

## Angela Mrad takes director crown

Reel to real glory

This award reflects the journey behind every frame, every challenge and every dream pursued through cinema

Lebanese-Greek filmmaker Angela Mrad continues to carve her name onto the international cinematic landscape after being crowned Best Female Director at the Reels International Film Festival in India for her acclaimed film LUMINA AM 91N, a milestone that further cements her growing influence in global cinema.

The award marks another defining moment in Mrad's artistic journey, one driven not only by visual storytelling but by a deeper commitment to cinema that resonates with humanity, emotion and social consciousness. Her work has increasingly drawn attention for its ability to bridge cultures and confront contemporary issues through a bold and deeply personal lens.

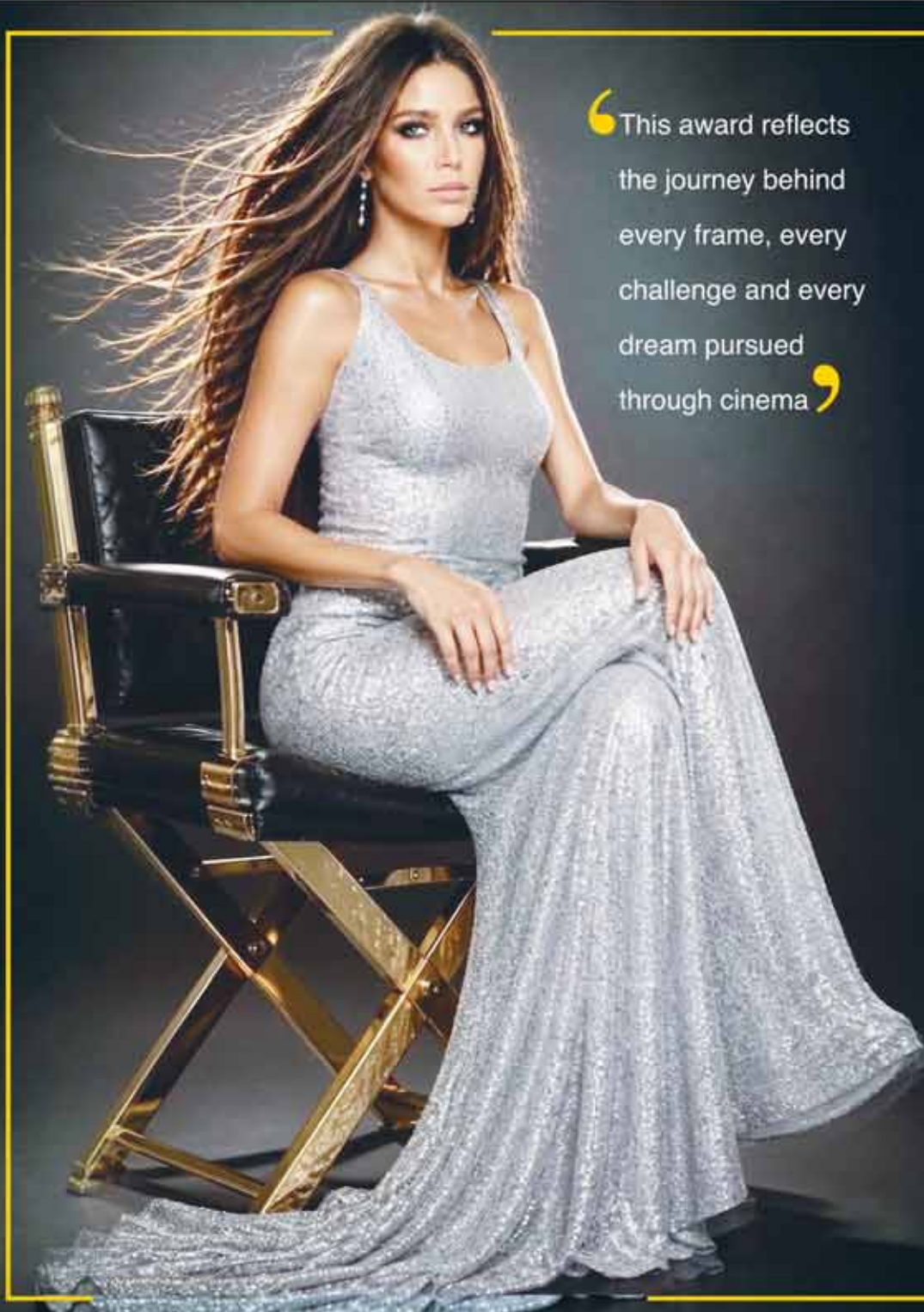
Speaking about the recognition, Mrad described the honor as far more than a personal achievement, calling it a tribute to years of dedication, perseverance and unwavering belief in the transformative power of film.

"This award reflects the journey behind every frame, every challenge and every dream pursued through cinema," she said, underscoring her passion for creating stories that spark dialogue and inspire change.

Mrad also dedicated the accolade to women filmmakers across the world, urging them to continue pushing boundaries, telling their stories and claiming their place within the global film industry.

"Cinema is a universal language that unites people," she said. "I am grateful to be part of this artistic community that tells human stories beyond borders."

With each international recognition, Angela Mrad further strengthens her standing as one of the Arab world's most promising female directors, a filmmaker whose work transcends geography while carrying a powerful human message. Through a distinctive cinematic voice and an expanding international footprint, she continues to position herself among a new generation of storytellers reshaping the global film narrative.



## 54 yrs rolling: 'Once Upon a Time in Harlem' finally cuts to Cannes

CANNES, May 21, (AP) — David Greaves was 26 when his father, the pioneering filmmaker William Greaves, asked him to be one of four cameramen documenting a historic gathering in Harlem.

In August 1972, William Greaves assembled as many artists, writers, poets, musicians and organizers from the Harlem Renaissance as he could. They came for a cocktail party at Duke Ellington's Harlem townhouse. There, they talked about the seminal 1920s cultural movement: what they remembered, who not to forget, what it all meant.

"My father would say, 'Capture the life that's happening,'" David recalls.

It took more than half a century for the result to see the light of day. But 54 years after that gathering, "Once Upon a Time in Harlem" screened this week at the Cannes Film Festival.

No movie in Cannes had a longer road to get here. William Greaves died in 2014 having never finished what he felt would be his most enduring work. With David ultimately stepping in as director, his family saw it through.

"It's not the film he was thinking of in his mind," David Greaves said in an interview by the beach in Cannes. "But it's definitely the film he would have wanted."

It was fitting that "Once Upon a Time in Harlem" got its moment in Cannes. William Greaves' 1968 opus, "Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One," was rejected at the time by the festival. The experimental documentary would nevertheless grow to become revered by filmmakers, and in 2015 it was added to the National Film Registry.

Given that history, it was hard for David Greaves to summarize what it felt like to be at the festival, bringing his father's work finally to cinema's global stage.

"It feels magical," he said, his eyes welling up. "Even surreal."

Now, "Once Upon a Time in Harlem" might be the nonfiction movie event of the year. Following its premiere earlier this year, Neon acquired it and is planning an awards campaign. It will play at top fall festivals. After seeing an unfinished cut of the film last year, The New Yorker's Richard Brody called it "a film for the ages."

Gathered that day in Harlem was a spectrum of Harlem Renaissance luminaries including the poet and novelist Arna Bon-temps; the artist Romare Bearden; the actor Leigh Whipper, then 96; Ida Mae Cullen, the widow of the poet Countee Cullen; the musician Eubie Blake, the poet and painter Richard Bruce Nugent; the

scholar John Henrik Clarke.

Together, they take turns reminiscing about the flourishing in Harlem - laughing, arguing over and celebrating their place in Black history. In the 1970s, it wasn't as widely recognized. Now, the film arrives at a time when African American history is increasingly under siege in America.

For David Greaves, the definition of the Harlem Renaissance is simple: "It's the wellspring."

"People say: How can there be a renaissance? People without history arriving here?" he says. "I first wanted to open the film with a history stretching back to Africa. Everyone was like, 'OK, OK, where's the party?'"

Instead, the documentary opens with a poem that Greaves felt expressed it all: Langston Hughes' "The Negro Speaks of Rivers."

