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## 1 FELONY EVERY 42 MINUTES PILES PRESSURE ON PROSECUTION



### Opinion

**Ahmed Al-Jarallah**

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

## Iran shamelessly demands compensation

THE Iranian regime has included a bizarre condition in its negotiations with the United States of America (USA) – compensation from the latter and regional countries – despite the fact that Iran provoked the attack through its crimes over five decades, dragging the Middle East, USA and the world into a crisis, which affected the global economy, exacerbated inflation, and brought the specter of systematic famine to the forefront.

Earlier, we talked a lot about the stalling tactics of Iran and its attempts to force the other side into a single option – accepting the Iranian viewpoint, even if it takes years. However, this approach is no longer effective in the current international climate. The world is changing rapidly, crises are unfolding, and policies are shifting.

In the current Iranian situation, Tehran has few options to compel the world to accept its conditions regarding the nuclear program, ballistic missiles, sponsorship of terrorist groups or the payment of compensation to those who have been practicing extortion for 47 years.

The correct logic is that Iran should pay compensation to its neighboring countries, and to the countries it has destabilized -- Lebanon since 1984, Iraq since 2003, Syria since 1980, Yemen since 2011 or the Gulf states where its proxies have committed numerous acts of terrorism, directly or indirectly, from the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War up to the present day.

In international law, certain crimes like acts of terrorism have no statute of limitations. Therefore, when the Iranian regime makes compensation a condition, it is attempting to reach a regional settlement regarding its past crimes. Undoubtedly, this is unacceptable for the Arab Gulf states, which will not relinquish their legitimate demands, the most important of which are maintaining stability in the region and ending political tensions between the Arab Gulf states and Iran.

While the Gulf capitals have always avoided provoking the Iranian people due to geographic realities, the brazen demand of Iran for compensation must be met with a similar response. This means that Tehran must pay for the damages it inflicted on the Gulf states, which it attacked while they were working hard to mend the rift and prevent their territories from being used to attack Iran.

On the other hand, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz has started to cause a global food crisis. The damage will not be limited to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, as it will extend to the entire world.

In a recent report, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) at the United Nations stated that the continuous closure of the Strait of Hormuz is a shock to the global food system, and that the effects will begin to appear within six to 12 months. What does this mean?

The Tehran regime caused the starvation of millions by closing the vital waterway. If closing the waterway for 85 days led to such a crisis, its continuous closure will exacerbate the situation, hence, Iran is committing international genocide by weaponizing starvation.

Moreover, the countries affected by the global food crisis have the right to demand compensation from Iran, which must cease its intimidation tactics and stalling. In the end, Iran will face numerous financial claims, and the billions of dollars in its accounts in banks worldwide will not suffice. Its people will continue to bear the cost of the wars instigated by the current regime for decades to come.

Finally, the world must not lift sanctions on Iran and must freeze its assets until it pays compensation to the countries it has ravaged.

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# Felony wave tests Kuwait

Courts face mounting criminal caseload

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

**KUWAIT CITY, May 23: The number of felony cases that the Public Prosecution received in the first quarter of this year shows the rising workload of the judicial system daily, with dozens of criminal cases being filed round the clock.**

Therefore, the prosecution frequently conducts investigations and handles various types of cases to ensure the quick application of the law and to serve justice.

The statistics revealed that 3,081 felony cases were registered in the first three months of the year, averaging 34 cases per day or one case every 42 minutes. It is a manifestation of the enormous pressure on the investigative and prosecutorial bodies and the vital role they play in protecting society, rights and freedoms.

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HH the PM tours Terminal 1 at Kuwait International Airport during an inspection visit accompanied by Minister of Defense and Chairman of the Public Authority for Civil Aviation.

### Kuwait PM tours revamped T1, hails comeback

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Thursday paid an inspection tour to Terminal 1 (T1) at Kuwait International Airport.

He was accompanied by Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and Chairman of the

Public Authority for Civil Aviation Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.

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## S&P affirms Kuwait 'AA-/A-1+' ratings with stable outlook

KUWAIT CITY, May 23, (KUNA): The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced Friday that the international rating agency, Standard & Poor's (S&P), has affirmed Kuwait's long- and short-term sovereign credit ratings at AA-/A-1+ respectively, adding that the outlook is stable.

In a statement to KUNA, the CBK said that

the S&P report confirmed Kuwait's fiscal assets would help overcome the repercussions of the war in the Middle East region and disruption in supplies through the Strait of Hormuz.

The stable outlook indicates that the sizable fiscal and external assets that Kuwait has accumulated will help it withstand the significant risks to security and trade flows

that stem from the Middle East conflict, the agency said, according to the statement.

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## Drug smuggling goes paper thin

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff  
KUWAIT CITY, May 23: Drug dealers have resorted to modern methods, such as saturating white 'A4' printing paper with narcotics and psychotropic substances like synthetic cannabinoids and methamphetamine (crystal meth).

This is a dangerous development in drug trafficking methods. Fortunately, the anti-narcotics officers, led by Director of the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) under the Criminal Security Sector at the Interior Ministry Brigadier General Mohammad Qabazard, and his assistant, Brigadier General

Sheikh Hamad Al-Yousef, uncovered such tactic in line with their continuous efforts to track modern criminal methods used by drug dealers in an attempt to disguise themselves and escape the grip of the anti-narcotics forces.

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## Bangladesh to send 240 tonnes of food aid to Kuwait in multi-flight operation

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: Bangladesh is set to dispatch a multi-flight consignment of essential food supplies to Kuwait, marking a significant humanitarian gesture aimed at supporting the Gulf nation's strategic reserves amid ongoing regional uncertainties, according to a press release issued by the Bangladesh Embassy in Kuwait.

The first shipment is scheduled to arrive on May 25, 2026, initiating an operation that will deliver a total of 240 tonnes of key food items over several days. The initiative underscores Bangladesh's commitment to strengthening bilateral ties and extending support to friendly nations during times of need.

A high-level delegation from Bangladesh will arrive in Kuwait on May 24 to oversee the official

handover of the consignment. The delegation will be led by Foreign Adviser and Special Envoy to the Prime Minister, His Excellency Humaiun Kobir, and includes State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism His Excellency Rashiduzzaman Millat, along with the Director General (West Asia) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During the visit, the Special Envoy will deliver a letter from the Prime Minister of Bangladesh to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait. The delegation will also formally hand over the food supplies to Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

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## Bonus payouts ahead of Eid for Electricity Ministry staff

By Mohammed Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem has approved the lists of employees eligible for the excellent performance allowance.

According to a ministerial source, the ministry has completed the procedures for disbursing the first installment, which covers the majority of eligible employees, in recognition of their efforts over the past year. The amounts are expected to be deposited into employees' accounts by Sunday or Monday at the latest.

They confirmed the commitment of the minister and the undersecretary

to complete the bonus disbursements before the Eid al-Adha holidays.

In other news, the Electricity Transmission Networks Sector at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy included the supply and establishment of 31 main transformer stations in various governorates in its current fiscal year plan.

These stations will provide the electricity needed for expanding the high and extra-high voltage networks in areas with rising power demand due to annual population growth and expansion of new residential cities.

On the other hand, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) recently opened the bids for the operation and maintenance of electricity transmission networks.

Six bids were received and will be referred to the ministry for review. A technical recommendation will be prepared within 30 days of the award decision, in accordance with regulations.

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Al-Mukhaizeem

## Kuwait Dive Team leads effort to save endangered sea turtles

KUWAIT CITY, May 23, (KUNA): The Kuwait Dive Team is "committed" to protecting sea turtles in Kuwaiti waters, said the environmental NGO on Saturday.

Such commitment would serve to raise awareness efforts and maintaining marine ecological balance. Team leader Waleed Al-Fadhli told KUNA on World Turtle Day, which falls on May 23.

He added that over the past years, the Team has carried out dozens of successful rescue operations, includ-

ing turtles trapped in abandoned fishing nets, factory water intake channels, power and desalination plants, then returning them to their natural environment.

Al-Fadhli noted that the Team also treats injured turtles due to boat collisions or plastic waste ingestion before releasing them back into the sea, noting that plastic is the most dangerous waste and leads to their death and extinction.

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Kuwait Dive Team photo  
Kuwait Dive Team rescues a hawksbill sea turtle.

### Newswatch

**KUWAIT CITY:** Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs **Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah** held a phone call on Saturday with Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates **Ayman Safadi**.

In a statement, the Foreign Ministry said the two sides discussed the latest developments in the region, ongoing efforts regarding them, and ways to bolster regional and international security and stability. (KUNA)

**DOHA:** Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs **Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman** affirmed that freedom of navigation is unnegotiable, noting that closing the Strait of Hormuz will only worsen the crisis.

The statement came during a phone call with **Iran's** Foreign Minister **Abbas Aragchi** on Saturday, where they discussed the current diplomatic efforts to end the war, according to Qatar's Foreign Ministry.

Sheikh Mohammad renewed Qatar's support to ongoing efforts to resolve the crisis, noting the importance of committing to diplomatic solutions by the clashing parties to achieve peace and stability in the region. (KUNA)



**2** Kuwait's Hajj Mission set to serve pilgrims at Holy Sites



**9** ALSAYER Group publishes its Sustainability Report 2024-2025



**11** Haute and heart



**Prayer Timings**

Fajr	03:20	Asr	15:20
Sunrise	04:52	Maghrib	18:38
Zohr	11:45	Isha	20:07

## Kuwait condemns targeting of airports, power grids

NEW YORK, May 23, (KUNA): Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Human Rights Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah has reaffirmed Kuwait's unwavering commitment to the principle of distinction under international humanitarian law (IHL) to safeguard civilian life and dignity during armed conflicts.



Sheikha Jawaher

Speaking at a UN side event titled "Upholding the Principle of Distinction: Protecting Civilian Objects in Armed Conflicts," Sheikha Jawaher voiced deep concern over the erosion of com-

pliance with IHL rules.

The event was convened by Kuwait's Permanent Mission to the UN on the sidelines of the ninth annual Civilian Protection Week.

The Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs condemned the systematic targeting of critical civilian infrastructure, including airports, seaports, power grids, water networks, and food supply chains.

She underscores that recent drone and missile strikes against regional civilian targets necessitate more robust and effective international intervention.

Sheikha Jawaher reiterated the urgent need to fortify international legal frameworks, hoping the UN deliberations would yield actionable

measures and best practices to enhance compliance and mitigate civilian collateral damage.

The high-level panel was co-organized by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states, alongside the UN missions of Ireland, Portugal, Slovenia, Vietnam, Mexico, and Norway.

Key humanitarian stakeholders also backed the initiative, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UNDP, OCHA, the World Food Programme (WFP), and the Centre for Civilians in Conflict.

The assembly featured prominent virtual addresses from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and ICRC President Mirjana Spoljari Egger, alongside statements from various international diplomatic delegations.

## Kuwait slams terrorist attack on Chad, Syria

KUWAIT CITY, May 23, (KUNA): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed recently the State of Kuwait's condemnation and denunciation of the terrorist attack on a military base in Chad that killed an individual and wounded some personnel.

In a statement, the Ministry reiterated Kuwait's firm rejection of all forms of violence and terrorism, stressing support for Chad in all efforts exerted to maintain its security and stability.

The Ministry extended its sincere condolences to Chad's government and people as well as the family of the victim, wishing those injured a speedy recovery.

### Syria

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also expressed Kuwait's condemnation and denunciation of the attack on a defense ministry building in the Arab Republic of Syria, which resulted in the death of a soldier and injuries of several people.

A ministry statement reiterated the State of Kuwait's firm rejection of all shapes and forms of violence and actions targeting the safety and security of the Arab brethren state, extending its sincere condolences to the family of the victim and wishing the injured a speedy recovery.



KUNA photo

Kuwait Consul receives the head of Kuwait Hajj Mission and acting Undersecretary of Ministry of Islamic Affairs Suleiman Al-Suwailim.

## Kuwait's Hajj Mission set to serve pilgrims at Holy Sites

JEDDAH, May 23, (KUNA): The head of Kuwait Hajj Mission and acting Undersecretary of Ministry of Islamic Affairs Suleiman Al-Suwailim inaugurated Friday the headquarters and Kuwait's campaigns at the holy sites, as part of preparations to receive pilgrims from Kuwait and offer to them the best services.

Speaking to KUNA, Al-Suwailim affirmed readiness of the mission's teams to serve pilgrims in Makkah and the holy sites, underlining the need for integrated efforts among multiple committees to help pilgrims perform rituals in an easy and tranquil way.

He pointed to the ongoing follow-up on

workflow of all arrangements related to Hajj as well as organizing, health and administrative and guidance plans to ensure providing better services.

He further highlighted intensified field efforts and follow-up on the developments around the clock, affirming the need to abide by instructions and guidelines in a way that contributes to facilitating pilgrims' performance of Hajj and ensuring their safety.

Al-Suwailim expressed deep thanks to Saudi Arabia, its leadership, government and people for these efforts and integrated services as well as developed services for pilgrims.

## Kuwait, WHO discuss health system sustenance in wars



KUNA photo

Kuwait's Health Ministry Undersecretary Sheikh Dr. Salman Al-Sabah (center), World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Ghebreyesus and Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen.

GENEVA, May 23, (KUNA): Kuwait's Health Ministry Undersecretary and head of delegation to the 79th World Health Assembly Sheikh Dr. Salman Al-Sabah discussed on Friday with World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Ghebreyesus ways to sustain financing of health systems considering the increasing global and economic challenges.

This came during a meeting on the sidelines of the Assembly, where they also discussed epidemic tracking systems, and enhancing information exchange to ensure faster and more effective response.

The meeting also discussed the pandemic agreement, where Sheikh Dr. Salman affirmed Kuwait's support for international efforts aimed at strengthening a more just, cooperative, and prepared global health system to face future emergencies.

For his part, Ghebreyesus praised Kuwait's active role in supporting health and humanitarian initiatives, particularly in enhancing regional coordination.

### Elderly health

Kuwait's Undersecretary of Health Sheikh Dr. Salman Khalifa Al-Sabah affirmed Kuwait's commitment to supporting international efforts to improve elderly healthcare and quality of life.

Speaking during the 2026 World Health Organization awards ceremony at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva, Sheikh Dr. Salman said the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Award for Health Promotion for Older Persons reflects Kuwait's humanitarian legacy and support

for global health action. During the ceremony, Sheikh Dr. Salman presented the award to Professor Bruno Vellas of France and Singapore's SingHealth Group in recognition of their distinguished contributions to elderly healthcare and integrated care services.

### Iranian attacks

Kuwait welcomed the World Health Organization's adoption of a resolution condemning Iranian attacks on GCC countries and Jordan, which also affirms commitments to protect the health sector.

In a statement to KUNA, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen described the WHO resolution; backed by GCC states and Jordan and supported by 91 of 124 member states, as a "historic Kuwaiti and Gulf achievement."

Ambassador Al-Hayen explained that it is the first GCC-backed WHO resolution in 66 years and the third international resolution issued in Geneva condemning the blatant Iranian attack and affirming the rights of GCC states and Jordan. He thanked the countries that supported the resolution, stressing that it reflects a firm international stance against violations targeting health systems and vital medical facilities in the affected countries.

He said the resolution condemns the deliberate targeting of hospitals and health facilities, as well as disruptions to medicine and vaccine supplies caused by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, warning that such actions violate international law and threaten a major humanitarian and health crisis.

## 120 fined for misplaced parking

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: Kuwait Municipality announced the completion of its fifth inspection campaign conducted by supervisory teams from the Public Hygiene and Road Occupancy Departments in six governorates, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The supervisory team of the Public Hygiene and Road Occupancy Department in Jahra Municipality carried out a field campaign to detect violations related to the unauthorized use of public spaces and

to take legal action against violators.

The campaign resulted in the issuance of 120 citations for road occupancy violations, specifically for the unauthorized use of spaces in front of shops in the Jahra Industrial Area.

Kuwait Municipality emphasized the continuation of field inspections conducted by supervisory teams in all governorates, reaffirming its commitment to strictly enforcing legal measures against violators.

# Charity spike amid Eid

Kuwait, Egypt ink deal to help needy families

KUWAIT CITY, May 23, (KUNA): Kuwait continues its humanitarian activities as Eid Al-Adha approaches, with Kuwaiti charitable institutions and associations carrying out relief and development projects in several countries, in addition to signing cooperation protocols to support underprivileged and low-income families.

In Egypt, Kuwait Office for Charity Projects in Cairo and the Egyptian Zakat and Charity House signed a cooperation protocol to support underprivileged, poor, and needy families in Egypt, in the presence of Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmad Al-Tayeb and Kuwait's Ambassador to Egypt Ghanim Al-Ghanim.

The protocol was signed from the Kuwaiti side by Director of the Charity Projects Office Engineer Jamal Al-Majdali, and from the Egyptian side by Secretary-General of Zakat House Dr. Sahar Naser.

Al-Tayeb stressed the depth of fraternal relations between Egypt and Kuwait, praising their cooperation, especially in charitable and humanitarian work, and highlighting the importance of continued support for projects targeting the most needy to improve living standards and meet community needs.

Ambassador Al-Ghanim said Egyptian-Kuwaiti relations represent a model of fraternal cooperation based on mutual respect and shared destiny, noting Kuwait's commitment to humanitarian and charitable work in Egypt.

He added that coordination with Egyptian institutions, particularly Al-Azhar, enhances the effectiveness of humanitarian initiatives and ensures aid reaches beneficiaries, stressing continued cooperation in support of sustainable development and solidarity between the two peoples.

Al-Majdali told KUNA that the protocol includes a financial donation of 3.881 million Egyptian pounds (USD 73,464), provided by Dr. Majda Al-Yatama, allocated to assist students from poor and orphaned families.

He expressed appreciation to donors, stressing their essential role in sustaining humanitar-

ian and development projects and alleviating the suffering of needy families, while calling for continued support to expand charitable services and ensure a lasting positive impact.

Sahar Naser said the protocol reflects strong fraternal ties between the Egyptian and Kuwaiti peoples and their shared commitment to social solidarity, thanking Kuwait and its charitable office for supporting underprivileged families across Egypt.

Meanwhile, "Namaa Charity," affiliated with the Social Reform Society, carried out relief and development projects in Gaza and Benin to support vulnerable families.

In Gaza, the organization distributed drinking water and vegetable baskets, benefiting more than 1,000 families and over 4,000 individuals amid worsening humanitarian conditions.

The projects aim to provide essential food and water supplies and ease the suffering of affected communities facing severe shortages.

Officials said children, women, and the elderly are among the most affected by the crisis, as families struggle to secure basic necessities. Field teams continue to deliver aid in an organized manner to ensure it reaches those most in need.

## PAM restores e-services post maintenance work

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) announced the successful resumption of all its electronic services and official portals, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

PAM had announced on Thursday the suspension of all electronic services and official portals due to maintenance work. Later, PAM clarified through its X account that the exit permit service was not affected by the maintenance work and remained available on the "Sahel Individuals" and "Sahel Business" platforms.

## Embassy staff efforts in Turkiye trip hailed

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah commended the efforts of the representatives of the Embassy of the State of Kuwait in the friendly Republic of Turkiye Consul General Khalid Bader Al-Khalifa, Chargé d'Affaires Counselor Sultan Al-Arada and Hassan Al-Ajmi.

Along with the Farwaniya Governorate delegation, they attended the Atatürk anniversary and Youth and Sports Day celebrations held in Samsun Province, Turkiye.

Sheikh Athbi Nasser affirmed that the embassy staff greatly contributed to the success of the visit and depicted a positive image of Kuwait. He praised their cooperation and follow up throughout the official visit.

At the conclusion of the visit, Sheikh Athbi Nasser presented commemorative shields to the staff in appreciation of their efforts and their vital role in representing the State of Kuwait in Ankara. He wished them continuous success in their diplomatic and national duties.

He also honored Necmi Çamash, Deputy Secretary General of Samsun Municipality, by presenting a commemorative shield to him in appreciation of his coordination with the Farwaniya Governorate during the official visit.



Farwaniya Governorate photo

Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah presents a commemorative shield.

## PAFN urges public to use only approved abattoirs

KUWAIT CITY, May 23, (KUNA): Director of the Slaughterhouses Department at the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) Mohammad Al-Salem stressed on Saturday the importance of consumers using only approved slaughterhouses and avoiding random slaughtering due to potential health risks.

Al-Salem said in a press statement that the authority supervises central slaughterhouses in the governorates of Capital, Jahra, Farwaniya and Ahmadi, while ensuring implementation of approved health requirements to guarantee the safety of carcasses and consumers' health.

He added that the authority continues its



Al-Salem

environment and securing sufficient meat supplies in line with the highest standards of safety and oversight.

monitoring and awareness efforts to maintain quality and safety through precise veterinary inspections before and after slaughter to ensure carcasses are free from diseases that may affect public health.

He noted that the authority is keen on providing a safe and healthy slaughtering environment and securing sufficient meat supplies in line with the highest standards of safety and oversight.

## Other Voices

### Who sells gold, who buys it ?

By Ahmad alsarraf

FOR thousands of years, humanity's fascination with gold has never waned.

In the past century, gold has become a source of security against the uncertainties of time, driving its price up, especially in the last 25 years.

The price of an ounce of gold has exceeded \$5,000 due to increased demand from individuals, central banks, major investment managers, and hedge funds. The main reason for this is growing uncertainty surrounding stocks, bonds, and the dollar, amid ongoing instability, wars, market volatility, and a general lack of security.

This obsession with acquiring gold, combined with the scarcity of legitimate sources, has led mining operations to engage in destructive practices, with gold sometimes linked to funding terrorism, crime, and brutal civil wars in Sudan and the war in Ukraine. This has even prompted some of the most reputable institutions, including the US Mint, to have purchased gold from drug cartels, who extract it from mines operated by well-known Colombian gangs. These gangs often use mercury to extract gold from sand, which is an illegal method that is highly damaging to the environment.

These gangs, including Del Golfo, use their proceeds to maintain control over their territory. Institutions like the U.S. Mint should not be complicit in such activities. Major gold dealers supplying wealthy governments and investors have established detailed policies to prevent illicit gold from entering their supply chains. Various law enforcement agencies are responsible for enforcing these policies.

However, as a New York Times

investigation revealed, the U.S. Mint and others appear to have turned a blind eye to the purchase of gold, including unethical or illegal sources.

The U.S. Mint has been issuing Lady Liberty coins made from gold sourced from Mexican and Peruvian pawn shops, as well as from a Congolese mine partly owned by the Chinese government, according to records and interviews.

Some of the U.S. Mint's gold also comes from a company in Honduras that extracted ore from an indigenous cemetery. The Mint is able to do this through a series of technical maneuvers involving a long supply chain, and by redefining the term "American gold" to include foreign gold, provided that the foreign supplier also purchases American gold.

