



Crown Prince lauds security bodies role in safeguarding Kuwait sovereignty Page 2



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KUWAIT AMIR CONGRATULATES SAUDI KING ON HAJJ SUCCESS

T4 welcomes first wave of returning Kuwaiti pilgrims



A joyous homecoming unfolds at T4 as returning pilgrims touch down in Kuwait following the completion of Hajj. Photo by Samer Shiqer

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: His Highness the Amir Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent cables of congratulations on Friday to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud on the success of the 1447 Hajj season.

In his messages, His Highness praised the outstanding organization of this year's pilgrimage, attributing its success to the dedicated care of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and the concerted efforts of Saudi ministries and sectors whose personnel worked diligently to serve pilgrims. He also commended the

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Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah conveys Eid Al-Adha greetings to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman. SPA photo



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

To the Lebanese President ... Anwar Sadat's path is yours

LEBANON is heading towards a new phase with the rounds of direct negotiations between it and Israel, at a time when Iranian interference is escalating through Hezbollah, whose military and security wing the Lebanese government has declared illegal.

The US government has also placed some Hezbollah members of parliament and several Lebanese army officers on its sanctions list as a result of their cooperation with the Iranian-backed Hezbollah.

These direct Lebanese-Israeli negotiations are supported by the majority of Arab states, particularly the Gulf states, which believe that Lebanon can no longer remain a pawn in Tehran's hands to achieve gains at the expense of the Lebanese people, who are currently suffering from the displacement of nearly a quarter of their population from southern Lebanon. Villages and towns in southern Lebanon are being wiped off the map, and dozens of innocent victims fall daily, their only fault being that they are residents of the south, which Hezbollah has turned into a proxy war zone.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun accurately described the situation when he said that the current war in his country is a war waged by others. When President Aoun took his firm stance on entering negotiations with Israel, he, as a former army commander, was aware that Lebanon is no match for Israel, which is backed by the United States and is heavily armed. President Aoun is convinced that the only way to save his country is through diplomacy.

Over the past two days, rounds of negotiations were held between Lebanese and Israeli military delegations at the US Department of Defense. The Lebanese negotiator presented his demands, calling for a ceasefire as a prerequisite for proceeding with the remaining political rounds.

This is the crux of disagreement between the two sides.

The United States believes that Lebanon's path out of its current crisis lies in the disarmament of Hezbollah, which would require a complete ceasefire from both sides.

As a result, this objective is unlikely to be achieved as long as cycles of action and reaction between Israel and Hezbollah continue.

Therefore, the pressure exerted by the United States on both sides provides the Lebanese president and government with significant domestic

leverage to address the situation and prevent renewed Iranian involvement in Lebanese affairs. Ultimately, Beirut is the sole authority responsible for addressing any outstanding issues with Israel.

This also strengthens the Lebanese presidency and government locally, while the Arabian Gulf states, particularly Saudi Arabia, have repeatedly affirmed their support for direct negotiations, a ceasefire, and the full implementation of the Taif Agreement as the only framework for preserving Lebanon's unity and ensuring the disarmament of all militias, specifically Hezbollah, which is the only group currently in possession of weapons.

Lebanon currently does not have sufficient time to remain outside the ongoing regional settlement, nor does it possess the capabilities to confront Israel. It also cannot address its deep-seated political, social, and economic problems without international support, primarily from the United States and Arab states.

Therefore, any deviation from the prevailing consensus and the divisions that Iran is attempting to impose through its Lebanese terrorist proxy will risk further destabilization of the Lebanese state and its transformation into another Palestine.

Consequently, Lebanese President Aoun and Prime Minister Salam must proceed with their current course of action, despite dissenting voices within the country.

As Lebanese thinker Michel Chiha stated when drafting the Lebanese Constitution in 1926, "We have established the written constitution of Lebanon, while the true, unwritten constitution stipulates that Lebanon can only be governed through compromises."

There is no viable alternative but full commitment to the Taif Agreement to bring the current Lebanese settlement to completion. Beirut's interests are best served by reaching an understanding with Tel Aviv through Washington's guarantees.

In conclusion, I would like to say sincerely to President Joseph Aoun - Former Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's path is your path. Have mercy on your people and proceed with the negotiations.

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Kuwait intercepts major meth haul

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The Drug Control General Department (DCGD) at the Interior Ministry continued its intensive security campaigns to track down drug dealers.

In its recent campaign, the DCGD foiled an attempt to smuggle a large quantity of crystal meth into the country, leading to the arrest of two Arabs who tried to smuggle drugs, which they hid inside heavy equipment with the intention of selling the drugs in the local market.

The ministry revealed that the anti-narcotics officers obtained confidential information about the plot to smuggle drugs using an unconventional method.

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Other Voices

What Hajj, human dignity, and Kuwait's laws teach us about protecting workers' rights

While we celebrate Eid, they are still working

By Dr. Fawaz Khaled Alkhateeb

Attorney-at-Law | Managing Partner, Taher Group I Chairman, Criminal Law Reform Committee, Kuwait Lawyers Association (BAR)

As families across Kuwait gather to celebrate Eid Al-Adha, visit relatives, shop in crowded malls, and enjoy meals in restaurants and cafés, hundreds of thousands of workers spend the holiday serving others rather than celebrating with their own families. Behind every pleasant Eid experience is a salesperson



Dr. Alkhateeb

assisting customers in a shopping mall, a waiter serving families at a restaurant, a cleaner maintaining public facilities, a security guard protecting visitors, or a delivery driver working long hours to meet increased demand. While many people enjoy the holiday with loved ones, others

continue working to make those celebrations possible.

Their contribution deserves more than gratitude. It deserves respect, fairness, and protection. This message becomes especially meaningful during Eid Al-Adha, a season that reminds us of sacrifice, compassion, humility, and justice. Few moments capture these values more powerfully than the pilgrimage of Hajj, where millions of people gather wearing the same simple white garments. In that remarkable scene, wealth, status, nationality,

profession, and social standing fade away. The wealthy stand beside the poor, employers stand beside employees, and people of every race and background stand shoulder to shoulder before their Creator. It is one of the most powerful reminders that all human beings possess equal dignity.

The significance of this lesson extends far beyond religious ritual. It offers a practical reminder of how societies should treat people in everyday life, particularly those whose labor

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'Hands off Kuwait'

Iranian strikes draw global rebuke

KUWAIT CITY, May 30, (Agencies): Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Thursday strongly condemned Iranian missile and drone attacks targeting its territory, describing them as a dangerous escalation and a blatant violation of the country's sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity.

In a statement, the ministry said the attacks posed a direct threat to civilians and vital facilities and came amid ongoing regional and international efforts to de-escalate tensions. It stressed that such actions undermine diplomatic initiatives aimed at preserving regional security and stability, calling on Iran to immediately and unconditionally halt its attacks and holding it fully responsible for the aggression.

The ministry affirmed that the strikes constitute a flagrant breach of international law, the UN Charter, and UN Security Council Resolution 2817 (2026), reiterat-

ing Kuwait's full right to take all necessary measures to defend its territory and protect its citizens in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.

The attacks drew widespread regional and international condemnation. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Jordan, and Egypt all denounced the strikes as violations of Kuwait's sovereignty and threats to regional stability, expressing full solidarity with Kuwait and support for measures to safeguard its security and territorial integrity.

In separate calls with his counterparts from Bahrain, the UAE, and Egypt, Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah discussed the developments, with all sides reaffirming Kuwait's right to respond to the attacks and ensure the safety of its citizens and residents.

Gulf Cooperation Council Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi condemned the continued attacks as a violation of international norms and principles of good neighborliness, reiterating the GCC's full support for Kuwait.

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Kuwait to enter hotter, dustier phase on June 7

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: Kuwait is set to enter the "Thuraya" season on June 7, a 13-day period traditionally associated with the start of summer and the appearance of the Pleiades star cluster, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to the Al-Ojeiri Scientific Center, the season is expected to bring a noticeable increase in temperatures, along with heightened activity of the "Bawareh" winds, which are often accompanied by dust and reduced visibility.

The center explained that

the Pleiades, known locally as "Thuraya," rises from the eastern horizon during this period and remains visible for longer hours at night until June 19. The cluster consists of a group of closely packed stars that appear as a luminous patch in the sky, including seven prominent stars that hold special significance in Arab astronomy.

The beginning of Thuraya also marks the onset of "Murabba'aniyat Al-Qaydh," the peak summer phase characterized by increasingly hot

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Amid soaring temperatures and dusty skies, children find moments of joy and excitement at a local amusement park. Photo by Samer Shiqer



Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:16 Asr 15:20
 Sunrise .. 04:49 Maghrib .. 18:42
 Zohr 11:46 Isha 20:13

His Highness offers Eid prayer at Grand Mosque

Crown Prince lauds security bodies role in safeguarding Kuwait sovereignty



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Hamad performed the Eid Al-Adha prayers at the Grand Mosque in Kuwait City.



Crown Prince Diwan photos His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Hamad visited the security sectors after the Eid prayers.

KUWAIT CITY, May 30, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah performed the Eid Al-Adha prayers at the State Grand Mosque early on Wednesday.

His Highness the Crown Prince was accompanied by senior sheikhs, as well as senior state officials.

In his sermon, Dr. Bader Al-Dhafiri said Eid is among the greatest Islamic occasions, bringing joy and reassurance to believers while reflecting values of mercy and divine grace.

He prayed and thanked Allah Almighty for all blessings and promoting solidarity and compassion among people.

Military, Security Sectors

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on Wednesday visited the military and security sectors.

His Highness the Crown Prince was received by Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Acting Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah

Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuraim, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lieutenant General Abdulwahab Ahmad Al-Wuhaib, Undersecretary of the National Guard Lieutenant General Hamad Salem Al-Barjas and Chief of the Kuwait Fire Force Major General Talal Mohammad Al-Roumi.

At the onset of the meeting, His Highness the Crown Prince conveyed greetings and congratulations of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, to leaders and personnel of the military and security bodies on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha.

His Highness the Crown Prince congratulated them on the blessed occasion, expressing his sincere wishes for their continued health, wellness and success, praying Allah Almighty that the occasion returns upon all with goodness, prosperity and blessings.

His Highness praised the major national role undertaken by personnel of the military and security bodies and the sincere efforts and valued sacrifices they make in protecting the homeland, preserving its security and stability and

safeguarding its territories, affirming that the military and security institutions embody the highest meanings of loyalty and belonging in carrying out national duty.

His Highness the Crown Prince also commended the high level of readiness and competence of the members of the military and security bodies, as well as their discipline and responsibility in carrying out their assigned duties, noting that their national role is a source of pride and appreciation for their dedication and devotion in serving the homeland.

His Highness prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow upon Kuwait lasting security, safety, progress and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir, and to grant mercy and forgiveness to the nation's martyrs and admit them into His vast paradise.

Accompanying His Highness the Crown Prince during the visit were Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Head of His Highness the Crown Prince Diwan Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Undersecretary of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Abdulaziz Meshal Mubarak Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Amir expresses condolences to Qatari Amir, Yemeni head

KUWAIT CITY, May 30, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable Thursday to Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, expressing condolences over the passing of the late Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, former Deputy Prime Minister and Qatar's Minister of Energy and Industry.

In his cable, His Highness the Amir prayed to Almighty Allah to bestow mercy and peace upon him and wished solace and patience for his family.

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His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable Thursday to Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, expressing condolences over the demise of the late Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, former Deputy Prime Minister and Qatar's Minister of En-

ergy and Industry.

Yemen

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to Yemeni Presidential Leadership Council Chairman Dr. Rashad Mohammad Al-Alimi over the death of former Yemeni President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi.

His Highness expressed sincere condolences and sympathy, praying to Allah Almighty to bestow mercy upon the deceased and grant patience to the Yemeni people and his family.

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Kuwait hails Pakistani efforts in area stability

KUWAIT CITY, May 30, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Wednesday a telephone call from UAE's President Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan on Eid al-Adha.

During the call, President Mohammad expressed sincere congratulations to His Highness the Amir on Eid al-Adha, praying to Allah Almighty to return this blessed occasion with blessings and goodness to both Arab and Muslim nations.

UAE's President wished His Highness the Amir everlasting good health and further progress and prosperity to Kuwait, under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir voiced his heartfelt thanks and appreciation to UAE's President for this good brotherly initiative and communication which embody the deep-rooted relations between the two sisterly countries and their peoples.

His Highness the Amir also congratulated President Mohammad on this blessed occasion, wishing him permanent good health and advance and prosperity to the UAE, under his wise leadership.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received a phone call from Pakistan Prime Minister Mohamud Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday, as His Highness conveyed greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to President Asif Ali Zardari on Eid Al-Adha.

His Highness the Amir's greetings also included His Highness's appreciation to Pakistan's supportive stance of Kuwait's stability.

Sharif on his behalf extended his best wishes to the Kuwaiti political leadership and people, praying for many returns and blessings upon both countries and the Islamic nation.

He reiterated Pakistan's full support for Kuwait in facing any threat to its safety and sovereignty, as well as stressing importance of continued coordination and cooperation in this regard.

His Highness the Crown Prince expressed appreciation to Pakistani efforts in supporting the area's stability, valuing at the same time the historic and deep-seated bilateral relations between the two countries, wishing Pakistan and its friendly people continued progress and prosperity.

'Curb financial waste'

Major restructuring of co-ops after Eid break

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Financial, Administrative and Cooperative Affairs and Director of the Planning and Administrative Development General Department at the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Sayed Issa disclosed that the ministry will implement the comprehensive restructuring of organizational frameworks, salaries and allowances for non-supervisory and supervisory positions.



Dr. Sayed Issa

This is in line with the Kuwaitization of cooperative societies and aimed at ending what officials describe as "financial waste" amounting to millions of Kuwaiti dinars spent

annually on the above-mentioned items.

In a press statement, Issa revealed that as per the instruction of Minister Dr. Amthah Al-Huwailah, the ministry will start the work after the Eid Al-Adha holiday to unify organizational structures, job descriptions, and salary scales in cooperative societies.

He said "this step will end major financial discrepancies currently seen among cooperative employees occupying identical positions and carrying out the same duties. It will also curb the financial waste associated with monthly allowances that are being paid in substantial amounts, disproportionate to the nature of the work performed by such employees."

He affirmed that the ministry is moving seriously and swiftly to address the issue in order to halt the ongoing financial drain that adversely affected the solvency of cooperatives, weakened their financial positions, and negatively affected the shareholders' funds.

He described the existing disparity in salary structures among cooperative employees as surprising, questionable and entirely unacceptable.

He added that, as part of the efforts of the ministry to gradually correct errors

within cooperative societies and eliminate all forms of waste, a mechanism will be introduced to standardize job descriptions and salary scales, alongside a reassessment of allowance values.

He stated that daily audits and inspection campaigns conducted by the ministry revealed the existence of hundreds of randomly created positions in cooperatives that imposed heavy financial burdens without any benefit. He indicated that the main objective behind many of these positions was to secure electoral gains or serve personal interests at the expense of the shareholders.

He disclosed that "the ministry linked employment in cooperatives to sales ratios, as the cooperative work regulations require cooperatives to adopt a rational hiring policy, limiting recruitment to what is genuinely needed for operational requirements according to actual demand, while ensuring that salary expenses—excluding supervisory positions—do not exceed six percent of sales.

However, this ratio is not currently being observed. The ministry will intensify efforts in the coming period to compel the boards of directors of cooperatives to comply with the ratio to stop the substantial financial waste in this sector."

Ministers congratulate Kuwaiti leaders on the occasion of 'Eid'

KUWAIT CITY, May 30, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan congratulated the nation's political leadership as well as its people on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha, Tuesday.

In a statement to KUNA, Minister Al-Mashaan wished the political leadership and its noble people good health, well-being, further progress, and prosperity.

Kuwait's Minister of Education Sayed Jalal Al-Tabatabaei extended his congratulations and best wishes to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and to the Kuwaiti people on the occasion of

Eid Al-Adha, Tuesday.

Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology and Acting Minister of Information and Culture Omar Al-Omar extended his heartfelt congratulations and greetings to Kuwait's political leadership and its people on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha, Tuesday.

In a statement to KUNA, Minister Al-Omar wished Kuwait, its leadership, and its people abundant health, well-being, prosperity, and security.

Kuwaiti Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Abdulaziz Al-Marzouq extended his warmest congratulations and best wishes to Kuwait's political leadership and its people on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha, Tuesday.

Other Voices

The book 'Sadaaqa' by Chaitali B. Roy

By Ahmad alsarraf

CHAITALI B. ROY is one of the most active women working in English-language journalism in Kuwait. She joined her husband in 2001 and has since worked for both Radio Kuwait and the Arab Times newspaper. Her media career began in Calcutta with a leading entertainment company, where she worked as a program producer and radio presenter, and has continued ever since.

Over the past quarter-century, Chaitali has accomplished extensive work documenting the relationship between Kuwait and India, as well as writing about Kuwait's heritage, culture, and the role of women in society.

She has worked closely with non-profit organizations, highlighting various aspects of Kuwaiti culture, both tangible and intangible. Chaitali has also been actively involved in re-creating the art of Sadu weaving, restoring heritage buildings, and preserving Kuwaiti folk music, dance, customs, and traditions.



alsarraf

She graduated from Loreto College in Calcutta with a degree in English. She later completed her master's degree and, during the same period, earned two postgraduate diplomas in marketing and advertising management.

Given our friendship, and as I am one of the subjects of her latest book, which touches on aspects of my life and experiences in India and my relationship with the Indian community, Chaitali asked me to speak at the book launch and signing ceremony at the National Library. The event was attended by the Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, the Ambassador of India to Kuwait Paramita Tripathi, and a number of other distinguished figures.

In my speech, I said that it was a pleasure to speak at the launch of the book "Sadaaqa: Partnership & Cultural Kinship" by my friend and fellow author, Chaitali B. Roy. This book is of paramount importance because it reminds us that the relationship between Kuwait and India is not limited to trade, diplomacy, or statistics. Rather, it is a relationship built over generations by individuals, families, merchants, teachers, workers, professionals, artists, and friends, all of whom have contrib-

uted to the course of my life and the history of my nation in valuable and impactful ways.

The relationship between Kuwait and India is unique and unparalleled among Arab countries in the modern era.

Furthermore, my personal connection with the Indian people spans over 72 years and has always been beautiful, fruitful, and deeply satisfying. I have expressed this in numerous articles published in Al-Qabas over three decades.

The bonds between the two countries have been reflected in a special spirit and in the friendships that have connected my family and me with many Indian families.

What Chaitali has accomplished through this book is invaluable, serving as a carefully and respectfully documented resource for present and future generations. The book will play a crucial role in preserving a part of Kuwait's history and its relationship with India over nearly 200 years.

A copy of the book, in English, is available at the Yarmouk Cultural Center (Tel: 22400992) and Bait Al Sadu (Tel: 22432395), and via WhatsApp: 65675506.



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'Work commitment ensures sustainable public services'

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem confirmed that the dedication of employees at power and water desalination plants, particularly during holidays

and official breaks, ensures the continuous production and delivery of electricity and water services to citizens and residents with the highest level of efficiency and stability.

The minister made the statement when he visited the South Zour Power and Water Desalination Plant recently, along with Undersecretary Dr. Adel Al-Zamel and acting Assistant Undersecretary for Power and Water Desalination Plants Eng. Haitham Al-Ali.

Director of the plant Eng. Thaher Al-Saad and several other officials warmly welcomed the visitors.

Al-Mukhaizeem explained that the ministry prioritizes continuous support

for field teams to raise the efficiency and readiness of operational sectors in order to guarantee the continuity of vital services according to the highest standard of reliability, particularly during peak hours and special occasions.

He praised the vital role played by national and technical personnel at various work sites, emphasizing that their sense of responsibility and dedication are the pillars for maintaining water and electricity security in the country.

The tour included the thermal control room, where the minister and his companions were briefed on the operational processes, production levels, and the technical follow up procedures to ensure the continuity and efficiency of electricity and water production at the plant.