William Greaves' original purpose with the footage was to use it for the 1974 film "From These Roots." But he instead opted to use archival photographs. Over the years, he would return to the 1972 footage in Harlem but nev-

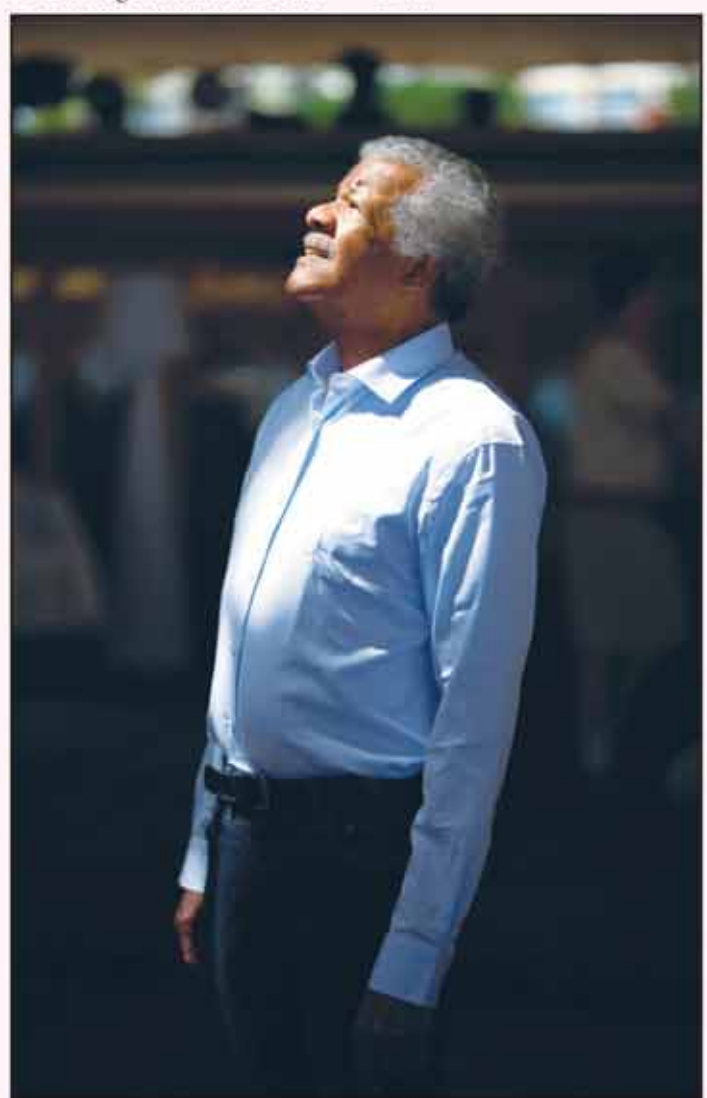
er shaped it into a film.

After he died in 2014 at the age of 87, his widow, Louise Archambault Greaves, took up the project. She died in 2023 but not before securing funding for the restoration.

"Louise was a lock protecting the footage. She told the Smithsonian, who asked for a copy, 'No!'" David Greaves says, laughing.

Though he was raised assisting on his father's films, David Greaves didn't remain in movie-making. He co-founded and ran the progressive Brooklyn community newspaper Our Time Press. It was years before he stepped forward to direct. His daughter, Liani, is a producer.

"Louis was talking about directors. 'Who could we get?' I just sat there and said, 'I don't know,'" David Greaves says. "Then it came to a point in the editing room after she had passed, (adviser) Marcia Smith said, 'Who's going to direct this? Are you going to direct it?' And I said, 'Yes.' I couldn't imagine anyone else directing this film. I just couldn't do it."



Director David Greaves poses for portrait photographs for the film 'Once Upon a Time in Harlem' during the 79th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Sunday, May 17, 2026. (AP)

### Television



Stephen Colbert attends The Hollywood Reporter's The Most Powerful People in New York Media issue celebration at Daniel on Thursday, May 7, 2026, in New York. (AP)

Colbert's long goodbye is coming to an end

## Final cue for 'Late Show'

NEW YORK, May 21, (AP) — On his very first time hosting "The Late Show" back in 2015, Stephen Colbert ripped into Donald Trump while gorging on Oreos, likening his inability to resist the cookies to his inability to resist going after the then-presidential candidate.

"Look, you don't own me. I don't need to play tape of you to have a successful TV show," he warned an image of Trump. "Someone on television should have a modicum of dignity and it could be me."

Over the next 11 years, Colbert couldn't curb his appetite for making Trump barbs, often turning his show into a full-throated rebuke of MAGA policies. Trump would call him a "dead man walking."

The on-air feud between the two men seemingly ends Thursday as Colbert's top-rated late-night TV program goes off the air for the final time, effectively silencing a high-profile White House critic.

"The legacy of this show needs to be that we remember it as the show that was canceled because a presidential administration wanted it off the air," says Heather Hendershot, a professor of communication studies and journalism at Northwestern University. "We haven't connected every single dot on that, but it's very clear that this was a political decision. And I think 20, 30, 40 years later, that is going to be strongly remembered about this show - that this was a moment of authoritarian triumph."

When CBS announced last summer that Colbert's show would end in May, the network said it was for economic reasons but others - including Colbert - have expressed skepticism that Trump's repeated criticism of the show had nothing to do with it.

The cancellation came after CBS parent company Paramount agreed to pay \$16 million to settle Trump's lawsuit over a "60 Minutes" interview, as Paramount's sale to Skydance Media awaited the Trump administration's approval. Colbert had called the settlement a "big fat bribe."

Trump rejoiced over the cancellation in a Truth Social post, writing "I absolutely love" that the host "got fired." He followed it with: "I hear Jimmy Kimmel is next." Just two months later, ABC, buckling to pressure from Trump's Federal Communications Commission chair and

affiliate networks, temporarily suspended Kimmel - the host of its own late-night show - following his remarks about the assassination of conservative activist Charlie Kirk.

TV experts said there are not many other examples of a hit show being shuttered due to political pressure. In 1969, CBS abruptly canceled "The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour," which had aired comedy bits in opposition to the Vietnam War and in support of civil rights.

Colbert, a "Daily Show" alum, spent nine years playing a buffoonish, conservative commentator on Comedy Central's "The Colbert Report." He was not universally welcomed to "The Late Show" by those he had lampooned, with Rush Limbaugh saying "CBS has just declared war on the heartland of America."

Through Democratic and Republican administrations, Colbert and other late-night comedians have offered their take on the day's events that offered something different from traditional news media.

"In given moments, like when something big happened, you really do want that perspective that says, 'Here's another way to look at it,'" says Dustin Kidd, a professor of sociology at Temple University. "Or when it feels really overwhelming, you want that reminder that there's still some way to laugh at it. And so the more you lose those ways to laugh at it, the more we all decline."

"The Late Show" had celebrities, musical guests and jokes about Arby's and Spirit Airlines, like other late-night shows. But Colbert put his own spin on things, like wearing his Catholic faith and his adoration of his wife and frequent guest, Evie McGee Colbert, on his sleeve.

After the monologue, he had oddball segments like "Meanwhile," a look at global affairs in "What's Going On Over There?," technology with "Cyborgasm" and youth slang in "Stephen Colbert Presents: That's Yeet. Dabbing on Fleek, Fam!"

"The Late Show," which began in 1993 with host David Letterman, won two Emmys under Colbert, as well as a Peabody Award. Come Friday, the 11:35 p.m. time slot goes to "Comics Unleashed," a talk show that host Byron Allen has vowed will eschew politics.

Arts & Culture



Paintings expressing the unity of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.



A painting highlights the role of the front lines



Photos feature by Shahad Kamal Distinctive paintings.

# 'Gulf Unity 2026' showcases the region's shared cultural identity

KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA): In an artistic event reflecting Gulf spirit and shared cultural identity, the Kuwaiti Artists and Media Professionals Association organized an exhibition under the theme: "Gulf Unity 2026."

Drawing a constellation of artists and media professionals, the exhibition featured approximately 90 artworks, ranging from paintings to ceramics and metalwork, showcasing creative visions inspired by Gulf heritage and its human and cul-

tural bonds. The event is part of the association's sustained artistic and cultural activities with a view to deepening the role of art in promoting inter-Gulf cultural ties and shared values.



The opening of the 'Gulf Unity 2026' exhibition with the participation of a select group of artists and media professionals.



A view of the exhibition and attendees.



The painting by the visual artist Awatif Kakouli titled 'Gulf Falcons'.



Frontline support.



Artwork 'Our Gulf is One'.

Culture

## Hwaseong Boating Festival returns with expanded maritime showcase

HWASEONG, South Korea, May 21, (BUSINESS WIRE): Hwaseong Culture & Tourism Foundation announced that the 16th Hwaseong Boating Festival, South Korea's premier marine event, will kick off at Jeongok Port for a four-day run from May 22 to 25.

The festival features an impressive fleet of 70 vessels across 12 categories, including luxury yachts, powerboats, cruise ships, and the restored Joseon Tongsinsa - a historical diplomatic ship operating as an onboard living history museum. Visitors can enjoy these tailored maritime programs throughout the event.

A fleet of vessels gathered at Jeongok Port ahead of the 16th Hwaseong Boating Festival, South Korea's premier marine event set to open on May 22 (Image: Hwaseong Culture & Tourism Foundation)

As day turns to night, the event transforms into a vibrant cultural hub. The main stage will host diverse performances that bridge generations and genres, featuring K-pop artists Blackswan and Woo Won Jae, the legendary band Spring Summer Autumn Winter, and a grand 50-piece orchestra. A dynamic street parade featuring 400 local citizens will also captivate audiences.



A fleet of vessels gathered at Jeongok Port ahead of the 16th Hwaseong Boating Festival, South Korea's premier marine event set to open on May 22 (Photo by Hwaseong Culture & Tourism Foundation)

Travel

Meaningful journeys replace packed tours

## Gen Z fuels China's new travel trend

ZHENGZHOU, May 21, (Xinhua): As China celebrates its annual tourism day on Tuesday, a younger generation of Chinese travelers is redefining outbound tourism, shifting the focus from ticking off landmarks to seeking emotional value, cultural meaning and more personal encounters.