The widespread nature of this practice makes it difficult to control. Gold is a highly lucrative commodity, and at the other end of the supply chain, miners working in difficult conditions for a few grams of gold a day receive only about 90 percent of its market value.

Between the miner and the refinery, there is a small middleman, an exporter in Colombia, security and transportation companies, and a middleman in Texas. Each party receives a small share of the profits, leaving little by the time the gold reaches the large refinery. Since they cannot raise prices, the only way to increase profits is for everyone in the chain to process larger quantities, even if it leads to environmental damage.

In such a system, few are willing to refuse questionable supplies. As a result, the cycle continues, fueled by the anxiety that drives demand for gold. In this way, rising gold prices can contribute to illegal mining and, in some cases, may be linked to financing terrorism, drug networks, and authoritarian regimes.



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# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## The 'Jack the Wolf' game between Tehran and US

"US President Donald Trump is dealing with Iran on the principle of "Be careful, the wolf as well as his cub came to you," placing pressure on the nerves of Tehran's leaders, while they, in turn, are pressuring global markets through the disruption of the Strait of Hormuz," columnist Eng. Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"The current situation suggests a tacit understanding between both sides to maintain the status quo for as long as possible, allowing each to gain more leverage.

"This situation contains many farcical elements, but in reality, it is far more tragic. Over the weekend, the US president makes statements suggesting the imminent return of war, while at the beginning of the week, his statements aim to de-escalate tensions, reduce market volatility, and generate profits.

"Many financial observers in the United States and some major capitals have begun to suggest that Trump is seeking financial gains for himself and major investors in the US stock market, and that he has no plan to end the war.

"To date, more than two months have passed since this situation began, and it could continue even longer. However, the global economy is facing difficulties, as are local and foreign political obligations in the United States. This means that continued indecision will increase the economic and political costs for all parties involved.

"On the other hand, Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Beijing, which had hosted US President Trump just days earlier. If indications suggest that Trump's visit did not achieve its objectives, then some change is likely after Putin's return to Moscow. It appears that a plan is beginning to take shape, one that may further exacerbate the crises currently facing the world.

"This means further losses not only for the global economy but also for several political positions. Perhaps Putin's visit aims to finalize a global solution. Therefore, the current reshuffling of the cards cannot continue indefinitely.

"If President Trump, who describes himself as a deal maker, understands that any card he plays at the table loses its value, even if it is a winning one, then the world, especially US allies, will not continue to bear the heavy costs resulting from the power struggle between Tehran and Washington. America's allies also understand that Iran is no longer the formidable threat it once was after its heavy losses in the last war.

"However, US allies also understand that a drowning man will clutch at straws, meaning the Tehran regime might resort to self-destruction if it feels it can no longer control internal affairs, adopting a "me and my enemies" approach.

"Will the United States accept this option? The answer lies in the White House, and nowhere else. As the Arabic proverb says, "A moment of pain is better than a lifetime of suffering." Are the analyses and reports about the imminent conclusion of the war credible, or will we continue to hear Trump's threats?"

Also:

"Decades ago, people tended to compare themselves to a limited circle - siblings, friends, neighbors, or colleagues", certified life coach and consultant in personality science and public relations," Hala Bader Al-Humaidhi wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"Today, however, we wake up each morning to the lives of thousands of people and fall asleep every night with the same images at our fingertips. We see their travels, achievements, relationships, fitness, and "happy" moments.

"Subconsciously, this can create a sense of falling behind. This feeling has a name today - Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO).

"However, the sad truth is that it is no longer simply a fear of missing out on an event or opportunity, but it has become a fear that our own lives are ordinary or unremarkable.

"We have begun to treat stillness as boring, and staying at home as a waste of time.

"We have been conditioned to think of relaxation as a waste of energy. At times, even relationships can become more about display than real emotional connection.

"Too many people are no longer fully present. They instead rush to document every moment, as long as the "frame" isn't lost.

"The most troubling aspect of all this is that many people now feel guilty when making simple personal decisions. Choosing not to accept an invitation, turning off your phone, or taking time away to recharge can feel

like a form of self-punishment—as though life were an endless race and anyone who pauses, even briefly, has already lost.

"Have we ever stopped to ask who started this race, and why it continues without end?"

"The reality is that social media has not only created fear of missing out; it has amplified it daily through endless algorithms, flooding us with curated images that rarely reflect the full reality of life or its ordinary moments.

"The most troubling aspect of all this is that many people now feel guilty when making their own decisions. Choosing not to accept an invitation, turning off your phone, or taking time away to recharge can feel like a form of self-punishment, as though life were an endless race and anyone who pauses, even briefly, has already lost.

"This is why it can seem as though everyone is only living their best moments, while the rest of us are left to struggle with anxiety, exhaustion, and doubt.

"The truth is quite the opposite. Behind every seemingly perfect image is a person with fears, loneliness, pressures, and difficult days they do not share.

"Perhaps the greatest cost of this age of "missing out" is not wasted time, but the loss of our ability to live and experience life in a real and authentic way.

"Because the more time and attention a person spends trying to observe and participate in everything around them, the less they are able to enjoy the world itself. And in trying to be everywhere, they risk losing themselves entirely.

"In that sense, stillness today is an act of rebellion, saying, "I don't want to care about everything," "I don't need to please everyone," and "I don't need to live under constant comparison." It is simply choosing to live my own life as it is."

"Five years have passed since the passing of the great journalist and former head of the Egyptian Journalists Syndicate, Makram Mohamed Ahmed," Egyptian writer Bassam Al-Qassas wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"However, the truth is that great figures never truly disappear, as their impact remains alive in our memories, in the profession, and in the hearts of all who knew them and appreciated their human and professional value

"Makram Mohamed Ahmed was one of the most prominent journalistic figures in the Arab world, a pioneer in management, writing, and journalistic leadership. He possessed a strong personality, exceptional charisma, and a commanding presence.

"Entering his office at the Dar Al-Hilal Foundation, where he served as board chairman and editor-in-chief of Al-Musawar magazine for 24 years, was not easy for many. Makram commanded respect from everyone who dealt with him. His management of the prestigious publishing house was marked by strict discipline.

"Despite his well-known prestige, I was among the fortunate few who came to know him on both a personal and professional level. I was honored to work with him as the editor and correspondent for Al-Musawar magazine in Kuwait. That period was one of the most important in my life, both professionally and personally. Our working relationship evolved into a close, familial bond filled with affection, respect, and trust.

"I vividly remember his visits to Kuwait, where he preferred to stay at the Sheraton Hotel. However, he always made a point of having lunch at my home, a gesture I considered a great honor.

"I also cherish my visits to him in Cairo during the final years of his life, when he was Chairman of the State Information Service. I would visit his office, and he would, as always, surprise me with his generosity and warmth by taking me to his home for lunch, which was prepared by his esteemed wife, Mrs. Rawya, a model of elegance and hospitality.

"In those gatherings, I was not simply in the company of a prominent journalist or a former head of the Journalists' Syndicate; I was in the presence of a man with a generous heart, a statesman who understood the power of words, and someone whose rich experience was a constant source of inspiration.

"Today, five years after his passing, memories of him remain vivid and warm, and his name is etched in the history of Arab journalism as one of the last great figures of a bygone era who combined professional integrity with human nobility.

"May God have mercy on Makram Mohamed Ahmed and grant him paradise."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

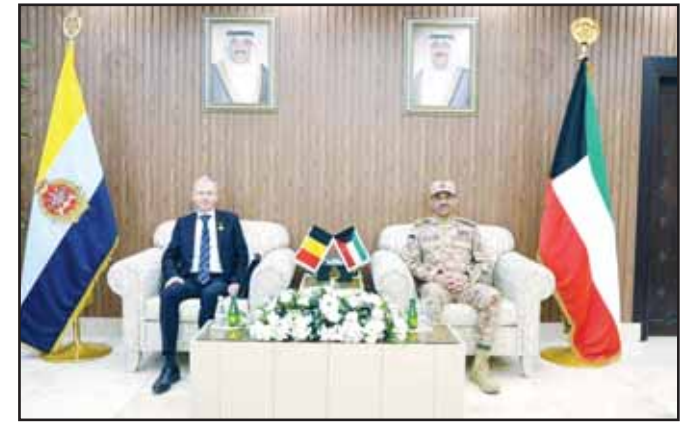


Adel Al-Kharafi

## Army Chief receives Indian, Belgian envoys



Left: Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuraian and Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Paramita Tripathi discussed topics of common interest. Right: Army Chief, Belgian Ambassador to Kuwait Christian Doods discussed joint cooperation and developing bilateral ties.



KUNA photos

KUWAIT CITY, May 23, (KUNA): Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuraian and Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Paramita Tripathi discussed topics of common interest.

Kuwait Army General Staff said in a statement that Lieutenant General Al-Shuraian received the Ambassador on Friday. Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuraian and Belgian Ambassador to Kuwait Christian Doods discussed joint cooperation and developing bilateral ties.

Kuwait Army General Staff said in a statement that Lieutenant General Al-Shuraian received Doods on Friday.



Jahra Governorate photo Governor of Jahra Hamad Al-Habashi meets agricultural officials.

## Talks focus on boost in agriculture sector

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: Governor of Jahra Hamad Al-Habashi met with Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwaiti Agricultural Engineers Association and President of the Arab Agricultural Engineers Union (AAEU) Eng. Abbas Hussein Abdul-Redha, who was accompanied by Secretary of the association Salah Jawad Behbehani.

They discussed avenues for joint cooperation in the agricultural and environmental fields, support for initiatives that contribute to developing the agricultural sector and promoting environmental sustainability, and role of agricultural engineers in supporting national development plans and to achieve food security.

Al-Habashi praised the role of the association in serving the agricultural sector and raising the efficiency of national personnel in the sector. He underscored the importance of strengthening cooperation between official bodies and civil society organizations to serve sustainable development and support initiatives with a positive impact on society.

On the other hand, Abdul-Redha expressed his appreciation for the warm reception and the interest of Jahra Governorate in supporting agricultural and professional activities and initiatives.

He affirmed that the association is keen on strengthening cooperation for the benefit of the agricultural and environmental sectors.

## Hefty fine, jail for 5 in real estate fraud

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: The Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Abdullah Al-Osaimi, convicted the owners and managers of a real estate exhibition organizing company in a real estate fraud case -- sale of fictitious chalets and projects, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

A Kuwaiti citizen, three Egyptians and a stateless person were sentenced to five years in prison with hard labor and fined KD5,316,000, while two other defendants were acquitted.

According to the case file, the defendants organized real estate exhibitions that allowed several companies to market and sell fictitious chalets in t Khairan, as well as a resort project in Egypt. This resulted in losses for a number of citizens and real estate companies that participated in the exhibitions.

Attorney Ali Al-Attar, a partner at Mishari Al-Osaimi Law Firm and Legal Consultants who represented a group of the victims and affected real estate companies in court, said the ruling affirms the responsibility of the exhibition organizers towards the victims.

He explained this responsibility is based on Ministry of Commerce and Industry Regulation No. 239/2013 about the organization of real estate exhibitions, which the defense team consistently insisted since the complaints were filed.

He added that the ruling is a significant step towards protecting the victims of fraudulent real estate exhibitions, emphasizing the necessity of enforcing court rulings and applying the law to ensure the restoration of the rights of real estate companies and all those affected.

## Inflammable items in cars to ignite fire: KFF

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) posted an awareness video on its X account titled "We Are Concerned About Your Safety," warning about the dangers of leaving heat-sensitive containers and devices inside cars under direct sunlight, as this could lead to fires, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

KFF urged vehicle owners not to leave pressurized containers, power banks, or other heat-sensitive materials inside their vehicles, emphasizing that doing so could pose serious safety risks.

# Officer jailed 4 yrs for forgery

Al-Dabbous gets 6 months

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: The Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Al-Dhuwaih Al-Dhuwaih, with Judges Ibrahim Khuraibat and Faisal Al-Khudair as members, sentenced a military officer assigned in the Deportation Department to four years in prison with hard labor, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The officer was convicted of forging an official document -- a letter of appeal purportedly from the Director of the Criminal Enforcement Department and addressed to the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior -- to overturn the deportation orders against two expatriate sisters in exchange for financial gain.

Case files indicate that the defendant exploited his position in the Deportation Department to expedite procedures for two expatriate women who received deportation orders.

He prepared a forged letter of appeal, falsely attributing it to the Director of the Criminal Enforcement Department, with the intention to submit it to the relevant authorities to overturn the deportation orders.

The investigation proved that the defendant

received payment for expediting the transaction before the incident was discovered.

He was referred to the Public Prosecution, which charged him with forgery of an official document and obtaining illicit benefit through it.

After reviewing the case and hearing the defense arguments, the court concluded that the charges against the accused were proven and sentenced him to four years imprisonment with hard labor, effective immediately.

Al-Dabbous jailed 6 mths: The Court of Appeals issued rulings in several cases related to social media posts, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Fadel Al-Dabbous was sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labor for insulting the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior on social media platforms.

In another case, the court overturned a three-year prison sentence imposed on a Twitter user accused of spreading false news and insulting the Arab Republic of Egypt and acquitted him of the charges.

The court also upheld the acquittal of Dr. Fahad Al-Shalimi in a case, in which he was charged with insulting Yemen, based on a video clip that spread on social media.

## 'Habib Munawar' road for repairs

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: The General Traffic Department announced the complete closure of Mohammad Habib Al-Munawar Street between Al-Salam and Hittin in both directions as part of road maintenance and repair works, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The closure includes the lane extending from the entrance of King Fahad bin Abdulaziz Road to the Hittin roundabout at the intersection with Al-Salam Road, as well as the opposite direction from the roundabout to the exit of King Fahad bin Abdulaziz Road.



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# Kuwait, UNCRC boost co-op to safeguard children in conflicts

Officials review capacity-building, curbing violations

**NEW YORK, May 23, (KUNA):** Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs, Ambassador Sheikha Jawaher Ibrahim Duaij Al-Sabah discussed Thursday with Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict Vanessa Fraser means of enhancing cooperation to protect children affected by the armed conflicts mainly in the areas of monitoring and building capacities.

This came in a meeting held between both sides at Kuwait's Mission to the UN on the sidelines of Sheikha Jawaher's participation in the 9th Protection of Civilians Week on June 18-22.

They also reviewed the most prominent international efforts exerted to safeguard children



KUNA photo  
Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs, Ambassador Sheikha Jawaher Ibrahim Duaij Al-Sabah, with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Children and Armed Conflict, Vanessa Fraser.

in armed conflicts and back precautionary approaches which contribute to curbing grave violations committed against children, along with areas of cooperation.

During the meeting, Sheikha Jawaher reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to fulfilling its obligations, under with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), noting that the country is paying much attention to the protection of children in conflicts and crises through the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict that aims to protect children from recruitment and use in hostilities.

Kuwait is supporting Fraser's mandate and lauded her office's efforts in promoting prevention and coordination with member states and UN partners.

The meeting stressed continued common coordination and discussing cooperation opportunities in a way that contributes to safeguarding children in armed conflicts contexts and backs UN relevant efforts.

## Crown Prince, PM extend wishes

### Kuwait's Amir congratulates Yemen Pres on National day

**KUWAIT CITY, May 23, (KUNA):** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Friday a cable of congratulations to the head of the Presidential Council President Dr. Rashad Al-Alimi on the occasion of his country's national day.

His Highness the Amir wished President Al-Alimi and his people more progress, development, stability and peace nationwide.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah,

sent a congratulatory cable on Friday to the head of the Presidential Leadership Council of Yemen President Dr. Rashad Al-Alimi on the occasion of his country's national day, wishing him long-lasting health.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, sent a congratulatory cable on Friday to the head of the Presidential Leadership Council of Yemen President Dr. Rashad Al-Alimi on the occasion of his country's national day.



KUNA photo  
Officials from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Chalhoub Group during the organization of the dialogue session.

## OCHA, Chalhoub boost partnerships

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in cooperation with the Chalhoub Group, organized a dialogue session on supporting the global humanitarian response and its partnership with the private sector.

The session was held with the participation of representatives from the Kuwaiti private sector and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

OCHA representative in the country Nour Al-Qattan told KUNA that the dialogue session comes amid increasingly complex humanitarian crises around the world and

the need for more coordinated and effective partnerships between the humanitarian and private sectors.

She added that Kuwait has always been an active humanitarian partner on a global scale, noting that the current phase represents an important opportunity to enhance the role of the Kuwaiti private sector in supporting global humanitarian action.

Al-Qattan pointed out that the session reviewed current humanitarian priorities and possible cooperation areas, in a way that enhances the private sector's contribution in supporting humanitarian efforts. (KUNA)

## Guidance center boosts inmate reform efforts



KUNA photo  
Officials at correctional facilities during the opening.

**KUWAIT CITY, May 23, (KUNA):** Acting Director General of Kuwait's correctional institutions Brigadier General Osama Al Majed said Thursday that opening the guidance center at these institutions comes as part of an integrated humanitarian and reform-oriented vision which aims to strengthen rehabilitation and counseling programs for inmates and supporting pathways for their reintegration into society.

In a press statement, Al Majed added the center, which is the result of cooperation among the General Administration of Correctional Institutions, the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Namaa charity, shows the importance of societal partnership in supporting humanitarian and reform efforts.

The center embodies keenness on developing awareness and guidance programs inside these institutions in a way that rehabilitates the inmates' psychological, social and religious aspects, he added.

Meanwhile, Abdulaziz Al-Kandar, Namaa executive president, told KUNA in a statement that this step reflects the faith of all in the importance of investment in humans and giving inmates an opportunity to correct path and build a better future for them and their families.

Rehabilitation and guidance centers are a main pillar in the modern reform system due to its key role in enhancing inmates' spiritual, psychological, and behavioral aspects, he noted.



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## Missing persons efforts hailed

### Kuwait a 'humanitarian beacon,' says outgoing ICRC chief to GCC

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 23:** Head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delegation to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations Mamadou Sow announced his departure from Kuwait after four remarkable years.

He expressed gratitude for the humanitarian cooperation achieved with Kuwait, while feeling sad about leaving the friends he had made during his tenure, which included government officials, Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff and journalists.

He said the past four years coincided with major crises and conflicts in the region, beginning with the war in Gaza and the developments in Lebanon, Syria and Sudan. He added that Sudan has become one of the world's largest humanitarian hotspots, with more than 11 million internally displaced persons, including four million outside the country.

He emphasized that during those years, Kuwait emerged as the major supporter of the ICRC and international humanitarian law, describing it as the "humanitarian beacon" in a region facing difficult circumstances. He affirmed that this support had a profound impact on the work of ICRC and those affected by wars.

He asserted that due to Kuwait's support, they were able to provide humanitarian aid in Sudan, Lebanon, Syria and Somalia, in addition to the flexible support that enabled the ICRC to respond to other crises around the world.

Asked about his assessment of the relationship with Kuwait, he affirmed that the relationship was strong before his arrival but became even stronger today.

He cited the high-level strategic dialogue held with Kuwait last year, the visit of the ICRC President and Director General to Kuwait, and the signing of several partnership agreements with Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS).

Regarding the issue of missing persons, he stressed that it is a top priority for the ICRC, explaining that while war may end for many when the ceasefire is declared, it does not end for the families of the missing, who continue to search for answers.

He said the ICRC continues to work with the Iraqi authorities, with the support of international partners from the United States, Britain, France, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, using modern technology and advanced search methods to locate the missing.

He revealed that discussions are underway with the State of Kuwait to benefit from its 35 years of experience in the missing persons file, with the aim of transferring this expertise to other countries, particularly in the Arab world. He indicated that Kuwait has made significant progress in the use of



Photo by Samer Shiqer  
Mamadou Sow, Head of the ICRC delegation to the GCC.

DNA, modern technology, and legal legislation in dealing with the missing persons issue.

He stressed that Kuwait played a crucial global role in addressing the issue, especially through its advocacy for the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2474 on missing persons during armed conflicts. He confirmed that work is still ongoing on the technical aspects of the proposed project.

He praised the historical role of Kuwait in charitable and humanitarian work since the 1970s, emphasizing that Kuwaiti institutions and associations continue to play this role up to this day.

He disclosed that his successor is Swiss national Anne Montavon, who will become the first woman to head the ICRC delegation in Kuwait. He affirmed his confidence in her ability to strengthen relations with the Kuwaiti society.

He asserted that Kuwait is distinguished by the openness of its people and the ease of communication with various segments of society, advising his successor to participate in diwanias (traditional Kuwaiti gatherings), familiarize herself with Kuwaiti culture, visit Souq Al-Mubarakiya (a traditional Kuwaiti market), and enjoy the high quality of life in the country.

He indicated that the Kuwait office was the first ICRC office in the GCC countries, established 35 years ago, and that the ICRC expanded through it, opening offices in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar.

Regarding recent Kuwaiti support for the ICRC, he said the Kuwaiti government contributed \$7.7 million to support humanitarian activities in Syria, while the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) provided \$2.5 million to support humanitarian operations in Somalia, and KRCS contributed \$ 2 million to support Sudan.

He added that the ICRC is currently in discussions with the Direct Aid Society, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri Charity Society and Kuwait Relief Society regarding support for humanitarian operations in Gaza.

## Biodiversity vital to sustainability: EPA

**KUWAIT CITY, May 23, (KUNA):** The Environment Public Authority (EPA) affirmed on Friday the importance of preserving natural diversity to protect the country's biodiversity, given its fundamental role in environmental stability and the sustainability of life.

On the International Day for Biological Diversity, Director of Public

Relations and Media at EPA, Sheikha Al-Ibrahim, told KUNA that this global occasion, designated by the United Nations, aims to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity, support sustainable development, and commemorate the adoption of the Convention on Biological Diversity at the Rio de Janeiro Summit in 1992.

## Al-Jalahma orders tough action against property abuse

## Social Affairs launches director review system

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: The Ministry of Social Affairs will implement a quarterly evaluation system for directors, requiring them to submit periodic reports on their performance and achievements to the minister.

According to informed sources, directors' continued tenure will depend on their level of performance and their contribution to developing administrative and technical operations within the ministry.

The evaluation will include measuring operational efficiency, submitting analytical reports on challenges and recommendations, and proposing improvements and streamlined administrative procedures, in line with Civil Service Commission (CSC) regulations.

## Youth Minister inspects sports facility encroachments



Kuwait's Minister of State for Youth and Sports Affairs, Dr. Tariq Al-Jalahma, leads a field tour of a number of violating sites.

KUWAIT CITY, May 23, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of State for Youth and Sport Dr. Tariq Al-Jalahma underlined on Thursday that it is a shared national responsibility to safeguard state assets.

Speaking to KUNA during a field tour to check efforts to address encroachments on several sports facilities, Al-Jalahma said it is essential to resolutely act against any property breach or abuse that could affect the role of sports installations.