The visiting delegation also expressed Eid Al-Adha greetings to the staff on duty and assessed the readiness and operational efficiency of the plant.

At the conclusion of the visit, the minister reiterated his gratitude to the employees at the plant and other facilities and sites, praying to Almighty Allah to protect Kuwait and to bring these blessed days back to its wise leaders and loyal people with goodness, prosperity and blessings.



Al-Mukhaizeem

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Divorce: Kids bear brunt in squabble to 'vendetta'

"UNFORTUNATELY, some husbands use divorce as a weapon to harm their former wives, damage their reputation, or pressure them into remarrying and starting a new life after the hardship they experienced with him," Doctor of Law and Kuwaiti lawyer Dr. Nayef Al-Adwani wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.



Dr. Al-Adwani

"In some cases, divorce occurs simply when the former wife is fortunate, or when she obtains it through legal means after the husband misuses amicable divorce procedures. In reality, this reflects a psychological state experienced by the former husband, stemming from his sense of loss after parting with a good woman whom fate brought into his life, making her his wife.

"Several factors contribute to this, including social pressure on women from their families to rush into marriage with any suitor, driven by fears of remaining unmarried or facing social stigma, and the anxiety of missing the opportunity to marry.

"The truth is that marriage is a journey of stability, happiness, serenity, and building a family and raising children. However, in some cases, a sense of loss may lead a former husband to adopt harmful tactics, deliberately harming his ex-wife and forcing her into court to present himself as the party who did not initiate the conflict. In reality, he may have intentionally disrupted her life and well-being by refusing divorce, denying custody of the children, withholding alimony, and obstructing other rights guaranteed by Sharia, law, and custom.

"During court proceedings, the ex-husband may resort to verbal or physical abuse, or make false claims, in an effort to prolong the dispute and derive satisfaction from harming the woman he was once entrusted with through the marriage contract.

"The situation becomes more complex when children are involved, leading to disputes and complaints at police stations and visitation centers over each parent's right to see the children at their convenience, often with little regard for the children's psychological well-being. In such cases, divorce shifts from a resolution to a failed marriage into a tool of revenge."

Also:

"Many organizations have begun issuing sustainability reports following the completion of their annual reports and general assemblies," sustainability expert Dr. Sami Al-Adwani wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"The submission of these reports often coincides with the United Nations High-Level Political Forum, held in Geneva every July, where national reports are reviewed and progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 is assessed.

"I had recently visited a financial institution to review its latest sustainability report. My colleagues and I attempted to provide an analytical reading of its efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals and the practices outlined in its annual reporting.

"We sat around a table with a diverse group of specialists and administrators. I was asked about the purpose of conducting the review and writing the report, a question that seemed to reflect both surprise and disapproval. I thanked them for attending the meeting and highlighted the positive aspects of the report.

"Today, many institutions prepare sustainability reports primarily as a form of public relations or to enhance their public image. I understand when a public relations or marketing manager leads the sustainability function in its initial stages of implementation.

"Sustainability is not a media campaign, nor a seasonal corporate promotion, nor a beautifully designed report presented to shareholders at the end of the year. At its core, sustainability means engaging with the most pressing issues facing the society in which an organization operates and from which it benefits.

"A sustainability report should raise fundamental questions about how the organization exists within its national context, what lasting impact it leaves beyond profit, and how it can evolve from a purely successful economic entity into a cultural partner in building society.

"The practices of many organizations and entities in 'complying' with efforts to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals often lack a clear national framework and are detached from the core pillars and indicators that reflect state needs and societal priorities. Many of the practices described in these reports are presented without alignment to development policies that support the goals and objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and without a strategic vision that defines logical and mea-

surable targets. "Many organizations focus more on "public image" than on "sustainable impact" based on clear and specific objectives. While every entity seeks to appear as the best, few pause to consider whether they are truly more beneficial, more integrated, or more capable of addressing the pressing challenges facing society and the nation.

"My role is not to add new pages to reports, nor to provide organizations and entities with more polished language to describe themselves. My role is limited to redefining the relationship between capital, development, responsibility, and the future. Perhaps some did not expect that reviewing a report would become a reflection on the very philosophy of sustainability.

"True sustainability, which begins with the report, must be preceded by a fundamental question - what do we want to leave for this nation after the profit cycle ends?"

□ □ □

"The question facing higher education institutions in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries is no longer how many graduates enter the job market each year, but whether they possess the skills employers actually need," Kuwaiti writer Dr. Nasser Hussein Abbas wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"Despite the importance of a university degree, it is no longer a guarantee of employment or sufficient evidence of workplace readiness, particularly as Gulf economies pursue diversification and expand into new sectors that demand efficiency, adaptability, discipline, and a commitment to lifelong learning.

"Although GCC countries rank among the world's highest spenders on education, according to OECD indicators, the return on investment in human capital continues to face structural challenges. These include disguised unemployment and the growing mismatch between the number of degree holders and their actual productive capabilities.

"Today's employers seek graduates who not only possess knowledge but can also apply it effectively. They value individuals who think practically, communicate clearly, collaborate with others, use technology professionally, and take responsibility for their work.

"Academic knowledge alone is no longer enough unless it can be translated into measurable performance, whether through writing reports, managing time efficiently, delivering presentations, or analyzing problems under pressure.

"This skills gap does not necessarily reflect weaknesses among graduates or shortcomings within universities. Rather, it highlights a disconnect between education systems shaped by curricula and regulations and labor markets driven by competition, performance, and technological change.

"Therefore, there is a pressing need for early practical training and closer partnerships between universities, employers, and students.

"One of the clearest manifestations of this gap is the shortage of soft skills, including communication, discipline, problem-solving, teamwork, and the ability to accept constructive criticism.

"While many young people are comfortable using technology in their daily lives, employers increasingly require professional proficiency in areas such as data analysis, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, digital marketing, and process automation.

"In many academic programs, practical training is still limited or largely symbolic, thereby failing to adequately prepare students to understand organizational culture and responsibilities.

"The problem is further compounded by a structural mismatch between academic disciplines and labor market needs. As Gulf economies expand into sectors such as financial technology, logistics, renewable energy, and the creative industries, many educational institutions continue to produce large numbers of graduates in traditional fields that are already saturated.

"Furthermore, the slow pace of curriculum reform and the absence of robust mechanisms for anticipating future labor market demands often leave education reactive rather than proactive.

"Historically, the public sector served as the primary employer of graduates, contributing to a culture in which obtaining a university degree was frequently sufficient to secure employment.

"Today, however, economic transformation, budget constraints, and the growing role of the private sector have shifted the focus toward performance, productivity, and merit-based hiring. This requires a fundamentally different approach to preparing graduates for the workforce.

- Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

Armed Forces personnel freed in Eid gesture

KUWAIT CITY, May 30, (KUNA): Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Lt Gen. Khaled Al-Shuraian issued Tuesday (last week) an order to release military personnel, who were being held for disciplinary

reasons, on Eid al-Adha. The step was taken on the directives of Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, the Ministry said in a press statement.

The ministry added that this generous humanitarian gesture reflects the Minister of Defense's belief in allowing military personnel to spend this blessed occasion with their families.



KUNA photo Minister of Defense and acting Interior Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah visited many military bases during the Eid Al-Adha occasion.



KUNA photo Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuraian visited several military sites during Eid Al-Adha event.

DM visits military bases on Eid

KUWAIT CITY, May 30, (KUNA): Minister of Defense and acting interior minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah visited several military bases and sites on Thursday on Eid Al-Adha.

According to a press statement, Sheikh Abdullah conveyed Eid greetings of His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, to the personnel of the armed forces.

He praised their dedicated efforts, vigilance, discipline, and high morale across all sites.

Army Chief visits military sites

KUWAIT CITY, May 30, (KUNA): Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuraian visited on Friday several military sites on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha.

Kuwait Army General Staff said in a statement that Al-Shuraian congratulated members of the army on Eid Al-Adha, expressing pride of their dedication and discipline which reflects their unwavering keenness on protecting their country.

It added that he prayed to Almighty Allah to bring this blessed occasion back to Kuwait, its leadership and people with goodness, prosperity and blessings, and to bestow lasting security, safety and stability upon Kuwait under the wise leadership.

Heavy fines: Mol 178 radar violations in first hours of Eid

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: According to official statistics, 178 radar citations were issued during the first hours of Eid al-Adha, reports Al-Anba daily quoting security sources.

They explained that the previously announced stricter penalties will apply to those recently apprehended during the radar campaigns, particularly those caught speeding significantly above legal limits.

A total of 97 citations were issued for using a mobile phone while driving and for not wearing a seatbelt, 38 for parking in the vicinity of Al-Amiri and Al-Adan hospitals, and 46 citations were issued to public transport buses, mainly for failing to adhere to designated routes and traffic regulations.

The sources stated that the Ministry of Interior is preparing to issue a decision banning delivery motorcycles during peak hours in order to protect the safety of riders and other road users, especially given the high summer temperatures.

□ □ □

130 kg 'bad' meat seized: The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) announced the seizure of 130 kilograms of meat and animal fat unfit for human consumption at a butcher shop in the Capital Governorate while they were being prepared for sale, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement issued on Thursday, PAFN explained that its Capital Inspection Department confiscated the quantity during intensive monitoring campaigns targeting food establishments. The necessary legal measures have been taken against the violating establishment to ensure the health and safety of consumers.

□ □ □

12 illegals arrested: Patrol officers from the Emergency Police launched a large-scale security campaign targeting residency and labor law violators and wanted individuals in Jahra Governorate. The campaign resulted in the arrest of 12 Arab and Asian nationals for residency law violations, including one wanted in connection with security cases and three with outstanding absconding reports, reports Al-Anba daily.

Six vehicles with court-ordered seizure orders were impounded, and three individuals were arrested for drug use and possession of narcotics.

The wanted individuals were referred to the General Department for Sentences Enforcement, while those found in violation of residency and labor laws were transferred to the Deportation Department.

Asian expat perishes in 6th Ring Road roll-over

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: A 51-year-old Asian expatriate died in a vehicle rollover accident that occurred on the Sixth Ring Road, to the right of the Saad Al-Abdullah area towards Jahra, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to a security source, when the Ministry of Interior's Operations Room received a report of the rollover accident, security patrols, firefighters, and medical emergency teams immediately rushed to the scene, where they confirmed one fatality. The body was transferred to the Forensic Medicine Department.

□ □ □

KFF crackdown continues: The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), represented by the Prevention Sector, continued its inspection campaigns on Thursday evening at several theaters in the Capital Governorate to ensure compliance with safety and fire prevention requirements, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a statement posted on its X account, KFF explained that these measures are part of ongoing campaigns by the Prevention Sector aimed at reducing the number of accidents, enforcing preventive measures to protect lives and property from fire hazards, and ensuring community safety.

□ □ □

Fire destroys vehicles: Fire engulfed a transformer in Fahad Al-Ahmad on Friday afternoon and spread to several vehicles parked nearby, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) explained that firefighters from Mangaf and Ahmadi fire stations rushed to the location and extinguished the fire before it spread further. No injuries were reported.

Investigations were launched to determine the cause of the fire.

'No fracas or chaos in jail'

Expat slapped in traffic rage

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The Ministry of Interior denied reports circulating on some social media platforms regarding a fight inside the Central Prison, along with claims that two inmates sustained injuries and that a state of chaos ensued, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the General Department of Public Relations and Security Media at the Ministry of Interior explained that the incident was a minor dispute between two inmates in one of the prison wards, and that security personnel on duty immediately addressed the matter. The situation was brought under control according to established security procedures, and both parties were summoned and the necessary measures were taken against them.


The ministry affirmed that the situation inside the Central Prison is stable and under control.

It urged the public to verify information and not be influenced by rumors or the circulation of inaccurate reports, and to rely only on information from official sources.

□ □ □

Expat slapped in traffic fight: The investigator at the Sabah Al-Salem Police Station directed detectives to apprehend an unidentified individual who verbally abused, assaulted, and damaged an expatriate's vehicle in front of a branch of the Sabah Al-Salem Cooperative Society, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to a security source, an Asian expatriate, born in 1996, reported that an unknown person driving an American-made vehicle verbally abused him, slapped him in the face, and broke his car's side mirror following a dispute over right-of-way in front of a branch of the Sabah Al-Salem Cooperative Society.

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Crown Prince and Prime Minister extend best wishes

Kuwait Amir marks Croatia Statehood, Azerbaijan and Ethiopia Nat'l Days

KUWAIT CITY, May 30 (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations on Saturday to the President of the Republic of Croatia, Zoran Milanović, on his country's Statehood Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir expressed his sincere congratulations and wished President Zoran Milanović good health and well-being, and further prosperity and progress for Croatia and its people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations on Saturday to the President of the Republic of Croatia, Zoran Milanović, on his country's Statehood Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince expressed his sincere congratulations and wished President Zoran Milanović good health and well-being.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations on Saturday to the President of the Republic of Croatia, Zoran Milanović, on his country's Statehood Day.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir expressed his sincere congratulations and wished President Ilham Aliyev good health and well-being, and further



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah



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



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

prosperity and progress for Azerbaijan and its people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince expressed his sincere congratulations and wished President Ilham Aliyev good health and well-being.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to the President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Taye Atske Selassie, on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir expressed his sincere congratulations and wished President Taye Atske Selassie good health and well-being, and further prosperity and progress for Ethiopia and its people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to the President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Taye Atske Selassie, on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince expressed his sincere congratulations and wished President Taye Atske Selassie good health and well-being.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to the President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Taye Atske Selassie, on his country's National Day.

MEWRE plans to expand power transmission grid

31 new transformer stations underway

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The Electricity Transmission Networks Sector at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy included the supply and installation of 31 major transformer stations in its plan for the current fiscal year.

The project aims to meet rising electricity demand through the

expansion of high-voltage and extra-high-voltage transmission networks.

The expansion is in line with ongoing efforts to keep pace with the annual population growth and the implementation of new residential development projects.

In a related development, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) recently floated a tender for the operation and maintenance of electricity transmission networks.

A total of six bids were submitted and are currently under

evaluation by the ministry.

Following the issuance of the award decision, the technical review process is expected to be completed within 30 days in accordance with the regulations and standards.

The tender is part of the strategy of the ministry to strengthen and modernize the national electricity grid.

These upgrades aim to ensure that the network is fully equipped to handle increasing power consumption and operational challenges, particularly during the peak summer season.

Officials highlight dev't and national unity

Kuwait's governors send Eid Al-Adha greetings to leadership and citizens

KUWAIT CITY, May 30, (KUNA): The governors of Kuwait's six governorates on Tuesday individually congratulated the nation's political leaders and their compatriots alike ahead of the holy Islamic festival of Eid Al-Adha.

The governor of the Capital Governorate Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Sabah said that the nation remains firmly on the path towards development, in line with the "wise directives," of its political leadership.

Extending his well wishes over the joyous Eid Al-Adha occasion, the governor of Al-Ahmadi Governorate Sheikh Humoud Jaber Al-Sabah highlighted that national development has been on an upward trajectory under the watch of Kuwait's "wise" political leadership.

The governor of Farwaniya Governorate Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Sabah wished the nation continued



The governors of Kuwait governorates.

prosperity, development and security, while the Acting Governor of Mubarak Al-Kabeer and Hawally Governorates Sheikh Sabah Bader Al-Sabah hoped that this year's Eid Al-Adha would usher in blessings and peace to the nation.

Congratulating Kuwait's political leadership on the joyous occasion of Eid Al-Adha, the governor of Al-Jahra Governorate Hamad Al-Habshi praised the efforts of state bodies for upholding national security as Eid festivities get underway.



Historic sites to be converted into design hubs

CAPT opens bids for NCCAL project

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) opened the bids for the consulting services needed to develop the educational infrastructure for the creative economy during its meeting on Monday.

The agency also agreed to refer the two selected bids to the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), the entity overseeing the project, for review and presentation of recommendations within 30 days.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the report issued by the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP), indicating that the project is for NCCAL and it is in line with the roadmap for the creative economy. It added that the council intends to position Kuwait as a leading country in the Original Design Manufacturer (ODM) industry.

It affirmed that the council aims to transform Kuwait into a regional hub for design innovation and excellence in talent development, design skills, production and entrepreneurship, while advancing the creative industries in the country.

It emphasized that design is the main driver of innovation not only in creative industries, but also in other sectors like technology, manufacturing, healthcare and services.

The council will renovate these historic buildings -- Mishref Palace, Chest Hospital, Mubarakiya School and Souq Al-Dakhili -- in order to develop the educational infrastructure in the field of design to support the growth of creative industries, encourage innovation, and build the required professional skills.

The transformation of these historic sites into centers for specialized programs in major design disciplines will solidify the position of the country as the regional center for creative industries.



Kuwaitis and residents performed Eid Al-Adha sacrifices amid organized health and safety measures at slaughterhouses.

Kuwaitis perform sacrifice rite

KUWAIT CITY, May 30, (KUNA): In a scene of faith embodying the values of mercy and solidarity, and reflecting generosity, Kuwaiti philanthropists and residents began performing animal sacrifice on Wednesday - the first day of Eid Al-Adha (Day of Sacrifice) holiday.

The ritual reflects devotion to Allah, the Almighty, and closeness to Him; it helps alleviate the burdens on the poor.

This is the first of the three "Tashreeq" days, during which Muslim philanthropists, including the Kuwaitis, flock to the central slaughterhouses.

The well-equipped have been prepared to receive them with a comprehensive

system of facilities and services, strictly adhering to public health requirements to ensure the organized performance of the sacrifice ritual.

The person offering the sacrifice takes great care to select their animal, ensuring it meets all religious requirements regarding age, health, and freedom from defects.

This is done to glorify Allah, the Almighty's rituals and draw closer to Him through this blessed tradition.

Acts of charity transform the sacrifice into a season embodying mercy and solidarity, and spreading joy and affection among people.

PAAET starts receiving summer social allowance applications for 2025/2026

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The Deanship of Student Affairs at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) has announced the opening of applications for the social allowance for students registered in the 2025/2026 summer semester, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Applications will be accepted starting next Monday until Tuesday, June 30, 2026.

The allowance will not be disbursed to any student who submits an application or updates the required documents after the deadline.

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LOCAL

Health Minister, undersecretary visit medical facilities

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi and Undersecretary Sheikh Dr. Salman Al-Sabah conducted extensive field visits to a number of hospitals, health centers and the Emergency Medical Services Department to personally look into the level of preparedness of healthcare facilities and ensure the uninterrupted delivery of medical services during the initial days of Eid Al-Adha.

Several other ministry officials and healthcare leaders participated in these inspection tours.

During the visits, the minister and undersecretary reviewed the workflow in intensive care units, emergency departments and support service sections.

They also assessed the implementation of the approved operational plans for the holiday period, confirming the readiness of administrative, technical and medical staff to handle health emergencies and various cases round the clock.

They met with on-duty personnel in different facilities, listened to their comments and needs, and commended their commitment and efforts in maintaining high standards of healthcare services throughout the Eid holiday.

As part of the efforts of the Health Ministry to improve service quality and ensure the comfort of the public during the holiday, the tours included meetings with patients and visitors to evaluate the level of healthcare services provided in various medical institutions.



MoH photo
Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi inspected hospitals and healthcare facilities across the country alongside Undersecretary Sheikh Dr. Salman Khalifa Al-Sabah and health officials.

Continued from Page 1

While we

contributes to the comfort and prosperity of others. Respect for human dignity is not merely a moral ideal; it is a principle that finds expression in modern legal systems, including the laws of the State of Kuwait.

Kuwait's legal framework recognizes the importance of protecting workers and ensuring fair treatment in the workplace. Article 68 of the Private Sector Labor Law grants workers official paid holidays, including Eid Al-Adha. Where operational requirements necessitate work during an official holiday, the employee does not lose that right. Instead, the law grants the worker both an alternative day of rest and double remuneration for the day worked. The principle is straightforward: business needs cannot become a justification for depriving workers of protections granted by legislation. If society requires someone to sacrifice part of the holiday in service of others, the law ensures that this sacrifice is fairly recognized and compensated.