This undated file photo shows Liang Yu, a 25-year-old from southwest China's Guizhou Province, attending a local culinary workshop in Chiang Mai, Thailand. (Xinhua)

Shen Bing, an office worker from Shanghai who recently returned from Malaysia, said her travel habits have changed. In her early 20s, she preferred packed itineraries covering as many places as possible, but after visiting Europe, the Americas and Southeast Asia, she is now more selective.

"I now pick places based on what I actually enjoy," Shen said. "I don't pack the day too full. Maybe some local food, some snorkeling and time to just relax."

The shift reflects the rise of China's "experience economy," as consumers seek more personalized and emotionally meaningful services. A report on Eurasia Review said Chinese consumers are prioritizing emotional value and cultural ritual over mere possession.

A 2025 travel trends report by Fliggy showed strong growth in bookings for local entertainment packages abroad, and Trip.com, a leading Chinese travel platform, reported a 78 percent year-on-year rise in interest-based trips.

Travel agencies are also adapting. Yang He, a manager at Henan China Travel Service Group, said customized tours and small-group packages have become highly popular. In one recent case, tourists asked to go sea fishing on Jeju Island in the Republic of Korea, and the agency built the entire itinerary around that request.

This experience-led trend is being driven largely by younger travelers. Data from Qunar showed that during the recent May Day holiday, outbound air ticket bookings rose 30 percent year on year among travelers aged 19 to 22.

Meanwhile, they are looking further afield, with flight bookings to South Africa rising 180 percent, Belgium 160 percent and Kenya 111

percent, according to Qunar.

Digital tools are also shaping how these trips begin, with a report finding that Chinese travelers mainly explore itineraries through Xiaohongshu, Douyin and travel apps. According to the China Tourism Academy, 70 percent of tourists have begun relying on artificial intelligence to plan their trips.

Behind the trend is a broader economic shift in China. Dong Yu, executive vice president of the China Institute for Development Planning at Tsinghua University, said that as China's per capita GDP approaches 14,000 U.S. dollars, consumer demand is shifting from goods to services and experiences.

### Pont Neuf vanishes beneath monumental art project

## French artist JR begins giant 'cave' over Paris' oldest bridge

PARIS, May 21, (AP): The oldest bridge in Paris has begun to vanish this week, as the artist JR - who is known as the "French Banksy" - began inflating a giant "cave" over the Pont Neuf.

The monumental, rocky illusion is swallowing the 17th-century landmark, which has carried Parisians across the Seine for more than 400 years. By Thursday, it looked as if a prehistoric cliff had risen in the heart of the city.

The inflation process, which was carried out overnight - after being delayed by bad weather - is the most dramatic stage yet of a project more than a year in the making.

One of the most ambitious public artworks Paris has seen in decades, which has been funded by the sale of JR's work and a handful of corporate partners, does not open to the public until June 6. "We're about to leave something pretty incredible in the middle of Paris," JR told The Associated Press earlier this year at his studio in the city's east, wearing his trademark hat and shades.



Inflation of the artwork 'The Pont Neuf Cave' by French street artist JR on the Pont Neuf bridge, Thursday, May 21, 2026, in Paris, before its free opening to the public from June 6 to 28. (AP)

The transformation of the bridge has been documented by the AP since March with time-lapse cameras, including one fixed on a rooftop terrace high above the river, watching the bridge slowly disappear day by day.

From the outside, the installation looks like a rocky mass

that "literally" breaks the landscape, said JR, who is famous for pasting enormous photographs on buildings, walls and rooftops around the world. This time he wanted Parisians to do something unusual on their busiest bridge: stop.

Visitors will be able to walk for free through a long, dark

tunnel that lets in no daylight and where, according to JR, people "will lose track of time."

The numbers are startling. The structure is 120 meters (393 feet) long and 18 meters (59 feet) tall - which is as high as a six-story building.

Yet it is built almost entirely from air - 80 fabric arches filled with 20,000 cubic meters of it - and weighs only about five tons. The fabric was hand stitched by 25 artisans in a village in Brittany.

Nothing digs into the historic stone. Cut the air and the cliff would sink like a held breath - a collapse JR's engineers spent weeks rehearsing in a hangar at Orly airport to be sure that if the power ever failed, the rock would come down gently.

The artwork, called La Caverne du Pont Neuf, is a tribute to a Parisian artistic legend.

In 1985, artist Christo and his wife, Jeanne-Claude, wrapped the same bridge in pale golden fabric - 13 kilometers of rope, a decade of arguing with city hall, three million visitors in two weeks. The act helped invent the idea of monumental art in modern cities.

A square beside the bridge now carries their names. "It's pretty hard to go after them," JR said.

His idea, he said, is to bring "mineral and nature" back to the heart of the city. He is not covering the bridge but undressing it - sending the dressed stone back to the limestone quarries from which Paris itself was cut.

## Kuwait health system shows strong resilience: Ministry Undersecretary

GENEVA, May 21, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Health Ministry Undersecretary and head of its delegation to the 79th World Health Assembly, Sheikh Dr Salman Khalifa Al-Sabah, said Wednesday that the country's health system demonstrated strong resilience despite regional tensions.

In Kuwait's statement during the assembly's high-level general debate in Geneva, Sheikh Dr Salman said this year's theme, "Reshaping Global Health: a shared responsibility," reflects expanding health challenges linked to emergencies, conflicts, climate change and supply chains.

He stressed the importance of developing an inclusive and transparent global health system capable of producing practical and effective solutions to current and future challenges.

Sheikh Dr Salman said protecting health is a collective responsibility, noting that targeting civilian infrastructure directly affects healthcare services, patients and local communities.

He referred to recent regional tensions and attacks that affected healthcare infrastructure and regional supply routes, creating additional challenges for maintaining medical services and supplies.

He said Kuwait's healthcare system maintained uninterrupted essential services through effective preparedness, careful planning and the dedication of healthcare workers.

Sheikh Dr. Salman reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to cooperation with member states and the World Health Organization to protect public health and strengthen international cooperation against global health challenges.

## MoH inaugurates 2 new oral and maxillofacial surgery clinics at Taima Dental Center

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The Ministry of Health inaugurated two new specialized oral and maxillofacial surgery clinics on Wednesday at the Taima Specialized Dental Center, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The move reflects the ministry's ongoing commitment to developing the healthcare system and enhancing specialized services in line with the latest medical practices.

In an official statement, the ministry said the expansion builds on the efforts of the Dental Department to provide advanced specialized care, facilitating patient access to precise surgical treatment, reducing waiting times, and improving the efficiency and quality of services delivered to the highest professional standards.

The ministry reaffirmed its continued support for expanding specialized



KUNA photo: The Ministry of Health opens two clinics for oral and maxillofacial surgery at the Taima Specialized Dental Center.

services and developing healthcare infrastructure across various health regions, in line with modern medical advancements and efforts to enhance the quality and efficiency of care provided to citizens and residents.

## Carbon pollution keeps rising globally

# Worst climate future less likely, but best one slipping away: scientists

WASHINGTON, May 21, (AP): Scientists are jettisoning their worst and best case scenarios for a warming world as no longer plausible. That shows how modest gains in the fight to curb climate change have dialed back the most catastrophic of future heating but also confirmed that there's no chance to limit warming to the international goal set in 2015.

Researchers' new list of seven plausible carbon pollution scenarios for the future are pushing aside two staples of climate policy: the extremes on either end.

The extremes have become less probable in the past several years because of how we power our world. Carbon dioxide, released from the burning of gas, oil and coal, is chiefly responsible for warming. Increasing use of green energies, like solar, wind and geothermal, which don't emit carbon dioxide, have lowered top end carbon pollution projections. However, because those changes haven't been fast enough, the bottom end projections have risen.

The Paris climate agreement in

2015 set a goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times, or the mid-1800s, giving rise to the mantra "1.5 to stay alive," but now scientists say that even their best case scenario still shoots past that signature temperature mark. On the other end, those same new scenarios no longer include the coal-heavy future that would lead to 4.5 degrees Celsius (8.1 degrees Fahrenheit) of warming by 2100, a scary scenario that many scientific studies used in their future projections.

The new proposed worst case scenario has an end-of-the-century warming of about 3.5 degrees Celsius (6.3 degrees Fahrenheit), a full degree (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) less than the old scenario, while the updated best case future is a couple tenths of a degree Celsius (0.36 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than previously theorized, squeezing past the Paris goal, said climate scientist Detlef Van Vuuren of Utrecht University, lead author of a recent study laying out future scenarios.

"There is kind of a narrowing of



The Jeffrey Energy Center coal-fired power plant operates at sunset near Emmett, Kan on Jan 3, 2026, in Topeka, Kan. (AP)

the futures. It cannot be as bad as we thought, but it cannot be as good as we hoped," said Johan Rockström, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany.