He added that the field tour came under the direction of protecting and safeguarding public properties and ensuring that they are properly used for relevant purposes within integrated efforts to strengthen abidance by law and keep public utilities intact.

The minister noted that during the field tour he had monitored several encroachment and that the necessary legal and administrative action was taken as per regulatory frameworks, affirming that law applies to everyone with utter transparency and justice.

Continued from Page 1

## Felony wave

January recorded the highest number of cases received with 1,216, followed by March with 1,024 and February with 841.

Attorney Inam Haidar affirmed that these figures reflect the immense responsibility on the shoulders of the prosecution and its important role in conducting investigations and handling criminal cases round the clock.

She stated that the prosecution is the first line of defense in terms of protecting society and enforcing the law through the swift handling of incoming reports and cases and taking legal measures against the accused, thus, ensuring justice is served while safeguarding rights and freedoms.

Attorney Abdulmohsen Al-Qattan said the continuous success of the prosecution in handling such high volume of cases confirms the efficiency of the judicial system and its legal personnel and their ability to handle various types of cases in an efficient and professional manner.

He added that the figures recorded during the first quarter of the year proved the significant workload undertaken by the prosecution, praising the efforts exerted in expediting case processing and follow up.

## Bonus payouts

The project is in line with the goal of the ministry to modernize the transmission network to guarantee its readiness to handle rising demand and challenges, particularly during summer.

## Bangladesh to

Bangladesh's Ambassador to Kuwait, Major General Syed Tareq Hussain, OSP, awc, psc will join the delegation in all official engagements, including the symbolic hand-over ceremony.

Officials said the initiative reflects the enduring friendship and strong cooperation between Bangladesh and Kuwait, highlighting Dhaka's proactive role in humanitarian support efforts amid regional volatility. Additional consignments are expected to follow in the coming days to ensure timely delivery of supplies.

## Drug smuggling

The ministry announced that DCGD arrested an Asian man in possession of 10 'A4' papers saturated with synthetic cannabinoids in a case that revealed new criminal methods in drug trafficking and disguising operations, as a result of ongoing security efforts exerted by the Criminal Security Sector to combat drugs and track down drug dealers.

The ministry disclosed that the accused was found in possession of five grams of methamphetamine (crystal meth) for trading and personal consumption, affirming that legal measures were taken against the accused and he was referred to the concerned authorities, along with the confiscated substances.

Saturating papers with psychoactive substances is one of the most dangerous new methods in drug traf-

ficking operations due to its ability to conceal narcotics inside seemingly ordinary papers. This reveals the extent of the development of criminal methods adopted by drug trafficking networks in their attempt to target young people, harm the society and destabilize national security.

The ministry stressed that its intensive security campaigns will continue in order to discover the latest criminal methods in smuggling and trafficking narcotics, adding that securitymen are on the lookout for anyone who dares to compromise the security of the nation or tamper with the safety of society.

## S&amp;P affirms

"Our outlook is based on our expectation that these disruptions will not be prolonged and that the regional security situation will gradually normalize - subject to intermittent disruptions--through the second half of 2026, as exports through the Strait of Hormuz resume," it pointed out.

On economic growth forecasts, the agency, in light of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and the resulting decline in oil production, expected a contraction in real GDP of around two percent in 2026.

Following a temporary contraction in growth in 2026, it expects real GDP growth to rebound to about three percent over 2027-2029, supported by a recovery in oil production and large-scale investment programs in non-oil sectors, it stated.

"Because of high expenditure, we estimate that Kuwait's headline fis-

cal deficits will remain elevated, at about 14 percent of GDP on average from 2026-2029," it noted.

It referred that expedited reforms should help achieve growth momentum and fiscal consolidation in the medium term.

The exchange rate regime of Kuwait dinar has historically helped the country manage inflation, it stressed.

The agency projects that consumer price index inflation will remain modest, at about percent over 2026-2027 because some prices are administered.

It indicated that, in April, the government issued a decree that introduced financial facilities and direct support for suppliers (covering higher insurance and shipping costs), to guarantee the continuous flow of essential goods without price increases.

The S&P assumes no obligation to update the Content following publication in any form or format.

Recent reforms and banks' expansion outside the country have spurred lending, so that the banking sector's annualized lending book widened by 7.6 percent in the first quarter of 2026, it showed.

Banks have retained their strong net external asset positions and are well positioned to cope with the risk of capital outflows under a severe stress scenario, it said.

The central bank's recent relief measures focused on enhancing banks' access to liquidity and providing temporary flexibility in regulatory requirements, which will also help banks navigate the current turbulence, it concluded.

## Kuwait Dive

Beach cleaning and removal of plastic and harmful waste, such as on the islands of Qaruh and Umm Al Maradim; which are natural refuge and nesting sites for turtles, are key within an inclusive awareness "strategy," he noted.

Al-Fadhli confirmed the team's cooperation with government entities and volunteer groups in this regard to unify efforts and apply environmental laws that prohibit hunting turtles or harming their natural habitat.

He called on citizens, sea-goers, and fishermen to be cautious, avoid throwing waste and fishing nets into the sea, and immediately report any sea turtle in danger to ensure a swift rescue.

## Kuwait PM

During the tour, His Highness the Prime Minister listened to a detailed explanation from officials on reforms, development and renovation works made at the terminal in the aftermath of heinous Iranian attacks early March.

His Highness the Prime Minister held a meeting with aviation officials on the latest developments of operation plans, inter-body collaboration mechanisms and precautionary measures to ensure smooth air traffic, passenger movement and high safety and security standards.

Speaking to reporters, Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah said the reoperation of the airport is a significant step towards a complete reopening of this vital facility, speaking highly of recent great efforts and response to relevant reflections. (KUNA)

## Exams on track

## KU monitors aptitude test

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: The acting Vice President for Academic Affairs, Professor Abdulrahman Al-Sulaili, and the Assistant Vice President for



Al-Sulaili

Assessment and Measurement, Dr. Sulaiman Ali Al-Rifai, inspected the testing process at its various locations within Sabah Al-Salem University City, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

They reviewed the organizational procedures and the level of preparedness in the halls and laboratories, and met with members of the supervising committees to ensure the smooth conduct of the tests in accordance with established regulations.

The university affirmed that organizing the academic aptitude test is part of its strategic commitment to quality, through developing the assessment and measurement system and enhancing the efficiency of procedures.

The tests were conducted in two sessions, with the first session from 9:00 am to 11:00 am, and the second session from 12:00 noon to 2:00 pm, amid comprehensive administrative and technical organization to ensure the smooth running of the testing process.



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Water is sprayed on a tank that overheated at an aerospace plant in Garden Grove, Calif on May 22. (AP)

### 40,000 under evacuation orders for chemical tank leak in S. Calif

Authorities in Southern California on Friday were racing to figure out how to prevent the explosion of a storage tank that has been leaking a hazardous chemical used to make plastic parts, as some 40,000 people were under evacuation orders in the area.

A storage tank holding between

6,000 and 7,000 gallons (22,700 and 26,500 liters) of methyl methacrylate overheated Thursday and began venting vapors into the air at an aerospace plastics facility in Garden Grove, a city in Orange County, the local fire authority said.

The tank could fail and crack,

releasing the chemical onto the ground, or it could explode, Orange County Fire Authority Division Chief Craig Covey said Friday.

"This thing is going to fail, and we don't know when," Covey said. "We're doing our best to figure out when or how we can prevent it." (AP)

## Gabbard resigns as director of nat'l intelligence, citing husband's health

WASHINGTON, May 23, (AP): Tulsi Gabbard resigned as President Donald Trump's director of national intelligence on Friday, saying she needed to step away as her husband battles cancer. She is the fourth Cabinet official to depart during Trump's second term.

In her resignation letter, which she posted on social media, Gabbard said she told Trump she would leave office on June 30. She said her husband had recently been diagnosed with a rare form of bone cancer and "faces major challenges in the coming weeks and months."

"At this time, I must step away from public service to be by his side and fully support him through this battle," she wrote in the letter, which was earlier reported by Fox News.

Trump, in his own social media post announcing her resignation, said "Tulsi has done an incredible job, and we will miss her." He said her principal deputy, Aaron Lukas, will serve as acting director of national intelligence.

During Trump's first term, Lukas was as an intelligence aide to the acting director of national intelligence, Ric Grenell, in 2020. A former policy analyst at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, he also served as deputy senior director for Europe



Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard listens during the Senate Committee on Intelligence hearings on Capitol Hill on March 18, in Washington. (AP)

and Russia at the National Security Council in the final year of Trump's previous administration.

There had been rumblings that Gabbard would split with Trump after the president's decision to strike Iran, which caused some division within his administration. Joe Kent, the director of the National Counterterrorism Center, announced his resignation in March, saying he "cannot in good conscience" back the war.

Gabbard, a veteran and former Democratic congresswoman from Hawaii, built her political name on her opposition to foreign wars. This put her in an awkward position when the US joined Israel in launching attacks on Iran on Feb. 28.

During a congressional hearing in March, her measured comments were notable for their careful non-endorsement of Trump's decision to strike Iran.

### 'Surprise change to a longstanding policy'

## Trump administration to force foreigners in US to apply for green card abroad

WASHINGTON, May 23, (AP): Foreigners in the US who want a green card will need to leave and apply in their home country, the Trump administration announced Friday, in a surprise change to a longstanding policy that sowed confusion and concern among aid groups, immigration lawyers and immigrants.

For over half a century, foreign nationals with legal status have been able to apply for and complete the entire process for permanent residence in the United States - including individuals married to US citizens, holders of work and student visas, and refugees and political asylum seekers, among others.

The announcement from US Citizenship and Immigration Services said foreigners who are in the US temporarily and who want to apply to become lawful permanent residents, or green card holders, have to return home and apply there, except in "extraordinary circumstances."

USCIS officers would decide whether applicants meet those.

"Nonimmigrants, like students, temporary workers, or people on tourist visas, come to the US for a short time and for a specific purpose. Our system is designed for them to leave when their visit is over. Their visit should not function as the first step in the Green Card process," the agency said in a statement.

It is the latest step by the Trump administration making legal immigration more difficult for foreigners already in the US and for those hoping to come here.

"The goal of this policy is very explicit. Senior officials in this administration have said over and over that they want fewer people to get permanent residency because permanent residency is a path to citizenship and they want to block that path for as many people as possible," said Doug Rand, a former senior advisor at USCIS during the Biden administra-



An information packet and an American flag are placed on a chair at the US Citizenship and Immigration Services Miami Field Office on Aug 17, 2018, in Miami. (AP)

tion, who added that about 600,000 people already in the US apply each year for a green card.

USCIS did not say when the

whether the policy impacts foreigners whose green card applications are already underway.

In an emailed statement to the Associated Press the agency said people who provide an "economic benefit" or "national interest" could likely stay in the US while others would have to go abroad to apply.

The changes come on top of steps the administration has already taken to restrict and limit entry for people from dozens of countries. In some cases, there are outright bans on travel from those countries, while people from others face pauses in visa processing. Experts and attorneys warned that forcing people from those countries to return home to apply for a green card would result in them being barred from coming back.

"If families are told that the non-citizen family member must return to his or her country of origin to process their immigrant visa, but immigrant visas are not being processed

there, it's a Catch-22. These policies will effectively create an indefinite separation of families," wrote World Relief, a humanitarian and refugee resettlement organization.

USCIS described the change as a return to "the original intent of the law" and closing a "loophole."

But immigration lawyers and aid groups pushed back, saying it was longstanding practice for many groups to be able to adjust their status in the US and that many people couldn't return home because it wasn't safe or they had no embassy to apply at. The US Embassy in Afghanistan, for example, has been closed since the US pullout in August 2021.

"USCIS is trying to upend decades of processing of adjustment of status," said Shev Dalal-Dheini, senior director of government relations at the American Immigration Lawyers Association. "This all applies very broadly to anyone seeking a green card."

## Carney vows better Canada after Alberta plans a vote on seeking independence

TORONTO, May 23, (AP): Prime Minister Mark Carney said Friday he's determined to build a better Canada after the leader of the country's oil-rich province of Alberta announced a public vote on whether to move toward independence.

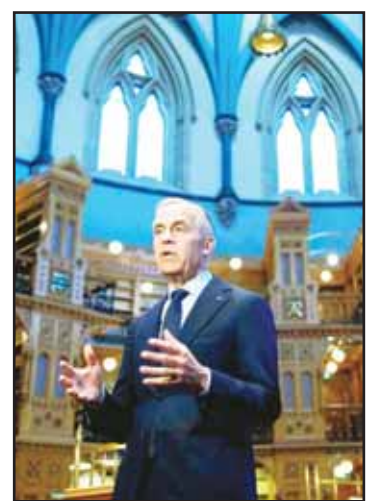
Alberta Premier Danielle Smith said Thursday a vote would be held Oct. 19 on whether Alberta should stay in Canada or take legal steps under the Constitution to hold a binding referendum on leaving. That fell short of the wishes of activists who have been seeking an immediate referendum on separating from Canada.

Carney, in his first remarks since Smith's announcement, said Albertans have made huge contributions to Canada.

"Canada is the greatest country in the world, but it can be better and we are working on making it better. We're working with Alberta on making it better," Carney said while touring the Parliament buildings which are under renovation.

Carney noted his government is working on getting a new oil pipeline built from Alberta to Canada's Pacific coast. Many Albertans have long complained that Ottawa hasn't done enough to get Alberta's vast oil reserves to Asian markets.

Smith reiterated Friday that she supports Alberta remaining in Canada. Some have compared her stance to the one of Britain's then-Prime Minister David Cameron ahead of the Brexit referendum, which he embraced as a way to manage a vocal faction of his ruling party while not



Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney makes a statement in the Library of Parliament in Centre Block on Parliament Hill, in Ottawa, on May 22. (AP)

wanting the U.K. to leave the European Union.

"I believe Canada is working better everyday and that it can work even better in the future," Smith said.

"I have seen enough from the directional change that we have with the new prime minister who is prepared to work with us. He is prepared to give Albertans hope again."

A "yes" vote in a referendum would not trigger independence. Negotiations with the federal government would have to take place.

Ian Brodie, a former chief of staff to ex-Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper and now a political science professor at the University

of Calgary, said Smith appears to be proceeding very carefully.

"A vote to see if people even want a vote. It's a good way to let the swing voters swing against separation," Brodie said.

Jeff Rath, the lawyer for Stay Free Alberta, the group that collected signatures to try to force a separation referendum, called the move an insult to those seeking independence. Cam Davies, leader of the pro-independence Republican Party of Alberta, agreed and called Smith's referendum question "spineless."

Smith said separatists who are upset that a binding vote on quitting Canada has been put off should focus on the fall referendum rather than campaigning to force a review of her job.

Smith said calling a binding referendum this fall just isn't feasible. Last week, a judge threw out the Stay Free Alberta petition, and Smith promised an appeal.

"With the recent court ruling there is no legal way to hold a binding separation referendum," Smith said. "It would have been struck down in a matter of weeks."

Daniel Béland, a political science professor at McGill University in Montreal, said a possible future referendum is likely to lose as support for separation is slightly less than 30%, but he said campaigns do matter.

Béland noted Smith's party didn't run on or mention a referendum in the last provincial election campaign.



United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio, (center), attends a meeting of the North Atlantic Council in NATO foreign ministers format in Helsingborg, Sweden on May 22. (AP)

## NATO allies bewildered by Trump's about-face on US troop moves in Europe

HELSEBORG, Sweden, May 23, (AP): NATO allies and defense officials expressed bewilderment Friday at US President Donald Trump's announcement that he would send 5,000 US troops to Poland just weeks after ordering the same number of forces pulled out of Europe.

The apparent change of mind came after weeks of statements from Trump and his administration about reducing - not increasing - the US military footprint in Europe. Trump's initial order set off a flurry of action among military commanders and left allies already doubtful about America's commitment to Europe's security to ponder what forces they might have to backfill on NATO's eastern flank

with Russia and Ukraine.

Earlier this month, the Trump administration said it was reducing levels in Europe by about 5,000 troops, and US officials confirmed about 4,000 service members were no longer rotating into Poland from Germany. The dispatch to Germany of US personnel trained to fire long-range missiles was also halted.

But in a post on Truth Social on Thursday, Trump said he would now send "an additional 5,000 Troops to Poland," citing his strong ties with Polish President Karol Nawrocki, whom Trump endorsed in elections last year.

"It is confusing indeed, and not always easy to navigate," Swedish Foreign Minister Maria Malmer

Stenergard told reporters Friday at a meeting she was hosting of her NATO counterparts, including U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

Ministers from the Netherlands and Norway were sanguine about Trump's latest move, as was Latvian Foreign Minister Baiba Braze, who said allies knew the U.S. troop "posture was being reconsidered, and now there is no change of posture. For now."

US defense officials also expressed confusion. "We just spent the better part of two weeks reacting to the first announcement. We don't know what this means either," said one of two officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive military matters.

## Pope Leo XIV visits Italy's 'Land of Fires'

ACERRA, Italy, May 23, (AP): Pope Leo XIV on Saturday greeted one by one families who lost loved ones to illegal toxic dumping in an area near Naples, as many paused to share photographs and other mementos of children and young people who have died or are battling cancer - illnesses tied to a multi-billion criminal racket run by the mafia.

Leo's visit to the so-called Terra dei Fuochi, or Land of Fires, came on the eve of the 11th anniversary of Pope Francis' big ecological encyclical Laudato Si (Praised Be), and indicates Leo's commitment to carry on his predecessor's environmental agenda.



Pope Leo XIV leaves Calipari Square at the end of his pastoral visit in Acerra, near Naples, Italy on May 23. (AP)

### Europe

**Ukraine drone attack sparks fire at oil depot:** A Ukrainian drone attack caused a fire at another Russian oil terminal overnight, local officials in Russia's Krasnodar region said Saturday, in what appeared to be the latest attack on Moscow's vital oil industry.

Authorities in the city of Novorossiysk said falling drone debris sparked a fire at an oil terminal, injuring two people, without naming the facility. (AP)

**Hungary plant explosion kills 1:** An explosion at a petrochemical plant in Hungary on Friday killed

one person and injured several others, according to a statement by Hungarian energy company Mol Group, which owns the plant.

The explosion in Tiszaujváros, in eastern Hungary, occurred during a restart of the plant following maintenance, Prime Minister Péter Magyar said in a post on social media. He added that seven people had suffered burn injuries during the blast.

Five helicopters transported the injured to hospitals in the cities of Miskolc and Debrecen, according to Minister of Economy and Energy István Kapitány. (AP)

'Short range ballistic missile successfully test-launched'

## Rubio arrives in India ahead of Quad talks as US tries to reset strained ties

NEW DELHI, May 23, (Agencies): US Secretary of State Marco Rubio arrived in India on Saturday ahead of a meeting next week with his counterparts from India, Australia, and Japan, members of the Indo-Pacific strategic alliance known as the Quad.

Rubio's first official trip to India comes as Washington seeks to stabilize relations with New Delhi after ties soured over President Donald Trump's tariff policies, which raised duties on several Indian exports.

Much of Rubio's four-day visit, however, will focus on a multi-city tour, along with a gala reception in New Delhi marking the 250th anniversary of US independence.

"There's a lot to work on with India, they're a great ally and partner. We do a lot of good work with them so this is an important trip," Rubio said ahead of his visit to India.

Rubio arrived in eastern city of Kolkata early Saturday where he is later scheduled to visit Mother House, the headquarters of the Missionaries of Charity, founded by Mother Teresa. In coming days, he will also visit northern cities of Agra and Jaipur, known for iconic monuments and palaces.

Sergio Gor, the US ambassador in India, in a social media post said Rubio will call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi later Saturday in New Delhi. "Trade, Technology, Defense, QUAD, and many other items to discuss and advance over the next few days!" he said.

He is also scheduled to hold a bilateral meeting with India's External



United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio speaks to Indian officials before boarding his plane to New Delhi at Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport in Kolkata, India on May 23. (AP)

Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar on Sunday.

On Tuesday in New Delhi, Rubio will participate in the ministerial

meeting of the Quad that has repeatedly accused China of flexing its military muscles in the South China Sea and aggressively pushing its maritime territorial claims.

Beijing maintains that its military is purely defensive to protect what it says are its sovereign rights and calls the Quad an attempt to contain its economic growth and influence.

After his inauguration in January last year, Rubio's first formal international engagement was meeting with the foreign ministers of the other Quad countries, both jointly and in separate sessions.

Also:

**NEW DELHI:** Indian authorities said on Friday that short range ballistic missile 'Agni-1' was successfully test-launched.

A statement from the Indian Ministry of Defence said that the short-range ballistic missile was test-fired from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur in the eastern Indian state of Odisha on May 22.

"The launch validated all operational and technical parameters. The test was carried out under the aegis of the Strategic Forces Command," the Ministry further said.

Agni-1 is a single-stage, solid-fuelled, road-mobile short-range ballistic missile with a strike range of 700-900 km.

India inducted Agni-1 which can carry a payload of up to 1,000 kg and is capable of delivering both conventional and nuclear warheads into service in 2004.

### 6 national rescue teams dispatched

## Coal mine explosion in China kills 90

BEIJING, May 23, (AP): A gas explosion at a coal mine in China's northern Shanxi province killed at least 90 people, state media said on Saturday, in the country's deadliest mining accident in recent years.

Official news agency Xinhua said the accident at Changzhi city's Liushenyu coal mine happened on Friday evening. Around 247 workers were on duty at the time.

Nine miners were still unaccounted for as of Saturday afternoon, Xinhua said, and more than 120 people were hospitalized.

The cause of the explosion was under investigation, Xinhua reported, and rescue work is pressing on with hundreds of rescuers and medical personnel sent to the site. Among the injured, many were hurt by toxic gas, according to state media CCTV.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has called for an all-out effort to rescue the missing, reported Xinhua.

Xi also called for the "proper handling of the aftermath of the accident and urged a thorough investigation into its cause, with accountability pursued in accordance with the law," the news agency said.

China has dispatched six national mine emergency rescue teams, totaling 345 personnel with equipment, to assist in rescue efforts following a coal mine gas explosion in Qinyuan County, north China's Shanxi Province, the Ministry of Emergency Management said on Saturday.



This photo taken on May 23, 2026 shows a scene at the rescue site of the Liushenyu coal mine in Qinyuan County, north China's Shanxi Province. (Xinhua)

ty, north China's Shanxi Province, the Ministry of Emergency Management said on Saturday.

Xinhua later reported that the "persons responsible for the company involved in the mine accident have been placed under control," citing the local emergency management bureau.

The coal mine, operated by the Shanxi Tongzhou Coal & Coke Group with an annual production capacity of 1.2 million tons, was placed on a national list of disaster-prone coal mines by China's National Mine Safety Administration in 2024 for having "high gas content."