The protection of workers in Kuwait, however, extends far beyond holiday entitlements. The law reflects a broader commitment to safeguarding human dignity and preventing exploitation. Workers are entitled to receive their wages in accordance with the law, and failure to pay wages is not always merely a contractual dispute. It exposes offenders to criminal accountability and investigation by the Public Prosecution.

More serious still are practices that exploit vulnerable workers. The unlawful confiscation of passports, restrictions on personal freedom, coercion, abuse of vulnerability, forced labor, or similar conduct may, fall within the scope of offences addressed under Kuwait's anti-human trafficking legislation. Such acts are treated with utmost seriousness because they undermine one of the most fundamental principles recognized by both law and humanity: the inherent dignity and freedom of every individual.

Kuwait has long been recognized for its humanitarian values and its commitment to protecting human rights. The legal protection afforded

to workers reflects that commitment. Regardless of nationality, language, religion, or economic status, every worker is entitled to basic rights and legal safeguards. No person should be exploited because of financial need, lack of knowledge, language barriers, or dependence on employment. The law exists not only to regulate relationships but also to protect those who may be vulnerable to abuse.

As we celebrate Eid Al-Adha, it is worth pausing to remember those who continue working while others enjoy the holiday. Respecting workers' rights is not simply a legal obligation. It is a reflection of character, leadership, and social responsibility. Compliance with the law is the minimum standard expected of every employer. Beyond compliance lies something greater: fairness, integrity, compassion, and respect for human dignity.

A timeless teaching encourages people to give the worker his wages before his sweat dries. Centuries later, that message remains remarkably relevant. Whether viewed through the lens of faith, morality, or law, the conclusion remains the same: no society becomes stronger by exploiting those who serve it. A society becomes stronger when it protects them.

Fawaz@tahergp.org

'Hands off

Arab League Secretary-General Ahmad Aboul-Gheit also strongly denounced the strikes, warning that Iran's repeated actions undermine de-escalation efforts and threaten international peace and security, while affirming that Kuwait's security is integral to Arab national security.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Muslim World League, Iraq, and Palestine likewise condemned the attacks, calling for restraint, respect for sovereignty, and the pursuit of diplomatic solutions to avoid further escalation.

The European Union joined the condemnation on Friday, describing the attack as a violation of international law and a serious threat to regional stability.

The EU urged full adherence to the UN Charter and the implementation of Security Council Resolution 2817, while reaffirming its support for de-escalation efforts.

Elsewhere, U.S. President Donald Trump held a White House Situation Room meeting with his advisers on Friday but has not yet made a decision on whether to move forward with a deal to extend the Iran ceasefire and reopen the Strait of Hormuz. Iran said the agreement has not been finalized.

Ahead of the meeting, Trump said he was looking to make a "final determination." A senior administration official later said the roughly two-hour meeting with national security aides had concluded without a decision.

The official, who was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity, said Trump would only sign a deal that "satisfies his redlines" and curbs Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Trump confirmed the high-level talks the day after The Associated Press and other news outlets reported that U.S. and Iranian negotiators had come to terms on a tentative agreement. The deal would extend the fragile ceasefire by 60 days as new talks are held on Iran's disputed nuclear program.

Trump wrote on social media that "Iran must agree that they will never have a Nuclear Weapon or Bomb." He said the strait must be reopened for international navigation and all sea mines destroyed.

Iran's main negotiator said Friday that it has "no trust in guarantees or words," only actions, underscoring lingering distrust after the U.S. and Israel have twice attacked Iran over the past year while it was engaged in nuclear negotiations.

"No step will be taken before the other side acts," Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf wrote on X. "We do not gain concessions through talks, but through missiles."

Later, but before Trump's meeting concluded, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei told a state broadcaster that the agreement "has not been finalized yet."

On Thursday, U.S. Vice President JD Vance suggested negotiators were trying to strike general terms on Iran's nuclear program, with the specifics to be ham-

pered out in the ensuing talks.

Baghaei, however, said Friday that Iranian officials were "focused on the end of war and are not discussing the details of the nuclear plan at this point."

Iran also wants any deal to include a truce between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah militants in Lebanon, where fighting has intensified despite a nominal ceasefire. And the Islamic Republic has been seeking the release of billions of dollars in frozen funds.

T4 welcomes

Kingdom's use of advanced technologies and services to facilitate the rituals for millions of pilgrims.

His Highness prayed to Almighty Allah to accept the righteous deeds of the blessed days and to grant Saudi Arabia continued progress, prosperity, and stability under its wise leadership.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent similar cables to King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, expressing congratulations on the successful Hajj season. He lauded the Kingdom's extensive preparations and integrated services that enabled pilgrims to perform their rituals with ease and safety, wishing Saudi Arabia and its people continued success and prosperity.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah likewise sent a cable to King Salman, congratulating him on the successful organization of the pilgrimage.

Meanwhile, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah conveyed Eid Al-Adha greetings to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman during a reception held at Mina Palace, attended by senior officials and GCC guests. He also relayed the greetings of His Highness the Amir and Crown Prince to the Saudi leadership and people, wishing the Kingdom continued security and prosperity.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef praised Saudi Arabia's exceptional organization of Hajj, highlighting the integrated security, logistical, and service efforts that ensured pilgrims' safety and comfort. During his visit to the Kuwaiti Hajj

campaigns' headquarters in Mina, he inspected facilities, met pilgrims, and reviewed services provided, reaffirming Kuwait's commitment to ensuring their wellbeing.

Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Wasmi also commended Saudi Arabia's efforts, noting that the Kingdom mobilized all resources to provide comprehensive care for pilgrims from arrival through completion of rituals. He expressed satisfaction with the performance of Kuwait's Hajj mission, citing strong coordination and efficient services.

Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry and Head of the Kuwaiti Hajj Mission Dr. Suleiman Al-Suwaiem praised the Kingdom's organizational excellence, emphasizing the high level of integration across services in the holy sites. He thanked Saudi authorities for their cooperation and received initial arrangements for the 1448 Hajj season during a closing ceremony organized by the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah.

Kuwait's Consul General in Jeddah and Permanent Representative to the OIC Yousef Al-Tunaib affirmed the consulate's readiness to assist Kuwaiti pilgrims during their return, noting that field teams will remain operational until all pilgrims depart. He added that coordination is underway to ensure smooth departures via King Abdulaziz International Airport.

The Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) announced the commencement of flights for pilgrims returning to Kuwait through Terminal Four (T4) at Kuwait International Airport on Saturday and will continue until Sunday evening.

According to PACA, the first return flight arrived at 12:15 pm on Saturday, while the last flight is expected to arrive at 9:00 pm on Sunday. It affirmed that the return flights are proceeding as scheduled, in coordination with the Kuwaiti Hajj caravan operators and relevant authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

It added that the necessary preparations and arrangements have been completed to welcome the pilgrims, and that the required facilities and services have been provided to ensure swift procedures and smooth flow at the airport,

proving the operational readiness of the airport to better serve the pilgrims returning from the Holy Land.

Kuwait to

and dry conditions. During this period, temperatures rise sharply across Kuwait and the wider Gulf region, while vegetation begins to dry out and dust waves become more frequent.

The center noted that the season coincides with the sun reaching its northernmost positions for both sunrise and sunset. Strong northwesterly winds are expected to prevail, contributing to the spread of dust and sand particles in the atmosphere.

With the arrival of Murabba'aniyat Al-Qaydh, daytime temperatures are expected to reach high levels, making it one of the hottest periods of the year. The combination of intense heat, persistent winds and dusty conditions has long made Thuraya a key seasonal indicator in traditional weather observations and astronomical calculations across the region.

Kuwait intercepts

This prompted the officers to conduct intensified search and investigation operations, including monitoring the movements of the two suspects until their arrest.

The ministry confirmed that the search resulted in the discovery of 12 kilograms of methamphetamine (crystal meth), which the suspects concealed inside hydraulic cylinders for excavators and trucks, in an attempt to mislead security personnel and divert suspicion from the shipment.

It indicated that the drugs were confiscated and the suspects were referred to the concerned authorities.

It reaffirmed its ongoing efforts to combat drugs and to thwart drug smuggling and trafficking attempts, emphasizing that security forces remain vigilant to prevent anyone attempting to harm society through drug trafficking and that the most rigid legal action is taken against those involved.



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America

3 dead in Alaska's Mt McKinley: Three climbers on Alaska's Mount McKinley who fell near a treacherous pass on North America's tallest peak have died, a Latvian mountaineering group announced Friday. A fourth climber was rescued.

The four were members of a Latvian mountaineering expedition, the group said. They were part of a seven-person team traversing a route known for its exposed sections - where many injuries and deaths have occurred over the years - when they fell Wednesday, the National Park Service has said.

McKinley stands at about 20,310 feet (6,190 meters), and the climber who was rescued was brought off the mountain from about 17,200 feet (5,240 meters) by Denali National Park and Preserve search and rescue personnel late Thursday afternoon. A long line from a helicopter was used in the rescue because the terrain and conditions prevented the helicopter from landing, the park service said Friday. The climber was later airlifted to a hospital. (AP)

6 remains found in tank rupture: Crews have recovered the remains of six of nine workers who were missing after a massive chemical tank ruptured at a paper mill in Washington state, releasing a flood of caustic liquid capable of causing severe burns and lung injuries, officials said. In all, 11 people were killed in the disaster, including the three yet to be recovered, and eight injured. It's one of the deadliest US workplace accidents in recent decades.

A tank containing more than 500,000 gallons (1.9 million liters) of a chemical mixture used to break down wood for making paper collapsed Tuesday



North America's tallest peak, on Aug 12, 2025, in Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska. (AP)

morning at the Nippon Dynawave Packaging Co. in Longview, a city along the Columbia River. (AP)

Man wanted over 3 killings arrested: A man wanted in connection with the killings of three men was apprehended Thursday after a massive search of Hawaii's Big Island that had left residents on edge. Police said Jacob Baker, 36, of Pahoa, Hawaii, was arrested on suspicion of murder, burglary and other charges following a search that involved "significant resources," including help from state and federal authorities. They described him as "armed and extremely dangerous."

Authorities said they believe Baker is involved in the deaths of three men: a 69-year-old man found partially submerged in a cement pond, a 79-year-old man who was found just a few hundred feet (meters) away, and a third man, also 69, whose body was found about 19 miles (31 kilometers) away. (AP)

US president's latest immigration move clouds path to green cards

WASHINGTON, May 30, (AP): When US President Donald Trump's administration announced last week that it would require green card seekers to apply from their home countries instead of in the US, immigration attorney Flavia Santos Lloyd's phone began ringing off the hook with clients worried about the implications for them.

Lloyd wasn't sure what to tell them, but she knew the confusing new policy would slow down applications.

"It has a chilling effect because we have some cases that we were going to proceed and I can tell already, we should wait and see what's going on," she said. US Citizenship and Immigration Services announced Friday that foreigners in the US who want a green card will need to leave and apply in their home country, barring some unspecified exceptions.

The announcement, which potentially affects hundreds of thousands of green card applicants a year, was the latest immigration policy unveiled by Trump's Republican administration to stun and confound lawyers, advocates and immigrants. It's also part of a pivot



US President Donald Trump speaks during a Cabinet meeting at the White House on May 27, 2026, in Washington. (AP)

by the administration to target legal pathways to immigration, after focusing since last year mostly on migrants in the US illegally.

"This is simply an attempt to try to limit and scare people away from the legal immigration process," immigration attorney Charles Kuck said, add-

ing that he expected legal action against the change. "This is a scare tactic."

As worried immigrants and their employers flood immigration law offices with questions, it's unclear what the effect will be, what exceptions might be allowed and how the policy will play out on the ground.

Candidates for California governor scramble to deliver final pitch to voters

Trump jumps into GOP primaries for gov in S. Carolina, Iowa and Oklahoma

COLUMBIA, SC, May 30, (AP): US President Donald Trump endorsed three Republican gubernatorial candidates Friday, wading into contests in South Carolina, Iowa and Oklahoma that have pitted allies against each other in a fierce competition for their party leader's blessing.

In a trio of social media posts, Trump gave his backing to South Carolina Lt. Gov. Pamela Evette, Iowa Rep. Randy Feenstra and former Oklahoma state senator Mike Mazzei as primary elections approach.

Iowa's primary is Tuesday, South Carolina's is on June 9 and Oklahoma's is on June 16. All three states are having their first competitive Republican gubernatorial primaries in years.

For two terms, Evette has served alongside Gov. Henry McMaster, one of Trump's earliest backers during his first presidential campaign. Earlier this year, the long-serving governor endorsed his No. 2, telegraphing to some that Trump's backing could be next.

On Friday, Trump expressed both appreciation for Evette and the state she represents, noting that she stumped for him in 2024. He also said "A BIG added plus" for her campaign is that Henry McMaster Jr.

- the sitting governor's son - may be Evette's running mate.

In the deep red state of South Carolina, the competition for the president's support has been the most intense part of the primary race.

In a separate post, Trump described Feenstra as "MAGA all the way" and said he would "fight tirelessly" for the state on issues including the economy, border security and support of law enforcement.

Evette and Feenstra have been vocal about wanting Trump's endorsement, in the hopes that it would carry weight in states that helped propel Trump's return to office in 2024. Feenstra said earlier this year that he asked for Trump's support, and much of Evette's campaign media has featured photos of her next to Trump.

Along with Feenstra, four other Republicans - state Rep. Eddie Andrews, businessman and former conservative political director Zach Lahn, former state Rep. Brad Sherman and former director of the state Department of Administrative Services Adam Steen - are in the primary to replace outgoing Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, who opted out of a third bid.

Evette is competing for the South Carolina nomination against Rep.



California gubernatorial candidate Tom Steyer speaks with reporters during a campaign event in Berkeley, Calif on May 27. (AP)

Nancy Mace, Rep. Ralph Norman and state Attorney General Alan Wilson.

Mazzei is running to replace Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt, who is finishing his second term. He's competing against state Attorney General Gentry Drummond, former state House Speaker Charles McCall and former state public safety secretary Chip Keating.

"Mike Mazzei has my Complete

and Total Endorsement to be the next Governor of Oklahoma - HE WILL NEVER LET YOU DOWN!" Trump wrote on social media.

Also:

SACRAMENTO, Calif: The end of California's chaotic governor's race was approaching Saturday as leading candidates rushed to deliver their closing arguments before voting concludes Tuesday.

Former US health secretary Xavi-

er Becerra has called for "hot competence summer," promoting his decades of public service as evidence he has what it takes to be California's next governor.

Republican **Steve Hilton** pledged an end to a "bloated, nanny-state bureaucracy" during remarks outside the state Capitol on Wednesday.

Billionaire climate activist **Tom Steyer** told reporters this week in Berkeley, California, that he's made it his life's work to advance progressive causes, a mission he'll bring to Sacramento.

They're seeking to stand out in a field of roughly 60 candidates on a single ballot, regardless of party, under California's top-two primary system. The two candidates who receive the most votes will face off in the general election to replace Democratic Gov **Gavin Newsom**, who can't seek a third term.

The crowded race includes Democrats **Becerra**, **Steyer**, former US Rep. **Katie Porter**, and **Matt Mahan**, the mayor of San Jose. Hilton, a former Fox News host backed by President **Donald Trump**, and **Riverside County Sheriff Chad Bianco** are the most prominent Republicans in the race.

As of Friday afternoon, 13% of voters had cast their ballots. That

included 13% of Democrats and 18% of Republicans, according to a tracker by Democratic strategist **Paul Mitchell**. The breakdown is unusual because Democrats in recent years have tended to vote early while many Republicans wait until Election Day.

Some Democrats have been waiting to cast their ballots to see if a candidate breaks away from the pack in the final days, or because they're unimpressed with the crowded field.

Two polls conducted in mid-to-late May suggested that Becerra and Hilton each have the support of about 2 in 10 California likely voters. In one poll, Steyer landed closer to Becerra and Hilton, with **Bianco** and **Porter** trailing further behind, but similar shares of voters were supporting Steyer, Bianco, and Porter in the other poll. None of the other candidates were in the double digits in either poll.

The contenders have been traveling across the state that includes roughly 23 million registered voters as they seek an edge over rivals. Becerra, Hilton, Steyer and Bianco will all be in the **San Francisco Bay Area** this weekend. **Fresno** and **Los Angeles** have also been popular campaign stops.

Former Greek anti-austerity leader Tsipras steps back into politics

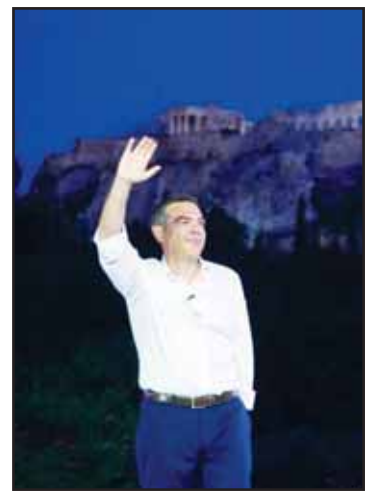
ATHENS, Greece, May 30, (AP): Alexis Tsipras, the combative Greek anti-austerity leader who rallied against Brussels during the country's debt crisis, returned to politics Tuesday ahead of elections next year.

The former prime minister launched a new left-wing political party, the Greek Left Alliance, cheered on by supporters at an outdoor event beneath the Acropolis.

"We cannot stand by and watch society suffocate," Tsipras said, arguing that the center-right government's pro-business agenda has worsened income inequality. "We don't want to get used to a world of war and injustice."

At 51, Tsipras is returning after three years away from active politics. He remains a polarizing figure.

He rose to power in 2015 on promises to end the harsh austerity measures demanded by Greece's European creditors and the International Monetary Fund. The standoff rattled global markets as Greece came close to crashing out of the euro currency bloc. Athens eventually accepted new loans



Former left-wing prime minister Alexis Tsipras waves to supporters in front of ancient Acropolis at an event to launch a new political party ahead of elections next year, in Athens, on May 26. (AP)

and more austerity. Tsipras now hopes to peel away support - and potentially lawmakers - from rival opposition par-

ties as he seeks to challenge conservative Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and his bid for a third term.

In launching the new party, Tsipras focused heavily on affordable housing, stronger labor protections and widening economic inequality, themes his allies believe could resonate with younger and lower-income voters squeezed by rising living costs. He also criticized the government's close ties with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Despite a cost-of-living crunch and a corruption scandal that has dogged his government, Mitsotakis continues to lead comfortably in opinion polls, buoyed by steady economic growth and falling unemployment. Greece's opposition landscape remains deeply fragmented with seven parties currently represented in parliament.

Several newcomers and smaller groups are competing to gain traction ahead of the vote. Last week, the mother of a 19-year-old university student killed in Greece's 2023 rail disaster launched an anti-corruption party, adding further pressure on established opposition groups.



This photo released by Romania's Department for Emergency Situations shows a fire on top of a block of flats after a drone crash caused an explosion and fire on impact, in Galati, eastern Romania near the Ukrainian border on May 29. (AP)

Russian drone targeting Ukraine hits apartment building in Romania; 2 injured

BUCHAREST, Romania, May 30, (AP): A Russian drone that was part of an attack on Ukraine went astray and struck an apartment building in eastern Romania, injuring two people in the NATO member country, Romanian officials said Friday. The incursion added to concerns that the war could spread across the alliance's borders.

The drone was tracked overnight by radar in Romanian airspace, crashed onto the roof of the building in the Danube port city of Galati and sparked a fire, the Defense Ministry said in a statement. The two injuries were minor and several people were evacuated.

It was the latest in a series of drones - from both Russia and Ukraine - to hit a NATO member since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022.

The incidents have left the 32-member military alliance on edge. Friday's incursion drew strong condemnation across Europe, with leaders calling Russia's actions reckless and irresponsible.

Romania scrambled two F-16 fighter jets and a helicopter, and alerted residents of the affected areas, but the aircraft didn't engage the drone in the city, which is located near the borders of Ukraine and

'Russian spies aggressively seeking Western technology'

STOCKHOLM, Sweden, May 30, (AP): Russia's intelligence agencies have grown more aggressive in their efforts to steal Western technology and defense secrets as sanctions squeeze the country's wartime economy, three senior European intelligence officials told The Associated Press.