The scenarios include a "middle" one where by the end of the century

the world warms 3 degrees Celsius (5.4 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial times, which is roughly the path society is currently on, scientists said. The world is now about 1.3 degrees Celsius (2.3 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial times. Even tenths of a degree of warming

cause problems for Earth's ecosystems, as species die off, fresh water becomes more scarce and extreme weather events, such as flooding and heat waves, intensify.

Because carbon pollution keeps rising globally and stays in the atmosphere for about century, the best case scenario is for warming to shoot past the 1.5 degree mark, peak at 1.7 degrees Celsius (3.1 degrees Fahrenheit) for maybe as long as 70 years, and eventually somehow come back down below 1.5 degrees if a technology can be designed to remove massive amounts of carbon from the air, said nine of the 10 scientists interviewed for this article. The world is warming at a pace of a tenth of a degree Celsius (nearly 0.2 degrees Fahrenheit) every five years, they said.

"This is just physics," said climate scientist Bill Hare, CEO of Climate Analytics, a policy institute. "We're losing the ability to limit warming even by two degrees without strong action and people need to be aware of that and be aware that it's a political failure. It's not an act of God or anything. It is just because politi-

cians in many places are not acting fast enough."

The 1.5 goal is not just a number, said Cornell University climate scientist Natalie Mahowald, co-author of a U.N. science report detailing the harms of going higher than 1.5 degrees.

"There's a lot of implications for, you know, not being able to meet the 1.5. And, of course, the people who will suffer the most are on the small island developing states," Mahowald said. "Some of them will go underwater."

American Enterprise Institute's Roger Pielke Jr. said changes to the highest end scenario matter because it was presented as a likely future that could come true if nothing changed. Thousands of scientific studies have been based on that highest warming scenario, called RCP8.5, even though research had already shown it to be improbable.

"It was always presented as where we were headed absent explicit climate policy," even though it was based on out-of-date and incorrect coal-heavy energy theories, Pielke said in an email.

## Musk's SpaceX reveals plans for what could be biggest-ever initial public offering

NEW YORK, May 21, (AP): Elon Musk announced plans Wednesday for one of the biggest stock sales ever by taking public a space company that is currently losing billions of dollars a year.

A filing shows that his SpaceX lost \$2.6 billion from operations last year on \$18.7 billion in revenue, and the losses kept piling up at the start of this year, too.

The prospectus did not put a dollar figure on the amount Musk hopes to raise, but various reports have put it at \$75 billion or so. An offering of that size would easily surpass the current title holder, Saudi Aramco, the oil giant that went public seven years ago and raised \$26 billion.

SpaceX, formally known as Space Exploration Technologies Corp., has said the money will help finance projects to put people on the moon and Mars in its quest to make humans an intergalactic species as they face existential threats that could wipe out civilization.

"We do not want humans to have the same fate as dinosaurs," the filing states.

The prospectus reads in part like a Hollywood fantasy version of the future, detailing in one section how part of Musk's compensation will be granted only if he maintains "a permanent human colony on Mars with at least one million inhabitants."

Short of that, the stock sale alone could make Musk, a major owner who founded SpaceX in 2002, the world's first trillionaire. Forbes currently puts his net worth at \$839 billion.

In addition to making reusable rockets to hurl astronauts into orbit, SpaceX has other businesses,

some successful, some struggling - and with plenty of questions marks.

The document shows that Starlink, the world's largest satellite communications company, is a big source of cash for the company, generating \$4.4 billion in operating income last year. The business uses 10,000 satellites in low orbit to provide internet service to 10 million people in 150 countries and territories.

Among the struggling businesses are two Musk units that were recently acquired by SpaceX - his social media platform X, formerly Twitter, and his artificial intelligence business, xAI. Those purchases were blasted by some SpaceX investors as bailouts because they are big money losers.

The prospectus said its AI business lost \$6.4 billion in operations last year.

The original SpaceX business, making rockets and staging launches, has been helped by massive government contracts, which raises questions that could come back to haunt the company. Given Musk's close relation to the Trump administration, government ethics lawyers and watchdogs have asked if he has gotten special treatment to win taxpayer money and whether that good luck will run out once President Donald Trump is out of office.

SpaceX has won contracts worth \$6 billion from NASA and the Defense Department and other government agencies in the past five years, according to USAspending.gov. The company noted in its filing that a fifth of its revenue last year was from the federal government.

Musk was the biggest donor to Trump's presidential campaign and is still a big backer despite

their sometimes rocky relationship after his stewardship of the government cost-cutting effort called DOGE early last year.

Like many corporate CEOs, Musk's compensation will go far beyond his annual salary, which was \$54,080 in 2025 and has remained unchanged since 2019, according to the filing.

The prospectus says stock grants for him would be sliced into 15 nearly equal amounts - 67 million shares each - and would vest only as the company achieves preset market cap goals. In addition to the Martian colony, SpaceX's stock market value would have to reach \$7.5 trillion for him to receive the full award.

He would get even more stock awards if SpaceX manages to get giant data centers the size of football fields in space.

The document shows Musk will be able to exert big control over the business.

It says he and certain other shareholders will receive shares in a special class of stock that gives them 10 votes for each share they hold. Those shareholders will be able, among other things, to elect a majority of the company's board of directors.

"This will limit or preclude your ability to influence corporate matters and the election of our directors," SpaceX said in a warning to prospective investors.

SpaceX will be able to pitch the offering to investors - in what's known in Wall Street parlance as a "road show" - 15 days after making its prospectus public. In this case, that works out to June 4.



SpaceX's latest version of its mega rocket Starship is prepared for a test flight from Starbase, Texas, on May 20. (AP)

## Study finds long-distance coral dispersal connects Pacific reef systems

SYDNEY, May 21, (Xinhua): Coral offspring can disperse more than 100 km across the western Pacific, linking distant reef systems and boosting their ability to recover from climate stress, new research reveals.

The study, published in Current Biology, shows for the first time the connectivity between the broadcast-spawning coral populations of the Great Barrier Reef, Coral Sea atolls and New Caledonia in the Western Pacific, said a statement from Australia's Southern Cross University released Thursday.

Australian and French researchers analyzed over 1,000 corals from 29 reef sites, finding that a common coral branching species forms large, interconnected breeding populations whose larvae disperse widely on ocean currents.

"This wide dispersal can help populations recover after disturbances such as marine heatwaves, crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks or cyclones," said study lead author Hugo Denis of Southern Cross University.

This also allows distant populations to occasionally exchange gametes and genetic variants, which can help reefs adapt to changing environ-



A diverse coral assemblage is seen despite impacts from the 2024 bleaching event at Pompey Reef at the northern Great Barrier Reef in far North Queensland, Australia, on Jan 1, 2025. (AP)

mental conditions, Denis said.

The study highlights the role of genetic diversity, including contributions from symbiotic algae, in strengthening coral resilience.

"Genetic diversity is the fuel for adaptation, like a shared toolbox in a community, the greater the variety

of tools, the better it can build new things, fix problems and respond to changing conditions," Denis added.

The findings underscore the need for cross-border conservation strategies, as reef connectivity extends beyond national borders and plays a crucial role in the survival of ecosystems.

## Ebola fears surge on ground in Congo over rapid spread of rare type

BUNIA, Congo, May 21, (AP): Anxious healthcare workers in eastern Congo said Wednesday they are underprotected and undertrained in a rapidly spreading Ebola outbreak of a rare type of the virus in one of the world's most remote and vulnerable places.

Long the scene of attacks by an array of armed groups, the region's volatility now further complicates efforts to handle the crisis. Local leaders said an attack by militants linked to the Islamic State group killed at least 17 people on Tuesday night in Alima village in Ituri, a province that has become the hot spot of the outbreak.

The World Health Organization, which noted a low risk globally, has said "patient zero" has not been found.

"It's truly sad and painful because we've already been through a security crisis, and now Ebola is here too," said Justin Ndasi, a Bunia resident.

Tons of health supplies have been airlifted to Bunia, where the first known death was announced last week, but residents said masks are harder to find and some disinfectants that previously sold for 2,500 Congo-



Red Cross workers arrive at a health center to transport people who died of Ebola, in Rwampara, Congo on May 20. (AP)

lese francs (about \$1) now cost four times more.

At a treatment center in Rwampara, families cried and watched as healthcare workers in protective gear silently disinfected the bodies of their loved ones - suspected Ebola victims - and placed them into coffins for secure burial sites.

The disease struck suddenly, they said, describing a rapid deterioration after symptoms were mistaken for illnesses such as malaria.

"He told me his heart was hurting," said Botwine Swanze, who lost her son. "Then he started crying because of the pain. ... Then he started bleeding and vomiting a lot."

## French tennis body slams players' initiative

## Players plan media blackout at French Open over revenue share

PARIS, May 21. (AP): Players at the French Open are planning to reduce media appearances ahead of the start of the Grand Slam to complain about their share of the prize money.

A group have already targeted the upcoming clay-court tournament for reducing players' share of revenue to an alleged 14.3% - compared to 22% at other ATP and WTA events.

Top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka and No.4 Coco Gauff were among leading players who threatened a boycott of the Slams earlier this month if they don't start receiving more compensation.