Shanxi province is known as China's main coal mining province. With a size larger than Greece and a population of

around 34 million, the province's hundreds of thousands of miners dug 1.3 billion tons of coal last year, or almost a third of China's total.

In February 2023, 53 people were killed after a collapse at an open-pit mine in northern China's Inner Mongolia region. In November 2009, an explosion at a mine in northeastern China's Heilongjiang province killed 108, according to state media.

China has dispatched six national mine emergency rescue teams, totaling 345 personnel with equipment, to assist in rescue efforts following a coal mine gas explosion in Qinyuan County, north China's Shanxi Province, the Ministry of Emergency Management said on Saturday.

## Everest record-holder Kami Rita urges limit on climbers as crowds swell on peak

KATHMANDU, Nepal, May 23, (AP): A renowned Mount Everest guide who this week scaled the peak a record 32nd time urged authorities on Friday to limit climbers on the summit.

The number of climbers making the ascent on the 8,849-meter (29,032-foot) peak from the Nepalese side is higher this season because China has closed the route from Tibet. Everest can be scaled from either the southern side in Nepal or the northern side in China.

On Wednesday, 274 climbers reached the summit, the highest number on a single day from the Nepal side. A total of 494 climbers have been issued permits by Nepal's mountaineering authorities and an equal number Sherpa guides are accompanying them.

"It was very crowded this year compared to last year," Kami Rita Sherpa told reporters at Kathmandu airport after flying back from the mountain. "There is a need for authorities to control this number."

Climbers only get a few windows of good weather to make their attempt on the summit. A large number of people waiting in a fixed rope line they are all clipped into increases the risks of a traffic jam and exposes the climbers to increased hours of harsh



Renowned Sherpa mountain guide Kami Rita, center right, returning from Mount Everest after his record 32nd successful ascent is presented with shawls and flowers as he arrives at an airport in Kathmandu, Nepal on May 22. (AP)

weather.

Kami Rita's closest competitor, Pasang Dawa Sherpa, scaled the peak for the 31st time on Friday, which was his second successful ascent this week.

Kami Rita, 56, first climbed Everest in 1994, and has been making the trip nearly every year since. He is one of many Sherpa guides whose

expertise and skills are vital to the safety and success of foreign climbers aspiring to stand on top of the mountain each year.

His father was among the first Sherpa guides. In addition to Everest, Kami Rita has climbed other peaks that are among the world's highest, including K2, Cho Oyu, Manaslu and Lhotse.

## Senegal's President Faye fires prime minister after months of tensions

DAKAR, Senegal, May 23, (AP): Senegal's President Bassirou Diomaye Faye has fired Prime Minister Ousmane Sonko after months of simmering tension.

The decision was announced by the secretary general of the government, Oumar Samba Ba, during a late-night broadcast on Friday.

The firing caps a period of open confrontation between the two former allies from the Patriotes Africains du Sénégal pour le Travail, l'Éthique et la Fraternité (Pastef) party, who had defeated the former ruling party in March 2024.

Ba said the sacking of the prime minister led to the resignation of all the members of the government and its dissolution.

The Pastef party had ridden into office after a fierce campaign mounted against the then-ruling party Alliance pour la République following widespread speculation that former President Macky Sall wanted to use a 2016 constitutional change to revise his term in office.

Sall, who led the country between 2012 and 2024, eventually did not contest the election after violence erupted in the West African nation. The clashes between the security forces and supporters of Ousmane Sonko, the then-opposition leader, led to at least 16 deaths and left sev-



Senegalese opposition leader Ousmane Sonko addresses journalists following his release from police custody in Dakar, Senegal, on March 8, 2021. (AP)

eral people injured. Sall's party lost the election in the first round.

Sonko, who heads the Pastef party, was barred from running after a defamation conviction was upheld by Senegal's supreme court, and the Constitutional Court dismissed his candidacy. Faye ran instead of Sonko, and Sonko was appointed Prime Minister.

"Praise be to Allah. Tonight I will sleep with a light heart in the Keur

Gorgui neighborhood," Sonko wrote in a short post on X after his dismissal.

The past few months have led to open confrontation between the pair. Earlier this month, Faye said the former prime minister would only keep his job if he did it properly after criticism from Sonko. The two disagreed on key policies, including the negotiation of a loan from the International Monetary Fund.

### Subcontinent

**10 dead in Afghanistan flash floods:** At least 10 individuals, including women and children, have perished in overnight flash floods that swept through multiple districts of northern Afghanistan's Baghlan province, local media outlet Tolo news reported on Friday.

The downpours destroyed more than 100 residential houses and inundated thousands of acres of agricultural land, delivering a severe blow to the province's already fragile rural economy, the media quoted Hedayatullah Hamdard, head of the provincial disaster management authority, as saying.

In a separate weather-related disaster, three people died and six others sustained injuries when violent windstorms swept through southern Kandahar province on Wednesday night.

Parts of Afghanistan have been battered by heavy rainfall, windstorms, thunder, and lightning over the past several days, prompting the country's meteorological department to issue warnings of continued rain in the coming days and raising serious concerns about further flooding in vulnerable regions. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

**Afghanistan road accident kills 6:** Six travelers died and three others sustained injuries due to a head-on collision in Kandahar province, south

of Afghanistan, on Friday evening, spokesman for the provincial police office Assadullah Jamshid said Saturday.

The deadly mishap occurred in Daman district yesterday evening as a car collided with a truck coming from the opposite direction, leaving six dead at the scene and three more injured, the official said, adding that traffic police shifted all the injured commuters to the nearby health center.

A similar accident claimed one life and injured five others in the eastern Laghman province on Friday morning. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

**Sri Lanka plans marine protected areas:** Sri Lanka is planning to declare new marine protected areas in its northern waters to curb illegal fishing, protect marine biodiversity and support sustainable livelihoods, the Ministry of Environment.

The ministry said the proposal was discussed at a meeting chaired by Deputy Minister of Environment Anton Jayakody and Deputy Minister of Defence Aruna Jayasekara.

Officials discussed threats from illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, including dynamite fishing, unauthorized spear-fishing and the use of banned fishing gear.

The ministry said suitable islands and surrounding marine zones in the Northern Province have been identified for possible declaration as protected areas. (Xinhua)



Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum speaks during a meeting with business leaders in Mexico City, Monday, May 4, 2026. (AP)

## United States and Mexico pledge ongoing joint security efforts during DHS Secretary Mullin visit

MEXICO CITY, May 23, (AP): Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum said that she and the US Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin agreed to maintain bilateral cooperation rooted in mutual respect.

Mullin arrived in the Mexican capital for a two-day visit following tensions in recent weeks over the deaths of two CIA agents at Mexico's northern border and US drug trafficking indictments against 10 Mexican officials.

Sheinbaum's administration, which took office in October 2024, has toed a fine line with the Trump administration as it has emphasized bilateral cooperation, while also maintaining Mexico's sovereignty in the face of threats of US military intervention.

After meeting with Mullin at the presidential palace, Sheinbaum shared a brief post on X saying that both nations will maintain cooperation based on mutual respect.

The Mexican Foreign Ministry emphasized respect for sovereignty and "coordination without subordination" as some of the key principles agreed upon for cooperation, in a statement issued after the meeting.

Mullin, who assumed the position in March after Kristi Noem's departure, also met with Mexico's Security Cabinet.

Sheinbaum said that she would also speak with Mullin about the 15 Mexican migrants who have died in US Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention centers since 2025, which prompted diplomatic protests from her government. Sheinbaum has instructed consulates to make daily visits to the detention centers, and Mexico announced in March that it would bring the cases before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

The foreign ministry in its Thursday statement emphasized the importance of cooperation on migration. It cited the successful reduction Mexican citizens crossing the border, which has reached a 50-year-low.

The Mexican president also ruled out discussing the cases of the 10 indicted officials, some of whom belong to the governing Morena party, during her meeting with Mullin.

In late April, the New York Attorney General's office indicted Sinaloa Gov. Rubén Rocha Culiacan mayor Juan de Dios Gámez, and eight other active and retired officials on charges including drug trafficking and illegal possession of firearms.

Rocha and Gámez temporarily stepped down from their posts to facilitate the investigation opened by Mexico's Attorney General's Office, while the former Sinaloa government officials, Gerardo Mérida and Enrique Díaz, surrendered to US authorities last week.

Bilateral relations became strained after the deaths of two CIA agents on April 19, along with two officials from the Chihuahua Attorney General's Office, when the vehicle they were traveling in plunged into a ravine in the mountains between Chihuahua - which borders Texas - and the state of Sinaloa, where a clandestine synthetic drug lab had been dismantled.

The incident prompted a formal protest from the Sheinbaum administration to Washington that it hadn't been informed of the presence of the two US agents in Mexico, or of their activities in the opposition-governed state of Chihuahua.

## Oil gains 48 cents to \$120.81 pb

KUWAIT CITY, May 23, (KUNA): Price of Kuwaiti oil rose by 48 cents to reach USD 120.81 per barrel (pb) in Friday's trading, compared with USD 120.33 per barrel in the previous trading session, according to

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC). In global markets, Brent crude rose by 96 cents to settle at USD 103.54 pb, while US West Texas Intermediate crude rose 25 cents to reach USD 96.60 pb.

### Other Voices

## Strait closure keeps oil markets on edge

By Kamel Al-Harami  
Independent Oil Analyst

AS long as the threat of possible war exists between the USA and Iran, oil prices will remain captive and captured by the possible outcome of war. Despite the ongoing negotiations, the prices will always be subject to the final outcome of any agreements between the two countries.



Kamel Al-Harami

Brent oil price is still hovering around \$102 a barrel, while Urals Russian crude oil is still the highest price globally at \$118 a barrel. It is freely traded with the USA approving India to buy crude oil from Russia, foregoing the USA restriction on countries buying Russian oil.

Of course, the absence of more than 22 million barrels per day of Arabian Gulf oil is forcing oil prices to go up, reaching very high levels and forcing consuming countries to use their strategic stocks to manage their own consumption.

Now we are entering the third month of the closure of the Gulf. The absence of large volumes of Arabian Gulf oil raises the question of how much longer the world can live with the absence of Arabian Gulf supply. With gasoline season beginning to emerge, and all kinds of vehicles hitting the highways throughout Europe and the USA, demand is increasing.

Certainly, some countries will be faced with shortages, either in

jet fuel or gasoline, the so-called transport fuels. With no signs yet of any compromise or agreement reached between the USA and Iran, the absence of Gulf oil of more than 2 million barrels per day continues to weigh on the market.

The world has never faced such an absence of oil from one region at such a volume. It is comparable to USA crude oil production combined with Russia, or to total US consumption per day. It is a large volume of oil, equivalent to one day of OPEC production.

Still, panic is not yet visible at gas stations globally. This is due to the availability of strategic reserves, which are being used gradually, but certainly leads to chaos and panic.

On the other hand, any release or agreement reached to open the Strait of Hormuz would bring some level of comfort. However, oil prices are likely to remain strong until global strategic reserves return to previous levels that are comfortable for oil consumers worldwide, with sufficient oil held in strategic tank farms and spare crude stored in tanks, ready and on standby to be used again in case of emergencies.

With uncertainty surrounding oil markets, it is difficult to predict what happens next. The world has gone through many experiences that have made it more prepared for future emergencies.

Did the world expect that the Arabian Gulf could ever be closed for three months, with no oil coming out of the Gulf and a loss of 22 million barrels of oil per day? It is perhaps still too early to predict what happens next with oil and its future prices.

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## Private debt portfolio diversification and income stability

By NBK Wealth

Historically, public equities and high-quality bonds formed the foundation of portfolio diversification. Bonds provided predictable income and typically rallied during equity drawdowns, helping to offset losses elsewhere.

This dynamic was challenged in 2022, when rising inflation and rates drove stocks and bonds down together. Inflationary pressures are now viewed as structural rather than cyclical, prompting central banks to adopt a higher-for-longer rate stance.

As a result, investors are looking beyond public debt for income stability and diversification. Private debt has emerged as a structural alternative, offering contractual cash flows and a return profile less correlated with public markets.

### Evolution and Benefits for Diversification and Income

Following the Global Financial Crisis, tighter regulations led banks to retrench from middle-market lending, and non-bank lenders filled the gap. By 2025, global private debt AUM reached \$1.9 trillion, and is projected to reach \$2.6 trillion by 2029.

Private debt offers several advantages over public fixed income. Privately negotiated loans, with stronger covenants and closer borrower oversight, help mitigate downside risk. Floating-rate structures reduce interest rate sensitivity, while the illiquidity premium compensates investors with yields exceeding the public credit spectrum.

Beyond yield, diversification benefits are meaningful. Returns are driven by borrower performance rather than market sentiment, supporting stability when stocks and bonds decline together, as in 2022. The asset class also expands exposure to middle-market borrowers absent from public bond indices.

### Strategies Supporting Income and Diversification

Private debt is not a single strategy but a spectrum, ranging from lower-risk senior lending to higher-yielding strategies. Capital allocation shifts with the credit cycle.

**Direct Lending:** At the top of the capital structure, this is the largest segment, accounting for around half of capital raised. Loans are secured against borrower assets with strong covenants. Gross IRRs typically range 6-10% (Preqin).

**Mezzanine and Subordinated Capital:** Lends to companies with senior funding that require additional capital. Loans combine contractual interest with equity-like features to compensate for higher risk. Gross IRRs typically range 13-17% (Preqin).

**Distressed and Opportunistic Strategies:** Use flexible mandates targeting companies in financial distress or markets in dislocation. They offer a countercyclical complement. Gross IRRs can exceed 15% (Preqin), though outcomes vary by vintage.

Together, these segments form a spectrum that behaves differently across the credit cycle. Senior strategies anchor income during stable periods, while higher-yielding strategies capitalize on market dislocations.

### Considerations for Private Wealth Investors

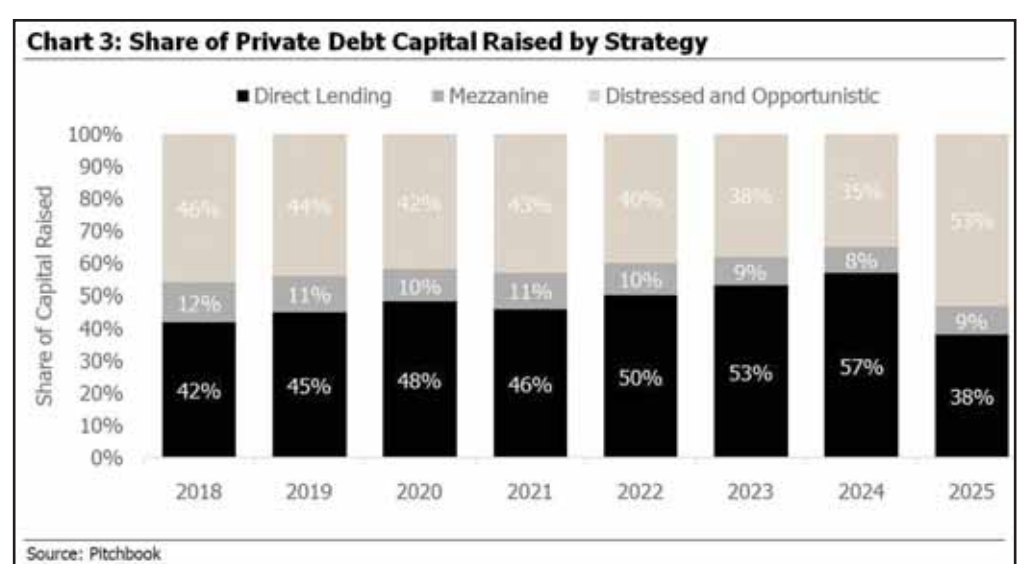
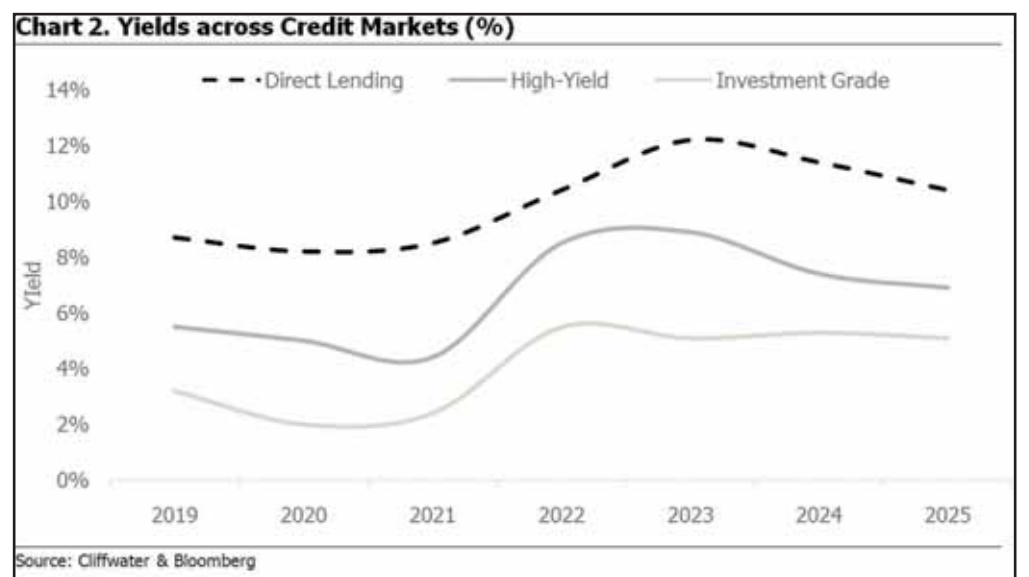
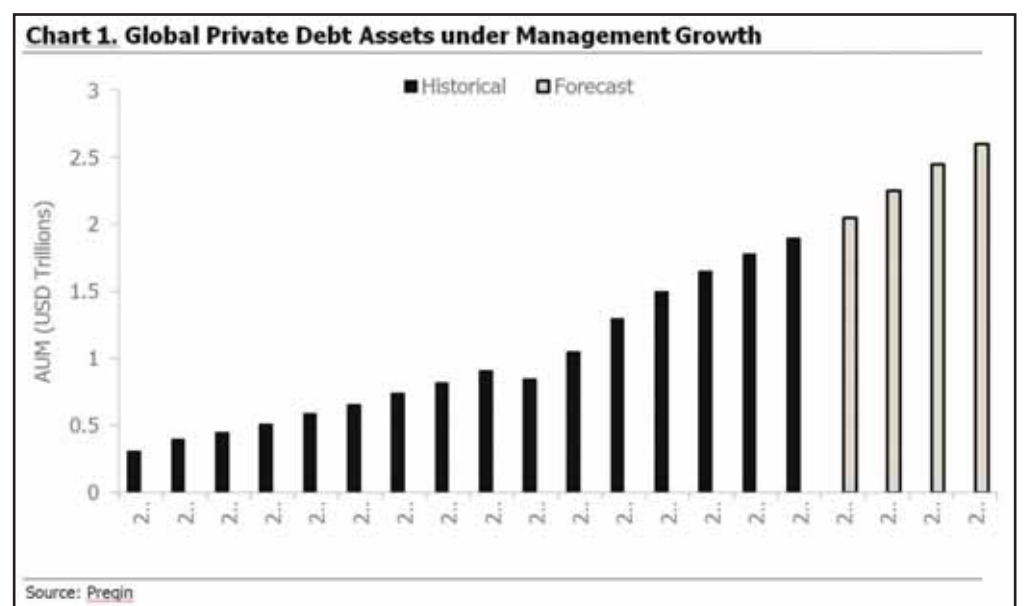
**Private debt's structural advantages come with inherent trade-offs. Five considerations are particularly relevant:**

1. **Illiquidity:** Capital is typically committed for multi-year periods, often ranging between 7 and 10 years in closed-end structures.

2. **Constrained Redemption Capacity:** Semi-liquid vehicles offer periodic liquidity, but redemption rights remain conditional, and recent gating events show liquidity is not assured in stressed markets.

3. **Valuation Visibility:** Private assets are valued less frequently than public securities, which can smooth reported returns but understate the extent of peak-to-trough drawdowns.

4. **Deferred Interest Features:** In some loans,



## Market shows resilience amid global challenges

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: The Union of Investment Companies (UIC) affirmed that Kuwaiti investment companies have demonstrated, over recent years, their ability to adapt to evolving market conditions by keeping pace with regulatory developments, adopting technological solutions, strengthening governance and sustainability practices, and responding to the changing needs and expectations of investors.

UIC emphasized that the resilience of the Kuwaiti market has been the result of strategic reforms and continuous development efforts at both the regulatory and operational levels, in addition to close cooperation among relevant stakeholders to maintain confidence, transparency, and sustainable growth.

### Webinar

In a press release regarding the webinar organized on 19 May 2026 in collaboration with London Stock Exchange Group, with the participation of Boursa Kuwait and Kamco Invest, UIC stated that the event served as an important platform to review the latest developments in the Kuwaiti market and highlight its ability to navigate current economic and geopolitical challenges. The webinar also showcased the resilience of Kuwait's financial and investment sector and its continued growth and development despite rapidly changing global conditions.

### Promoting Professional Dialogue

UIC explained that organizing this webinar comes as part of its commitment to fostering professional dialogue, enhancing investment awareness, and discussing how the Kuwaiti market is navigating the current period marked by economic volatility and geopolitical tensions that have impacted many global markets, while Kuwait has successfully maintained market stability and strengthened investor confidence.

UIC further noted that its role focuses on supporting awareness of capital markets and investment companies, highlighting the developments taking place within Kuwait's financial and investment sector, and encouraging the exchange of expertise and professional discussions on the opportunities and challenges facing the market.

It added that Kuwait's capital markets continue to reinforce their position as resilient and stable markets despite the geopolitical challenges and economic fluctuations affecting global capital flows and investor sentiment.

### Market Developments

UIC stated that the webinar addressed several important topics, including market developments during 2026, the participation of foreign and retail investors, new investment products, regulatory and techno-

logical advancements, as well as opportunities for new listings and key challenges and lessons learned from the current phase.

UIC also pointed out that Kuwait continues to build a more diversified and dynamic financial ecosystem capable of attracting local, regional, and international investors, while further strengthening the position of the Kuwaiti capital market among the region's promising markets.

### A Success Story

In this context, Noura Al-Abdulkarim stated that the Kuwaiti capital market has a success story worth telling, noting that the session served as a reminder of the importance of communicating this image effectively. She emphasized that the discussions during the webinar contributed to enhancing awareness and confidence in the Kuwaiti market.

### Government Reforms

Sarah Dashti affirmed that the Kuwaiti market's performance during 2025 was driven by government reforms and strong economic fundamentals rather than speculation alone, noting that the market achieved a return of 21%, while average daily trading volumes more than doubled.

She added that mortgage and real estate reforms represent a structural shift toward a more private sector-driven economy, particularly with more than 100,000 housing applications and the development of three new residential cities, which is expected to support the growth of the banking sector and related industries.