Moscow's agents are building fake companies, recruiting middlemen and deploying

cyber spies and hackers who are gathering information that could also be used to attack key infrastructure, they said.

Four years of international sanctions have hampered Moscow's ability to procure machinery, technology and research from Europe, while the grinding war in Ukraine has taxed key industries and pushed the country toward a potential financial crisis.

Moldova.

Romania asked NATO to speed up the transfer of anti-drone capabilities to its military, the Foreign Ministry said, calling the incursion a serious violation of international law.

Asked about the drone during a state visit to Astana, Kazakhstan, Russian President Vladimir Putin said its origin is yet to be determined, telling reporters that "no one can say what origin a particular aircraft has until it has been examined."

He urged Romania to turn the drone over to Russia for it to conduct "an objective investigation."

But Romanian President Nicusor Dan identified the drone as Russian.

"We had a Russian drone, German-2, leaving Russia. We know the trajectory, we know where it went through Ukraine, we know where it entered Romania, part of a swarm of 43 Russian drones, of which only one reached Romanian territory," a statement from Dan said.

Europe

Hungary bus crash kills 1, injures 23: A bus carrying young athletes to a competition in Hungary early Saturday veered into the opposing lane and then collided with a tree, killing the driver and injuring nearly two dozen, police said.

The accident occurred near the town of Hird in southwestern Hungary at around 5:20 a.m. local time, Baranya County Police said in a statement, adding that the cause of the accident had not yet been determined.

There were 28 people on the bus including 19 youth competitors from the aerobics division of the nearby Pécs Sports School, as well as three coaches, six parents and the driver. The bus was taking the students to the second round of a competition in the capital Budapest, around 120 miles to the north, when the crash occurred. (AP)

Man stabs 3 at Swiss train station: A man stabbed and wounded three people in what authorities described as an "act of terror" at the train station in the Swiss city of Winterthur on Thursday before being arrested.

The attack took place shortly before 8:30 am. The suspect, who was arrested five minutes after emergency services were alerted, is a 31-year-old Swiss-Turkish dual national who lives in Winterthur, regional police chief Marius Weyermann said. (AP)



A police vehicle is parked in front of Winterthur train station following a stabbing attack in Winterthur, Switzerland on May 28. (AP)

Latvian parliament approves new govt: Latvian lawmakers on Thursday approved a new coalition government that will lead the European Union and NATO member country in the coming months after its predecessor collapsed following an argument over its handling of stray drones suspected to be from Ukraine.

The parliament, or Saeima, approved the four-party coalition under new Prime Minister Andris Kulbergs of the centrist United List party, which was previously in opposition, the LETA news agency reported. The Cabinet was approved by 66 votes to 25.

The alliance includes the New Unity party of its predecessor, Evika Silina, and Baiba Braze keeps her post as foreign minister in the new administration. (AP)

Leaders of ASEAN member states to meet with Putin at June summit in Russia

Vietnam's To Lam points to Strait of Hormuz as warning for Asia-Pacific rivals

SINGAPORE, May 30, (AP): Vietnam's leader said Friday that the Strait of Hormuz has shown how one flashpoint can throw the rest of the world into turmoil, suggesting that the US and China need to abide by international law to avoid provoking a global crisis as they vie for influence in the Asia-Pacific region.

Vietnamese leader To Lam was delivering the keynote address at the Shangri-La Dialogue, Asia's premier defense summit, to an audience that included US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and a high-level delegation from China. Lam suggested that Iran's stranglehold on the Strait of Hormuz during the war in the Middle East has demonstrated how regional conflicts can have worldwide ramifications.

"Recent tensions along strategic maritime routes in the Middle East remind us that a single flashpoint can rapidly disrupt trade, energy supplies, logistics and social economic life across the globe," the Vietnamese leader said.

Lam has consolidated his power in Vietnam this year, becoming both Communist Party general secretary and president of the strategically important Southeast Asian nation,

departing from its tradition of shared leadership.

Like several other countries in the region, Vietnam has competing maritime claims with Beijing that have led to confrontations, but at the same time is heavily tied economically to China, its biggest two-way trade partner.

The US, meantime, is Vietnam's largest export destination and has been seeking to make diplomatic inroads and expand defense contracts to try and pull some of that market away from Hanoi's traditional partner, Russia.

Recently leaked documents showed, however, that even after elevating relations with Washington to the highest diplomatic level, Vietnam's military remained skeptical of American intentions and had taken steps to defend against a possible American "war of aggression."

"This is the world's most dynamic center of growth, but also a theater of intense strategic competition, a region defined by vital maritime routes, yet fraught with risk," Lam told the gathering of world leaders, diplomats and top defense officials.

He said the region has "benefited profoundly from globalization," but



Vietnam's President To Lam delivers his address during the Shangri-La Dialogue, Asia's annual defense and security forum, in Singapore on May 29. (AP)

at the same time now faces mounting pressure on many fronts.

"What the region seeks is neither the mere presence nor absence of any major power, what it seeks is responsible commitment," he said. "We recognize that competition is an enduring reality of international relations, but competition must be bound by law, guided by transparency and

exercised with restraint.

At a meeting with Lam and Vietnam's defense minister ahead of Lam's speech, Hegseth "applauded Vietnam's rapid military modernization, which will strengthen Vietnam's ability to defend its sovereignty and our shared interests," according to a statement from the Pentagon.

Hegseth, who will be making his

second appearance at the event, was due to speak on Saturday morning. Last year in Singapore, Hegseth raised the ire of Beijing by saying "the threat China poses is real, and it could be imminent," and that its military was "rehearsing for the real deal."

Hegseth said Washington would bolster its defenses to counter what the Pentagon sees as rapidly developing threats, particularly in China's aggressive stance toward Taiwan.

But this year's speech comes only about two weeks after US President Donald Trump visited Chinese leader Xi Jinping in Beijing, where Xi warned that their two countries could clash over Taiwan if the issue was not handled properly.

Following the meetings, Trump called Xi a "great leader" and said that they were going to have a "fantastic future together." Trump also raised questions about Washington's willingness to defend Taiwan, calling a new \$14 billion arms package that he has yet to greenlight "a very good negotiating chip for us" with China.

China claims the self-governing democratic island as its own, and Xi has not ruled out using force to take it.

Also:

MANILA, Philippines: Leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations will hold a commemorative summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Russia in June, the Philippines' top diplomat said Friday.

Philippine Foreign Secretary **Teodoro Lazaro** said in a post on X that she and her Russian counterpart, **Sergey Lavrov**, spoke on the phone about ASEAN's summit to be held in the Russian city of **Kazan**.

The Russian Embassy in Manila said that ahead of the June 17 to 18 meeting, Lavrov and Lazaro discussed "the prospects of expanding Russia's strategic partnership" with ASEAN.

Aside from the Philippines, ASEAN members include **Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, East Timor and Vietnam**.

Most ASEAN state members voted to support a United Nations General Assembly resolution condemning Russia for its Feb. 24, 2022, invasion of **Ukraine**, but the regional bloc has maintained relations with Moscow as a "dialogue partner" and engaged Russian officials in annual top-level meetings.

ICC trial for ex-president Duterte to start in November

Japan, Philippines agree to bolster defense ties

TOKYO, May 30, (AP): Japan and the Philippines agreed to strengthen their defense cooperation by accelerating talks on Japanese weapons sales and intelligence sharing at a time of fears over China's military activity in Asia.

The two countries also upgraded their ties to the highest-tier diplomatic framework of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, meaning that they will cooperate on a broader range of areas, not just on a strategic priorities.

Japan treated Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. with highest levels of hospitality, including a meeting with Emperor Naruhito, a palace banquet and one of Japan's most prestigious decorations, the Grand Cordon of the Supreme Order of the Chrysanthemum, on Wednesday.

The message was clear: Japan sees the Philippines as a key defense partner and major arms customer in a region where tensions are rising.

Marcos, at a joint news conference after Thursday's talks with Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, called the partnership upgrade a



Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, (right), and Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. shake hands before a summit meeting at the Akasaka Palace state guest house in Tokyo, Japan, on May 28. (AP)

"milestone" and that it "will be built on a foundation of friendship and shared values for peace, diplomacy and adherence to international law."

Both nations have China firmly in mind as they tighten a military relationship that the United States hopes will act as a bulwark against

Beijing's ambitions in the East and South China Seas and its designs on Taiwan, the self-governing island China claims as its own.

Philippines is the first potential major customer for Japanese arms since Takaichi's government scrapped a ban on lethal weapons

exports. The change in April was a break from Japan's postwar pacifist policy as the nation accelerates its military and arms industry buildup.

Also:

THE HAGUE, Netherlands: Judges at the International Criminal Court said that the trial of former Philippine president **Rodrigo Duterte** for crimes against humanity will start on Nov. 30.

According to prosecutors, the ex-leader is responsible for dozens of murders, allegedly overseeing deadly anti-drug crackdowns, first as mayor of the southern Philippine city of **Davao** and later as president.

"The expediency of the trial is of the utmost importance," presiding Judge **Joanna Korner** said, rejecting requests from the registry of the court to delay the start date over concerns about a lack of translators.

Duterte, who served as president from 2016 to 2022, was arrested in the Philippines last year and flown to The Hague, where the global court is located. He denies the charges against him.

4 rescued in Laos cave as search on for two missing

BANGKOK, May 30, (AP): Rescue workers in Laos said Saturday they have safely evacuated four villagers trapped in a flooded cave for 10 days, the day after another one was successfully extracted. Two men remain missing.

Lao and Thai rescue groups posted about the successful operation on social media, along with photos of the men lying on stretchers, wearing oxygen masks and being wrapped in foil blankets.

The villagers had reportedly entered the cave last week to look for valuable minerals before being trapped by flash flooding that blocked their way out. One other villager escaped in time and alerted the authorities to the seven left behind.

Lao organization Rescue Volunteer for People said on its Facebook page that the water level inside the cave receded low enough for them to leave with divers who had gone in to deliv-



This video grab provided by the Association Of Volunteers For Lao People, shows rescuers evacuating the first of five villagers, center, who had been trapped in a cave in Xaisomboun province, Laos on May 29. (AP)

er food and water. They said they will continue their search for the two who remain missing.



Students gather after a fire at Utumishi Girls School in Gilgil, central Kenya on May 28. (AP)

Deadly fire at girls school in Kenya kills 16

Police in Kenya have arrested eight female students on suspicion of arson, authorities said Friday, after a fire destroyed a dormitory at a boarding school, killing 16 children and injuring dozens of others. The motive is still unknown.

Police held 30 students overnight for questioning. Authorities said school administrators would face disciplinary action for safety violations after an exit door was found to be locked during the panicked rush

to escape the building. At least 79 people were injured.

Education Minister Julius Ogamba said two teachers were aware that students were planning something but failed to take appropriate action, without elaborating.

A full day after the blaze, some parents said they had still not been told whether their children were under arrest or just being questioned.

"We have not even been told about the eight that police have

arrested," a parent, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of fear that her daughter could be victimized, told The Associated Press. "We are just here and no one is giving us any information."

At a hospital morgue some 28 kilometers (18 miles) from the school, other parents awaited DNA tests to identify their children. A distraught father, John Muiruri, said they were being given conflicting information about the location of the bodies. (AP)

Sudanese medical group accuses RSF of killing 27 in attack targeting civilians

CAIRO, May 30, (AP): A humanitarian organization on Friday accused forces affiliated with a Sudanese paramilitary group of targeting civilians in an area of Sudan free of any military presence during a major Muslim holiday, killing 27 people, among them elderly people.

Sudan Doctors Network, a group that tracks violence across the country, blamed forces affiliated with the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces for carrying out the attacks on Thursday on villages in al-Murrah area located west of Barah town in North Kordofan.

It said the attacks worsened already "catastrophic humanitarian conditions that citizens are enduring due to the ongoing war."

A full-scale war erupted in April 2023 after long-simmering tensions between the army and the Rapid Support Forces escalated. The Kordofan region has become one of the conflict's main epicenters, with fighting intensifying on several fronts, including through drone warfare.

The paramilitary RSF and its allies control the western Darfur region



Sudanese soldiers from the Rapid Support Forces unit patrol during a rally for Dagalo, in Garawee town, north of Sudan on June 15, 2019. (AP)

and areas in the Kordofan region along the border with South Sudan - both regions rich in oil fields and gold mines. The RSF also repeatedly clashed with the army over Barah.

Thursday's attacks were carried out during the second day of Eid al-Adha or "Feast of Sacrifice," an Is-

lamic holiday celebrated by millions of Muslims around the globe.

The doctors' network said in its statement that "targeting villages and civilian areas and liquidating citizens in this horrific manner constitutes a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law."

Truck accident in Afghanistan kills 18

KABUL, May 30, (AP): A truck carrying Afghan refugees returning from neighboring Pakistan overturned on a highway in eastern Afghanistan on Saturday, killing at least 18 people and injuring 35 others, most of them women and children, officials said.

The accident occurred in Laghman province on the main highway linking Kabul, the Afghan capital, with Nangarhar province, said Abdul Malik Niazi, the spokesperson for the provincial governor.

He said among the dead were 10 children and five women and the injured were taken to hospitals in Nangarhar for medical treatment.

Top US commander meets with Cuban military officials

WASHINGTON, May 30, (AP): The top US commander in Latin America met with Cuban military leaders Friday in a "brief exchange on operational security matters" near the US Navy base in Guantanamo Bay, the latest official to visit the island nation as President Donald Trump ramps up pressure on its leaders.

Trump has warned that Cuba "is next" after US military forces captured Venezuela's autocratic leader, Nicolás Maduro, in a January raid. In the months since, the Trump administration has imposed an oil blockade on Cuba, maintained warships in the Caribbean Sea and indicted former Cuban President Raúl Castro on federal charges.

Gen. **Francis Donovan**, head of US Southern Command, met with Lt Gen Roberto Legrá Sotolongo and other Cuban military officials.

Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces said in a statement that both sides viewed "the meeting positively because it addressed security issues along the perimeter separating the military enclave, and they agreed to maintain communication between the two military commands."



Donovan

SAO PAULO, May 30, (AP): The US State Department announced that it will designate Brazil's two biggest criminal groups as foreign terrorist organizations early next month, a move the South American nation's government has said it will interpret as undue interference in its politics.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a statement that the First Command of the Capital, or PCC, and the Red Command, or CV, will be considered foreign terrorist organizations as of June 5. Until then, they will be named as specially designated global terrorists, which hampers their ability to make financial transactions as they are regarded as a threat to US citizens.

Rubio's announcement comes 24 hours after a visit by Sen. Flávio Bolsonaro, a presidential hopeful and son of former President Jair Bolsonaro, who has advocated for the move. The senator's bid to face President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in October's election is at risk after



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio speaks during a joint news conference with Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban in Budapest, Hungary on Feb 16. (AP)

he admitted receiving money from a disgraced banker.

Lula, who the Bolsonaros accuse of not fighting organized crime, has repeatedly said he would interpret

a designation of the two criminal groups as terrorist organizations as interference to favor his electoral rival. He has yet to comment on Thursday's announcement.

Oil falls 84 cents to \$117.51

KUWAIT CITY, May 30. (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by 84 cents to reach USD 117.51 per barrel on Friday, compared to USD 118.35 pb on Thursday, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation

(KPC) on Saturday. In global markets, Brent crude decreased by USD 1.66 to reach USD 92.05 pb, and West Texas Intermediate decreased by USD 1.54 to reach USD 87.36 pb.

8,143 repairs, 2,095 new wells

Kuwait Oil Company enhances capacity to 2.6 mln bpd in 2025

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The drilling and exploration teams at Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) repaired around 8,143 producing oil wells – excluding non-associated gas wells – over the past five years, after reaching a production capacity of around 2.60 million barrels of oil per day in 2025, while taking into consideration the ongoing exploration and drilling operations and the modernization of operating facilities through the use of advanced technologies.

The newspaper obtained a copy of a document stating that from 2020 to 2025, the company drilled about 2,095 new oil wells, increasing the total number of wells drilled and repaired during the five-year period to 10,238.

The document confirmed that the total number of wells drilled specifically for oil production last year reached 498, while 2,107 repair and maintenance operations were carried out in the existing wells.

It confirmed that KOC succeeded in reducing the number of shut-in wells scheduled for repair and maintenance during the 2024/2025 fiscal year from 662 to 264. This lowered the percentage of inactive wells connected to gathering centers from 14 percent to five percent of the total producing wells.

According to the document, this achievement is consistent with the international benchmark ranging from five percent to 10 percent and contributes an additional 10,000 barrels per day, equivalent to about 3.65 million barrels annually.

On the exploratory drilling in Jurassic reservoirs, the company drilled 182 deep wells during the past five years, while workover operations for deep Jurassic wells covered 112 wells within the

same period.

The document also revealed that KOC completed a study last year on deep gel conformal treatment in the Mudud reservoir at the Bahra field aimed at enhancing oil recovery.

The findings showed the possibility of reducing water production, maintaining reservoir pressure, and improving oil displacement efficiency, thereby, boosting oil output while lowering water treatment costs.

The study also supports the strategy of KOC to reduce emissions and achieve sustainable oil production.

Regarding polymer injection testing, the document disclosed that KOC completed a pilot polymer injection project in 2025 targeting the Managish Al-Sari reservoir in the Umm Qadeer field in the West Kuwait operations area.

The long-term polymer injection test utilized high-salinity water, allowing the company to save time while maximizing the use of existing wells and infrastructure for improved oil recovery operations.

The approach facilitates operational efficiency and reduces water treatment requirements at gathering centers, hence, raising oil recovery rates and supporting production sustainability.

Results indicated that the project has the potential to accelerate oil recovery rates by 3.5 percent to 4.5 percent.

For the Lower Fars (F1) reservoir in the Umm Niqa field, KOC completed water injection operations, achieving an additional recovery factor estimated at 34 percent of the total oil in the project implementation area.

The company is expected to start polymer injection operations using existing wells and infrastructure in the 2025/2026 fiscal year, including 182 deep Jurassic wells drilled between 2020 and 2025.

Other Voices

Oil is below \$100 a barrel. For how long?

By Kamel Al-Harami

Independent Oil Analyst

ALL of a sudden, oil prices dropped from highs of \$115 and above to below the \$100 level, despite concerns over closure of the Strait of Hormuz and disruptions to oil shipments from the Arabian Gulf, which continue to impact oil cargo movements.



Al-Harami

We understand that commercial and strategic reserves in consuming countries are being heavily utilized to compensate for the shortfall from the Arabian Gulf. Strategic reserves are estimated at around 440 million barrels, serving as emergency spare capacity, which now appears to be increasingly drawn upon.

This situation may continue until normal shipping conditions resume and passage through the Strait of Hormuz is fully safe for oil tankers entering and exiting the Gulf.

Surprisingly, strategic reserves have not been fully utilized, as supply from the United States has helped stabilize oil availability in Europe, which is not yet facing a critical shortage. However, this situation is unlikely to last.

From now until the beginning of next month, with the start of the driving season, oil prices are expected to rise, placing Asia and Europe in tighter supply conditions and pushing prices higher.

With the driving season underway and pump prices beginning to rise, US consumers

are likely to be unhappy with higher petrol costs and the resulting impact on inflation. This comes despite calls from the current administration to lower oil prices. However, such expectations are increasingly difficult to sustain, as no clear path exists for lower fuel prices while the Strait of Hormuz remains closed.

Certainly, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz is a major global challenge, with more than 20 million barrels of oil passing through it. Regardless of the current situation, some Saudi crude is already moving through the Red Sea, which serves as an eye-opener for other Gulf producers to consider alternative routes for exporting crude oil to global markets.

Oil prices are expected to come down once an agreement is reached between Iran and the United States. However, the timing of such an agreement remains uncertain. In the meantime, the world may face sustained pressure on oil prices, potentially keeping them at high levels around \$100 a barrel until a resolution is achieved and access through the Arabian Gulf is fully restored.