L'Equipe newspaper reported Wednesday that many players competing at Roland Garros, which begins Sunday, are planning to limit their conversations with reporters to 15 minutes during Friday's traditional pre-tournament media day.

The French tennis federation (FFT), which organizes the French Open, said in a statement to The Associated Press that it regrets the players' initiative "which penalizes all stakeholders involved in the tournament: the media, broadcasters, federation staff and the entire tennis community that enthusiastically follows each edition of Roland Garros."

Sabalenka and fellow No. 1 Jannik Sinner were among leading players - most of them ranked in the top 10 - who earlier this month issued a statement expressing "deep disappointment" over French Open prize money.

The players are also seeking better representation, health options and pensions from the four Grand Slam tournaments: Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon and U.S. Open.

Roland Garros organizers announced last month they were increasing overall prize money by about 10% for an overall pot of 61.7 million euros (\$72.1 million), with the total amount up 5.3 million euros from last year. But the



Stan Wawrinka, from Switzerland, returns a ball to Alex Michelsen, of the United States, during a round of 16 match at the Geneva Open tennis tournament in Geneva, Switzerland. (AP)

players said "the underlying figures tell a very different story," claiming they will receive a smaller share of tournament revenues.

The FFT said it will continue to maintain an open dialogue, adding that it

proposed a meeting expected to take place Friday with the players and their representatives.

"The FFT is ready for direct and constructive discussions on governance issues, with the aim of giving players a greater role in decision-making, contributing to players' social protection, and evolving the distribution of value, and it put forward several proposals in this direction during the meeting," it said.

The players claim their share of Roland Garros revenue has declined from 15.5% in 2024 to 14.9% projected in 2026. They say the event generated 395 million euros in 2025, a 14% year-on-year increase, yet prize money rose by just 5.4%, reducing players' share of revenue to 14.3%.

"With estimated revenues of over 400 million euros for this year's tournament, prize money as a percentage of revenue will likely still be less than 15%, far short of the 22% that players have requested to bring the Grand Slams into line with the ATP and WTA Combined 1000 events," the players said.

The Australian Open this year increased the players' compensation by 16%, and the U.S. Open prize money last year went up by 20%.

The singles champions at Roland Garros will each receive 2.8 million euros, an increase of 250,000 euros compared with 2025.

"Beyond the prize money, a Grand Slam tournament like Roland Garros offers players exceptional exposure, generating indirect income through sponsorships, partnerships, exhibitions and appearance fees," the FFT said.

"This year the French Tennis Federation also chose to direct a significant portion of these increases toward players eliminated in the early rounds of the main draw and qualifying rounds, with increases of more than 11%, in order to better support those who depend most on tournament earnings to finance their season."

## Kolkata edges Mumbai to boost playoff hopes

Pandey, Powell lead charge

KOLKATA, India, May 21, (AP): Kolkata Knight Riders kept their playoff hopes alive with a four-wicket victory over Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League.

Manish Pandey (45) and Rovman Powell (40) did bulk of the scoring as Kolkata reached 148-6 for their sixth win in the last seven games to move to sixth place.

Mumbai's disappointing season continued when it slumped to 41-4 inside the power play before Corbin Bosch's quickfire 32 not out off 18 balls lifted them to 147-8.

"After that first win, we started believing," captain Ajinkya Rahane said of Kolkata's turnaround that started with a victory over Rajasthan Royals.

"We kept a nice and positive atmosphere and preparation has been fantastic. When Green started bowling (in the IPL) we wanted Powell to get in and what an impact he has made."

Kolkata's million-dollar signing Cameron Green (2-23) and Saurabh Dubey (2-34) had Mumbai reeling within the first six overs, and the innings couldn't gain momentum even after rain interrupted the play for almost an hour.

Captain Hardik Pandya made 26 in his return game from injury before he was clean bowled by Sunil Narine, who returned with impressive figures of 1-13 off his four overs.

Kolkata also lost two early wickets of Rahane (21) and Finn Allen (8) while Green holed out at deep fine leg after scoring only 4 off 8 balls before Pandey and Powell put the chase back on track with a 64-run stand.

Jasprit Bumrah, who had a lean



Kolkata Knight Riders' Manish Pandey plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Mumbai Indians, in Kolkata, India. (AP)

season with the ball, clean bowled Pandey with a perfect off-cutter and Powell was smartly snapped by Bosch at backward point before Kolkata reached the target with seven balls to spare when Rinku Singh smashed Will Jacks over his head for a winning boundary.

Earlier, Green struck twice in one over when Pandey at point held onto a well-judged catch of Ryan Rickelton, who top-edged the seamer and then two balls later the Australian found the outside edge of Naman Dhir's bat.

Dubey kept Mumbai under pressure on a wicket where the ball was gripping as he got the big wickets

of Rohit Sharma and Suryakumar Yadav, who played onto the fast bowler. Tilak Varma (20) and Pandya struggled to raise a 43-run stand before Bosch smashed two sixes and three fours in the last two overs to give Mumbai some hope.

"I don't mind playing on such wickets where bowlers have something to do," Pandya said. "IPL is becoming batting dominated where bowlers are helpless ... so I kind of enjoyed this pitch."

Mumbai had been untidy in fielding throughout the season and on Wednesday Deepak Chahar missed Powell's catch in the outfield before the West Indian batter hit four

boundaries and two sixes in his 30-ball knock.

"I don't know, we have been quite poor (in the fielding) throughout the season," Pandya said. "No one wants to do it, but there's no hiding away, we haven't taken those chances."

Mumbai remained ninth and will round off their season with the last league game against Rajasthan.

Rajasthan could seal the final playoff spot if they beat Mumbai. Defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru, Gujarat Titans and Sunrisers Hyderabad have already qualified for the playoffs.

## Underdogs across Europe finally taste glory

## Arsenal fans enjoy Europe's wildest soccer season

GENEVA, May 21, (AP): The joy that flowed across north London for Arsenal clinching a Premier League title capped a European soccer trend this season that started in a Swedish fishing village.

From stunning first-time champions to teams ending their decades-long run without a league title.

It was a season like no other in modern European soccer, sparking euphoric celebrations by fans who hardly believed their success would ever happen or feared it never would again.

Arsenal fans' wait through 22 years of mostly underachievement for another Premier League title ended late Tuesday when second-place Manchester City drew a must-win game at Bournemouth.

It had been 40 years in Denmark for AGF to regain the title this month and 61 years in Austria for LASK from Linz.

First-time champions included 128-year-old club Thun in Switzerland and 87-year-old Mjällby in Sweden, who set the ball rolling in October.

Why has this happened for unheralded teams that could now play in the elite and lucrative Champions League next season?

A more democratic and low-cost access to knowledge and data about running clubs and scouting players has helped, Olivier Jarosz told The



AGF Aarhus celebrate with the trophy after the Superliga soccer match between AGF and Viborg FF in Aarhus, Denmark. (AP)

Associated Press on Wednesday. He advises potential investors and teams across Europe.

If so, there could be more unheralded teams lifting trophies in small provincial towns next season.

First it was Mjällby, then weeks later Viking sealed its first Norwegian title for 34 years. That was in November, when Nordic soccer seasons end to avoid the midwinter weather.

If Mjällby was a Cinderella team that played in the third tier nine years earlier, Viking's story was the

revival of a past champion from decline.

Viking had to topple the new power in Norway, Bodø/Glimt, the Arctic Circle team that itself wrote Champions League lore this year by beating Manchester City, Atletico Madrid and Inter Milan.

Denmark made it a hat trick this month when AGF was guided to success by coach Jakob Poulsen, like Mauro Lustrinelli at Thun, a former star player who came back to his old club.

Three of the most dominant clubs

in European leagues were dethroned. Ludogorets won 14 straight titles in Bulgaria. Qarabag won 11 of the past 12 in Azerbaijan, and Ferencvaros was a seven-time defending champion in Hungary.

The new Bulgarian champion is Levski Sofia, whose previous title was 17 years ago, just weeks after the club was bought by a former Goldman Sachs investment banker, Atanas Bostandjiev.

In Azerbaijan, Sabah won its first title just nine years after the club was created. Second-place Qarabag played in the Champions League this season, and beat Benfica which led to Jose Mourinho returning to coach his former club.

There was another power shift in Hungary this spring. Ferencvaros, coached by Ireland great Robbie Keane, was edged by one point by Györi ETO, whose previous title was 13 years ago.

LASK is the new champion in Austria, which was in Salzburg's grip for a decade before the Red Bull-affiliated club went into decline three years ago.

In Romania, Universitatea Craiova won its first title since 1991, with 11-goal top scorer Assad Al-Hamrawi from the Palestinian national team.

Two of the best stories just missed a Hollywood ending in France and Scotland.

## Karl wins race to be fit in time

## Germany calls out Neuer of retirement for World Cup

BERLIN, May 21, (AP): Veteran goalkeeper Manuel Neuer has been coaxed out of retirement for the World Cup by Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann.

The 40-year-old Neuer retired after the 2024 European Championship but was included in Nagelsmann's 26-man squad on Thursday for the upcoming tournament in Canada, Mexico and the United States.