She further explained that the Kuwaiti market demonstrated resilience during 2026, supported by corporate earnings and cash dividend distributions, alongside continued investor confidence. She noted that the positive foreign inflows sustained over the past nine years reflect a long-term investment approach, while local investors have also contributed to strengthening market stability.

Dashti also highlighted that sustainability remains an ongoing global trend, and that the expected IPOs and new listings in the utilities, energy, and investment sectors will further enhance market diversity and liquidity.

She added that the First Market Fund was launched to address the absence of ETFs in Kuwait, while Kamco Investment Fund continued its achievements by winning the London Stock Exchange Group Lipper Award for four consecutive years.

She concluded by noting that the challenges of 2026 require more flexible investment portfolios with a stronger focus on companies benefiting from structural transformations and on appropriate stock selection.

As part of its strategy to foster digital innovation & develop human capital

## NBK launches the 'AI Mindset' program to enable associates to effectively implement AI technologies

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: In line with its commitment to keeping pace with the latest technological advancements and integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into its operations, National Bank of Kuwait announced the launch of its new e-learning program, "AI Mindset"; an initiative that reflects the Bank's strategic direction towards fostering digital innovation and empowering its workforce.

The program complements NBK's efforts to promote a corporate culture that embraces cutting-edge technologies. It is designed to be more than just technical training; it focuses on developing employees' understanding of AI and its practical applications within the workplace, further contributing to the development of modern thinking skills.

The program aims to empower employees to understand and effectively apply artificial intelligence technologies, which should positively support decision-making and enhance performance efficiency. It also promotes the adoption of innovative work methods that keep pace with the rapid developments in the banking sector.

Based on three specialized learning pathways, the program is designed to meet the needs of different job levels, from entry-level employees to executive leaders. Additionally, the content has been tailored to the specific roles and responsibilities of each



Najla Al-Sager

- **Najla Al-Sager:** NBK is among the first institutions to utilize artificial intelligence to enhance organizational efficiency.
- We invest in our workforce to help them keep pace with rapid digital transformations.
- At NBK, we promote a corporate culture based on innovation and the adoption of cutting-edge technologies.

group, ensuring maximum practical benefit.

"AI Mindset" was developed to utilize the advanced capabilities of NBK's learning platform, which provides a comprehensive digital experience that offers customized learning paths, interactive progress tracking, and flexible access for employees across all departments, ensuring continuity of learning without compromising content quality.

On this occasion, Najla Al-Sager, SVP - Head of Talent Management and Learning at National Bank of Kuwait, said, "NBK is a pioneer in adopting the latest updates in the fields of technology, digitalization, and artificial intelligence. It has successfully transformed its operations by incorporating these technologies into its processes and it was among the

first institutions to use artificial intelligence for the betterment of performance efficiency and employee empowerment".

"At NBK," Al-Sager added, "we continue to invest in our workforce by equipping them with the skills and tools that enable them to effectively utilize technological advancements, consequently enhancing productivity and strengthening our competitive edge in a rapidly and digitally transforming banking environment".

Al-Sager also emphasized that this approach extends beyond developing technical skills to also encompass promoting a corporate culture based on innovation and the adoption of digital solutions, enabling the use of artificial intelligence to support decision-making and achieve higher levels of efficiency.

Based on its strategy that aims to establish advanced standards in the banking and financial sectors, NBK continues to strengthen its leadership with a responsible approach to digital transformation, and this is achieved by empowering employees by equipping them with the necessary digital skills and granting them flexible access to AI tools to enhance performance efficiency and innovation.

It is worth mentioning that NBK has won the Excellence Award for AI-led Transformation Efforts during the Microsoft Summit, in recognition of its role in using the latest technologies to simplify workflows and enhance operational efficiency, after launching the digital assistant "Copilot" and enabling its employees to use it across its various operations in all departments.

'Towards A Greener Tomorrow'

# ALSAYER Group publishes its Sustainability Report 2024-2025

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: ALSAYER Group has published its Sixth Sustainability Report (2024-2025) highlighting the commitments, challenges, and achievements in creating sustainable value for our stakeholders. Guided by our GEAR framework, Nature, Economy, Society, and Well-being, the report reflects our ongoing journey to strengthen sustainability and foster a lasting positive impact. Together, we remain dedicated to advancing our efforts toward a brighter, more responsible future.

**Mr. Faisal Bader Al-Sayer, Chairman of ALSAYER Group, emphasizes:** "Building on our foundation of Heritage, Leadership & Growth, we continue to evolve, driven by responsibility, innovation & collaboration. Our Sustainability Strategy aligns with the Kuwait National Development Plan (KNDP) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These global and national frameworks inspire us to take bold actions, reducing our environmental footprint, empowering communities & fostering ethical conduct through strong governance and compliance systems."

**CEO Mr. Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer highlights:** "We continue to invest in energy efficient infrastructure, adopting renewable energy solutions, optimizing logistics, and integrating smart technologies to reduce emissions and resource use. These initiatives not only strengthen our environmental performance but also set new industry benchmarks for responsible business practices. At the heart of our sustainability vision lies community engagement. Through environmental campaigns, awareness programs, and partnerships with local organizations, we empower individuals to take part in building a greener, more sustainable Kuwait."

**Mr. Mohamed Naser ALSAYER, Executive Board Member and Chairman of the Sustainability Committee, shares:** "At ALSAYER Group, we firmly believe that building a sustainable future requires collaboration, accountability, and shared purpose. We extend our sustainability commitment across our supply chain by partnering with suppliers who share our values of ethical conduct, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship. By promoting responsible sourcing and transparency, ALSAYER Group ensures that sustainability principles



are embedded in every stage of our operations."

Our commitment to environmental stewardship is clearly demonstrated through our solar energy initiatives. Since 2015, these efforts have generated 13,517 MWh of clean electricity. By 2025, solar energy accounted for 25% of electricity consumption at our largest energy-consuming sites, and up to 10% at other locations, depending on the available space for installing solar energy systems, contributing to a 5.83% reduction in carbon emissions, equivalent to 8,351 MT of CO<sub>2</sub> avoided. Over the years, we have steadily expanded our solar photovoltaic systems across five major facilities, reaching a total installed capacity of 1,350 kWp. Equally important is our contribution to society and the community. During 2024-2025, we supported more than 52 initiatives, recorded 23,525 volunteering hours. These ef-



orts reflect our deep commitment to social responsibility and our role in empowering communities.

In addition, ALSAYER Group places the welfare of its employees at the center of its sustainability commitments, fully aligned with the principles of the United Nations

Global Compact. The organization upholds human rights and fosters a safe, supportive, and empowering work environment through a wide range of comprehensive employee-focused initiatives. Looking ahead, ALSAYER Group remains steadfast in its mission to align business



ALSAYER Group advances its sustainability journey

growth with environmental stewardship and social responsibility. By embracing innovation and fostering collaboration, we aim to inspire

positive change across industries and communities, ensuring that sustainability is not just a goal, but a shared legacy for generations to come.

## EU warns energy prices to stay high through 2027

NICOSIA, May 23, (AP): European Union officials said Friday that Europeans can expect oil and gas prices to remain above what they were before the Iran war for at least until the end of 2027, with prices of other goods also following an upward trajectory.

EU Economy Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis said that higher energy prices are primarily responsible for driving inflation to a forecast 3.1% for this year and 2.4% for 2027. That's significantly higher than the earlier forecast for this year of 1.9%.

"We expect that this energy inflation will gradually also trickle down to different sectors of the economy," Dombrovskis said after a meeting of the 21-member eurozone's finance ministers, who make up the Eurogroup.

European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde said that even if the conflict in the Middle East ended now, "lagging effects" would keep the prices of goods elevated.

"And it's probably a fact that price levels will be higher at the end of this crisis, when we see the end of the crisis," Lagarde said.

She said that the ECB would take "all the necessary measures" to keep

price stability at 2% by paying close attention to the aftereffects of the initial economic shock brought on by the energy price hike. She also pointed to how much oil the EU holds in reserve to meet possible demand.

Eurogroup President Kyriakos Pierrakakis said that for the EU, an end to the crisis would mean a return to free navigation without the imposition of any tolls through the Strait of Hormuz, from which roughly a fifth of the world's oil and gas passes.

Pierrakakis affirmed that economic growth within the eurozone would reach 0.9% this year and 1.2% in 2027, lower than the previous forecast, "but clearly far from a recession scenario."

Although higher inflation projections have led to predictions that the ECB would raise its interest rate benchmarks to combat inflation, Lagarde didn't offer any indication of how the bank would act.

"We will continue to follow a data-dependent and meeting-by-meeting approach in order to determine the most appropriate monetary policy stance in order to deliver on our 2% medium-term target," Lagarde said.

## LuLu Financial MD named to AI & Technology Council

ABU DHABI, May 23: Washington Post Intelligence, the intelligence and advisory platform of The Washington Post, has named Adeb Ahamed, Managing Director of LuLu Financial Holdings, to its Council on AI & Technology.

The council is a global leadership forum focused on advancing policy and industry innovation across artificial intelligence, emerging technologies and digital transformation.

Mr Ahamed is among the first Middle East-based business leaders to join the council, bringing the perspective of a region that is rapidly emerging as a global centre for AI-driven innovation, digital infrastructure and next-generation financial ecosystems.

His appointment also reflects the growing importance of financial services and cross-border payment infrastructure in global AI conversations, particularly as emerging technologies increasingly shape the future of commerce, compliance, financial accessibility and real-time global connectivity.

Under Mr Ahamed's leadership, LuLu Financial Holdings has grown into one of the region's leading financial services groups, operating across the GCC, Indian subcontinent and Asia Pacific, with a strong focus on cross-border payments, fintech innovation and digital financial inclusion.



Adeb Ahamed

Commenting on the appointment, Mr Ahamed said: "The future of artificial intelligence will be shaped by regions that are able to combine innovation, infrastructure and global connectivity at scale. The GCC and the broader Middle East are increasingly emerging as one of those centres, driven by ambitious technology agendas, forward-looking leadership and rapidly evolving financial ecosystems. I look forward to contributing a perspective from a region that sits at the intersection of global commerce, finance and human mobility, where digital infrastructure and financial innovation are evolving at remarkable speed."

Bank distributes travel kits to departing pilgrims at Terminal 4

## Warba Bank launches initiative for Hajj Pilgrims

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: Warba Bank launched a community initiative for Hajj pilgrims departing from Kuwait International Airport (Terminal 4). The bank distributed travel essentials and customized bags to pilgrims, reflecting its ongoing commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) and its engagement with the community during significant religious and national occasions.

The initiative focused on strengthening community engagement, offering hospitality, and providing travel essentials designed to facilitate the pilgrims' journey to the Holy Sites.

**Community Engagement and Social Responsibility:**

Ayman Salem Al-Mutairi, Director of Public Relations and Corporate Communications at Warba Bank, stated: "The bank's role extends beyond providing banking services to being an active partner in national and religious occasions. Through targeted initiatives, we aim to reflect our vision of remaining close to the community and supporting our corporate values."

Al-Mutairi added that the bank is keen on participating in events that



Warba Bank supports pilgrims departing from Terminal 4.

carry strong social value, reinforcing its position as a financial institution that combines banking services with community engagement.

**Banking Services Tailored for Travel:**

In tandem with the Hajj initiative, Warba Bank continues to offer a comprehensive suite of banking benefits for its clients during peak travel periods. The bank's credit and prepaid cards include

cashback rewards and travel-related benefits, including access to international airport lounges, travel insurance, and exclusive discounts on bookings and various travel-related services.

As part of its ongoing support for banking awareness campaigns, Warba Bank also emphasized the importance of card security during travel, encouraging clients to notify the bank of their travel destinations via

the bank's mobile application before departure.

**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.

New route strengthens connectivity between Kuwait and Northern Italy

## Jazeera launches Kuwait-Milan Bergamo service

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low-cost carrier, today celebrated its inaugural direct flight from Kuwait to Milan Bergamo Airport, marking the launch of the airline's newest European destination and its first-ever connection to Italy.

The first flight departed from Jazeera Terminal 5 (T5) at Kuwait International Airport and was seen off by His Excellency Lorenzo Morini, Ambassador of Italy to Kuwait.

**H.E. Morini highlighted:**

"It is an honor and a privilege to represent the Italian embassy at this important event, celebrating the start of the connection flight between Kuwait City and Milan Bergamo Airport carried out by Jazeera Airways. This initiative will create a new 'bridge' connecting Italy and Kuwait and will allow the people of the two countries to reinforce their economic and cultural ties. I am certain that the new connection flight will also contribute to the reinforcement of the traditional friendship between Italy and Kuwait, allowing a great number of Italian tourists to discover this beautiful country and to Kuwaiti travelers to visit the North Eastern part of Italy, an area extremely rich in traditions and attractions."

The new service will operate three times a week, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays offering travelers more flexibility to visit Kuwait or plan short business trip and longer holidays to Italy.



Jazeera takes off to Milan Bergamo.

**Barathan Pasupathi, Chief Executive Officer of Jazeera Airways, said:**

"The launch of our direct flights to Milan Bergamo marks another important milestone in Jazeera Airways' continued network expansion and reflects the growing demand for direct connectivity between Kuwait and Europe. Italy has always been a highly attractive destination for both leisure and business travelers, and we are proud to introduce Bergamo as our newest destination which serves as a gateway for our European expansion. As we

continue to expand to new and exciting destinations, we remain focused on providing passengers with greater choice, convenience, and accessibility. This launch also represents our continued commitment to strengthening Kuwait's global connectivity and supporting travel, tourism and economic ties between our two countries."

The launch of Milan Bergamo comes as Jazeera Airways continues to expand its direct network from Kuwait. The airline currently serves over 34 destinations across the Middle

East, Central and South Asia, Africa, and Europe following the geopolitical crisis during which operations at the Kuwait International Airport were suspended for an extended period of time.

For the summer 2026, Jazeera is offering passengers a broad range of travel options across more than 60 destinations with 2 million seats.

Passengers can book flights to Milan Bergamo through the Jazeera Airways website: [jazeeraairways.com](http://jazeeraairways.com), mobile application, or by contacting the airline's customer service center at 177.

Awareness initiatives to consolidate transparency and governance

# KFH promotes Compliance Culture and Internal Audit Awareness

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: Marking International Internal Audit Awareness Month, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) underscores its firm commitment to the internal audit function as a cornerstone of governance and a driver for achieving the institution's strategic objectives. As independent, objective discipline, internal audit advances organizational efficiency through proactive risk management, resource optimization, and absolute compliance with professional standards.

KFH remains committed to aligning its internal audit framework with both the Central Bank of Kuwait's regulations and global auditing standards. This alignment ensures the bank swiftly adapts to regulatory shifts, strengthens the efficiency of its internal controls, and fosters long-term sustainable growth.

To foster a strong internal audit culture and enhance corporate awareness, the bank launched a series of initiatives this month. These included educational emails to employees and introductory videos highlighting how internal audit promotes compliance and risk management, boosting knowledge and encouraging active participation across our workforce.

Internal auditing is based on four main pillars: providing the Board of Directors, the Audit Committee, and Executive Management with assurance that risks are managed efficiently and controls are working effectively; offering



advice on new projects, products, and processes to ensure controls are established from their earliest stages; delivering insight by turning observations into practical recommendations that improve performance; and fostering a commitment to integrity, ethical standards, and a culture of accountability

across the entire bank.

Internal auditing is based on four main pillars: providing the Board of Directors, the Audit Committee, and Executive Management with assurance that risks are managed efficiently and controls are working effectively; offering advice on new projects, products, and processes to ensure controls are established from their earliest stages; delivering insight by turning observations into practical recommendations that improve performance; and fostering a culture of integrity, ethical standards, and accountability across the bank.

KFH Group's internal audit team comprises highly qualified professionals equipped with specialized certifications, including CPA, CIA, CFE, and CISA. Their diverse experience across banking, financial, and technical operations strengthens the overall quality and efficiency of the bank's audit functions.

The celebration of this month serves to emphasize the importance of raising awareness about the role of internal auditing in supporting governance requirements and increasing transparency. KFH continues its efforts to establish internal auditing as an effective strategic tool that protects assets, generates added value, and enhances the bank's position as a leading institution both locally and globally.

New Fed Chair signals focus on growth

US jobless claims fall

## Trump swears in new Fed Chair Kevin Warsh

WASHINGTON, May 23, (AP): President Donald Trump on Friday oversaw the White House swearing-in of the new Federal Reserve chair and said he would like Kevin Warsh's help in stimulating the economy even as he tried to emphasize that the nation's central bank would remain independent.

Trump spent months criticizing Warsh's predecessor, Jerome Powell, for being reluctant to cut interests rates, with the Republican president arguing that lower borrowing costs would provide an economic boost. By taking the unusual step of holding the ceremony in the East Room and not the Fed, Trump made clear his pleasure that Warsh is now in charge.

The war with Iran has caused gas prices to spike, unsettled financial markets and driven inflation concerns across the economy. Those developments have led to recent doubts about whether Warsh might heed Trump's calls and push the Fed to lower rates.

Still, Trump said he had faith that Warsh would prioritize a strong economy.

"Thankfully, unlike some of his predecessors, Kevin understands that when the economy is booming, it is, that's a good thing," the president said. Trump said it was not necessary "to go crazy. Just let it go. We want it to boom."

Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas administered the oath of office. Also on hand were House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., Justice Brett Kavanaugh, CIA Director John Ratcliffe and Cabinet members.

"I expect he will go down as one of the truly great chairmen of the Federal Reserve that we've ever had," Trump said of Warsh.

Republican President Ronald Reagan swore in Alan Greenspan as Fed chair at the White House in 1987. Republican President George W. Bush attended the 2006 ceremony at central bank headquarters when Ben Bernanke became chair.

But having the event at the White House raises more questions about the Fed's independence at a time when Trump has constantly sought to bend the independent central bank to his will.

Trump's Department of Justice began an investigation into Powell and the Fed's extensive building renovations. That drew backlash from lawmakers and the department scrapped the investigation. The Fed's internal watchdog is now handling the matter. Powell's term as chair ended last week, though he has opted to remain on the Fed board for now.

Trump made a point of saying during his



President Donald Trump, right, speaks with Federal Reserve Chairman Kevin Warsh during Warsh's swearing-in in the East Room of the White House, Friday, May 22, 2026, in Washington. (AP)

remarks, "Honestly, I really mean this. This is not said in any other way: I want Kevin to be totally independent."

"I want him to be independent and just do a great job," Trump said. "Don't look at me, don't look at anybody. Just do your own thing."

In the next breath, however, Trump said that "in the eyes of many, the Fed has lost its way in recent years" under his predecessor, Democratic President Joe Biden. Trump also suggested that Warsh is looking to lead policies that promote "positive economic growth" and that doing so did not have to mean higher inflation.

Trump also noted that the stock market had risen Friday. "That means they like you," he said of Warsh.

Warsh once harshly criticized Fed's policies, including its low interest rate policies coming out of the coronavirus pandemic, which he says contributed to the largest U.S. inflation spike in four decades in 2021-2022. More recently, he has sometimes echoed Trump's demands for lower rates.

Warsh says productivity gains from artificial intelligence will help the economy grow more quickly without spurring infla-

tion, enabling the Fed to reduce borrowing costs. Many Fed officials, however, disagree that AI's development will support rate cuts, especially because the technology has also been blamed for large-scale layoffs in the computer sector and other parts of the economy.

On Friday, Warsh promised "to lead a reform oriented Federal Reserve, learning from past successes and mistakes, both escaping static frameworks and models and upholding clear standards of integrity and performance."

He told Trump that he believes "these years can bring unmatched prosperity that will raise living standards for Americans from all walks of life. And the Fed has something to do with it."

Warsh further noted that the Fed's mandate "is to promote price stability and maximum employment. When we pursue those aims with wisdom and clarity, independence and resolve, inflation can be lower; growth, stronger; real take home pay, higher and America can more prosperous."

As he left the ceremony, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent reinforced Trump's message, predicting to reporters that Warsh will "do the right thing for inflation and growth."

Administration divided over AI regulation

## Trump delays AI order over innovation concerns

WASHINGTON, May 23, (AP): President Donald Trump called off plans to sign a new executive order on artificial intelligence hours before an expected White House ceremony Thursday because he said he was worried the measure could dull America's edge on AI technology.

Trump said he was postponing the Oval Office event with tech industry executives because he did not like what he saw in the order's text. "We're leading China, we're leading everybody, and I don't want to do anything that's going to get in the way of that lead," Trump told reporters.

The order would have established a framework for the government to vet the national security risks of the most advanced AI systems before their public release, according to a person familiar with the White House's deliberations with the tech industry but not authorized to speak about them publicly. The directive was being characterized as a voluntary collaboration with participating U.S.-based tech companies, including Anthropic, OpenAI and Google, the person said.

The push for some kind of government action to review leading AI systems follows growing concern within the banking industry and other institutions about the leaps in AI's abilities to find cybersecurity vulnerabilities in the world's software.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and outgoing Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell convened an urgent meeting with Wall Street CEOs in April, warning them about the cybersecurity risks posed by Anthropic's AI model, Claude Myths.

The meeting, urgently assembled at the Treasury Department's headquarters, was intended to ensure that banks were aware of the risks associated with the models, Bessent said at CNBC's "Invest in America Forum" in Washington in April. "This new Anthropic model is very powerful," he said. "Some banks are doing a better job in cybersecurity than others, and we want to have the ability to convene them and talk about what is best practices and where they should be heading."

That led some allies of the Republican

president to propose better methods for getting those AI tools in the hands of trusted cybersecurity experts.

Trump had pledged to undo the AI safety regulations set by his predecessor, Democratic President Joe Biden. Trump's administration has viewed the AI sector as an engine to help deliver on his pledges to expand the economy and he has promoted its major players at events at the White House and around the world. Last week, Trump had tech CEOs in tow for a summit with China's Xi Jinping.

Trump's ambitions for the sector have collided with the fears of voters over the impact of the technology on American life, jobs and electricity bills. Republicans themselves are divided over whether to embrace the AI industry or side with voters who express skepticism about the technology.

Also complicating the government's interest in working with Anthropic on cybersecurity is the government's ongoing legal fight with the company. Trump in February ordered all U.S. agencies to stop using Anthropic's chatbot Claude after an unusually public clash between the Pentagon and CEO Dario Amodei.

There are competing factions within the administration, said Serena Booth, a computer science professor at Brown University and former AI policy fellow in a Democratic-led Senate committee.

"We do see this kind of public fighting," she said. "We will release an executive order. No, we won't. We're going to sign it this afternoon. Oh, the signing is canceled." I think this whiplash is because we're seeing these fractures."