Oil-producing countries must seriously consider alternative ways to transport their exports to global markets, possibly through pipelines or other routes outside the Arabian Gulf. However, such alternatives are likely to be challenging, costly, and may not be practical or feasible on a large scale.

This is the main challenge in seeking stable oil prices in the future, along with ensuring safe and reliable export routes.

Email: naftikuwaiti@yahoo.com

Business



Group photo

As part of their strategic partnership

NBK organizes KPC delegation to enhance collaborations in training and development

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: As part of their strategic partnership, a delegation from Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) visited the headquarters of the National Bank of Kuwait to exchange knowledge and expertise in training and development, strengthen collaboration, and learn about the latest global practices in employee skills enhancement.

To further strengthen this strategic partnership, a dedicated e-learning platform was developed for employees participating in the Talent Management Program across KPC and its subsidiaries on NBK's leading educational platform, which provides a rich learning experience that meets the evolving needs of human resources development and effectively contributes to enhancing employee efficiency and skills.

The platform includes a variety of learning pathways, consisting of programs on development, leadership competency, mandatory training courses, and recommended educational programs. This suite of e-learning programs allows participants in the Talent Management Program to benefit from comprehensive training content within a sophisticated digital environment, enabling them to continuously enhance their professional capabilities.

Moreover, 120 employees enrolled in the Talent Management Program across KPC and its subsidiaries have been granted access to the NBK learning platform, allowing them to utilize the platform's diverse training content at any time, thus ensuring an ongoing journey of skills development.

This step contributes to establishing a culture of self-learning and empowering participants in the Talent Management Program to keep pace with the latest developments in their fields of specialization, which should further support institutional performance and enhance efficiency and productivity.

Additionally, this collaboration stems from the aligned visions of NBK and KPC that aim to develop human capital and adopt best practices in skills development, further achieving sustainable added value and supporting the realization of shared strategic objectives.

In this light, KPC expressed its deep appreciation for the fruitful



Hesham Al-Refae



Emad Al-Ablani and Hana Al-Marzouq

Al-Ablani:

- We believe that investing in human capital is the cornerstone of achieving institutional excellence and sustainability.
- Our partnership with KPC embodies a long history of fruitful collaborations in developing talent.
- NBK's learning platform is a cornerstone of our training and development strategy.
- We are working to empower Kuwaiti nationals through an integrated digital learning environment that meets the demands of the future.

partnership with a prestigious institution like NBK, praising the level of coordination and integration that characterizes the implementation of such initiatives.

On this occasion, Mr. Emad Al-Ablani, Group Chief Human Resources Officer said, "At NBK, we believe that investing in human capital is the cornerstone of achieving institutional excellence and sustainability. Therefore, we are committed to developing our education and training platform to align with global best practices".

Al-Ablani added, "Our collaboration with KPC reflects the deep historical relationship we have with institutions in the oil sector, a relationship spanning decades of fruitful collaborations in training and development, which we continue to expand through impactful initiatives that contribute to developing national talent and enhancing their readiness to meet the sector's demands, further supporting its long-term growth and sustainability".

Al-Ablani also said: "NBK's learning platform is a cornerstone of the Bank's training and develop-

ment strategy. It provides an integrated digital environment that meets the needs of modern institutions and enables employees to continuously and effectively develop their skills, and we are proud to utilize these capabilities to support our partners and enhance the impact of our initiatives across various sectors".

Finally, Al-Ablani emphasized that NBK enjoys strong and established relationships with all state institutions in both the public and private sectors, through which it seeks to unify efforts to serve Kuwait, support the economy, and equip national talent with the necessary skills and expertise to ensure the sustainability of its human resources.

On this occasion, Mr. Hesham Ahmad Al-Refae, Managing Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services at Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), stated: "Despite the rapid advancements in information technology, KPC remains committed to investing in human capital, recognizing that national talent is the primary driver of institutional excel-

lence. KPC adopts innovative training and development methods and forges strategic partnerships with leading national and international institutions." He added: "Our collaboration with the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) embodies the strong and enduring relationship between the oil and banking sectors. It reflects the shared vision among Kuwait's leading economic institutions regarding the priority of human capital development and the establishment of a culture of continuous learning, thereby enhancing the readiness of our national workforce to adapt to changes and maintain the highest performance and productivity levels."

NBK's training initiatives reflect its committed vision towards investing in human resources, as it's keen to bring the best experts in banking to share their unmatched expertise with the young promising talents. These initiatives are provided annually, which goes in line with NBK's deep-rooted policies in social responsibility and reflect its leadership in this field for many decades.

Three weekly flights from 16 July, now open for booking

Jazeera relaunches direct flights to Budapest

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low-cost carrier, announced the relaunch of direct flights between Kuwait and Budapest, Hungary on the sidelines of the UEFA Champions League final match in Budapest.

This route further expands Jazeera's growing European network and offers travelers another attractive destination for their summer holidays.

The service will commence on 16 July 2026 and operate three times a week, with flights now open for booking through the airline's website, mobile application, and call center.

Budapest joins Milan Bergamo and London Luton in Jazeera's European network this summer. The addition of Budapest reflects the airline's continued focus on providing affordable, convenient connectivity between Kuwait and key leisure, cultural, and business destinations



Jazeera Airways

across Europe.

Speaking from Budapest, just before the UEFA Cup Final between PSG and Arsenal at the Puskas sta-

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

"We are pleased to bring Budapest

back to our network, giving our customers even more choice when planning their summer travels. Budapest has consistently been a popular destination, offering a unique blend of history, culture, architecture, and vibrant city life. The relaunch of this route further strengthens our European footprint as we continue to build a network focused on convenience, value, and direct connectivity."

Often referred to as the "Pearl of the Danube," Budapest is renowned for its historic landmarks, thermal baths, vibrant culinary scene, and picturesque riverside setting. The city also serves as an ideal gateway for travelers looking to explore Central Europe.

With more than 2 million seats and over 60 destinations on offer for the summer, passengers can easily book Jazeera Airways' flights through jazeeraairways.com, the Jazeera Airways mobile application or Call Center at 177.

Natural gas prices surge in Q1-2026 led by Middle East conflict

By KAMCO Invest

Global natural gas prices, barring the US, recorded notable growth in the first quarter of 2026 mainly due to the supply disruption by the war in the Middle East. According to the World Bank, average monthly EU natural gas prices in March-2026 surged by 35.3% y-o-y, reaching USD 17.91/MMBtu the highest prices since January-2023.

The rise was primarily attributed to the sustained uncertainty of the war in the Middle East combined with the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and its continuing supply disruption. According to the IEA, the closure of the strait has affected over 10 Bn cubic feet per day (Bcf/d) of global LNG supplies, or roughly 20%, mostly from Qatar's Ras Laffan export facility. According to reports, around 20% of Qatar's Ras Laffan LNG refinery has been damaged due to the war and the facility is not expected to back online until the end of Q3-2026.

Moreover, QatarEnergy has declared long-term force majeure on several LNG delivery contracts with buyers in China, South Korea, Italy and Belgium. In addition, Liquefied Natural Gas prices Japan/Korea also experienced a substantial growth in March-2026, when prices increased by 18.4% y-o-y, averaging USD 14.85/MMBtu. This increase was also largely driven by the disruption of the war in the Middle East as well as the continuing closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

In contrast, US average monthly natural gas prices saw a significant decline 26.2% in March-2026 weighed down by rising inventories and mild weather. However, despite the supply shock, prices remained below the 2022 crisis heights, with the prices being supported by higher LNG exports from the US and Canada and weaker seasonal demand.

According to the IEA, global LNG production declined by 8% (or 4 bcm) y-o-y in March-2026, mainly due to a drop in loadings from Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, which fell by 9.5 bcm compared with the previous year.

However, this decline was partly offset by higher LNG production and exports from new projects in North America and Africa. Despite the steep fall in LNG production, global LNG deliveries declined less sharply than loadings, falling by just 2% (or 1 bcm) y-o-y in March-2026. This disproportion between LNG production and LNG loadings is mainly attributed to the shipping time required for the disruption to materialize. Moreover, global LNG deliveries declined by 10% y-o-y (or more than 3 bcm) in the first 20 days of April, according to the IEA.

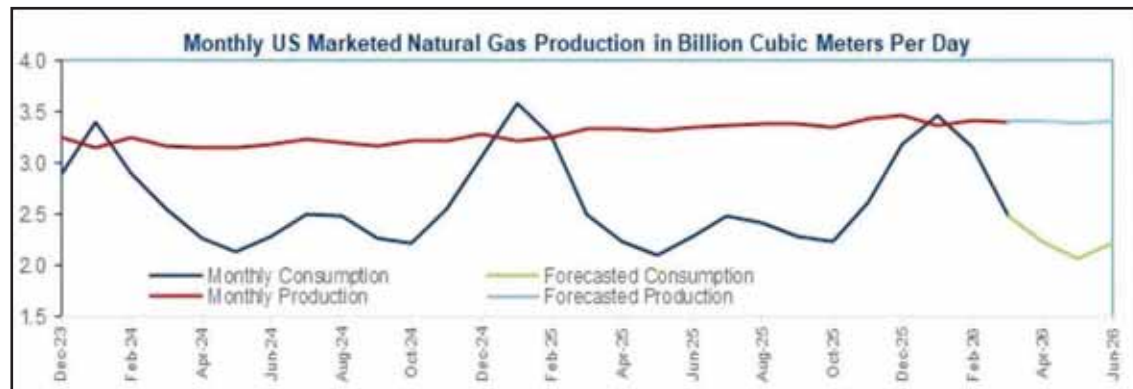
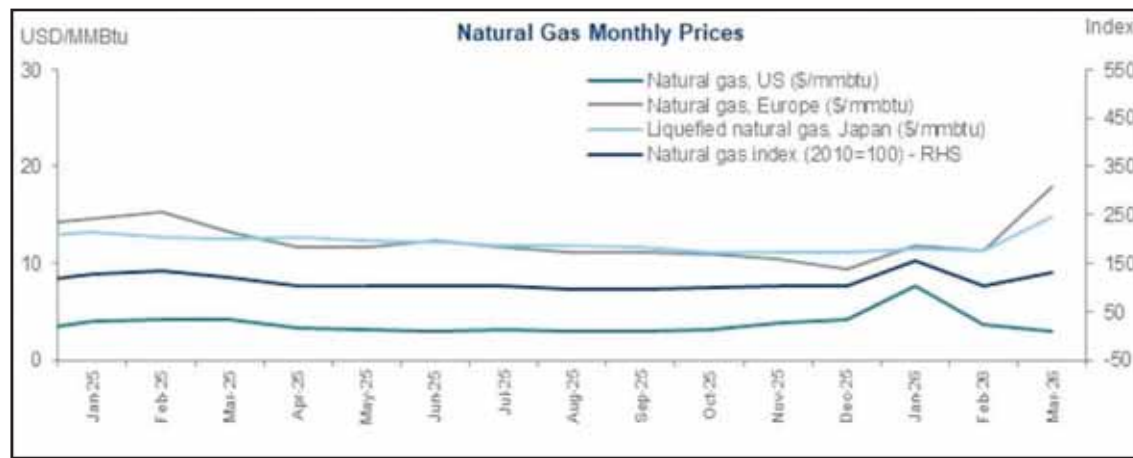
Overall, the disruption caused by the war in the Middle East is expected to have far-reaching effects beyond a near-term supply shock. The war in the region has already prompted the loss of around 120 bcm of cumulative LNG supply for the period 2026-2030, according to the IEA. The expected losses stemming from the Middle East conflict account for around 15% of the expected global LNG supply over the 2026-2030 period.

Natural Gas Consumption

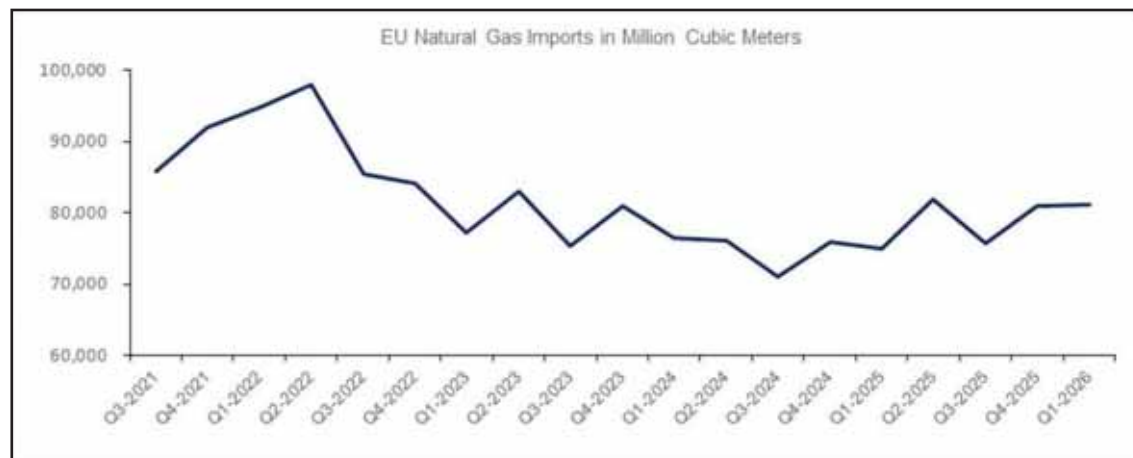
Aggregate gas consumption in some of the major gas-consuming countries, which account for three-quarters of global gas demand, witnessed an increase of 1% y-o-y to reach 662 bcm for the first two months of 2026, according to the GECF. This moderate growth was mainly registered in the EU, the Middle East, and Asia, while North America showed a decline. This moderate consumption is expected to improve in 202. According to the GECF, global natural gas consumption is expected to reach 1.2% y-o-y for the full year 2026, supported by robust gas demand growth.

EU natural gas consumption in Q1-2026 improved moderately by 1% y-o-y to reach 114.4 bcm, compared to 113.2 bcm in Q1-2025. Most of the EU natural gas consumption came in January-2026, when gas consumption in the region jumped 10% y-o-y to 47 bcm due to robust heating demand in the residential sector.

Meanwhile, consumption in the remaining two months witnessed a y-o-y drop of 4.4% each month.



EIA Forecast - US Natural Gas Supply and Consumption in Billions Cubic Feet Per Day	2024	2025	2026-e	2027-e
Marketed Production	103.07	107.74	109.59	112.60
Consumption	90.33	91.88	90.61	92.75
LNG Exports	11.90	15.10	17.00	18.60
Henry Hub Spot Prices (\$/thousand cubic feet)	2.19	3.53	3.67	3.59



The drop in EU natural gas consumption during February and March-2026 was mainly due to unusually milder temperatures in the region. In South Asia, according to the IEA, natural gas demand in the region increased by 7 bcm during the October-February period before the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

In China, colder weather together with higher gas use in industry and the power sector supported stronger gas demand during the heating season. However, the country's LNG imports declined by 6% y-o-y over the heating season. In Japan, natural gas consumption in Q1-2026 improved marginally by 0.7% to reach 25.8 bcm, compared to 25.6 bcm in Q1-2025.

Most of the growth in Japan's gas consumption during the quarter came in January-2026, while gas consumption in February and March-2026 declined. For South Korea, Q1-2026 natural gas consumption improved by 1.9% to reach 18.5 bcm, compared to 18.1 bcm in Q1-2025.

In the US, Q1-2026 natural gas consumption declined by 1.6% to reach 273.1 bcm, compared to 277.5 bcm in Q1-2025, according to data collected by the GECF. Of the three months in the quarter, natural gas consumption in the US increased only in March-2026, improving by 0.5% to reach 77.4 bcm, mainly reflecting higher demand in the power generation sector.

According to the IEA, overall North American natural gas consumption during the 2025/26 winter

remained close to the levels seen during the previous heating season.

As a result of the disruption caused by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz to global LNG supply, several Asian countries are undertaking demand-side and fuel-switching measures to lower their use of natural gas.

The duration of the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz is a key uncertainty that will affect global gas demand in 2026. Each month without LNG cargo transiting the strait leads to approximately 10 bcm of LNG supply shortfall, resulting in a downward adjustment of demand expectations in key importing regions.

Natural Gas Production

Global gas production was estimated to have increased by 2.2% y-o-y to stand at 729 bcm for the first two months of 2026, compared to 713.2 bcm in the corresponding period of 2025. All major gas-producing regions (except Europe) witnessed positive production variation, with US dry natural gas production opening 2026 with y-o-y growth of 4.2% in Q1-2026, extending the positive momentum of 2025.

Robust feed gas demand from LNG export facilities, combined with cold spells in the northeastern and southern regions of the US, established a pronounced demand-side draw on the domestic market. However, US January-2026 natural gas production was partly constrained by Winter Storm Fern, which led to approximately 2.1 bcm of lost production

across the three major basins. These losses would otherwise have contributed approximately 0.7% more natural gas to quarterly y-o-y growth. North America led global natural gas production during the first two months of 2026, representing around 30% of global production, followed by Eurasia and the Middle East, which represented 22% of production. According to the GECF, the forecast for global gas production for the full year of 2026 has been lowered to 1.2%, mainly driven by geopolitical developments in the Middle East.

In terms of global gas trade, global LNG imports declined by 1.7% y-o-y to 36.3 Mt in March-2026, the first y-o-y decline since January-2025, prompted by dwindling LNG supply due to the blockage of the Strait of Hormuz, particularly from Qatar and the UAE, according to the GECF. However, this impact was not immediately felt by consumers, as it was partially softened by a transit lag, with LNG cargo loaded in February-2026 continuing to reach markets despite a sharper 6.8% fall in global LNG exports. In terms of regional LNG trade, Asia faced the largest decline, with imports hitting a seven-year low for March-2026 as the market braced for a tightening supply squeeze, especially significant given that over 80% of the LNG transiting the Strait was destined for Asian markets before the conflict.

The disruption in LNG trade came on the back of global LNG supply double-digit growth (10%) in 2H-2025 and 12% y-o-y (29 bcm) through the October-2025 to February-2026 period. In context, according to the IEA, overall global LNG production increased by 7% (38 bcm) in 2025, with over 70% of the growth coming in the second half of 2025. Most of the growth in global LNG production and supply came from the US in 2025, with the Plaquemines LNG Plant representing 60% of the growth in LNG supply in 2025. Moreover, global LNG supply was set for growth in 2026 (prior to the war in the Middle East), supported by continued LNG supply increases from the US. The IEA estimates that global LNG supply in 2026 will increase by over 7%, or more than 40 bcm. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz stopped Qatar and UAE LNG deliveries from leaving the strait from March-2026 onward. According to the IEA, GCC LNG deliveries in March declined by 45% y-o-y, or 45 bcm. While the March closure of the Strait of Hormuz led to the effective shut-in of about 10 bcm of liquefaction capacity from the Ras Laffan (Qatar) and Das Island (UAE) facilities.

GCC Market Outlook

The war in the region has severely disrupted regional and global gas markets. Barring deliveries to Kuwait, the entirety of LNG exports from Qatar and the UAE need to cross the Strait of Hormuz route to reach their destinations. In context, around 110 bcm (nearly 20% of global LNG trade) passed through the Strait of Hormuz in 2025. The vast majority of LNG exports from the region went to Asian importers, including China, India, and Pakistan. The disruption in LNG imports for Asian countries has prompted these countries to seek LNG from elsewhere, making the overall global supply of LNG tighter and prices higher. Moreover, the disruption has also caused several countries in Asia to shift their power generation from gas to coal.

The supply disruption from the war was not only confined to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and near-term gas supply market disruption but is also expected to disrupt natural gas markets in the near and medium term as a result of the some of the destruction of energy and gas infrastructure, such as the attack on LNG liquefaction facilities in Qatar's Ras Laffan.

The IEA estimated that over 18 bcm of LNG production has been lost since the start of the conflict. In addition, QatarEnergy halted the production of certain downstream products, including urea, polymers, methanol, and aluminum, in early March-2026. The war damage to Qatar's Ras Laffan included the Pearl GTL (gas-to-liquid) plant and two LNG liquefaction trains with a combined capacity of 12.8 mtpa (17.5 bcm/yr), with repairs expected to take between three to five years. The damage to Qatar's Ras Laffan refinery is expected to translate into an overall cumulative loss of 50-90 bcm of LNG supply between 2026 and 2030.