His inclusion means a demotion for Hoffenheim goalkeeper Oliver Baumann, who was assured he was the No. 1 until reports emerged in recent weeks that Nagelsmann was thinking about a Neuer recall. Up to last week, Baumann was saying his "current understanding" was that he'd be the starting goalkeeper at the World Cup.

"We told Oli in March that we had a meeting with Manu," said Nagelsmann, who acknowledged Neuer's return was "a blow" for the 35-year-old Baumann.

Asked about his communication with the players, Nagelsmann replied, "I ask for understanding that I can't go into every detail from conversations. I try to explain a lot and take people with me. Some times I manage it less well, other times better. ... From Oli's point of view there's definitely some room for improvement."

Baumann has shown over more than 500 Bundesliga appearances that he's a team player, and he's unlikely to let any personal disappointment have any impact on Germany's chances of success.

Barcelona goalkeeper Marc-André ter Stegen was seen as Neuer's natural successor but has been beset by injuries and made just two appearances for Girona after joining the club on loan in January.

Baumann has made 11 appearances for Germany, compared to 124 by Neuer, whose last game was in the Euro 2024 quarterfinals hosted by Germany, a 2-1 extra time loss to eventual champion Spain.

The clamor to include Neuer in the squad grew louder after he produced some outstanding performances for Bayern Munich, particularly against Real Madrid in the Champions League quarterfinals.

The only concern are recurring injuries. Neuer went off early during Bayern's last Bundesliga game of the season and the club said on Sunday he "must take a break for the time being because of muscular problems in his left calf." It was unsure if Neuer could play in the German Cup final against Stuttgart on Saturday.

In a bid to generate more excitement, the German soccer federation (DFB) began on Thursday morning announcing the World Cup squad one by one before Nagelsmann's scheduled announcement that afternoon.

Midfielder Joshua Kimmich was the first to have his place confirmed, followed by Deniz Undav, Nico Schlotterbeck, Kai Havertz and Bay-

ern star Jamal Musiala.

Musiala made the squad after impressing for Bayern and proving his fitness after recovering from breaking his leg at the Club World Cup in July.

"He's healthy, he's fit and will help us a lot to play a good World Cup," Neuer said of the 23-year-old Musiala.

Eintracht Frankfurt left back Nathaniel Brown will get a chance to add to his three appearances.

Bayern forward Serge Gnabry was ruled out of the tournament with injury, while young Bayern teammate Lennart Karl won his race to be fit in time.

Four-time champion Germany faces Ivory Coast, Ecuador and newcomer Curacao in Group E at the World Cup.

Preparations are due to start in the Bavarian resort of Herzogenaurach on May 27, two days later than initially planned.

The team will play warmups against Finland in Mainz on May 31, then the United States in Chicago on June 6.

"I think we're well prepared," Nagelsmann said. "We need to let our actions do the talking. That is why I'm glad that things are finally about to get underway."

**Germany:**  
**Goalkeepers:** Oliver Baumann (Hoffenheim), Manuel Neuer (Bayern Munich), Alexander Nübel (Stuttgart)  
**Defenders:** Joshua Kimmich (Bayern Munich), Nico Schlotterbeck (Borussia Dortmund), Nathaniel Brown (Eintracht Frankfurt), David Raum (Leipzig), Waldemar Anton (Borussia Dortmund), Pascal Groß (Brighton), Antonio Rüdiger (Real Madrid), Malick Thiaw (Newcastle), Jonathan Tah (Bayern Munich)

**Midfielders:** Jamal Musiala (Bayern Munich), Jamie Lewelling (Stuttgart), Aleksandar Pavlović (Bayern Munich), Nadiem Amiri (Mainz), Felix Nmecha (Borussia Dortmund), Angelo Stiller (Stuttgart), Leon Goretzka (Bayern Munich)

**Forwards:** Kai Havertz (Arsenal), Deniz Undav (Stuttgart), Maximilian Beier (Borussia Dortmund), Florian Wirtz (Liverpool), Nick Woltemade (Newcastle), Lennart Karl (Bayern Munich), Leroy Sané (Galatasaray)



Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer greets fans prior the Champions League semifinal second leg soccer match between Bayern Munich and Paris Saint Germain in Munich, Germany. (AP)

## Equestrian League heats up as riders battle in fifth round

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The fifth round of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation League will get underway at 3:00 p.m. tomorrow and run through Saturday evening at the Police Sports Federation equestrian track in Sbaahan.

The opening four rounds were claimed by British rider Nick Chaning, Ali Ahmad Al-Kharafi, Youssef Al-Naimi, and Abdulrahman Al-Fuzaie.

Now in its fifth edition since the establishment of the national federation, the league has seen Kuwait Equestrian Club rider Ali Jassem Al-Kharafi dominate, winning all four previous editions and edging closer to a fifth consecutive title ahead of the final round.

Al-Kharafi leads the riders' standings with 422 points, followed by Annaz Al-Anaz (331), Abdullah Al-Awadi (313), Fawaz Al-Subaie (223), Abdulrahman Al-Fuzaie (218), and Yara Al-Hunaidi (205).

In the team standings, Kuwait Equestrian Club sits on top with 397 points, ahead of Hawalli Club, Al-Sayed Club, and Sbaahan Club.

International judge Nizar Al-Musta-



Ali Ahmad Al-Kharafi in celebration mode following victory.

fa is overseeing the competition.

The hosting of several rounds at the Police Sports Federation track comes under a cooperation protocol between the Police Sports Federation and the Equestrian Federation, aimed at strengthening collaboration and developing equestrian sport in Kuwait.

Expansion of tournament will make the game truly global: Infantino

## FIFA's big experiment may have made the World Cup too big for its own good

MANCHESTER, England, May 21, (AP) - A supersized World Cup with more teams, more games and even more host nations than ever before leaves a big question hanging over the biggest sporting show on earth: How much is too much?

The latest edition of the World Cup - co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico - will push the boundaries of how far the most popular sport on the planet can go before it reaches breaking point.

Be it the limits of physical endurance as top players threaten strike action over an ever-congested calendar, the attention span of fans in an age of seemingly wall-to-wall televised soccer or the exorbitant prices people are prepared to pay for tickets - or even parking - the pressure points are numerous going into the June-July tournament.

With an expanded 48-team format - up from 32 - played out over nearly six weeks, some say this year's tournament risks a dilution of FIFA's most prized product.

"I personally think it's kind of taken a little bit of the excitement and quality away from the tournament and it's almost like it doesn't start until the round of 32," former U.S. forward Clint Dempsey told The Associated Press.

The expanded format has effectively removed the chance of several top teams being drawn in the same group - known as a "group of death" in soccer vernacular.

Much of the jeopardy traditionally seen in the early stages of the tournament has been removed until the round of 16 because the eight best third place teams also advance from the groups the round of 32.

"I think the biggest danger is dilution of spectacle," said Jonathan Wilson, author of *The Power and the Glory: A New History of the World Cup*.



In this file photo, FIFA President Gianni Infantino speaks during the match schedule reveal for the 2026 soccer World Cup in Washington. (AP)

"Maybe FIFA gets away with it this time because it's the first expanded tournament and because ticket prices are enormous. But eventually broadcasters and fans may stop caring if the tournament doesn't become interesting until the last 16," Wilson said. "A World Cup game should feel almost must-watch. Nobody is watching 90 out of 104 games. It's just too much."

FIFA President Gianni Infantino says the expansion of the tournament will make the game "truly global" and create opportunities for countries that "would never have dreamed to participate" in a World Cup.

The theory is that given a greater chance to qualify, more nations would increase grass roots funding and therefore improve the standard of soccer around the globe.

Four nations will be making their debut at this year's tournament, including tiny Curacao, the smallest by population ever to qualify.

"It's a big achievement for us to make it, but we also want to show that we can play and that we deserve to be there," Curacao goalkeeper

Eloy Room said.

Jordan, Cape Verde and Uzbekistan are the other debutants. Haiti has qualified for the first time since 1974.

"As children, we all watched the World Cup. We all dreamed of playing in the World Cup. But it was just a dream, a fantasy when you're a child. Qualifying and being able to participate is unimaginable," said Haiti midfielder Yassin Fortune.

There are certainly feel-good stories. Like Haiti goalkeeper Josué Duverger, who will swap regional soccer in Germany to rub shoulders with Brazil superstars like Vinicius Júnior and Neymar. New Zealand has called up defender Tommy Smith from Braintree Town, which was relegated from the fifth tier of English soccer this season.

Maheta Molango, chief executive of England's Professional Footballers' Association, has been one of the leading voices warning about the impact on top players being asked to play more and more soccer.

He says the quality of the product is being diminished and soccer should follow the lead set by the NFL and appreciate the "value of scarcity."

The NFL averages nearly \$11 billion in revenue per season from its media deals, with teams playing 17 regular season games and up to 21 if they make the Super Bowl.

The English Premier League is the world's richest and most watched soccer league in the world, yet its financial figures do not match the NFL's. Its teams play 36 games each per season and its latest domestic broadcast deal was worth \$9 billion, at current exchange rates, over a four-year period. Its international deals from 2022-25 were reportedly worth \$7.2 billion. Even combined, its yearly broadcast revenue is less than half of the NFL's.