Some of those divides are balancing what Booth said is a "reasonable idea" to test the most capable AI models before their public release, with a concern that government scrutiny, if it takes too long, could burden AI developers.

"It does come at a potential very large cost to innovation and speed of development," she said. "There is, I think, a real risk here and I do see both sides."

The White House has pushed back against state laws seeking to regulate AI, saying the

measures could curb growth. A new executive order that could have been perceived as government screening of commercial AI models would have signaled a significant shift in the administration's approach.

At the same time, similar screening is already happening. Trump's Commerce Department announced earlier this month that it signed agreements with Google, Microsoft and Elon Musk's xAI to evaluate their most powerful AI models before their public release, building on previous agreements the Biden administration made with Anthropic and OpenAI. But the announcement later disappeared from the Commerce Department website.

At a White House press briefing Tuesday, Vice President JD Vance declined to discuss specifics from the order but said the administration wants to promote innovation while also addressing cybersecurity threats and data privacy.

"The president wants us to be pro-innovation. He wants us to win the AI race against all other countries in the world," he said. Vance added, "We also want to make sure that we're protecting people."

Asked about new models that could pose security risks, Vance said the administration is taking a collaborative approach with tech companies.

"It also does have some downsides," he said, "and we're trying to balance that safety against innovation."

A former White House tech policy adviser who was a lead author of Trump's AI policy road map said the disagreements likely represent "healthy tension" in an administration that has long been wary of regulating the "frontier AI" companies like Anthropic, OpenAI and Google.

"They don't want to do it because it's politically risky in a million different ways," said Dean Ball, now at the Foundation for American Innovation. Ball said he would welcome an executive order that would get those companies working more closely with the government on cybersecurity but "ultimately, I'm fine with them taking time to get this right."

## Rising mortgage rates add pressure on US homebuyers

WASHINGTON, May 23, (AP): The economy, inflation and how those forces could impact the lives of Americans were front and center over the past week. Trips to the grocery store or gas station are more painful than they were last year, and that is impacting the decisions of both households and businesses.

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

The average long-term U.S. mortgage rate climbed this week to its highest level in nearly nine months, driving up borrowing costs for homebuyers during what's traditionally the housing market's busiest time of the year.

The benchmark 30-year fixed rate mortgage rate rose to 6.51% from 6.36% last week, mortgage buyer Freddie Mac said Thursday. Despite the sharp increase, the average rate remains below 6.86%, where it was a year ago.

Rates have been mostly trending higher since the war with Iran began. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has roiled energy markets, sending crude oil prices sharply higher - a key driver of inflation.

Expectations of higher oil prices and worries about big and growing debts for the U.S. government and others have pushed up long-term bond yields, causing mortgage rates to head higher.

U.S. retailers have spent months navigating an uncertain economic environment, from President Donald Trump's tariffs to the impact of soaring gasoline prices due to the Iran war. The average price for a gallon of regular gasoline rose again this week, ending at about \$4.55 per gallon on Friday, according to AAA. Gasoline prices are about 45% above where they were at this time last year.

Based on quarterly financial reports from Walmart, Target, Home Depot, Lowe's and TJX, shoppers are cautious but still spending, helped by more generous tax refunds. Yet there is a widespread belief among economists that once those refunds dry up, shoppers will pull back on spending. Consumer spending is the

dominant economic engine for the U.S., and retreat would have broad implications for the U.S.

Walmart issued a forecast for the current quarter on Thursday that was weaker than what Wall Street had been expecting. Target raised its annual revenue outlook on Wednesday, saying it expected momentum to continue the rest of the year. Yet the upgraded sales expectations were still below the pace of the first quarter.

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.

The split between Wall Street and most U.S. households grew even wider Friday, as U.S. stocks rose toward the finish of an eighth straight winning week, their longest such streak since 2023. That's even though a survey showed on the same day that U.S. consumers are feeling worse about the economy.

Shares of Workday and Zoom Communications rose after both delivered better profit reports for the latest quarter than analysts expected.

They're the latest companies to top analysts' expectations for profits for the start of 2026. And the cascade of such reports has helped U.S. stocks remain near their records. Stock prices tend to follow the path of corporate profits over the long term.

## Shein to buy eco-friendly Everlane in an unlikely fit

NEW YORK, May 23, (AP): Everlane, the retailer that bucked the fast-fashion industry by promising affordable ethically sourced and sustainable clothing, is being acquired by the king of fast-fashion Shein, founded in China.

A letter to Everlane employees from CEO Alfred Chang confirming the deal was obtained by The Associated Press on Friday.

Everlane, based in San Francisco, didn't disclose a purchase price. Shein declined to comment. Everlane's majority owner L Catterton couldn't be immediately reached for comment.

Everlane was founded in 2011 by Michael Preysman and Jesse Farmer with a mission to produce eco friendly and affordable clothing. The company publicized regular audits of its pay and working conditions, as well as the brand's environmental impact. The online retailer opened its first physical store in 2017. But the company in recent years has been embroiled in controversies surrounding treatment of its workers, according to media reports.

Everlane, which was joined by other eco-friendly brands like Allbirds, also found that offering a more transparent look at its factories wasn't enough for consumers, according to independent retail analyst Bruce Winder. Winder said shoppers were also seeking more affordable prices, and "the novelty wore off." He cited Allbirds. After sales of the once highly popular shoe tumbled, it rebranded itself "NewBird AI," and is now focused on artificial intelligence and cloud-computing services.

L Catterton began acquiring significant stakes in Everlane in September 2020, becoming its majority owner. It also owns a significant stake in brands Boll & Branch, Etra and Birkenstock.

Preysman officially stepped down in 2022.

The online retailer Shein was founded in China in 2012 and became extremely popular with teens and young shoppers with \$15 trendy dresses and sandals. A majority of items are mass produced and stitched together by workers in a web of factories in China. It has moved its head-

quarters in Singapore.

"Like many brands, we've faced increasing pressure in a rapidly changing retail landscape," Chang wrote in the letter. "This partnership allows us to remain independent, and gives us the stability and resources to make a larger impact, without compromising on the quality and standards that make Everlane, Everlane."

Chang, who became CEO in 2024, wrote that the deal will enable the business to invest more in its product, innovation and staff. He emphasized that Everlane will remain an independent brand, staying true to its "sustainability" commitments.

Chang said he will continue as CEO and its leadership will remain in place.

The takeover bid arrives at a time when Everlane is struggling. Sales are down and debt has mounted, according to Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData Retail. The company needs new ownership to survive, and Shein can provide that financial stability, he said.

Shein can establish a presence outside of fast fashion through Everlane, Saunders said, as growth within the industry becomes more difficult. Tariffs and other trade restrictions under the Trump administration have upended imports of the inexpensive clothing that dominates fast fashion.

Winder noted that Shein also has an opportunity to redefine its brand by creating a portfolio of eco-friendly brands like Everlane.

But Everlane and Shein are an odd couple, analysts noted.

Shein is unlikely to completely retool Everlane's supply network, Saunders said, but even being associated with the Shein group may be "somewhat jarring for core Everlane customers."

"Ultimately, the deal likely saves Everlane," he said. "But that salvation comes at a price."

Chang seemed to allude in his memo to some of the negative responses on social media when rumors of the deal were swirling, stating that the "past week has been a hard one. Seeing our company in the media, and in that light, was painful."



# Haute and heart Abed on Beirut, beauty and belonging



With Alex Assouline



# MAGLEBANON

## and the mega man behind its rise

By Marlon Aquino Malinao  
Managing Editor

Arab Times exclusive interview with Abed Al Rahman Naamani

There is something deeply personal about the way Abed Al Rahman Naamani speaks about Beirut. Not the Beirut of breaking news alerts and political turmoil, but the Beirut of candlelit dinners, culture ateliers, old architecture, late night conversations, music drifting through crowded streets, and people who continue choosing beauty no matter how difficult life becomes.

That emotional connection became the foundation of MAGLEBANON, the luxury lifestyle and cultural platform Naamani quietly built from scratch while still a university student at the Lebanese American University in 2014.

At the time, social media was evolving rapidly across the Middle East, but Naamani felt something was missing.

"I felt Lebanon and the region were often being seen through one lens," he says. "I wanted people to discover another side of us. The creativity, the elegance, the culture, the ambition, the human stories."

What began as a small independent project soon evolved into a recognizable media presence stretching from Beirut to Kuwait, Dubai, Riyadh, Doha, Paris, London, Monaco and beyond.

Today, MAGLEBANON sits at the intersection of fashion, culture, luxury, travel and storytelling, covering everything from international couture shows to film festivals and cultural moments shaping the modern Middle East.

But long before the invitations, partnerships and front row access came the difficult years. Naamani built the platform alone. He handled the editorial work, partnerships, social media, networking and business development himself while navigating university life and later surviving some of Lebanon's darkest periods, including the financial collapse, the pandemic and the Beirut Port Explosion.

"There were moments where I questioned everything," he admits. "Moments of exhaustion and uncertainty. But I never wanted to abandon the vision."

That vision was never simply about glamour. For Naamani, luxury has always carried emotion. "Luxury without authenticity feels empty," he says. "People connect to emotion, honesty and meaning much more than perfection." It is perhaps why MAGLEBANON feels different from many polished digital platforms chasing trends and algorithms. Beneath the refined imagery lies something more intimate. A sense of identity. Memory. Humanity.

Growing up in Beirut shaped that perspective. "Beirut teaches you resilience naturally," he says. "It is a city full of contradictions. Chaos and elegance exist together here. Pain and beauty exist together too."

That duality continues to influence the way he approaches storytelling. Whether attending a couture presentation in Paris or covering cultural events in Riyadh, Naamani says he always searches for the human story behind the spectacle.

Over the years, his work opened doors across the GCC, where MAGLEBANON steadily built strong regional visibility through collaborations within the luxury, hospitality and fashion industries.

His experiences in Kuwait left a particular impression. "Kuwait has a unique cultural warmth," he says. "There is a deep appreciation for creativity, fashion and meaningful connections."

Collaborations with Oud Fashion and growing relationships within the Gulf helped transform MAGLEBANON from a Lebanon based platform into a regional cultural bridge connecting the Middle East with international audiences.

That expansion eventually brought Naamani into some of the world's most prestigious spaces, including events hosted by Hermès and Schiaparelli, alongside appearances at the Red Sea International Film Festival and the Joy Awards.

Yet one evening still stands above the rest. Attending "1001 Seasons of Elie Saab" during Riyadh Season became one of the defining moments of his career.

"It was emotional beyond words," he says. "Seeing Lebanese creativity celebrated on such a massive international stage felt deeply personal."

Then came the moment Céline Dion appeared on stage. "That performance stayed with me," he recalls. "Fashion, music, culture and emotion all came together in one unforgettable moment."

Now, another deeply personal chapter is unfolding through his collaboration with luxury publishing house Assouline on a Beirut focused publication.

The project aims to capture the soul of the city through its architecture, fashion, gastronomy, nightlife and creative spirit.

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# Features



With Zainab Abdal Razaq Co Founder of Oud fashion talks and Lara Mansour Founder of Voice Dubai Communication in Kuwait Nov 2025



Elie Saab Flagship Boutique Opening in Kuwait November 2025 - The Avenues - Elie Saab, Elie Saab Jr, Claudine Saab



With Dua Lipa at Schiaparelli Fall Winter 2025 Haute Couture Show in PFW



With Jessica Alba at Women in Cinema Gala Dinner during Red Sea International Film Festival in Jeddah



With Naomi Campbell during Art Basel Doha 2026



With Jacob Arabo Founder of Jacob & Co at the Launch of Jacob & Co Residences in Delhi India



With Eva Longoria & Hande Ercel PFW in Elie Saab Show



With Celine Dion at 1001 Seasons of Elie Saab in Riyadh Riyadh Seasons



With Anas Bukash Ab Talks



With Mohammad Al Turki & Alessandra Ambrosio in Doha during Art Basel Qatar

editor's choice





Abed Al Rahman Naamani

## Haute and heart

Continued from Page 11

"This is not just about documenting Beirut," he says. "It is about preserving its emotional identity."

The partnership reflects something Naamani has consistently pursued throughout his journey: reshaping how the world sees Lebanon.

Not through crisis alone, but through culture, artistry and resilience.

He believes the Middle East is entering a new cultural era, especially in cities like Riyadh, Dubai, Doha and Kuwait, where fashion, cinema, luxury, hospitality and entertainment are increasingly intersecting.

"These worlds are no longer separate," he says. "Culture today is becoming global, but people still crave authenticity."

That authenticity remains central to everything he builds.

Naamani speaks often about patience, especially in an era dominated by fast content and instant validation.

"Not every opportunity deserves a yes," he says. "Sometimes protecting your identity is more important than visibility."

His definition of success has changed too.

When MAGLEBANON first launched, success meant recognition and growth. Today, he measures it differently.

"Legacy matters more to me now,"

he says. "Reputation. Relationships. The way people remember your energy and your values."

For young creatives and entrepreneurs across Lebanon and the Middle East, Naamani's message comes from experience rather than theory.

"Do not underestimate the power of consistency, patience and authenticity," he says. "Coming from our region is not a weakness. It is a strength."

He encourages younger generations not to become consumed by trends, numbers or constant online validation.

"Focus on quality. Stay grounded. Protect your identity and values," he says. "Growth takes time and difficult moments are part of the journey."

Naamani also believes many of the most successful people he encountered internationally shared one thing in common: humility.

"The most inspiring people are often the quietest people in the room," he says. "Real influence does not always need attention."

And despite the international expansion, wuxury circles and growing global visibility, Naamani still speaks with the same emotional attachment to Beirut that inspired him more than a decade ago.

For him, the city remains far more than a backdrop.

## Arts

### Kuwaiti artist turns vision loss into art

## Al-Humoud's journey a story of resilience and creativity

KUWAIT CITY, May 23, (KUNA): Kuwaiti artist Abdulrahman Al-Humoud has turned severe visual impairment into a source of artistic inspiration, presenting a model of determination and creativity for youth and people with disabilities.

Al-Humoud began his artistic journey in 2012 after discovering his talent under the guidance of instructor Bader bin Ghaith, who supported him in developing his skills.

Over the years, drawing became a means of self-expression and spreading positive energy. He progressed from pencil sketches to colorful artworks reflecting his unique vision of life.

In 2018, Al-Humoud participated in creating the world's largest incense painting in the UAE. A year later, he made his stage debut through an initiative by the Public Authority for Disability Affairs during a Gulf festival, winning Best Actor award.

His achievements continued with second place in Kuwait's Ammar Award for supporting creatives in 2021 and first place in the creative category of Al-Baghli Award for distinguished blind individuals in 2025.

This year, he won Best Artwork award at Al-Qurain Fine Arts Exhibition, organized by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, for two paintings highlighting people with disabilities.

Al-Humoud told KUNA that multiple surgeries during childhood left him with only one percent vision, but he refused to let the condition limit his ambitions.



Artist Abdulrahman Al-Hamoud receives one of the honorary awards.



Artist Abdulrahman Al-Hamoud during his participation in the Al-Baghli Award for Distinguished Blind People.



Participation in an event in the United Arab Emirates.



Artist Abdulrahman Al-Humoud representing Kuwait.

He said art became both a personal outlet and a humanitarian message aimed at encouraging people with disabilities to believe in their abilities and pursue their goals with confidence.

Al-Humoud praised the strong community support he received throughout his journey, stressing its role in refining his talent and expanding his artistic experience.

He affirmed that true vision comes from insight and spirit,

enabling individuals to overcome challenges and create positive impact.

Beyond his artistic career, Al-Humoud has delivered workshops and specialized art courses to support and inspire people with disabilities to discover and develop their talents.

His journey reflects Kuwait's supportive environment for people with disabilities, with official and community efforts contributing to

empowering creative talents and promoting inclusion.

The Public Authority for Disability Affairs has played a key role through initiatives and festivals aimed at highlighting youth talents and expanding opportunities for success.

Al-Humoud's experience remains a living example of how determination, support and opportunity can turn challenges into achievement.

### Multi-sensory experiences enhance visitor engagement

## Zayed Nat'l Museum expands cultural outreach

ABU DHABI, May 23, (KUNA): Zayed National Museum, the UAE national museum, is strengthening its role as a platform for cultural dialogue and community engagement through initiatives designed to promote accessibility, inclusion and learning.

Marking International Museum Day, observed annually on 18th May, the museum said it continues to highlight the UAE's history, identity and values since opening in December 2025, inspired by the legacy

and vision of the UAE's Founding Father, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan.

Accessibility is integrated throughout the museum's pathways, digital spaces and galleries, featuring multi-sensory experiences that combine sound, touch and scent alongside visual elements to provide visitors with an interactive experience.

Accessible pathways extend across all galleries, supported by tactile elements and audio guides where

possible to cater to a wide range of visitors, alongside sensory guides and a quiet room.

In a statement to the Emirates News Agency (WAM), Nassra Al-Buainain, Director of Learning and Public Engagement at Zayed National Museum, said the museum aims to ensure every visitor feels part of the cultural experience regardless of their background, abilities or needs.

She said the museum's approach to accessibility goes beyond tech-

nical or service aspects to create a welcoming environment that enables visitors to engage with stories, collections and cultural experiences in an inclusive and inspiring way.

The museum also runs community-focused programmes, including "Quiet Morning," which allows families to explore the museum in a calm and supportive environment, and guided tours in Emirati sign language led by deaf museum experience specialists to support the inclusion of deaf and hard-of-hearing visitors.

Another initiative, "Al Dhuha Hour: Traditional Tassels," provides a dedicated programme for senior citizens, including those living with dementia and their caregivers, combining guided tours with a hands-on workshop.

Beyond the museum itself, Zayed National Museum has expanded its outreach through the initiative "From Museum to Community" across all emirates, organised in partnership with local entities to bring inclusive cultural experiences and dialogue sessions to communities across the UAE.

The museum tells the story of the UAE from ancient times to the present day, highlighting the country's cultural heritage, the journey of the Union and the values championed by Sheikh Zayed in education, tolerance, humanitarian work and sustainability.

Designed in the shape of falcon wings inspired by the UAE's falconry heritage, the museum combines modern architecture, sustainability and cultural symbolism, making it one of the country's leading cultural landmarks.



The Zayed National Museum reflects the UAE's values of tolerance, openness, and cultural diversity.

## SF Symphony hires Elim Chan as first female music director

SAN FRANCISCO, May 23, (AP): Elim Chan was hired as first female music director of the San Francisco Symphony on Thursday, two years after Esa-Pekka Salonen announced he was leaving because he did not share the same goals as the orchestra's board.



Chan

Chan, 39, will start with the 2027-28 season and was given a six-year term. She was given

the title music director designate until then.

Chan was born in Hong Kong and studied at Smith College and the University of Michigan.

She was principal conductor of the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra in Belgium from 2019-24 and principal guest conductor of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra from 2018-23. She will be artistic partner of the Vienna Symphony for two seasons starting next fall.

Salonen, whose term ended with the 2024-25 season, announced his departure after the orchestra's management cut spending. He succeeded Michael Tilson Thomas, the music director from 1995 to 2020.

### Naoko Watanabe rewrites rules of Elite Mountaineering

## Japanese woman who scaled world's 14 top peaks says she wants to share joy

TOKYO, May 23, (AP): The first woman to conquer the world's second-highest peak, K2, three times has also summited all 14 of the world's tallest mountains.

But Naoko Watanabe, 44, says climbing is less about piling up records than enjoying an adventure, being happy and experiencing new people, food and culture. She's planning to return in June to her favorite climb, Pakistan's Nanga Parbat, known as the "killer mountain," with a group of amateur trekkers.

"I'm just an ordinary person who has happened to achieve records while climbing the Himalayas during my vacations," Watanabe told The Associated Press in a recent interview in Tokyo. "I don't consider myself a mountaineer."

In 2006, when she was a student nurse, Watanabe successfully reached the 8,201-meter (26,906-foot) summit of the world's sixth-highest mountain, Cho Oyu, on the Nepal-China border.

It was the first time she climbed one of the world's 14 peaks exceeding 8,000 meters (26,246 feet).

After becoming a full-time university hospital nurse in 2009, she struggled to balance work and climbing,



Naoko Watanabe, who has become the first Japanese woman to scale all 14 of the world's mountains that reach 8,000m above sea level, poses for a photo with her climbing clothes and gear after an interview with The Associated Press in Tokyo, Wednesday, April 8, 2026. (AP)

eventually switching to temporary nursing so she could climb more often.

She has since regularly scaled the Himalayas and sees it as a way to regain her peace of mind from Japan's often stressful conformity-bound environment. She now wants to share the joy of mountain climbing with those who need a break.

Watanabe is preparing for a trek in June to Nanga Parbat in Pakistan, the world's ninth-highest peak, which she reached in her second attempt in 2022. This time, she plans to go with a group of amateurs, most of whom will stay at the base camp.

"The Nanga Parbat base camp is extremely scenic and it's my favorite among the 14 peaks," Watanabe



This selfie photo provided by Naoko Watanabe, who has become the first Japanese woman to scale all 14 of the world's mountains that reach 8,000m above sea level, shows herself, right, with her Sherpa when they reached the summit of Dhaulagiri in Nepal, Oct. 1, 2021. (AP)

said. "I want everyone to see that." The participants are encouraged to follow at their own pace, freely stop, take photos and talk to the Sherpa guides.

"They are not supposed to be working hard," Watanabe says. "I want (the climbers) to be free from the stereotypes and realize that the Himalayas can be fun ... and to know

there are more important things than reaching the summit."

Born in Onojo City in southern Japan in 1981, Watanabe was encouraged by her mother to join a kids' adventure club and started climbing at age 3. She went to an island camp in China, an expedition on the Mongolian grasslands with other children, and climbed a snowy mountain in

Pakistan at 12.

Growing up, she said that her passion for adventure and climbing helped her pull through difficult times as she struggled with pressure in Japan to join collective activities and not stand out.

Her medical training has helped during her 31 expeditions over the past 20 years.

"The experience (as a nurse) has become useful in the mountains when I face emergencies and need to make a quick decision on the spot about the weather or my own health conditions."

In her first attempt at Everest in 2011, with the peak just 150 meters (160 yards) away, she decided to turn back when the weather suddenly deteriorated. Her tearful Sherpa protested, saying it was only an hour to the top. But Watanabe said she anticipated a shortage of oxygen in the tank if the weather worsened and slowed them down. On the way back, she lost her sight. They made it back safely, although she came down with pneumonia.

Back at Everest in 2013 on an extremely windy day, the conditions seemed better. Other climbers retreated, but she carefully went on and safely reached the summit.

## Newly opened center equipped with modern medical infrastructure

# Medx Medical Group opens third branch in Farwaniya with special public offers

KUWAIT CITY, March 23: Medx Medical Group, a leading healthcare provider in Kuwait, has officially inaugurated its third branch, Al Medx Care Medical Center, in Farwaniya during a ceremony held on Friday, May 22.