It's not just high gas prices – inflation is now spreading through the US economy

By D. Brian Blank, Mississippi State University

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

Americans don't need a press release to know that inflation is rising. Gasoline is above \$4 per gallon amid the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and closure of the Strait of Hormuz, and the release of key price data on May 28, 2026, underscores why policymakers are worried these pressures could spread into the broader economy.

The report offered a mixed but still uncomfortable picture. The month-to-month rise was softer than expected, but the change year over year still points to concern: a 3.8% jump from a year earlier, the fastest pace since 2021, and a less volatile index that excludes food and energy up 3.3%.

This increase suggests inflation isn't limited to gasoline. Housing, utilities and recreational spending are also keeping underlying inflation elevated, even as other data shows a slowing economy and weaker income growth.

As finance and applied investments professors who study how businesses make decisions amid uncertainty, we have been watching this tension build. In our 2026 economic outlook, we warned that recession fears could persist alongside rising prices. Fresh inflation data now suggests the challenge may be deeper and longer lasting than many expected.

The fresh inflation data comes from the Personal Consumption Expenditures Price Index, or headline PCE, which is maintained and released by the Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis. Headline PCE had already been getting hotter, rising to 3.5% year on year in March 2026, up from 2.8% in February. But an even more important metric for the Federal Reserve is core PCE, which excludes the more volatile categories of food and energy. Core PCE matters because it gives policymakers a clearer read on underlying inflation pressures and is generally considered a better predictor of where inflation is headed, the Fed's chief concern. That has been rising this year as well.

The key question isn't simply whether gas prices are rising, but whether those higher energy costs are spreading into the rest of the economy.

That's why energy costs are both a measure of current inflation and a signal of future rising prices. They show up directly in inflation data like PCE but also affect shipping, airline fares, food production, utili-

ties, packaging, business profit margins and consumer psychology. A one-time bump doesn't necessarily create lasting inflation. But the risk increases when those higher costs pass through to the broader economy and people begin to expect inflation to remain high. For example, if workers believe costs will be higher in general, they might demand higher wages, which in turn can make inflation even hotter.

There's already some evidence that the inflationary effect of energy prices is spreading. April's Consumer Price Index report - another inflation gauge - showed a 3.8% leap, the fastest in three years, with energy prices up 18% and spending on airlines up over 20%, while grocery prices posted their largest monthly gain since 2022. Tariff-sensitive categories like apparel and household furnishings are also still climbing.

And it's these costs, not core PCE, that households experience every day. Americans buy gas, pay utility bills, purchase groceries and start changing their spending behavior in response to these pressures. That's why the Fed is watching to see how energy prices impact other measures of inflation.

Kevin Warsh has just been sworn in as the new chair of the central bank, which means the next meeting of the Fed's policymaking committee on June 16-17, 2026, will be his first in that role. He'll face an unusual amount of disagreement among committee members as well as scrutiny over his own positions given his rhetorical shifts on inflation and Fed policy since he was nominated by President Donald Trump. The president has pressured the Fed to cut rates, while Warsh has recently downplayed the significance and accuracy of the PCE gauge.

The Fed's tool for responding to inflation is to raise interest rates, but it's not always straightforward. The Fed doesn't just hike interest rates as a direct response to inflation. If the increase in energy prices looks temporary and inflation expectations remain "anchored" - that is, stable among consumers - the Fed may hold steady on rates or even cut them as consumers continue to dial back spending. But it may have to keep rates higher for longer or even consider additional tightening if those conditions don't hold and inflation continues rising.

This creates a problem for the Fed's "dual mandate" to control inflation while supporting economic growth. Higher gas prices are inflationary, but they also reduce households' spending power and dampen growth. In that sense, higher energy prices can act like a tax on consumers: People spend more to drive, heat and cool their homes, and receive goods, leaving less income for restaurants, travel, retail and other purchases.

That's why the Fed doesn't have a simple answer. If it hikes inter-

est rates to combat inflation, it still won't resolve geopolitical conflict and increase global oil supplies. But it can reduce demand and slow inflation.

Indeed, according to notes of the most recent Fed policy committee meeting in April, many officials are increasingly concerned that persistent inflation could require additional rate hikes. While the Fed decided to hold rates steady at 3.50% to 3.75% at the time, committee members noted that inflation remains elevated, "in part reflecting the recent increase in global energy prices."

Another factor: Long-term yields on Treasury bonds, which reflect what investors demand for buying U.S. debt, have reached their highest levels since 2007. That could be a sign that markets expect higher rates or more uncertainty - and it matters because yields influence mortgage rates, business borrowing costs and the value of retirement portfolios, to name a few examples. In other words, inflation concerns don't have to wait for another Fed rate hike to affect the economy. If markets believe inflation will stay elevated, borrowing costs can rise on their own.

The leadership transition at the Fed makes this moment particularly noteworthy. Warsh's first major challenge may not be whether to raise or cut rates immediately, but how to explain what the Fed is watching. Will he emphasize headline inflation, core inflation, other inflation measures, consumer expectations, financial conditions or signs of slowing demand? This is especially important, as some of these gauges are closer to 2% and rising more slowly while others rise more rapidly away from the Fed's 2% target.

Artificial intelligence adds another complication. AI-related investment may be helping hold up growth even as households feel pressured by higher gas and grocery prices. That creates a divided economy: Consumers struggle with higher prices and borrowing costs, but AI-related investment supports markets, infrastructure spending and business optimism. For his part, Warsh argues that AI also will help drive down prices, allowing the Fed to cut rates sooner.

All of this makes the inflation outlook hard to read. Weakening consumer demand and wage growth argues for caution, while rising inflation expectations and businesses passing on higher costs to consumers and the broader economy argue for higher rates.

Ultimately, the key question for the Fed is not simply whether inflation is rising, but whether energy prices are reopening the inflation fight at the exact moment it's trying to prove that price stability is still within reach. Warsh's first months as chair will test whether the Fed can maintain inflation credibility while avoiding unnecessary damage to an already pressured consumer economy. (AP)

AI hiring tools gain ground amid surge in applications

One Tech Tip: Your next job interview could be with an AI bot

Have you applied for a new job? If you've been shortlisted, get ready to be interviewed by artificial intelligence.

Deluged by a flood of AI-generated job applications from easy-apply job boards, recruiters are turning to AI to cope. Companies are using chatbots to interview candidates, typically at the screening stage, through phone calls, text messaging or video chats with on-screen avatars.

Recruiters have been using AI-powered hiring tools for years to assess job applicants, and their use has been expanding in step with technology advances.

Many people find AI job interviews unsettling, though the trend seems here to stay. According to recent research by hiring platform Greenhouse, more jobseekers are reporting they've faced AI job interviews. But many applicants have walked away from the hiring process because of it, which could be a sign that they're either creeped out, or they could be fraudulent or were not serious candidates, depending on who you ask.

Here's what to expect from an AI job interview and how to do your best:

Whatever the interview format, the fundamentals still apply, said Amanda Augustine, a career coach at CareerMinds, which helps companies support laid-off workers with resume writing and job search services.

Ahead of the interview, review the job description, research the organization, and understand what it's looking for.

"The more prepared you are, the easier it will be to tailor your responses, even when you're interacting with AI instead of a person," she advised.

If you've never done an AI job interview before, the first time could be unnerving or unsettling.

I did a demo AI interview set up by Netherlands-based TestGorilla, one of numerous platforms providing recruitment tools for companies. First came two sets of questions, one that tested problem-solving skills and another gauging work experience. Then I faced an AI-generated female face.

"My goal is to learn more about you and the experiences, skills and competencies that you might bring to this role," it said, adding that I should plan to spend about two minutes to answer each of three questions.

Unlike a human interview, there was no warm-up chit-chat, no chance to build a rapport. There was no point in smiling or trying to break the ice.

Experts say the best way to get over that is preparation.

"You need to practice out loud," said Priya Rathod, workplace trends editor at online job board Indeed. "And when I say practice out loud, I mean, say the actual answers out loud," because the chatbot needs to record what you're saying, she said.

Also keep in mind you're providing information about yourself to a machine, not having a conversation.

"You have to be particularly descriptive and a very clear communicator in your language so that they can pick up on things that a regular interviewer might pick up through your facial expressions and tone," Rathod said.

An AI interviewer "cares less about my tone and more about what it is that I'm saying," she added.

Use an online interview simulator to prep - there are many available. They can record your answers and provide instant feedback on your content, delivery or pacing. They'll also help you get used to speaking into a camera, manage time limits and give your answers in a structured way without the natural back-and-forth of a live conversation, Augustine said.

For my demo interview, the AI grilled me for a communications professional role.

One question it asked was how I use AI in my "workflow," including examples of both success and failure. When I replied that I saved lots of time with an AI transcription tool for interviews and other recordings, it summarized my answer and then asked me if I wanted to add anything else. I wasn't sure whether I had answered satisfactorily.

I scored "below average" on this question, according to TestGorilla's assessment, which said I provided "no concrete metric" such as minutes saved. "The improvement claim is therefore vague," it said.

AI interviewers are asking these "behavioral questions" because they want candidates to provide examples of how they handled specific work situations, complete with numbers and metrics, Rathod said.

"Those are the kinds of questions that AI relies heavily on. And

the trap that we see a lot of people falling into is giving really vague answers," she said.

Candidates should still rely on tried and tested tactics like the STAR method - short for situation, task, action, result.

So be prepared to talk about a specific work situation and the task assigned to you, the action that you took, and the result, Rathod said.

"You want to use numbers as much as possible. Even if you're not in a revenue driving role, there are ways in which you can say (how) you influenced something or impacted something within a group," she said.

Don't neglect the physical setup of your desk and computer - it's still important even if the video-based interview is with AI, and not a person.

Test your audio and video in advance. Make sure the lighting is bright enough and is on your face. Raise your laptop to eye level so that you're not looking down at the camera.

"Small adjustments, such as using a stack of books or a ring light, can make a noticeable difference in how polished and professional you present," Augustine said.

Jobseekers might be tempted to use AI to help come up with answers. After all, they're so easy to use and if you're not talking to a human, no one will be able to tell, right?

"That's a big no-no because it's pretty obvious" to both the AI interviewing tool and anyone who might review the recording, said Rathod. Using AI for your answers "can sometimes immediately disqualify you."

If you're having difficulty answering, you can always ask it to clarify or repeat the question.

The question might even be designed to figure out if you're using AI to cheat. TestGorilla's head of marketing, Mehak Chowdhary, said it sometimes poses simple questions worded in a very convoluted way.

"We do that intentionally to understand whether you are running an AI alongside, because the AI will then try and optimize for the length of the question," she said. "But if you know your skill set, you will understand what's being asked."

"And we strongly recommend candidates put the AI devices aside. This is a test of your capability." (AP)

Home sales struggle

US mortgage rates hit 9-month high at 6.53%

WASHINGTON, May 30, (AP) - The average long-term U.S. mortgage rate rose again this week, reaching its highest level in nine months, another setback for prospective homebuyers.

The benchmark 30-year fixed rate mortgage rate rose to 6.53% from 6.51% last week, mortgage buyer Freddie Mac said Thursday. Despite the latest increase, the average rate remains below 6.89%, where it was a year ago.

When mortgage rates rise they can add hundreds of dollars a month in costs for borrowers, reducing their purchasing power.

Rates have been mostly trending higher since the war with Iran began, disrupting the passage of tankers ferrying crude oil from the Persian Gulf to customers worldwide. That's sent oil prices sharply higher - a key driver of inflation.

Mortgage rates are influenced by several factors, from the Federal Reserve's interest rate policy decisions to bond market investors' expectations for the economy and inflation. They generally follow the trajectory of the 10-year Treasury yield, which lenders use as a guide to pricing home loans.

Expectations of higher oil prices have pushed up long-term bond yields, causing mortgage rates to head higher.

Bond yields have been easing this week amid hopes that the United States and Iran may reach a deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and get oil flowing again. The yield on the U.S. 10-year Treasury note was at 4.46% in midday trading Thursday on the bond market, down from 4.57% a week ago. It was just 3.97% in late February, before the war broke out.

Meanwhile, borrowing costs on 15-year fixed-rate mortgages, popular with homeowners refinancing their home loans, also rose this week. That average rate rose to 5.87% from 5.85% last week. A year ago, it was at 6.03%, Freddie Mac said.

As recently as late February, the average rate on a 30-year mortgage had slipped just under 6% for the first time since late 2022. It's hasn't fallen below that threshold since. It's now at its highest level since Au-

gust 28, when it was 6.56%.

While average long-term mortgage rates remain lower than they were at this time last year, their recent increase has put a damper on sales so far this spring homebuying season.

Sales of previously occupied U.S. homes were essentially flat last month after declining from a year earlier in the first three months of the year, extending a nationwide housing slump that dates back to 2022 when mortgage rates began to climb from pandemic-era lows.

Demand for newly built homes has also been lackluster. New home sales fell 6.2% in April to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 622,000 units, the U.S. Census Bureau reported Thursday.

Through the first four months of this year, new home sales are down 6.5% from where they were at this time last year, even as many homebuilders continue to lower prices and offer incentives to woo home shoppers.

New data on mortgage applications points to ongoing weakness.

Mortgage applications, which include loans to buy a home or refinance an existing mortgage, fell 8.5% last week from a week earlier as mortgage rates marched higher, according to the Mortgage Bankers Association. A pullback in demand for mortgage refinancing loans accounted for a big share of the overall decline.

One bright spot: Applications for loans to buy a home continued to run ahead of last year's pace.

Home shoppers who are undeterred by rising mortgage rates are benefiting from buyer-friendly trends in many markets, including more properties on the market than a year ago and data showing home listing prices have started falling in many metro areas, especially in the South and Midwest.

"Buyers have more homes to choose from and asking prices continue to soften, but their dollars don't stretch as far as they did a few months back," said Jake Krimmel, senior economist at Realtor.com. "A resolution to the (U.S.-Iran) conflict, therefore, would do a world of good for mortgage rates, consumers, and housing market momentum."

US tomato prices soar amid tariffs, war impact

NEW YORK, May 30, (AP) - Tomatoes, ubiquitous in everything from fast-food burgers to haute cuisine, are taking on a new role beyond the plate: A nagging reminder of rising costs.

Prices for those red orbs have soared more than any other food product over the past year to cement a spot as one of the consumer headaches du jour.

"The tomato has become a symbol of something much deeper," says Isaac Bernal Carbajo, a New York City chef who lamented life's "simplest pleasures" falling victim to price increases. "Something as basic as buying fresh vegetables is starting to become a serious financial decision for many families."

Tomato prices are up about 40% over a year ago, according to the latest Consumer Price Index, dwarfing increases for other groceries, including coffee (up 18.5%), beef roasts (up 17.8%) and frozen fish and seafood (up 12%), among other products that have become symbols of America's affordability squeeze.

A separate inflation gauge released Thursday showed that overall prices increased 3.8% in April from a year earlier, the highest reading in nearly three years.

Alongside crop yields, experts blame price increases for tomatoes, in part, on two pillars of President Donald Trump's second-term policies: the Iran war and tariffs. The war spiked

gas prices and increased shipping costs. Meantime, the U.S. withdrew from a deal allowing duty-free imports of tomatoes from Mexico, which grows most of America's supply.

Usha Haley, a Wichita State University economist, says it's "a perfect storm of trade policy, extreme weather and Mideast policy."

American tomato farmers cheered the withdrawal from the tomato deal last July, saying it would help rebuild their shrinking industry. But for consumers, it's been painful. Though the U.S. withdrew from the Mexico tomato deal in July, it took time to see the impact in the produce aisle, with more imports in late winter and early spring.

When the tomatoes arrived, they were slapped with a 17% tariff.

"Tariffs are undeniably a big driver of the price inflation," says Brett Massimino, a Virginia Commonwealth University business professor. "Because the U.S. relies on Mexico for the majority of its tomato supply, any changes in trade policy can have a large impact."

U.S. tariffs collected on tomatoes ballooned from just \$16,424 in 2024 to nearly \$4.6 million, according to federal data, a staggering 27,879% increase.

As the cost trickles down, outraged shoppers have pulled out their phones in the produce aisle, shooting videos lamenting costs

they said quadrupled, with some vowing to plant a garden to avoid prices of up to \$8 a pound. But the impact has been most pronounced for businesses that rely on tomatoes as a key ingredient in their kitchens.

MarginEdge, which tracks prices for restaurants, says grape tomatoes have increased most - 65% in just a month - but prices have gone up across all types of tomatoes.

Phillip Coles, a professor of supply chain management at Lehigh University, says prices should drop later in the year when domestically grown tomatoes are harvested. Higher prices, he says, will also "induce farmers to increase planting to meet the demand, but this takes longer because of the lead time."

Meantime, it's translating to a big hit for businesses like Snarf's Sandwiches, which puts a tomato in nearly every sandwich it makes.

Wayne Humphrey, chief operating officer of Snarf's, which operates dozens of stores in Colorado, Missouri and Texas, said cases of tomatoes went from costing him \$27 to \$93 in the space of a year, piled on top of rising expenses for other ingredients including bread and beef, as well as increased labor costs.

"That single ingredient now costs us more than \$1.7 million in additional spend annually," says Humphrey. "The math is getting harder to ignore."

Trump \$250 bill proposal awaits congressional approval

Treasury Secretary confirms limited steps toward \$250 bill featuring Trump

WASHINGTON, May 30, (AP) - Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Thursday that his department has prepared the design for a \$250 bill featuring President Donald Trump, anticipating the passage of stalled legislation in Congress to put the president on a new denomination of legal tender.

Bessent said at the White House that authorizing the new currency will be up to lawmakers on Capitol Hill, but that "we've created the bill" because "we have to be prepared."

The secretary downplayed the idea that the administration is pushing the matter, despite Trump's penchant for infusing his name and likeness across the nation's capital and into the observances of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Yet he also insisted there is nothing inappropriate about Trump's visage being part of the seminal national celebration.

"The president doesn't do it; the House and the Senate have to do it," Bessent said at the White House, referring to legislation, introduced by Representative Joe Wilson, R-S.C., that would direct the Treasury Department's Bureau of Engraving and Printing to put Trump's face on the new bill to mark the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding.

A Treasury Department spokeswoman said the agency has carried out "appropriate planning and due diligence" to implement a potential congressional mandate "to produce a \$250 commemorative note which will appropriately recognize the 250th Anniversary of our great nation." The spokeswoman did not mention Trump.

If passed and signed into law by Trump, Wilson's bill would mark an extraordinary recognition for a sitting U.S. leader and comes as Trump has sought to place himself at the center of this year's seminal Independence Day commemorations. The Department's preparation for the languishing legislation suggests some enthusiasm for the idea on the part of the Trump administration.

The agency's explanation follows a Washington Post report stating that U.S. Treasurer Brandon Beach, a Trump appointee, has been pushing the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to expedite the process for a new currency note. The paper also reported that the former BEP



Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent holds up an image of the proposed \$250 dollar bill, while speaking to reporters in the James Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House, Thursday, May 28, 2026, in Washington. (AP)

chief, Patricia Solimene, was reassigned after pushing back.

The Treasury spokesperson declined to comment on Solimene's current status but confirmed that Michael Brown, a top Beach aide, became acting director of engraving and printing on May 18.

Beach did not respond to an Associated Press request for comment. Wilson's legislation, which so far has languished in Congress, is intended to create an exception to existing law that bars any living person from appearing on U.S. currency; the bill would allow current and former presidents to be featured.

Bessent confirmed the measure is designed for one person.

"Donald J. Trump," he said emphatically, repeating the full name that the president himself often uses in the third person.

According to the Post report, Beach last fall provided the Bureau of Engraving and Printing with the design for the new bill. It featured Trump's portrait - the same one that adorns banners hanging on some federal buildings in Washington - and a 250th anniversary logo. Trump's signature also was included, a design element that would differ from other paper money.