## 'Punishment manifestly disproportionate'

### Southampton loses appeal in spying case

LONDON, May 21, (AP) - Southampton's appeal against its expulsion from the Championship playoff final because of spying offenses was dismissed.

An arbitration panel upheld the English Football League's decision to remove Southampton from Saturday's final, meaning Middlesbrough will take its place and play Hull at Wembley Stadium for the chance to win promotion to the Premier League.

The decision is final. Southampton was expelled after admitting to repeatedly spying on opponents.

It was charged earlier this month for the unauthorized filming of Middlesbrough's practice sessions ahead of their semifinal. It went on to win the two-legged tie to go within one game of promotion to the top flight.

The southcoast club subsequently admitted further breaches this season concerning games against Oxford United and Ipswich. It was also deducted four points for next season.

In its appeal, it described its punishment as "manifestly disproportionate" to any previous sanction in English soccer history.

In a long club statement, Southampton chief executive Phil Parsons had accepted "what happened was wrong" and that the club deserved to be sanctioned.

"What we cannot accept," he said, "is a sanction which bears no proportion to the offense."

The playoff final is labeled the world's richest one-off soccer match because a windfall of at least \$270 million in future earnings is on offer for the winning team.

Promotion to the top flight of English soccer - the world's wealthiest and most-



In this file photo, Southampton's Wellington, right, and Ryan Manning celebrate at the final whistle in the EFL Championship play off semifinal soccer game between Southampton and Middlesbrough in Southampton, England. (AP)

watched league - brings with it access to its multibillion dollar global broadcast deals as well as sold out stadiums for games against the biggest teams in the world like Manchester United, Liverpool and Arsenal.

Southampton was relegated from the Premier League after finishing bottom of the standings last season and was aiming to make an immediate return.

The league said the final would go ahead on Saturday, kicking off at 3:30 p.m. local time.

## More than 3,000 people working 20 hours a day

### Mexico City airport races to finish \$500m renovation as the 2026 World Cup nears

MEXICO CITY, May 21 (AP) - With the 2026 FIFA World Cup less than a month away, thousands of passengers arriving at Mexico City's Benito Juárez International Airport are greeted by a chaotic construction site of buzzing drills, scattered pipes and unfinished flooring.

The construction work coexists with hundreds of posters promoting the soccer tournament, as well as large-scale figures of soccer balls and trophies, which help passengers forget the inconveniences caused by renovations that have dragged on for a year.

Sitting beside one of the six cranes remaining at the Terminal 1 entrance, 28-year-old engineer Luis Ibarra says he isn't bothered by the renovations. After all, he noted, the airport has suffered for years from flooding, leaky roofs and severe overcrowding.

The countdown to complete one of the largest renovations at Mexico's largest airport has more than 3,000 people working 20 hours a day, airport authorities told The Associated Press.

It has not been an easy task.

One year into the renovation - with the first phase over 90% complete - complications have been "more than we expected," Adm. Juan José Padilla, general director of the Benito Juárez International Airport, told the AP. He explained that the unexpected challenges stemmed from half-century-old infrastructure and a lack of original blueprints for some areas.

"We are facing years of neglect," said Padilla, acknowledging that years of underinvestment had affected the terminals handling some 120,000 daily passengers.

Against this backdrop, work began in May 2025 on a \$500 million modernization project. The massive undertaking is fully funded by the airport itself, which has been administered by the Mexican Navy since 2023.

Project coordinator Capt. Arturo Flores noted that the massive upgrade includes new terminal facades, renovated restrooms, refreshed baggage carousels, and the replacement of nearly 100,000 square meters (1,100,000 square feet) of flooring and lighting. An internal redesign also reclaimed 30,000 square meters (320,000 square feet) of waiting space for travelers. Phase two will begin in August - following the World Cup - and run through December.

The renovations also include an increase in security cameras - rising from 2,200 to over 4,000 - which will operate using artificial intelligence to detect suspicious vehicles, luggage or individuals.

Padilla noted that an anti-drone system is also expected to be installed shortly to address any contingencies.

Earlier this month, Mexico's foreign ministry announced an agreement with the U.S. Department of Transportation to enforce the 2015 bilateral transportation pact through a new series of measures.

These measures include expanding the number of slots - the specific windows allocated for aircraft takeoffs and landings - which Washington had requested for U.S. airlines. During the previous administration, available slots at the capital's airport were slashed from 61 to 43 per hour, before ticking back up to 44 last year.

In this regard, Padilla reported that the number of slots available to both foreign and domestic airlines will soon be increased to 46.

The latest airport upgrade is a major initiative by Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, following a turbulent period under her predecessor, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who had attempted to reroute capital flight operations to a new, military-run airport in a different location - an effort that ultimately failed to gain traction.

## OKC turns tables on Spurs



San Antonio Spurs forward Victor Wembanyama (1) shoots against Oklahoma City Thunder center Isaiah Hartenstein (55) during the second half of Game 2 in the Western Conference finals NBA basketball playoffs series in Oklahoma City. (AP)

### Gilgeous-Alexander bounces back from subpar opener to score 30

OKLAHOMA CITY, May 21, (AP) - The MVP looked like the MVP again, and the Western Conference finals are knotted up.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander bounced back from a subpar series opener to score 30 points, Alex Caruso added 17 off the bench and the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the San Antonio Spurs 122-113 in Game 2.

Chet Holmgren scored 13 points and reserves Jared McCain and Cason Wallace each had 12 for Oklahoma City. The Thunder finished with a 57-25 edge in bench scoring, plus a 27-10 advantage in points off turnovers.

"I thought we all played better," Thunder coach Mark Daigneault said. "I had a quiet confidence about that. I didn't know if we'd win or lose the game, but I was pretty sure after watching Game 1 and knowing our team that we were going to come out and play

better tonight."

Stephon Castle scored 25 points for the Spurs, who got 22 points from Devin Vassell and a 21-point, 17-rebound, six-assist, four-block night from Victor Wembanyama.

Game 3 is Friday in San Antonio.

"The guys brought it tonight," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "Knowing what it would have meant if we lost this one, we brought the energy from the jump."

Isaiah Hartenstein - who barely played in Game 1 - had 10 points and 13 rebounds for the Thunder, who improved to 14-5 after a loss this season - and beat the Spurs for just the second time in seven meetings.

The win was not without cost for the Thunder, who lost guard Jalen Williams - who had already missed six games in these playoffs with a left hamstring strain - in the first half with a recurrence of the hamstring issue. The Thunder said it was tightness, but even that would figure to put his availability



Oklahoma City Thunder guard Alex Caruso celebrates after a 3-pointer during the second half of Game 2 in the Western Conference finals NBA basketball playoffs series against the San Antonio Spurs in Oklahoma City. (AP)

for Friday into doubt.

And the Spurs got banged up

as well. Already without All-Star guard De'Aaron Fox because of ankle soreness, San Antonio lost his replacement in the starting lineup - Dylan Harper - to a right leg injury after he took a couple of awkward falls in the third quarter.

Spurs coach Mitch Johnson had no update on Harper after the game, though he noted that it puts "a ton" of pressure on others when his team is down two guards.

"Obviously this team is as good as anybody at turning you over, so when you're down some of your primary creators and initiators it causes a little bit of an extra strain, whether that's who to play, what to play, what to run, etc., etc.," Johnson said. "We'll just have to be sharper in that area because it's tough fully loaded against these guys."

San Antonio was down by 11 at the half and trailed by eight going into the fourth quarter, then got within 99-97 off a corner 3-pointer by Harrison Barnes with 9:06 left.

## UEFA plans to revamp qualifying group formats for WC and Euro

GENEVA, May 21, (AP) - UEFA has proposed a revamp of qualifying for the 2030 World Cup and 2032 European Championship that could end mismatches between the strongest and weakest teams, with a format similar to the Champions League.

UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin revealed last year that reform was planned to revive interest from fans and broadcasters because many traditional men's qualifying groups had become predictable.

Lopsided recent results that provoked concern included France beating Gibraltar 14-0 in a Euro 2024 qualifying game, and Austria's 10-0 win over San Marino last year in a 2026 World Cup qualifier.

UEFA proposed creating a top tier of the 36 best-ranked teams playing in three groups of 12 with a format similar to the Champions League.

Teams in those groups would each play six games against six different opponents and be ranked in a 12-team league table. Teams would be

drawn from three different seeding pots, playing a weighted schedule of two teams from each pot.

Such a format could fit in existing FIFA-mandated schedules from September to November and would not add extra games to player workloads.

The 36 top teams would not play teams ranked Nos. 37 to 55 by UEFA, which could play games in a separate tier and also have a path through playoffs to qualifying for major tournaments.

A decision on the proposed revamp is expected in September, UEFA said after an executive committee meeting on the sidelines of the Europa League final in Istanbul, Turkey.

"The concept will be fine-tuned over the next few months before being submitted for final approval of the detailed format at the next Executive Committee meeting," UEFA said.