The new facility was inaugurated by Medx Medical Group President and Chairman Mohammed Ali VP, along with Mohammed Adel Al-Munawer. The opening marks a significant expansion of the group's healthcare network in Kuwait.

The ceremony was attended by several senior officials and dignitaries, including Faisal Ijlawi Al Arbeezi, Jassim Mohammed Alloush Al Azmi, CEO Sharafuddin Kannet, General Manager Intiaz Ahmed, and



Head of Operations Junais Koimma. Prominent community figures, media representatives, social activists,

and Medx staff were also present. Speaking at the press conference earlier, Medx management high-



Photos from the event

lighted the group's growth journey and commitment to delivering quality healthcare services in Kuwait. The

management also acknowledged the contributions of partners and staff in establishing the new branch.

The newly opened center is equipped with modern medical infrastructure, offering comprehensive healthcare services across multiple specialties, along with advanced laboratory and paramedical facilities.

To mark the launch, Medx Medical Group announced special promotional offers for the public, valid for two months. These include a 50 percent discount on all doctor consultations and a 30% discount on laboratory tests and medical procedures, in addition to other attractive service packages.

The management said the new branch reflects its commitment to expanding accessible, high-quality healthcare services in Kuwait, particularly in densely populated areas such as Farwaniya.

## Epic launch and landing: Musk

# SpaceX launches its biggest, most beefed-up Starship yet on test flight



SpaceX's Starship rocket lifts off during a test flight from Starbase, Texas on May 22. (AP)

WASHINGTON, May 23, (AP): SpaceX launched its biggest, most powerful Starship yet on a test flight Friday, an upgraded version that NASA is counting on to land astronauts on the moon.

The redesigned mega rocket made its debut two days after SpaceX CEO Elon Musk announced he's taking the company public. It blasted off from the southern tip of Texas, carrying 20 mock Starlink satellites that were released midway through the hour-long spaceflight that stretched halfway around the world.

The spacecraft reached its final destination - the Indian Ocean - despite some engine trouble, before erupting in flames upon impact. That last part was not unexpected, according to SpaceX.

Musk called it "an epic" launch and landing. "You scored a goal for humanity," he told his team via X.

It's the 12th test flight of the rocket that Musk is building to get people to Mars one day. But first comes the moon and NASA's Artemis program.

NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman flew in for the launch, saying Starship is now one step closer to the moon.

The last of the old space-skimming Starships lifted off in October. SpaceX's third-generation Starship - a souped-up version dubbed V3 - soared from a brand-new launch pad at Starbase, near the Mexican border. Last-minute pad issues thwarted Thursday evening's launch attempt.

SpaceX was hoping to avoid the fireworks it experienced during back-to-back launches last year when midair explosions rained wreckage down on the Atlan-

tic. Earlier flights also ended in flames.

There was no fireball this time until the very end. The spacecraft plummeted upright into the Indian Ocean under seemingly full control, then toppled over and ignited.

While the liftoff itself went well, not all of the engines fired as the booster attempted a controlled return. The spacecraft also had to make do with fewer engines, but kept heading eastward 120 miles (194 kilometers) up. A pair of modified, camera-equipped Starlinks ejected from Starship provided brief views of the spacecraft in flight - a remarkable first.

At 407 feet (124 meters), the latest model eclipses the older Starship lines by several feet (more than 1 meter) and packs more engine thrust.

The revamped booster sports fewer but bigger and stronger grid fins for steering it back to Earth following liftoff, and a larger and more robust fuel transfer line to feed the 33 main engines. This fuel line is the size of SpaceX's Falcon 9 first-stage booster. The retro-looking, stainless steel spacecraft also has more of everything - more cameras and more navigation and computer power - as well as docking cones for future rendezvous and moon missions.

Starship is meant to be fully reusable, with giant mechanical arms at the launch pads to catch the returning rocket stages. But on this latest trial run, nothing was being recovered. The Gulf of Mexico marked the end of the road for the redesigned first-stage booster, and the Indian Ocean for the spacecraft and its satellite demos.

NASA is paying SpaceX billions of dollars - and also Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin - to provide the lunar

landers that will be used to land Artemis astronauts on the moon.

The two companies are scrambling to be first.

While Starship has reached the fringes of space on multiple flights lasting an hour at most, Bezos' Blue Moon has yet to lift off, although a prototype is being readied for a moonshot later this year.

NASA is following April's successful lunar fly-around by four astronauts with a docking trial run in orbit around Earth planned for next year. For that Artemis III mission, astronauts will practice docking their Orion capsule with Starship, Blue Moon or both.

A moon landing by two astronauts - Artemis IV - could follow as soon as 2028 using either Starship or Blue Moon, whichever lander is safer and ready first. It will be NASA's first lunar landing with a crew since 1972's Apollo 17. The goal this time is a moon base near the lunar south pole, staffed by astronauts as well as robots.

SpaceX is already taking reservations for private flights to the moon and Mars on Starship.

The world's first space tourist, California businessman Dennis Tito, and his wife signed up 3 1/2 years ago for a flight around the moon. The timing is uncertain.

This week, another wealthy space tourist - Chinese-born bitcoin investor Chun Wang - announced he will fly to Mars on Starship's first interplanetary mission. Wang previously chartered a SpaceX polar flight in a Dragon capsule last year and, along with his hand-picked crew, became the first to orbit above the north and south poles.

# China discloses Shenzhou-23 mission tasks, testing artificial embryos, year-long stay

JIUQUAN, May 23, (Xinhua): China's Shenzhou-23 crew, during their upcoming mission, will carry out experiments involving "artificial embryos," rare-earth alloys and novel batteries, while contributing data on long-duration space residency, the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) announced on Saturday.

The crew will conduct more than 100 new science and application projects, focusing on frontier fields such as space life science, materials science, microgravity fluid physics, aerospace medicine and new space technologies, CMSA spokesperson Zhang Jingbo said at a press conference held one day prior to the launch of the Shenzhou-23 mission.

The mission will utilize zebrafish embryos, mouse embryos and stem cell-derived "artificial embryos" to explore the establishment of a space embryonic research system ranging from lower vertebrates to higher mammals, said Zhang.

In space material science, their research will focus on producing advanced materials, including high-performance rare-earth permanent magnets and lightweight high-entrop-



Chinese astronauts Zhu Yangzhu (center), Zhang Zhiyuan (right) and Li Jiyang, or Lai Ka-ying in Cantonese, for the upcoming Shenzhou-23 crewed spaceflight mission, meet the press at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China on May 23. (Xinhua)

py alloys, and studying how to regulate their performance, according to Zhang.

The mission will leverage the year-long flight of one astronaut to explore human adaptability and per-

formance limits, aiming to establish a multi-system, multi-omics atlas of human body in space.

An in-orbit verification of a new type of space energy storage battery will also be conducted, and the

results are expected to be applied to future upgrades of the space station's capabilities, said Zhang.

The crew will also conduct extravehicular activities (EVAs), handle cargo transfers, as well as install and retrieve external facilities. Aside from operational tasks, they will also engage in science education.

China's Shenzhou-23 crewed spaceship is scheduled to be launched at 11:08 p.m. Sunday (Beijing Time) from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China.

### Also:

**JIUQUAN:** China's space station will step up support for the country's first crewed lunar landing, scheduled to be achieved by 2030, the China Manned Space Agency said on Saturday.

As a national space lab, the Chinese space station Tiangong, which means Heavenly Palace, has offered strong support in training a pool of taikonauts and in validating key technologies for future lunar missions, the agency said at a press conference ahead of the launch of the Shenzhou-23 mission, which is scheduled for Sunday night.



This image provided by the US National Science Foundation's NOIRLab on May 21, 2026, shows the Crystal Ball Nebula. (AP)

## Dying star resembles billowing crystal ball in new telescope photo

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., May 23, (AP): A dying star has never looked so lovely.

The Gemini North Telescope atop Hawaii's tallest peak, Mauna Kea, captured the star in its last gasps. The image was released Thursday by the National Science Foundation's NOIRLab, which operates the telescope.

It's actually a binary star system

1,500 light-years away, nicknamed the Crystal Ball Nebula because of the milky white, spherical cloud around it. A light-year is almost 6 trillion miles.

This cloud of gas forms when a star sheds its outer layers near the end of its life. The exposed stellar core heats the cloud to tens of thousands of degrees, giving it an ethereal glow.

# Congo curtails funeral wakes in Ebola outbreak as WHO upgrades risk assessment

BUNIA, Congo, May 23, (AP): Authorities in northeastern Congo banned funeral wakes and gatherings of more than 50 people Friday in an effort to curb a rapidly spreading Ebola outbreak in a region where medical workers have struggled with a lack of resources and pushback from angry residents.

The World Health Organization said that the outbreak now poses a "very high" risk for Congo - up from a previous categorization of "high" - but that the risk of the disease spreading globally remains low.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said 82 cases and seven deaths have been confirmed in Congo, but that the outbreak is believed to be "much larger."

There is no available vaccine for the Bundibugyo virus, which spread undetected for weeks in Congo's Ituri Province following the first known death while authorities tested for another, more common, Ebola virus and came up negative. There are now 750 suspected cases and 177 suspected deaths, though more are expected as surveillance expands.

"We are trying to catch up," Congo Foreign Minister Therèse Kayikwamba Wagner told the AP. "It is a



Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus speaks to the media regarding the epidemic of Ebola disease caused by Bundibugyo virus in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, during a press conference at the WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland on May 22. (AP)

race against the clock."

Supplies were being rushed to Ituri in the northeastern corner of the country, where nearly a million people have been displaced by armed conflicts over mineral resources. Ramping up contact tracing is a priority, Kayikwamba Wagner said.

In the provincial capital of Bunia,

AP reporters saw empty emergency treatment centers, and doctors in the nearby town of Bambu using expired medical masks while tending to suspected Ebola patients.

The provincial government said Friday it was temporarily banning wakes and gatherings of more than 50 people.

## Grey whales at risk, humpbacks most vulnerable

# California turns to AI as whale deaths spike

SAN FRANCISCO, May 23, (AP): Ferries, cargo ships and tankers cut through choppy waters in the San Francisco Bay Tuesday as a whale surfaced nearby, its spout barely visible against the white caps. Until now, whales could easily go unnoticed by mariners, but an AI-powered detection network launched this week is designed to track them day and night.

The system, called WhaleSpotter, scans the bay around the clock for whale blows and heat signatures up to 2 nautical miles away, alerting mariners to slow down or reroute when whales are nearby.

"They'll be able to make adjustments way before they get anywhere close," said Thomas Hall, director of operations for San Francisco Bay Ferry. "It will also allow us to track data over time and see where the whales are camping out so we can adjust our routes during whale season to avoid those areas completely."

The effort comes amid an alarming rise in gray whale deaths in the bay. Last year, 21 dead gray whales were found in the wider Bay Area - the highest number in 25 years, according to The Marine Mammal Center - with at least 40% killed by ship strikes. At least 10 more have died in the Bay Area so far this year.



A tanker and other vessels pass through the San Francisco Bay on May 19. (AP)

Scientists say those figures likely underestimate the true toll as many whale carcasses sink or are swept back out to sea before they are ever found or reported.

Gray whales have long migrated along the California coast on their roughly 12,000-mile (19,300-kilometer) journey between breeding lagoons in Mexico and feeding grounds in the Arctic.

But instead of simply passing off-

shore, increasing numbers are now diverting into San Francisco Bay and lingering for days or even weeks inside the crowded estuary - a shift scientists increasingly link to climate change. Warming temperatures and shifts in sea ice in the Arctic are disrupting the food web gray whales rely on during summer feeding months, according to a 2023 study in Science, leaving many malnourished during migration.

## Obituary

## Motorsport world stunned by Busch report

## Kyle dies at 41 after coughing blood at training facility

CONCORD, N.C., May 23, (AP) - NASCAR driver Kyle Busch experienced shortness of breath, felt he was overheating and was coughing up blood the day before his death, according to a 911 call obtained Friday by The Associated Press.

Busch died Thursday at age 41. No cause of death has been given, though his family said earlier he had been hospitalized with a "severe illness" three days before he was to compete in the Coca-Cola 600 at Charlotte Motor Speedway.

Busch was testing in the Chevrolet racing simulator in Concord on Wednesday when he became unresponsive and was transported to a hospital in Charlotte, several people familiar with the situation told the AP. The people spoke on condition of anonymity because details have not been disclosed by Busch's team or family.

During the emergency call placed late that afternoon from the General Motors training facility, an unidentified caller calmly told the dispatch: "I've got an individual that's (got) shortness of breath, very hot, thinks he's going to pass out, and is producing a little bit of blood, coughing up some blood."

Busch was lying on the bathroom floor inside the complex and the caller told dispatch "he is awake," according to audio provided by the Cabarrus County Sheriff's Office.

The man then gave directions on where emergency responders should go and asked that they turn off any sirens upon arrival.

NASCAR CEO Steve O'Donnell addressed reporters at a news conference Friday but declined to answer any questions about the cause of death or any health problems that might have plagued Busch.

"We are 24 hours from getting a phone call and out of respect for the family, and they have asked for privacy, I am not going to address anything," O'Donnell said. "But transparency is something that we all believe in. So in

due time I think that everyone will be comfortable with where things stand." O'Donnell talked at length about Busch's legacy, his rebellious nature and even his feuds with NASCAR, while calling him "an American badass."

"We certainly had our battles but I would give a lot of money to have a few more battles," O'Donnell said.

He joked about the time Busch pretended to be seriously hurt when NASCAR had ordered him to go to the infield care center after hitting the wall at Texas.

"He laid flat out on a pit cart, made fun of us," O'Donnell said. "I was mad at the time, but I look back and that was damn funny - and that was Kyle."

O'Donnell mentioned NASCAR might consider adding Busch to this year's list of Hall of Fame Class of 2027 inductees, which was determined earlier this week with Kevin Harvick, Jeff Burton and Larry Phillips being voted in.

The news of Busch's death sent shock waves across the motorsports world on one of racing's biggest weekends, which also features the Indianapolis 500.

The NHL's Carolina Hurricanes honored Busch with a moment of silence before Thursday night's Eastern Conference Finals game against the Montreal Canadiens.

Vice President JD Vance took to social media, saying "I had the opportunity to meet Kyle, one of NASCAR's greatest racers, on the campaign trail in 2024. Usha and I are praying for him and his family. Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord."

Richard Childress Racing announced plans to suspend use of Busch's No. 8 Cup Series car until his 11-year-old son, Brexton, is old enough to begin NASCAR racing.

Gloomy, gray skies hung over the track on an unseasonably cool day in Concord, which seemed a fitting background for the in memoriam photo of Busch on the videoboard.



In this file photo, Kyle Busch is introduced during the NASCAR All-Star auto race at Dover Motor Speedway in Dover, Del. (AP)

## Kuwait volleyball season set for Sept restart after long suspension

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: The Kuwait Volleyball Association is preparing to restructure the current season schedule following the lengthy suspension caused by recent regional developments, with plans to resume and complete the league championship in September.

The federation hopes to conclude the domestic season before the Kuwait national team begins preparations for upcoming international commitments, including the Arab Championship, which is expected to take place in either Jordan or Egypt.

League action has been halted since February 28, leading the federation to explore several options for restarting competitions while balancing the national team's preparation program and allowing clubs sufficient time to restore players' match fitness.

The dates for the Federation Cup and Super Cup competitions have not yet been finalized. Federation officials are expected to determine both tournaments after approving the revised league calendar to fit around local and international schedules.

For youth competitions, the federation decided to rely on preliminary league standings to crown champions in various age categories

because of time limitations and the difficulty of completing the remaining fixtures. In the youth division, standings at the end of the second round will officially determine the final rankings, while the youth cup competition for the current season has been canceled.

The federation's board is expected to hold a meeting today or tomorrow at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex to officially approve the proposed recommendations, although minor amendments could still be made before the final announcement.

Looking ahead to the 2026-2027 campaign, the federation has tentatively targeted late October or early November as the starting date for the new season in an effort to restore the traditional local competition calendar.

Meanwhile, the federation has received approval from the International Volleyball Federation to open registration for foreign professional players starting in early August, giving clubs an early opportunity to strengthen their squads for next season.

The federation is also considering a proposal that would allow clubs to register foreign professionals throughout the entire season, similar to several Gulf federations. The proposal includes financial regulations and registration fees that would increase if clubs sign more than one foreign player, aiming to balance club support with maintaining the technical stability of the competition.



In this file photo, two Al Arabi players block a shot from an opponent during a league match.

## Gauff walks out

## Top 10 players stage media protest over Grand Slam revenue sharing

PARIS, May 23, (AP) - Ten questions into her pre-tournament news conference as the defending champion at the French Open, Coco Gauff announced she was done.

"I have to go. Sorry. I'll see you guys later."

That was about as serious as the protest from top-10 players got at Roland Garros as interactions with reporters were limited to 15 minutes on Friday.

The players announced the limitation due to their displeasure about

not getting a bigger share of tournament revenues at the clay-court Grand Slam, where play starts on Sunday. Top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka had even discussed a boycott.

"It shows a lot of us are all on the same page and have kind of a collective action other than just having conversations," Gauff said. "This is the first real point of action we have done."

Players have criticized French Open organizers for reducing the players' share of revenue to under 15% - compared to 22% at regular

ATP and WTA Tour events.

The only player who came near to approaching 15 minutes in the question and answer sessions was record 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic, who clocked in at 14 minutes, 48 seconds.

But Djokovic, who was celebrating his 39th birthday, said he wasn't officially taking part in the protest. He still voiced an opinion on the subject, though, pointing to the schism between the PGA Tour and LIV Golf.

"Golf is a good example of a professional individual global sport that has been through and is still going through very challenging times in terms of the governance and splitting tours and players," Djokovic said. "Let's try to be a bit more united and have a unifying voice into finding a better structure and better future for our sport."

Larry Scott, the former WTA CEO and ex-commissioner of the Pac-10 collegiate sports conference, has been advising the players.

Fifth-ranked Jessica Pegula said the players with Scott's help needed to find "a middle ground of what we can do together that's feasible the week before a Slam."

"If you try to talk about more extreme circumstances then all of a sudden people aren't on board, you can't get anything to happen."



Italy's Jannik Sinner speaks to reporters during Media Day ahead of the French Open tennis tournament in Paris. (AP)

## Change Name

I, Mustafa shabbir barodiya holder of Indian Passport No. V3666636 having permanent address Ward no 32 nai abadi gol choraya Banswara pin 327001 Rajasthan india residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as under: Given name Mustafa shabbir hussain and Surname Barodiya

## Fiorentina draws with Atalanta

FLORENCE, Italy, May 23, (AP) - Fiorentina drew with Atalanta 1-1 and the clubs rounded out disappointing Serie A campaigns on Friday.

Roberto Piccoli put Fiorentina ahead just before halftime but an own goal from Pietro Comuzzo eight minutes from time gave Atalanta a share of the points and ensured Fiorentina's worst league placing since 2019.

The Florence club started the season horrendously and had to wait until the 16th round to record its first league win.

A recovery in the new year boosted its league position and it was in 14th place although it could fall further if Genoa or Cagliari, the two teams immediately below it, win this weekend.

It was also a disappointing season for Atalanta, whose top four finishes the last two seasons guaranteed it Champions League football. Atalanta will finish seventh, which means a place in the Conference League, but it has won only one of its last seven Serie A matches.

## Bengaluru tops table despite 55-run defeat to Hyderabad



Sunrisers Hyderabad's captain Ishan Kishan plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Sunrisers Hyderabad and Royal Challengers Bengaluru in Hyderabad, India. (AP)

## Ishan, Abhishek and Heinrich score fifties

HYDERABAD, India, May 23, (AP) - Defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru sacrificed trying to beat Sunrisers Hyderabad to ensure they finished atop the Indian Premier League table.

Bengaluru got what it wanted despite losing by 55 runs.

Top of the table on net run rate, Bengaluru will host Gujarat Titans in the first playoff on Tuesday with the winner going straight to the May 31 final in Ahmedabad.

Hyderabad, tied on points with Bengaluru and Gujarat but third in the table, will host the second playoff on Wednesday against a team yet to be determined.

Hyderabad posted 255-4 - its ninth 200-plus total in 14 games - thanks to half-centuries from Ishan Kishan (79), Abhishek Sharma (56) and

Heinrich Klaasen (51).

That left Bengaluru needing only 166 runs to clinch a top two placing. After a blazing start by Venkatesh Iyer and the cheap dismissals of Virat Kohli and Devdutt Paddikal, captain Rajat Patidar and Krunal Pandya set their sights on 166 instead of winning and got there in the 17th over.

They then passed 178 to clinch top spot in the table. They finished on 200-4, Pandya not out on 41 after Patidar fell for 56.

"The top priority was to be on the top (of the table). The target was a lot," Patidar said.

"The top five (Hyderabad) batters played very well and they dominated ... (and when we batted) the slower bouncer was gripping and they executed the bouncers and yorkers very well."

Iyer, opening the batting for the first time this season, smashed four sixes and four boundaries in his rapid 44 off 19 balls, but once he was

out and Kohli was caught at cover for 15 off 11 balls inside the powerplay, Bengaluru revised its match priority.

Fast bowlers Eshan Malinga (2-33) and Sakib Hussain (1-31) stood out for Hyderabad.

Earlier, the Hyderabad top order flayed the Bengaluru pacers including senior pros Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Josh Hazlewood, who conceded 106 runs off their eight overs without a wicket.

Sharma profited from three dropped catches before completing his 21-ball half-century with five sixes and four boundaries. Kishan and Klaasen kept on attacking the pacers and didn't spare spinner Pandya, who gave away 24 off his two overs before dismissing Klaasen in the 17th over as Hyderabad notched its season-best total.

"It's pretty impressive to get the score that we did," Hyderabad captain Pat Cummins said. "Everyone's hitting their straps."

## Slot coy on Salah's Anfield farewell

## Bruno wins EPL player of season award

LONDON, May 23, (AP) - Manchester United captain Bruno Fernandes was named the Premier League's player of the season on Saturday after helping his team secure Champions League qualification and tying an assists record.

Fernandes notched his record-tying 20th assist of the Premier League season last weekend and can break the record when United visits Brighton on Sunday in the season finale.

The Portugal midfielder is tied with Arsenal great Thierry Henry (2002-03) and former Manchester City star Kevin De Bruyne (2019-20) for most assists in a single Premier League campaign.

Earlier this month, Fernandes was voted as footballer of the year in England by soccer writers.

Meanwhile, Mohamed Salah will say goodbye to Liverpool on Sunday. In what manner remains unclear.

Liverpool manager Arne Slot wouldn't commit on Friday to the Egypt star playing against Brentford in their Premier League finale at Anfield.