British artist Iain Alexander told the Post he designed the bill and said he'd discussed it with the president. Alexander did not respond to an AP request for comment.

The newspaper also reported that the Solimene resisted pressure from Beach and Brown and stressed to them the lengthy legal and procedural process required to issue new currency. Solimene was reassigned against her will, the Post reported, paving the way for Brown to oversee the bureau.

A new currency note would be the latest example of Trump expanding his personal brand in his official capacity since returning to the White House in 2025.

Beach and Bessent already streamlined approval of a commemorative 250th anniversary coin featuring Trump. The Treasury Department has asserted that those special coins fall outside the prohibition on living presidents appearing on money. In 1926, the nation's 150th anniversary, then-President Calvin Coolidge appeared on a commemorative half-dollar coin that was official legal tender.

The Trump administration has had banners featuring his portrait hung on the Department of Justice and other federal buildings. And his slate of appointees to the Kennedy Center governing board added his name to the national performing arts facility that Congress originally designated as a memorial to assassinated President John F. Kennedy. That renaming is being challenged in court because of the federal law establishing the center as the official memorial to the 35th president.

Bessent noted that unless Wilson's exception passes, current law sets just two conditions for him to consider on currency: that "In God We Trust" in some place and that only deceased individuals be depicted, with their names described below their portraits.

"It's all up to Capitol Hill," Bessent said. "We will stick to the law."

Films

Viral internet horror concept delivers atmosphere but little payoff

'Backrooms' gets lost in its own labyrinth

LOS ANGELES, May 30, (AP): What evil lurks in the drabdest of interiors?

The meme-rooted "Backrooms" is the latest movie to pull its mounting horrors out of liminal spaces. "Exit 8," released earlier this year, was set entirely in a subway corridor. In "Backrooms," a struggling furniture salesperson discovers beneath his store an underground labyrinth, all lined with yellow wallpapered walls and fluorescent lighting.

Where "Backrooms" came from is more interesting - and potentially meaningful - than the result. The movie, directed by 20-year-old YouTuber-turned-filmmaker Kane Parsons, is a fitfully unsettling nightmare that never convincingly builds beyond its creepy, dated-decor premise.

But the "Backrooms" backstory is more intriguing. In 2019, an anonymous post on 4chan creepypasta - an online repository for internet-created urban legends - provided the initial image of the seemingly infinite Backrooms with a caption describing "nothing but the stink of old moist carpet, the madness of mono-yellow, the endless background noise of fluorescent lights at maximum hum-buzz."

Like many others, Parsons - who has posted under "Kane Pixels" - picked up the idea and ran with it. His YouTube series expanded on the 4chan post, adding a found footage approach. Eventually, A24 greenlit his movie, the big-screen product of an internet-born concept.

But while the hive mind of the internet can produce some glorious things, movies require closer to a single author. And "Backrooms," written by Will Soodik and pro-



This image released by A24 shows Chiwetel Ejiofor in a scene from 'Backrooms.' Inset: This image released by A24 shows Renate Reinsve in a scene from 'Backrooms.' (AP)

duced by Osgood Perkins, struggles to retrofit a compelling story to match its disquietingly banal imagery.

Clark (Chiwetel Ejiofor) is the not-exactly-proud owner of Cap'n Clark's Ottoman Empire, a sad and empty furniture store located in a 1990s strip mall. He has plenty of concerns, the end of his marriage, any customers at all - but unexplained electric trou-

bles at the store also nag him. The lights keep flickering.

When Clark inspects the circuit breaker, there are odd, irregular breakers at the bottom of the panel. Who put them there? What are they for? If there's one thing "Backrooms" gets spot on, it's the mysteries of the circuit breaker. One night, Clark goes looking in the store's lower floor when he unwittingly passes right through the wall, and into the Backrooms.

Wonderland it is not. The seem-

ingly never-ending chambers almost resemble vacant, nondescript office spaces. But they're stranger, like art installation versions of office space. There are piles of furniture, shrunken doors and disturbingly random things like a stop sign or a cardboard cutout with a cassette player saying hello in different languages. Clark later describes the rooms as though they were made "by a bunch of construction workers on acid."

The uncanny dimensions and

strange recesses of modern workplaces have been a common motif lately, from "Severance" to "The Chair Company." And it's hard not to see the endless iterations of the Backrooms as a metaphor for the internet itself.

But Parsons pushes the setting into a psychological realm. One of the only other characters we see Clark interact with before he grows obsessed with exploring the rooms is his therapist, Mary Kline (Renate Reinsve). "We all have our loops,

our habits," she tells him in a session.

The subterranean labyrinth increasingly begins to resemble a warped version of Clark's own looped psychology. Its many doors go deeper into his psyche, and Mary (whose new book is titled "The Window Within") becomes trapped too.

As a horror, fluorescent-lit riff on Michel Gondry's "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," "Backrooms" doesn't quite work. While the movie finds a potentially insightful pathway to a story, it can't bridge its very physical, wall-to-wall-carpeted labyrinth with Clark's mental state. A movie with so many doors ultimately can't find the right one.

Despite a paper-wall-thin concept, both Ejiofor and Reinsve give "Backrooms" some depth. Ejiofor has almost always been a supremely level-headed screen presence, but here embraces a latent capacity for fevered mania. Reinsve, the star of "The Worst Person in the World" and "Sentimental Value," proves especially absorbing in her first horror film. She gives the movie a slinky intelligence.

But the real star is Danny Vermette's production design. Banal and bizarre at once, the Backrooms serve as a mysterious rabbit hole. Horror films have long found trouble down the stairs, but the movies - like 2022's "Barbarian" - seem to be digging even deeper. It's no wonder the movie gets lost down there, too.

"Backrooms," an A24 release in theaters Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for language and some violent content/bloody images. Running time: 105 minutes. Two stars out of four.

Obituary



Marcia Lucas, wife of director George Lucas, right, carries her Oscar statuette as they arrive at a post Academy Awards party at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles, April 4, 1978. (AP)

Oscar-winning Star Wars editor Marcia Lucas dies

LOS ANGELES, May 30, (AP): Marcia Lucas, who won an Oscar as editor of the original 1977 "Star Wars" has died, a lawyer for her family said Friday.

Lucas, who was married to "Star Wars" creator George Lucas from 1969 to 1983, died Wednesday from metastatic cancer, the attorney, Deidre Von Rock, said in an email to The Associated Press. Marcia Lucas died in Rancho Mirage, California, surrounded by loved ones, Von Rock said. She was 80.

Marcia Lucas was the editor on 1983's "Return of the Jedi" and the pre-"Star Wars" George Lucas-directed films "THX 1138" and "American Graffiti."

She was also part of the editing team for director Martin Scorsese's 1970s films "Taxi Driver," "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore" and "New York, New York."

Marcia Lucas was often called the unsung hero of "Star Wars," the original film that after sequels, prequels and spinoffs has come to be known by its subtitle, "A New Hope."

She convinced husband George that he should have Obi-Wan Kenobi, played by Alec Guinness, in his light saber battle with Darth Vader and become a spirit guide to Mark Hamill's Luke Skywalker.

And she had to make sense

of the raw footage that could've been a mess in the wrong hands, including the climactic rebel attack on the Death Star.

"It was extremely complex and we had 40,000 feet of dialogue footage of pilots saying this and that. And she had to cull through all that, and put in all the fighting as well," George Lucas told Rolling Stone in an interview a few months after the film came out and became a phenomenon. "Nobody really has ever tried to interweave an actual plot story into a dogfight, and we were trying to do that."

After her divorce from George Lucas, she was married to Tom Rodrigues, a production manager at the Skywalker Ranch production center, from 1983 to 1993.

She is survived by her daughters, Amanda Lucas and Amy Soper, and grandchildren Felix Hallikainen, Aeliana Hallikainen and Knox Soper.

"Her influence on film is indelible, but those who knew her best will remember the way she made life feel more vivid, more beautiful, more fun, and more full of love," a family statement said. "Her work was known for its emotional intelligence, rhythm, and humanity - a rare ability to find the truth of a scene and bring heart, momentum, and clarity to the screen."

Stage

'The Lost Boys' and 'Schmigadoon!' top nominations

Broadway gears up for 2026 Tony Awards

NEW YORK, May 30, (AP): Twenty-four shows on Broadway received Tony Award nominations this season, but not all will walk away with a trophy and the box office attention they usually bring.

Here are some key things to know as Broadway's biggest night approaches, including how to watch, the top nominees, who is poised to make history and what shows secured performance slots.

The Tonys will be broadcast to both coasts on June 7 from 8-11 p.m. Eastern/5-8 p.m. Pacific, live from Radio City Music Hall.

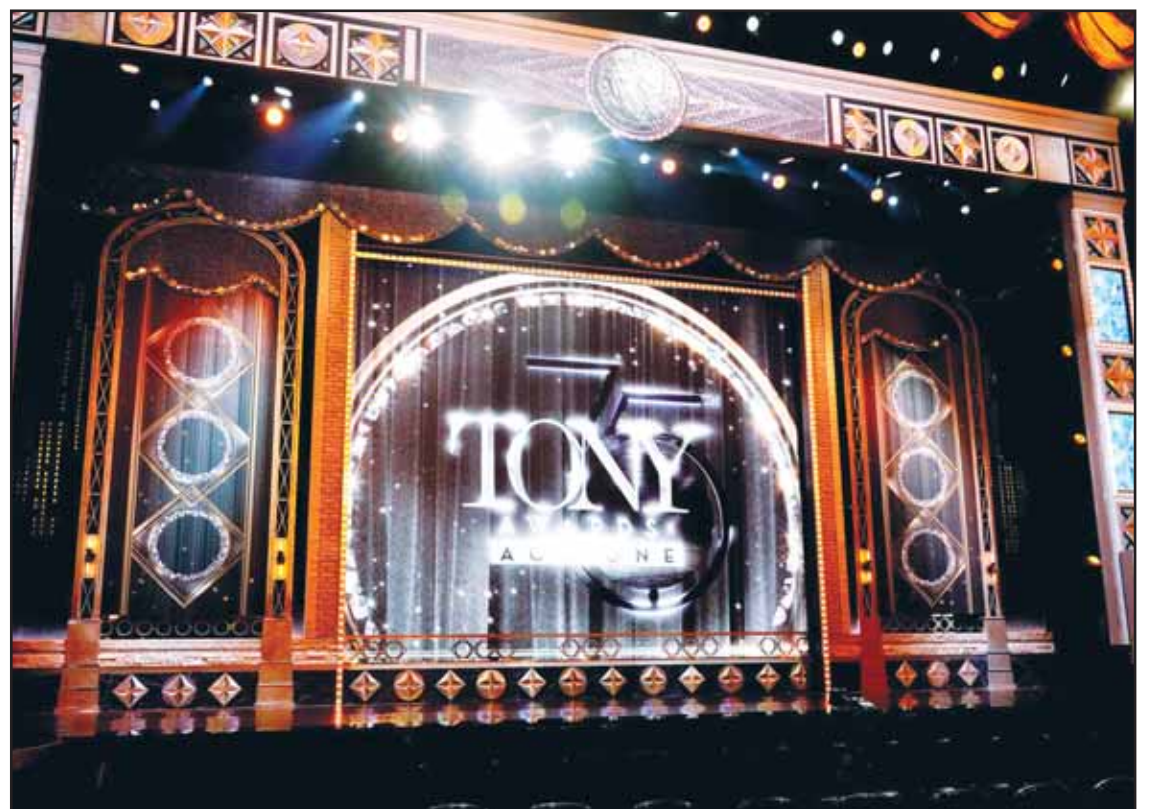
On CBS and streaming for Paramount+ with Showtime subscribers in the U.S.

Pink, a three-time Grammy Award winner, will make her debut as MC.

A pre-show will be broadcast on Pluto TV from 6:35-8 p.m. Eastern/3:45-5 p.m. Pacific. Laura Benanti and Tituss Burgess will host that telecast. Viewers can access it on their smart TV, streaming device, mobile app or online by going to Pluto TV and clicking on the "Live Music" channel, found within the Entertainment category on the service.

The seven best new musical and best musical revivals - "The Lost Boys," "Schmigadoon!," "Titanique," "Two Strangers (Carry a Cake Across New York)," "Cats: The Jellicle Ball," "Ragtime" and "The Rocky Horror Show."

A total of 26 competitive categories, from lead and featured actors to scenic, costume and lighting design. Some technical award handouts may be pre-taped and winners



A view of the stage appears before the start of the 75th annual Tony Awards in New York on June 12, 2022. (AP)

won't appear on the live show, only cut down into edited bits sandwiched into the telecast.

There are two top nominees: "The Lost Boys" and "Schmigadoon!" each earned a leading 12 Tony Award nominations.

"The Lost Boys" is an adaptation of a 1987 teen movie vampire thriller, and "Schmigadoon!" is an adaptation of an Apple TV series that gently mocks Broadway musicals.

They're followed by a revival of "Ragtime," a big, soaring musical celebrating early 20th-century America, with 11 nominations, and "Death of a Salesman," Arthur Miller's masterpiece that looks at the unraveling of the American Dream, starring Nathan Lane, which nabbed nine nods.

For new musicals, it's "The Lost Boys," "Schmigadoon!," "Titanique" and "Two Strangers (Carry a Cake Across New York)."

For new plays, it's "The Balusters," "Giant," "Liberation" and "Little Bear Ridge Road."

History has already been made, in a way. June Squibb became the oldest Tony-nominated actor in history at 96 and could become the oldest Tony winner, surpassing Lois Smith who was 90 when she won in 2021.

Nathan Lane is hoping for his fourth Tony, which would make him tied as the most-awarded male performer in Tony history, alongside Boyd Gaines and Frank Langella. If he does win for best lead actor in a play for the revival of "Death of a Salesman," he'd have Tonys in three separate acting categories, previously winning featured actor in a play for "Angels in America" and lead actor in a musical twice for "A Funny Thing Happ-

pened on the Way to the Forum" and "The Producers."

And for the first time since 2002, the contenders for best leading actress in a musical are all first-time nominees: Sara Chase ("Schmigadoon!"), Stephanie Hsu ("The Rocky Horror Show"), Caissie Levy ("Ragtime"), Marla Mindelle ("Titanique") and Christiani Pitts ("Two Strangers (Carry a Cake Across New York)").

Other performances include the original lead cast members of "The Book of Mormon" - Josh Gad, Andrew Rannells, Rory O'Malley and Nikki M. James - this year celebrating its 15th anniversary.

The 2025-2026 Broadway season set a new box office record for the second year in a row. Over the 52 weeks of the season, Broadway brought in a combined total of \$1,910,903,835, a smidge higher than last season's then-historic total of \$1,892,650,959. Last season also had 53 weeks instead of the usual 52, a Broadway accountant trick.

In more gloomy news, attendance was actually down - 14,577,322 versus 14,658,531 from last season. And the average paid admission was \$131.09, continuing an ever upward trend.



The Broadway cast of 'The Lost Boys' appears during a performance in New York on March 25, 2026. (AP)

Books

Former first lady shares her first public account of the campaign's defining moment

Jill Biden revisits debate fallout in new memoir



President Joe Biden, center, and first lady Jill Biden, right, pay for a purchase as they greet supporters at a Waffle House in Marietta, Ga., June 28, 2024, following a presidential debate in Atlanta. (AP)

WASHINGTON, May 30, (AP) — In her new memoir, former first lady Jill Biden reflects on former President Joe Biden's poor debate performance against Donald Trump nearly two years ago and wonders whether it would have been better to acknowledge it rather than reassure supporters afterward.

The Democrat's performance ultimately proved to be his undoing as he campaigned for reelection, amplifying concerns about whether the then-81-year-old could serve a second term. He ultimately dropped his bid under pressure from within his party and endorsed his vice president, Kamala Harris, who lost to the Republican Trump.

In "View from the East Wing," a memoir about her White House years that's being published next Tuesday, she said she still doesn't know why her husband performed so disastrously that day.

The Associated Press obtained a copy of the book's 274-page manuscript, which includes her first public comments about the debate and the ensuing chain of events that sent Joe Biden back to private life in Delaware sooner than he had envisioned.

The book also covers his prostate cancer diagnosis after leaving office and their son Hunter's federal trial on gun charges, among other issues during Joe Biden's term, along with how she juggled the added responsibilities of being first lady and her teaching career.

Here are some highlights from the book:



First lady Jill Biden speaks during an event at the White House in Washington, Jan. 16, 2025. (AP)

Jill Biden writes that her husband "looked bleary" in their hotel suite in Atlanta before the debate. She was confident he would do well, she said, because big events energized him. But when the CNN-sponsored event began, "I

immediately noticed that Joe didn't look good. He didn't seem himself from the opening."

A few minutes in, he said something out of turn about how "we finally beat Medicare."

"Is he short-circuiting? I thought," she wrote. "Is this a stroke? It felt like we were watching an AI hologram of the man we knew, and the hologram was glitching."

She wondered if he had been drugged or was experiencing a medical emergency.

He improved as the debate went on, "but not enough to reassure me or anyone watching that he was okay. He clearly wasn't," Jill Biden said. "I'd never seen that look on his face before in my life."

As they walked offstage afterward, he used colorful language to whisper to her that he had messed up, which she took as a "sign of his having returned to himself."

But "to this day, I still don't know what happened," she wrote. They attended a post-debate rally and dropped in at a Waffle House before traveling to North Carolina for a next-day appearance.

The official explanation at the time from the White House and others close to the president was that he was suffering from a cold. But Jill Biden said she wonders if they should have acknowledged what millions of people saw — "that he looked very unwell in that debate."

"The biggest lesson for us, I think, was that if you don't explain something well enough then the question won't go

away," she wrote. "There was never a satisfying enough explanation offered for Joe's debate performance, and a lot of people never got over it."

Biden's performance in the debate crystallized the concerns of many voters that he was too old to continue serving as president. It sparked a fresh round of calls for him to consider stepping aside as the party's nominee as fellow Democrats feared a Trump return to the White House if Biden remained as their candidate.

The drumbeat of calls for him to leave the race started before the debate had ended and, "in the days to come, it would grow louder and louder," Jill Biden wrote.

Jill Biden reveals that while she was first lady, she was terminated by the school where she had taught English and writing since 2009. She had signed her annual contract in July 2023, and a termination letter signed by the college president was hand-delivered that winter.

The grant used to pay her salary had dried up.

"I felt sick," she wrote. "I was hosting holiday parties at the White House, so I had to go from seeing emails about my firing to groups of children belting out 'Jingle Bells.'" Ultimately, the issue was resolved — she did not say how — "and I kept my position."

But she taught her last class at the school in December 2024, wrapping up a 40-year career as an educator. She wrote in the book that she's exploring an opportunity to teach GED classes at an undisclosed women's prison.

People in Washington sent her photos of the demolition and she said, "I could barely look."

The East Wing was the historic base of operations for first ladies and their staffs, the social office, the military office and other operations. Trump had it torn down last year to build a ballroom.

"A major landmark and historic treasure was being treated like an extreme fixer-upper on HGTV's 'Property Brothers,'" she wrote, adding that what "pained me" was "the symbolic bulldozing of history and the eradication of institutional memory."

She noticed that Biden started waking up repeatedly in the middle of the night in the year before they left the White House. She alerted his doctors and urged him to see a urologist.

About four months after leaving office, in May 2025, he was diagnosed with stage IV prostate cancer that had spread to his bones. Biden underwent daily radiation treatment for five and a half weeks and takes hormone pills that can cause him to become fatigued and moody.

"But we couldn't dwell in the grief because we were put immediately on the defensive, accused of having hidden his illness," she wrote.

The White House has a doctor's office and presidents have access to the best medical care.

"Joe couldn't stub his toe without 10 people wanting to run at him waving bales of gauze," she wrote. "You put the president in bubble wrap, and he ends up with stage IV prostate cancer? It made no sense."

Shortly before that fateful debate, Hunter Biden had been convicted of all three felony charges related to the purchase of a revolver in 2018 when, prosecutors argued, he lied on a mandatory gun-purchase form by saying he was not illegally using or addicted to drugs.