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Aston Villa's Morgan Rogers scores his side's third goal during the Europa League final soccer match between Freiburg and Aston Villa in Istanbul, Turkey. (AP)

# Sports

## Kuwait women's padel team strikes gold



Gold-winning women's padel team shines in podium celebration



The bronze-winning men's team.

KUNA photos

### Bronze for the men's team at Gulf Games

**DOHA, May 21, (KUNA):** Kuwait's women's padel team secured the gold medal at the fourth Gulf Games in Doha after a commanding 3-0 victory over the United Arab Emirates, with the competition running until May 22.

Saudi Arabia took the silver medal, while the UAE settled for bronze in the women's event.

In the men's competition, Kuwait defeated Saudi Arabia 2-1 to clinch the bronze medal. The UAE won gold, with Qatar finishing second to claim silver.

The Kuwaiti women delivered a dominant campaign from start to finish; re-

cording straight 3-0 wins over Bahrain, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia before sealing the title against the UAE, further strengthening Kuwait's overall medal tally and underlining the growing impact of its female athletes at the regional level.

Speaking to KUNA on the occasion, Kuwait's Ambassador to Qatar Ahmad Al-Shuraim expressed his delight at the national team's achievements and medal-winning performances.

He praised the high technical level and strong displays shown by Kuwaiti athletes throughout the pan-Gulf championship.

Deputy Head of the Kuwaiti delegation, Dr. Suad Al-Faqaan, hailed the achievement as a significant milestone that reflects the steady progress of

women's sport in Kuwait.

She praised the athletes' consistency and competitiveness across events, noting their strong contribution to Kuwait's medal haul at the Games.

Kuwaiti athletes have performed strongly throughout the competition, adding multiple medals across different disciplines and enhancing the country's presence on the Gulf stage.

Al-Faqaan highlighted that Kuwaiti women have now secured 19 medals in total – five gold, seven silver, and seven bronze – crediting their success to structure planning, continued support from the Kuwait Olympic Committee, and the athletes' determination and resilience.

## Change sweeps through Al-Qadsia as new board confirmed for 2026–2030

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The nomination process for Al-Qadsia Club elections closed on Sunday, with the "Unity List" being elected unopposed to lead the club for the 2026–2030 term.

The new board will be headed by Sheikh Mishal Talal Al-Fahad as president, with Hamad Al-Yaseen serving as vice-president. These posts are already settled, while Hassan Abu Al-Hassan is expected to be named secretary.

The list also includes Walid Al-Damkhi, Rifaa Al-Dihani, Mohammed Ma'arifi, Sami Bu Yabis, Abdulrahman Al-Yaseen, Dr. Hussein Al-Qabandi, Adnan Bu Hamad, and Salman Al-Kandari. The first board meeting will decide the distribution of executive roles and committee responsibilities.

The new lineup reflects a 45% change in membership compared to



Al-Qadsia new board.

the previous board, with several key figures stepping down, including Sheikh Khaled Al-Fahad, former head of the list and former football department chief Sheikh Fahad Talal Al-Fahad, along with Walid Al-Kandari,

Hani Al-Mulla, and Hamad Al-Basam.

New members joining the board include Sheikh Mishal Talal Al-Fahad, Walid Al-Damkhi, Sami Bu Yabis, Sualeiman Al-Kandari, and Abdulrahman Al-Yaseen.

### Salmiya welcomes Shabab

## KFA to complete season in line with AFC deadline

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: Al-Salmiya will host Al-Shabab at 7:15 p.m. on Saturday at Thamer Stadium in the opening fixture of the 16th round of the Zain Premier League.

The round continues on Sunday with Kazma facing Al-Fahaheel and Al-Nasr taking on Kuwait Club, before concluding on Monday with Al-Jahra vs Al-Arabi and Al-Tadamon vs Al-Qadsia.

Al-Salmiya head into the match looking to bounce back from a 1-2 defeat to Al-Qadsia in the previous round, a result that saw them drop to fifth place on 23 points. Bahraini coach Ali Ashour is aiming for a response as his side targets a top-four finish to secure qualification for external competitions.

Al-Shabab, seventh with 15 points, are also under pressure after being joined by Al-Nasr on the same tally, while Al-Tadamon (11 points) continues to close in ahead of the relegation phase. Al-Shabab will be eager to collect vital points to strengthen their position in the top flight and close the gap on sixth-placed Al-Fahaheel (18 points).

The Kuwait Football Association (KFA) has confirmed it will complete the remaining fixtures of the Zain Premier League 2025–2026 season, including Round 18, the championship stage, and the relegation stage, to determine the final league standings.

In a circular sent to clubs, the KFA stated that the decision complies with Asian Football Confederation (AFC) regulations,



A file photo of players in action.

which require domestic leagues to be concluded before June 30 to ensure eligibility for Asian and Gulf competitions.

The federation added that finishing the season will allow the official confirmation of final standings and the nomination of clubs for continental competitions in accordance with established criteria. Club lists for external tournaments must be submitted before the end of July.

The competition is set to resume after the national team's camp concludes on June 9 (FIFA window), with Round 18 followed by the championship group for the top six teams and the relegation group for the bottom four.

## Al-Jalahma meets Milton owners to discuss sports investment



Al-Jalahma flanked by Al-Ghanim and Al-Marzouq

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Dr. Tareq Al-Jalahma received the owners of English club Milton Keynes Dons – Fahad Ali Al-Ghanim (Chairman), Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq (Vice Chairman), and Mishal Jassim Al-Marzouq (Board Member) – to review their investment experience in English football and the club's successful promotion last season.

During the meeting, Al-Jalahma highlighted the importance of investing in youth capabilities and creating wider opportunities for emerging leaders to benefit from successful international models. He stressed that such experiences contribute to enhancing youth programs and initiatives, in line with national efforts to prepare a generation capable of actively contributing to development and future-building.

The discussions also covered potential areas of cooperation and knowledge exchange in sports management and youth development, aimed at strengthening national expertise and supporting the creation of qualified cadres to lead future initiatives.

## Villa wins Europa League to end 30-year drought

ISTANBUL, May 21, (AP): In front of the future king of England, Unai Emery reaffirmed his status as the king of the Europa League.

Aston Villa beat Freiburg 3-0 in Istanbul to secure Emery a record-extending fifth title in this competition.

Celebrating wildly inside the Tupras Stadium was lifelong Villa fan Prince William, who traveled to watch his beloved team end a 30-year wait for a major trophy.

"Amazing night!! Huge congratulations to all the players, team, staff and everyone connected to the club!" the Prince posted on X.

He had his phone out taking photos as captain John McGinn lifted the cup in the center of the field and in front of an explosion of confetti.

"He's a classy guy. He was in the dressing room before the game and he's a massive Villa fan so he was never going to miss it," McGinn told TNT Sports.

It was Villa's first major piece of silverware since winning the English League Cup in 1996 and its first continental title since lifting the European Cup and then the Super Cup in 1982.

Was the outcome ever in doubt with the ultimate Europa League specialist Emery on the sideline?

The Spanish coach has enjoyed remarkable success in Europe's second-tier competition, winning it three years running with Sevilla

from 2014-16 and again with Villarreal in 2021.

Now he has led a third team with 'Villa' in its name to the title.

"I am always very grateful for Europe, for every competition, Conference League, Champions League, Europa League, but especially Europa League," Emery said. "We fought strongly in this competition and tried to give it our best. We played in a very serious way this year."

Two brilliant first-half strikes from Youri Tielemans and Emiliano Buendia put Villa into a 2-0 lead at the break. Morgan Rogers added a third in the second half.

German team Freiburg, which was playing in the second division 10 years ago, was outclassed in its first European final.

Villa was in England's second tier even more recently, in 2019. And while it was the overwhelming favorite going into Wednesday's match, occasions like this looked a long way off when Emery was hired in 2022.

Back then, Villa was one place above the relegation zone and in danger of going down again.

The transformation he has overseen has been remarkable – leading the team into the Champions League last season and qualifying

for European club soccer's top competition again next term.

"With this manager in charge, anything's possible," said McGinn, a Scotland international. "Tonight was just everything we have built, coming together, and the pride I felt at 3-0 with 10 minutes to go, thinking we're European champions was something I can't even describe."

"It's the proudest moment and night of my career so far."

Tielemans put Villa ahead with a controlled volley from Rogers' cross in the 41st minute – driving his shot past Freiburg goalkeeper Noah Atubolu.

Three minutes into first-half stoppage time, Buendia doubled the lead with a curling left-footed shot from outside the box that arched into the top corner.

Rogers' goal in the 58th came when he slid in at the near post to divert Buendia's cross over the line.

"We had a great season and to top it off with this is amazing," Tielemans said.

Victory was further personal redemption for Emery, who was fired by Arsenal in November 2019 despite having led the team to the Europa League final earlier that year, which it lost to Chelsea.

A serial winner, he has now won trophies with clubs from three different countries, having also lifted the French title with Paris Saint-Germain.



Aston Villa players celebrate as they win the Europa League final soccer match between Freiburg and Aston Villa in Istanbul, Turkey. (AP)