Salah forced the question with his criticism of Liverpool's style of play after a 4-2 loss to Aston Villa last Friday. He called for a return to "heavy metal attacking" that used to strike fear in opponents.

Salah's second public rift with Slot this season has added extra drama to his farewell and the team's last chance to secure Champions League qualification.

Slot was asked on Friday if Salah will definitely be involved against Brentford.

"I never say anything about team selection," Slot responded. "It would be a surprise to you if I did this right now, I think."

In March, the 33-year-old Salah announced he was leaving at the end of the season after reaching an agreement with the club to end his contract one year early.

Salah's production has dipped in his ninth year at Anfield, to such an extent that he was dropped for a stretch of games - leading to the winger telling reporters in December that the club "has thrown me under the bus."

"Heavy metal" football is a reference to the aggressive style favored by former manager Jurgen Klopp.

"That is the football I know how to play and that is the identity that needs to be recovered and kept for good," Salah wrote in a social media post. "It cannot be negotiable and everyone that joins this club should adapt to it."

Liverpool won the Premier League last year in Slot's first season in charge and Salah was the player of the season and winner of the golden boot. But Salah has tallied just 12 goals in 40 appearances this season.

"Mo and I have both the same interest - we want the best for this club, we want the club to be as successful as possible," Slot said.

The Dutchman was asked if Salah's critique could undermine what he's trying to accomplish.

"You are doing a lot of assumptions. You say that he wants to play that style and then say that it is not my style," Slot said. "I think Mo was really happy with the style we played last season, and the fans as well, because that led to us winning the league."

"Football has changed, football has evolved. He and the team - and I was included in that - brought the league title back after five years and we would like to challenge for that again next season and continue to evolve the team."



Fernandes

'The World Cup is very, very difficult'

## Scaloni remains calm and cool as Argentina prepares to defend World Cup title

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, May 23, (AP): The image is still remarkable. Lionel Scaloni standing impassively on the sidelines after Gonzalo Montiel scored the decisive penalty in the final of the 2022 World Cup, giving Argentina its third star with a victory over France.

The coach didn't celebrate at first, remaining still, silent, as if oblivious to the feat he himself had helped to accomplish. Several minutes later, he broke down when one of his players approached him, hugged him, and whispered: "We are world champions."

Scaloni almost never loses his cool. He didn't when he was bombarded with criticism for his lack of experience while leading Argentina. Nor did he when Kylian Mbappé's goals threatened the country's World Cup hopes four years ago. And he remains the same today as he faces the challenge of trying to repeat as a World Cup champion.

Those who know him say Scaloni learned to control his temper thanks to a hobby outside of soccer. Since retiring as a player, he dedicates two to three hours a day to cycling, a sport he took up on the recommendation of his friend, the former Spanish tennis player Carlos Moyá.

Pedaling his bicycle through the mountains of Mallorca, the Spanish island where he lives, or along the trails of his hometown of Pujato in the northwest of the South American country, Scaloni seeks to clear his mind and reflect.

"On the bike, you can think about your team, your opponent, how to prepare for the match. It really clears my head. I use it as therapy," Scaloni said in several interviews. "It's a good escape ... it helps me lower my expectations, be calmer."

In a few weeks, Scaloni will become the third coach to lead Argentina into consecutive World Cups, following in the footsteps of César Luis Menotti (1978 and 1982) and Carlos Bilardo (1986 and 1990), both also champions. But the youngest of the three doesn't believe he deserves comparisons to the others.

"I don't think we're on the same level. They have established careers, they defined an era," Scaloni has said repeatedly.



In this file photo, Argentina's coach Lionel Scaloni reacts during the Copa America final soccer match against Colombia in Miami Gardens, Fla. (AP)

With no prior experience managing professional teams, Scaloni took over the team on an interim basis in 2018 after Argentina's debacle in Russia, where the Argentinians were eliminated in the round of 16 months earlier. Meanwhile, the Argentine Football Association (AFA) was considering Mauricio Pochettino or Diego Simeone as candidates for the senior national team. "Scaloni? He can't even direct traffic," Diego Maradona, who led Argentina to a World Cup championship in 1986, said at the time.

The inexperienced coach stayed on and Argentina went on to win the 2021 Copa

América and successfully navigated the qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup.

In Qatar, Scaloni weathered a storm of criticism after a disappointing opening match against Saudi Arabia, revamped the team mid-tournament with the addition of then-rookies Enzo Fernández, Alexis Mac Allister, and Julián Álvarez, and, most importantly, unleashed the best version of Lionel Messi in a World Cup.

"The criticism was normal, I hadn't coached anywhere. (Maradona) wasn't far off," Scaloni acknowledged shortly after lifting the cup, without any resentment toward the star who passed away in 2020.

Brazil was the last world champion to repeat in 1962.

Scaloni knows the demands will now be the same or even greater. He will have to defend the title with his star player nearing retirement at 38, while also dealing with turmoil within the Argentine football organization.

"The World Cup is very, very difficult. To win a World Cup, a lot of things have to come together, not just playing well," Scaloni said in a recent interview with CONMEBOL. "Every time Argentina goes to a World Cup, it will try to reach its full potential. It's very difficult, but not impossible."

Scaloni made it clear to his players that being world champions didn't guarantee them a place on the national team and demanded they never let their guard down.

"I don't dwell on past achievements; you always have to keep looking ahead," he said in late 2025. "With this jersey, you don't have time to relax and think your place is secure."

The Albiceleste won the Copa América in 2021 and 2024 and finished first in the South American qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup, overcoming absences by Messi, who missed several matches due to physical problems.

"Argentina has achieved the best thing a national team can achieve: being a team," Jorge Valdano, a World Cup champion with Argentina in 1986, said in a recent interview with The Associated Press. "It's a team with very clear leadership, that of the coach and Leo Messi, and players who haven't lost their hunger."

## Lens make history with maiden French Cup victory against Nice



Lens players celebrate with the trophy after winning the French Cup soccer final between Nice and Lens in Saint-Denis, outside Paris. (AP)

### Thauvin shines in 3-1 win

PARIS, May 23, (AP): Lens capped a spectacular season by winning the French Cup for the first time, with star striker Florian Thauvin scoring and making another in a 3-1 win over Nice in the final.

Lens matched Paris Saint-Germain in Ligue 1 for large parts of the season but struggled to match its resources during the latter weeks of the campaign and finished second, six points behind.

Friday's win at the Stade de France was a merited triumph for a side that under coach Pierre Sage mixed young prospects with expe-

rienced journeymen to great effect.

Thauvin scored the opener after 25 minutes - meaning he scored in the quarterfinal, semifinal, and final - and Odsonne Édouard doubled Lens' lead when he headed home Thauvin's corner from the left three minutes before halftime.

Djibril Coulibaly pulled one back almost immediately for Nice but Abdallah Sima made sure the trophy was heading to the north of France when he muscled his way past Nice defenders to poke home for 3-1 with 12 minutes remaining.

The result was tough on Nice, which hit the woodwork twice, but perhaps no surprise after a woeful last few weeks of the season. Nice has

not won in Ligue 1 since mid-March and ended the year in third-to-last place.

Its Ligue 1 status will be decided next week in a home-and-away promotion/relegation playoff against Saint-Étienne.

The final was notable for the numbered shirts worn by referee Jérôme Brisard as part of a campaign designed to foster respect for match officials.

Brisard wore No. 84 on his back, in reference to a poll that showed 84% of French respondents believe that "valuing referees means protecting sport."

Match officials in other sports, including rugby and basketball, are slated to wear the same number in upcoming games.

### 'It's my time'

## Guardiola leaving Manchester City after the season

MANCHESTER, England, May 23, (AP): Pep Guardiola confirmed what Manchester City fans had been fearing. The club's most successful manager is leaving, bringing to a close a trophy-laden, 10-year spell in which he established City as a force in Europe and changed the face of English soccer.

Guardiola had a year left on his City contract but will take charge of his final game on Sunday against Aston Villa in the Premier League.

"Don't ask me the reasons I'm leaving. There is no reason, but deep inside I know it's my time," he said.

City said Guardiola will become a global ambassador and it was naming its newly developed stand at Etihad Stadium after him.

Enzo Maresca - the former Chelsea manager who was previously assistant to Guardiola at City - is the favorite to take on the daunting task of filling the Catalan's shoes after a decade of unprecedented dominance.

Since joining City in the summer of 2016, Guardiola has led the Abu Dhabi-owned team to six Premier League titles and a first Champions League crown in 2023.

He won 17 major trophies including a domestic double this season of the English League Cup and the FA Cup. He has won 35 major titles across his coaching

career including at Barcelona and Bayern Munich.

City was by far his longest job in management, having never previously stayed more than four years in a role.

"I will not train for a while," the 55-year-old Guardiola said. "I feel I would not have the energy that is required to daily ... with the expectations to fight for the titles."

Guardiola set new benchmarks; City became the first team to win four straight English leagues and the first to amass 100 points in a single season in 2018. The follow-

ing year City was the first team to win the domestic treble of the league, FA Cup and League Cup in the same season.

His biggest achievement was leading City to the ultimate treble in 2023, winning the Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup - matching Manchester United's feat from more than 20 years earlier in 1999.

He also brought to England a style of soccer - a possession-based approach that started with playing the ball out from the goalkeeper or defense - that ended up being mim-

icked across the country, from kids' teams at grassroots level to rivals in the Premier League.

"The unique approach that he brings to his coaching has allowed him to constantly challenge the accepted truths of our game. It is the reason that in the last 10 years he has not only made Manchester City better - he has also made football better," City chairman Khaldoon Al Mubarak said. He added it was the "right answer" for Guardiola to walk away now.

While he goes out on another trophy-winning campaign, this was the first time in his career that he has gone two seasons without being crowned league champion. City was also eliminated from the Champions League before the quarterfinals in the last two years.

City said Guardiola's new role would see him give technical advice to clubs in its ownership group.

"Pep's legacy is extraordinary and its true impact will be better assessed by Manchester City historians of the future," chief executive Ferran Sorriano said. "If there is something more difficult than winning, it is winning again. It requires incredible persistence, resilience and the humility to start again every year, with the same energy, again and again. This is what Pep did."



In this file photo, Manchester City's head coach Pep Guardiola holds the trophy after winning the Champions League final soccer match between Manchester City and Inter Milan at the Ataturk Olympic Stadium in Istanbul, Turkey. (AP)

### Auckland FC makes history

## North Korean team clinches Asian Women's Champions League title

SUWON, May 23, (AP): North Korea's Naegohyang FC defeated Tokyo Verdy Beleza 1-0 to win soccer's Asian Women's Champions League on Saturday in the South Korean city of Suwon.

Kim Kyong Yong scored the only goal of the game, her fourth of the tournament, just before halftime.

The North Korean international forward, who also scored the winning goal in the semifinal win over South Korea's Suwon FC on Wednesday, shot home from inside the area after receiving the ball from Kim Jung who broke free of the Japanese defense.

Watched by a sparse crowd at Suwon Sports Complex, just south of Seoul, the team from Pyongyang had more chances than Tokyo in what was a tight game and deserved to win just the second edition of the 12-team continental tournament, following Wuhan Jiangda's triumph a year earlier.

The triumph continues unprecedented success for North Korea in women's soccer. In 2024, the national team won both the U-20 and U-17 World Cups, and successfully defended the latter in 2025.

At a continental level, North Korea won the 2024 Women's Asian Cup and the 2024 and 2026 U-17 tournament.

"We don't have enough time to explain the evolution of our national football programs," Naegohyang head coach Ri Yu Il said prior to the final.

"We have a specialized player development system. Players are well-trained from

a young age and as they grow older, they contribute to good performances at AFC or FIFA competitions."

Auckland FC became the first New Zealand team to win Australian soccer's A-League title when it beat Sydney FC 1-0 on Saturday in the first grand final held outside Australia.

Cameron Howieson's first A-League goal - a low, left-footed strike in the 60th minute - proved to be the winner in front of 28,000 fans who packed Auckland's home ground to see the club claim the title in just its second season in the league.

"I'm just over the moon for the boys. We have such a great group here," Howieson said. "It's amazing to be part of it and to be champions and a great time to score my first goal."

"It means the world to me. I think a lot of people know I spent a lot of time out of the professional game and to come back into it at 30 years of age just tops it off."

The 31-year-old Howieson played briefly for Burnley in England and St Mirren in Scotland before returning to New Zealand's semi-professional national league in 2016.

The victory gives coach Steve Corica his third A-League title. He had won the title with Sydney FC in 2020 and '21.

The grand final hadn't previously been played outside Australia in the 49-year history of the A-League and its predecessor, the Australian National League.



Naegohyang Women's FC's players celebrate on the podium after winning the AFC Women's Champions League soccer final match against Tokyo Verdy Beleza in Suwon, South Korea. (AP)

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Naegohyang Women's FC's Ri Myong Gum, right, battles for the ball against Tokyo Verdy Beleza's Yuna Aoki during the AFC Women's Champions League soccer final match in Suwon, South Korea. (AP) - See Page 15

# Sports

## Kuwait closes out Gulf Games with 60-medal haul

Official expresses pride in achievements

**DOHA, May 23, (KUNA):** Kuwait wrapped up its participation in the 4th Gulf Games in Doha 2026 with an impressive tally of 60 medals, including 14 gold, 17 silver, and 29 bronze medals.

Held from May 11 to 22, the Games saw Kuwait's athletes produce outstanding performances across 13 sports through a delegation of 120 male and female competitors. Kuwait took part in equestrian show jumping, 3x3 basketball, handball, athletics, bowling, swimming, padel, taekwondo, archery, billiards and snooker, fencing, karate, and shooting.

The Kuwaiti delegation was led by mission director Abdullah Shaaban, assisted by deputy mission director Dr. Souad Al-Faqaan, along with administrators Dr. Hussein Al-Saeed and Ali Mishari.

Shaaban expressed pride in the delegation's achievements, describing the final medal haul as a fitting reward for the tremendous efforts made throughout the tournament despite challenging circumstances.

He noted that the team faced difficult conditions during the preparation period due to regional developments, which affected readiness ahead of the Games. However, he praised Kuwaiti athletes for once again proving their determination and commitment by overcoming obstacles and competing with passion and loyalty for their country.

Shaaban also extended his gratitude to the Kuwait Olympic Committee, headed by Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, for the continuous support and guidance provided to the delegation, which helped the team overcome difficulties and present Kuwaiti sports in the best possible manner.

He further commended the dedication and hard work of the administrative and technical staffs of the sports federations, clubs, and Olympic Committee committees for their vital role in the delegation's success.



Kuwait's athletes display the national flag as they celebrate on the podium.

## Marzo returns to Kuwait Club training ahead of Club Handball Championship

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 23:** Frankis Marzo is set to join the Kuwait Club's training sessions tomorrow after completing his participation with the Qatari national team at the 4th Gulf Games in Doha, where Qatar finished runner-up behind Bahrain.

The "Whites" are continuing their intensive daily training camp with morning and evening sessions as they gear up for the 28th Asian Men's Club League Handball Championship, which serves as a qualifier for the 2027 IHF Super Globe in Egypt.

Kuwait Club will host the continental tournament from June 6 to 15 at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex.

The technical staff plans to give players a short break during the Eid Al-Adha holiday before resuming preparations under a program aimed at boosting the squad's fitness and technical readiness ahead of the Asian event.

At the same time, Kuwait Club and Kuwait national team star Saif Al-Adwani has returned to training gradually after recovering from the injury he sustained during his stint



Frankis Marzo goes for a goal against Saudi Arabia during the Gulf Games.

with Qatar's Al-Arabi at the end of the current season. The coaching staff is expected to increase his workload progressively to ensure he is fully prepared for the start of the championship.

In another development, Qadsia handball administrator Haider Bahman confirmed he will step down from his role with the team

next season due to personal and work commitments.

Bahman explained that he is currently focused on managing his legal office and his duties as a players' agent, with several ongoing contracts and legal responsibilities involving handball players from various clubs, including contract negotiations and legal representation.

## Title push continues as Kuwait Club meets Al-Nasr

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 23:** Kuwait Club continues its push for a fifth consecutive Zain Premier League crown when it takes on Al-Nasr at 8:25 pm today at Ali Sabah Al-Salem Stadium in Round 16. Earlier, Kazma meets Al-Fahaheel at 7:15 pm at Friendship and Peace Stadium.

The league leader sits top of the table with 39 points, holding a 12-point advantage over its nearest challengers with seven rounds remaining.

Kuwait Club enters the clash boosted by a commanding 4-0 win over Al-Fahaheel in a postponed Round 15 match last Thursday. Another victory would move it closer to a 20th league title, with the "Whites" needing just three wins from its remaining fixtures to secure the championship, regardless of Kazma's results.

Al-Nasr, placed eighth with 15 points, will look to extend its strong recent form, having gone seven matches unbeaten with four wins and three draws. It will also aim to avenge its narrow 1-0 defeat to Kuwait Club in the first round.

In the earlier fixture, second-placed Kazma (27 points) is determined to maintain its title challenge as it remains the closest pursuer of Kuwait. The "Orange" side is chasing a fifth straight victory.



Kuwait Club player jumps over an opponent during the Zain Premier League match.

A win would also provide a major boost ahead of its crucial top-of-the-table clash against Kuwait Club in Round 17 next Saturday.

Al-Fahaheel, sixth with 18 points, are looking to bounce back after a difficult run of form, collecting just two draws and three defeats in its last

five matches, including a 4-0 loss to Kuwait Club.

Al-Fahaheel, knows that another setback could drag it into the relegation battle, with Al-Shabab (15 points), Al-Nasr (15 points), and Al-Tadamon (12 points) all closing in.

## KFA holds first board meeting

**KUWAIT CITY, May 23:** The Kuwait Football Association (KFA) will hold its first board meeting tonight at its headquarters in Al-Adailiya, chaired by Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef.

The General Assembly had officially endorsed the new board for the 2026-2030 term last Wednesday, with Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef elected president. The board also includes Daeen Al-Daeen and Ayman Al-Hussaini as vice presidents, along with Dr. Ahmad Ajab, Dr. Adel Al-Adwani, Nasser Al-Adwani, and Dalal Al-Mudhaf as the women's representative.

The new board formation followed the withdrawal of Al-Qadsia and Al-Arabi candidates, Sheikh Nasser Talal Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah and Khaled Al-Qabandi.

Tonight's meeting is expected to focus on approving key administrative posts, naming new committee heads, and reviewing existing committee memberships, with decisions on whether to retain or replace current members.

## Vingegaard seizes control of Giro

**PILA, Italy, May 23, (AP):** Pre-race favorite Jonas Vingegaard moved into the overall lead of the Giro d'Italia on Saturday, emphatically taking control of the race by soloing to victory on the brutal 14th stage.

Vingegaard attacked on the daunting climb up to the finish, with just under five kilometers remaining, and no one could follow. The Team Visma-Lease a Bike rider beat Felix Gall by 49 seconds, with Jai Hindley nine seconds further back.

The 133-kilometer (83-mile) route from Aosta included five climbs, two of them ranked category one, including a huge 16-kilometer (10-mile) slog up to the finish at Pila.

Afonso Eulálio, who had been in pink since finishing second in the

fifth stage, was dropped on the final climb and finished nearly three minutes behind Vingegaard.

The young Portuguese rider managed to remain second in the overall standings, 2:26 behind Vingegaard and 24 seconds ahead of Gall, who moved into third.

Sunday's 15th stage will offer the riders some respite before a tough final week in the high mountains. The entirely flat 157-kilometer (98-mile) route starts in Voghera and ends with four laps of a circuit in Milan.

The 109th men's Giro ends on May 31 in Rome.

The women's Giro runs from May 30-June 7 with Italian rider Elisa Longo Borghini as the defending champion.

SGA, bench propel Thunder past Spurs

## OKC overcomes historic cold start for 2-1 lead

**SAN ANTONIO, May 23, (AP):** Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 26 points and 12 assists, and the Oklahoma City Thunder climbed out of a 15-point hole minutes into the game to beat the San Antonio Spurs 123-108 and take a 2-1 lead in the Western Conference finals.

Jared McCain had 24 points and Jaylin Williams added 18 for Oklahoma City. The Thunder were without Jalen Williams, who sat out with left hamstring soreness.

Oklahoma City's bench outscored San Antonio's 76-23, including 15 points by Alex Caruso.

"We just went out there and competed," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "They obviously jumped on us early. First game in their building, their crowd behind them, they were excited to play. We just wanted to make sure we competed from that point on. We obviously didn't give our best effort to start that game, but can't do nothing about it. It's behind us. All we can do is focus on the next possession, and we did that."

Victor Wembanyama had 24 points for San Antonio. Devin Vassell added 20 and De'Aaron Fox had 15 in his series debut.

The Thunder have won two straight after the Spurs' double-overtime victory in Game 1. Game 4 is Sunday.

Fox (sprained right ankle) and Dylan Harper (right adductor soreness) were cleared to play 45 minutes prior to tipoff.

Fox's return sparked a historic start. The Spurs raced to a 15-0 lead, the longest run to open a game in the conference finals since the play-by-play era began in 1997.

Fox opened the run by wrapping in a driving layup and Wembanyama followed by crossing over Isaiah Hartenstein to drill a 3-pointer. Vassell's 3-pointer put the Spurs up 10-0, leading to an early timeout by Thunder coach Mark Daigneault.

"Other than the first 15 points, our defense was really tight," Daigneault said. "We got back, settled down into the halfcourt. Our offense had



Oklahoma City Thunder guard Luguentz Dort, front, and San Antonio Spurs guard De'Aaron Fox compete for the ball during the second half of Game 3 in the Western Conference finals NBA basketball playoffs series in San Antonio. (AP)

something to do with that. We ran good offense tonight, despite the fact that they were amped up and ready to go, the Spurs were. It's a discipline series. We did that. We couldn't be reckless against them, they are too good with the ball, too well coached, too talented. So you've got to be able to do it with discipline. I thought we really were disciplined tonight."

Isaiah Hartenstein broke the drought with a runner over Wembanyama, but the center was immediately greeted with thunderous boos after his physical play against the Spurs in Game 2.

The Thunder went on a 13-2 run when Wembanyama went to the bench and closed the first quarter trailing 31-26.

It was a pattern the Spurs could not overcome. "It's my first playoffs," Wembanyama said. "It's the first playoffs for many of us. Of course, there was going to be hard trials. It's to be expected, but now we're going to see what we're made of."

The series continued to be chippy with emotions boiling over early in the second half. Stephon Castle hit the court on back-to-back dunk attempts. The second resulted in a flagrant 1 foul against Ajay Mitchell and technical fouls on Mitchell and Vassell after the two exchanged words following the foul.

Back-to-back 3-pointers by Gilgeous-Alexander and Williams extended Oklahoma City's first lead to 35-31.