The family was surprised the case went to trial and viewed it as politically motivated.

While Joe Biden had vowed that he wouldn't pardon his son if he were convicted, the former first lady saw things differently.

"In the end, it felt like in working so hard to be impartial, we guaranteed that Hunter would meet the worst possible legal fate," she wrote. "Joe might have gone too far, in my opinion, to show that his family was being treated with complete impartiality."

But during his final weeks in office, Biden issued pardons for Hunter, sparing him a possible prison sentence, and for Biden's siblings and their spouses, fearing they might become targets of the incoming Trump administration.

Destinations

Al Quaa Desert emerges as a haven for stargazers

A trip to United Arab Emirates' darkest spot reveals rare view of the Milky Way

AL QUA DESERT, United Arab Emirates, May 30, (AP) — The gleaming skyscrapers and bright lights of the United Arab Emirates draw the eyes of all who travel there, a sign of the Arabian Peninsula nation's rapid, oil-fueled development over the last decades into a major hub for commerce and tourism.

But something has been lost over that period: a clear vision across nearly all of the country's inhabited lands of the stars in the night sky that once guided Bedouin across the shifting desert dunes of its vast interior, known as the Empty Quarter.

A group of volunteers from the Dubai Astronomy Group recently has been helping people reconnect with the sight of stars and the Milky Way by taking them on nighttime excursions to Al Quaa Desert, one of the darkest spots remaining in the Emirates.

"It causes us to appreciate our existence in this galaxy," Sheeraz Awan, the general manager of the astronomy group, said as he guided participants through a weekend view of the stars in late May.

The UAE ranks among the world's most light-polluted countries, along with several other Gulf Arab states whose populations largely live in major cities.

A 2016 scientific study concluded "humanity has enveloped our planet in a luminous fog" and suggested 99% of the Emirates population could not see the Milky Way from their homes because of artificial lights.

That illumination ranges from street lights on roadways to the LED light show thrilling tourists at Dubai's Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building. Abu Dhabi plans to build a \$1.7 billion version of the Sphere, the Las Vegas attraction, on its Yas Island.

In Abu Dhabi, capital of the UAE, authorities have acknowledged the light pollution problem, coming up with what it calls a "Dark Sky Policy" in 2024 on lighting and other issues across its entire emirate. In Dubai, increasingly more buildings have LED displays and LED billboards have become more common. Authorities in the emirate did not respond to a request for comment, though Dubai also is home to the Al Qudra Lakes, a rural area with fewer areas of light pollution.

City lights don't reach Al Quaa Desert. The desert is easily reachable by vehicle,



This long-exposure photograph shows men using a laser pointer to name the stars in the Milky Way galaxy in the Al Quaa Desert outside of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates on May 24. (AP)

about 100 kilometers (62 miles) southeast of the city of Abu Dhabi along a major highway to the oasis city of Al Ain, then another road south far out into the desert.

Despite overhead road lights on the stretch known as Razeen Road, with a heavily lit prison along the way, the desert stretches just beyond in total darkness, unburdened by the bright illumination of the city. Razeen Road finally jogs east, but an automatic gate opens to allow drivers onto an unpaved road leading deeper into the desert.

Kilometers (miles) further along, past those camping in the dunes and enjoying some of the last good overnight weather before the UAE summertime high temperatures of around 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit), the astronomers gathered dozens of people to see the stars.

They weren't alone. Several laborers beneath heavy blankets slept nearby in the back of a pickup truck under the stars. Under one small LED lamp signaling where to park, a Solifugae — better known as a camel spider — ate another

camel spider after a long struggle. The creature ran briefly toward a journalist and a volunteer before the vibrations of an approaching car sent it scurrying back into the darkness. Everyone around then carefully watched their steps.

On carpets laid out for the weekend excursion in May, families speaking Arabic, English and Russian looked up at the sky. The half-moon slowly set over the horizon. Soon, the outline of the Milky Way could be seen by the naked eye.

"When you look toward the east, can you see that faint cloud," Awan asked. "That, ladies and gentlemen, is the Milky Way."

He used a laser point to highlight the array of stars, drawing one woman to exclaim: "Ay ye ye!"

The Dubai Astronomy Group volunteers described this as one of the best times of the year to see the galaxy. Several gasped as they spotted meteors occasionally streaking across the sky, easily visible in the darkness without the interference of urban lights.

Music

Trio revisits career-defining record

The Chicks celebrates 20 yrs of their defiant comeback album

NEW YORK, May 30, (AP) — Call it a comeback, a crossover moment, or both. Twenty years ago, The Chicks released their blockbuster 2006 album "Taking the Long Way" — their first full-length after the country music industry turned their backs on them — and one of the biggest of their career. This fall, the Texas trio of Emily Strayer, Martie Maguire and Natalie Maines will take it on the road, hitting intimate theaters across the U.S.

"This album in particular is what I think fans would say is the most recognized time in our career," says Maines.

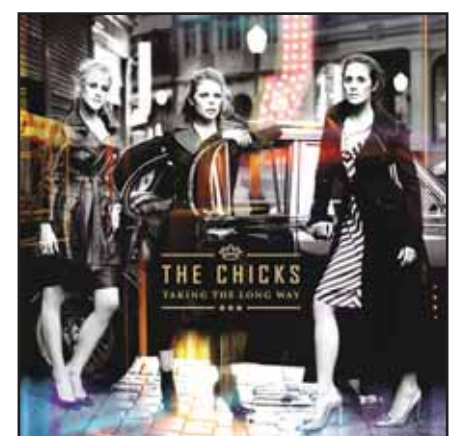
And so, they expect the shows — which will feature them performing "Taking the Long Way" in full as well as additional songs — will also have them reminiscing about the album and the very unusual time that led up to it, on stage.

The moment that changed everything was back in 2003, when then-President George W. Bush was preparing to invade Iraq. The Chicks were playing a show in London when Maines announced that they were ashamed that the president was from Texas. The backlash was swift, and the stuff of industry lore. They were booted on awards shows, radio stations pulled their music and fans destroyed their CDs. There was an apology, and then in 2006, a rescinding of the apology — with the best revenge served in the form of a multiplatinum-selling single, "Not Ready to Make Nice."

"It was definitely inspiring for songwriting," said Maines of that period. "It felt like life was happening to us, like we weren't steering the ship."

"Those were hard times for us," adds Maguire. "It's all the stages of grief ... I think we were kind of in that misunderstood, angry, but also really upset and needing an outlet (stage)."

And so, they wrote the triumphant "Taking the Long Way," produced by Rick Rubin, after "licking our wounds," as Strayer puts it.



This album cover image released by Columbia Records shows "Taking the Long Way" by The Chicks. (AP)

"Not Ready to Make Nice" came out of that. "It was like, 'This is solely selfish. This is our lives,'" Maines says of the song. And they were shocked when it connected — but now, they recognize that "people have their own 'Not Ready to Make Nice' story to tell."

The album went on to earn them five Grammy Awards, including album, song and record of the year, and marked a transformative moment for the band. And its themes still resonate.

"Re-listening and rehearsing those songs, I was surprised how relevant they still seemed and how universal they still seemed even though they were such personal stories," says Strayer.

Later this year, fans will have the opportunity to relive the "Taking the Long Way" era for a 16-night run that starts at the Fox Theatre in Detroit on Sept. 30 and ends in Los Angeles at the Dolby Theatre on Nov. 1 and 2. They'll also do two nights in Chicago, New York, San Antonio, Seattle and San Francisco. They'll hit Washington, Nashville, Tennessee, and Austin, Texas, for one night only.

Tickets will go on sale June 4 at 10 a.m. local time on LiveNation.com.



A Blue Origin New Glenn rocket explodes during an engine-firing test on May 28, in Cape Canaveral, Fla. (AP)

Blue Origin investigates rocket explosion as public warned about possible wreckage washing ashore

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., May 30, (AP) — Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin is assessing damage to its launch pad after a rocket exploded during a test firing, creating a giant orange fireball seen and felt for miles around.

The company fueled the hulking New Glenn rocket Thursday night, hoping to briefly ignite the engines ahead of a satellite launch next week. But the 321-foot (98-meter), rocket blew up, taking part of the pad with it.

Aerial views on Friday revealed heaps of crumpled structures on the ground, with just one tower and the water tank still standing. Emergency officials warned the public to avoid any wreckage that might wash ashore and to instead call 911. There were no reported deaths or injuries.

It's a major setback for Blue Origin, coming just one month after the entire New Glenn fleet was grounded because of an upper-stage engine issue that dumped a satellite in the wrong orbit.

Named after John Glenn, the first American in orbit, New Glenn is the rocket that Blue Origin plans to use to launch landers to the moon under NASA's Artemis program that aims to build a sprawling base near the moon's south pole. The goal is to land the first Artemis moonwalkers as early as 2028. Earlier this week, the space agency awarded a new contract to Blue Origin worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

One of the biggest rockets to reach orbit, New Glenn has seven first-stage engines fueled by liquid oxygen and liquefied natural gas, which is essentially methane. It has flown three times.

None of the assigned 48 Amazon Leo satellites were on board the newest rocket when the blast occurred. Another batch of Amazon Leo satellites — competing with SpaceX's Starlinks to provide internet service to remote locales — lifted off from another pad at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station on

Friday night, courtesy of United Launch Alliance's Atlas V rocket.

It was the second launch of the day. SpaceX launched more Starlinks to orbit Friday morning, within 12 hours of the explosion. CEO Elon Musk has two Florida pads in action, one on the Space Force side where the latest Falcon 9 lifted off and the other at NASA's Kennedy Space Center.

Blue Origin has just one Florida pad: Launch Complex 36 dating back to the early 1960s. NASA's Mariner and Pioneer interplanetary probes rocketed away from there, as well as the moon-bound Rangers and Surveyors. The Washington state-based Blue Origin spent more than \$1 billion rebuilding the launch complex — taking it from double pads to a single — after leasing it from the Air Force in 2015.

The company's smaller New Shepard rockets soar from Texas, skimming space for a few minutes with tourists and science experiments. Those suborbital hops were paused in January so the company could focus on New Glenn and upcoming moonshots. All that is now on hold, pending the investigation into the explosion.

NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman said late Thursday that the space agency will evaluate near-term impacts to the Artemis program, which saw four astronauts fly around the moon in April. That Artemis II mission was hoisted by NASA's Space Launch System rocket.

Before the explosion, Blue Origin was on track to launch a prototype lunar lander to the moon on a New Glenn this fall, with another lander due to rocket into orbit around Earth in 2027 for docking practice by the soon-to-be-announced Artemis III crew.

A touchdown by two astronauts on Artemis IV — using a Blue Moon lander or SpaceX's Starship, whichever is ready first — was targeted as early as 2028.

Kenya court suspends US plan for quarantine facility for Americans

WHO chief lands in Congo's Ituri, epicenter of Ebola, as outbreak outpaces response

BUNIA, Congo, May 30, (AP) — The head of the World Health Organization Saturday arrived in eastern Congo's Bunia, a city at the heart of an outbreak of a rare type of Ebola, where the virus still spreads faster than the response, despite better-organized health facilities and new aid arrivals.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus is expected to visit a treatment center and meet local authorities, health workers and affected families in Bunia.

"The best way to address this is to provide all the necessary support to fight the disease at its epicenter and to continue offering every assistance needed," Tedros told reporters late Friday.

The WHO said Friday authorities have reported 906 suspected cases and 223 suspected deaths. Neighboring Uganda has confirmed nine cases and one death, the Ugandan ministry of health said Friday.

The Bundibugyo virus, the current kind of Ebola, has no approved treatment or vaccine.

"This is a difficult situation, and we recognize that. But the Democratic Republic of Congo has faced the Ebola virus many times be-

fore. We are confident that it can once again bring this outbreak under control," Tedros told reporters Friday after meeting with Congo's Prime Minister Judith Suminwa Tuluka.

Medical aid donated by the European Union arrived in Ituri, the heart of Congo's Ebola outbreak, on Thursday, with more shipments expected over the next eight days. The U.S. announced \$80 million in additional aid on the same day, bringing its total commitment to more than \$112 million.

Response efforts at Bunia's Rwampara and General hospitals appear more organized, with additional staff, protective gear and medical supplies, though patients continue arriving around the clock, an AP reporter observed on Friday.

The response has not kept pace with one of the fastest-spreading outbreaks on record, Doctors Without Borders, or MSF, warned on Saturday. "Never before has an Ebola outbreak recorded so many cases so soon after its declaration," Dr. Alan Gonzalez, MSF's deputy director of operations, said in a statement.

"Nobody knows the true scale and severity of this outbreak," Gonzalez



Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, speaks to the media upon his arrival at N'djili International Airport in Kinshasa, Congo on May 28. (AP)

said, calling for immediate expansion of testing, faster deployment of aid workers and sustained access for medical supplies.

Dangers faced by health workers have been heightened by anger among residents over the stringent medical protocols for handling

the victims' bodies, which clash with local burial rites. Residents have launched at least three attacks against health centers.

Attacks in Ituri by the Allied Democratic Force, a rebel group allied with the Islamic State group, and a coalition of ethnic militias have also

hindered the response.

The illness also has been reported in the Congolese provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu, south of Ituri, where the Rwanda-backed M23 rebel group controls many key cities, including Goma and Bukavu. The rebels have reported two cases.

Uganda and Rwanda have closed their borders, while the Trump administration last week banned entry of non-U.S. passport holders who had recently visited Congo, Uganda or South Sudan.

Tedros on Friday called border closures and travel bans "not effective at all" in preventing the spread of the outbreak.

"Closing borders, as some countries have done, only discourages transparency. The Democratic Republic of Congo is reporting the situation openly and transparently," he said, urging countries to reconsider these measures.

Also:

NAIROBI, Kenya: A court in Kenya on Friday suspended a US plan to establish a quarantine facility for Americans exposed to a rare type of Ebola virus spreading in northeastern Congo, following a backlash by

medical workers and activists.

US administration officials said on Thursday that the US was planning to send Americans who are exposed to Ebola while abroad to a new facility in Kenya instead of flying them home. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to share the administration's plans. They said the facility would be at Laikipia Air Base and would be operational with 50 quarantine beds by Friday.

The Kenyan government said it was in discussions with the US on support for Ebola preparedness, but declined to address whether the country would establish a treatment facility for Americans. The U.S. government intends to commit \$13.5 million toward Kenya's Ebola preparedness efforts, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a statement.

The High Court in Nairobi on Friday put a stop to any deal on the Ebola facility until petitions against it are heard on Tuesday.

An organization formed to defend Kenya's Constitution, Katiba Institute, and the Kenya Law Society separately challenged any presence of Ebola-related facilities.



The full moon rises behind the buildings of the banking district in Frankfurt, Germany on May 1. (AP)

Rare blue micromoon rises this weekend

Get set for a rare blue micromoon this weekend — a blue moon that's also the most distant and smallest-looking full moon of the year.

A bonus: The brilliant star Antares will photobomb Sunday's spectacle for a celestial three-for-one.

A blue moon occurs every two to three years when a second full moon squeezes into a single month. May 1 saw this month's first full moon.

Since the moon's orbit isn't a perfect circle, the upcoming full moon will be farther from Earth than usual at a distance

of 252,360 miles (406,135 kilometers), making it seem a bit smaller and dimmer. It's the opposite of a supermoon when a full moon comes closer to us than normal. The most recent supermoon, for instance, was just 225,130 miles (362,312 kilometers) away. (AP)

Experimental hepatitis B drug may offer 'functional cure' for some patients

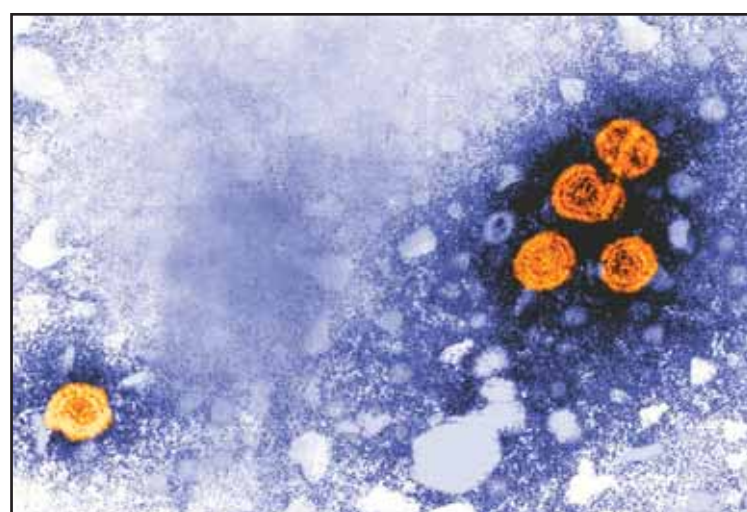
WASHINGTON, May 30, (AP) — A first-of-its-kind drug for hepatitis B is letting some patients stop treatment without showing signs of the dangerous liver virus, what's called a "functional cure," researchers reported.

In two international studies, about 1 in 5 patients given the experimental drug saw their virus reduced to levels low enough for the immune system to keep in check.

"We have not had a treatment which has come to this level of cure," Dr. Seng Gee Lim of the National University Health System of Singapore, who helped lead the GSK-funded studies, told reporters before presenting the findings at a scientific meeting in Barcelona, Spain.

The data also was published Thursday in the New England Journal of Medicine.

Chronic hepatitis B can cause liver cancer or liver failure, and kills about 1.1 million people around the world each year. Improvements to today's lifelong therapy, which can be hard to stick with or access in



This 1981 electron microscope image made available by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows hepatitis B virus particles, indicated in orange. (AP)

some countries, have been sought for decades.

The drug is bupirovirsen, nicknamed "bepi" and developed by GSK and Ionis Pharmaceuticals. It is

under fast-track review by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, with a decision expected in October. Regulators in Japan, China and Europe also are considering the drug.

You should be dancing, yeah. Moving to music offers all kinds of benefits as you age

TUCSON, Ariz., May 30, (AP) — Carol Ross can't stop smiling at dance practice as she shouts out the steps of a routine to members of her tap and jazz troupe for women age 50 and older.

"I've been dancing my whole life, it's the best," said Ross, who founded the Rodeo City Wreckettes group 23 years ago at an age when many people are getting ready for retirement.

Now 87, Ross and her husband and lifelong dance partner John, also 87, have long known what more older adults are now discovering: Moving to music is one of the best ways to stay healthy. Medical professionals say it doesn't matter if it's Western line dancing, ballroom steps, salsa, tap, Zumba at the gym, or with a group like the Wreckettes.

"Dancing is one of the most powerful activities for older people," said Julio Loya, a nurse and geriatric program coordinator at the Tucson Medical Center.

Dance, like other exercise, can help people lose weight, get stronger, reduce fall risk, increase mobility and flexibility, and even improve brain health.

"It engages their brain, it changes their mood, and it connects them socially while getting them moving," said Loya. "And it's fun. Everybody has a good time."

Dr. Thomas Johnson, a geriatrician at the UHealth Seniors Clinic in Aurora, Colorado, said he remembers one man in particular whose passion for dance was so strong that he willed himself to attend one last class before he died in his late 80s.

"His No. 1 priority was that he danced until the day that he died," Johnson said of his patient.

Johnson said dance can improve the balance of his patients at the clin-



Cindy Soffrin, (from left), Carol Ross, and Suzy Rhoades, of The Rodeo City Wreckettes, a tap and jazz dance group for older women, practice on April 16, in Tucson, Ariz. (AP)

ic, which serves about 2,500 people 75 and older a year.

He said older patients can benefit from adding two to three dance sessions to the 150 minutes of aerobic exercise he recommends for them each week, because dancing often involves movements that help with balance, such as walking backward or standing on one foot.

The Wreckettes practice their routines during two-hour sessions at least twice a week in a rented dance studio.

After studying ballet as a girl, then moving on to everything from ballroom to tap as an adult, Ross said it made sense to keep dancing when she and her husband moved from Philadelphia to retire in Tucson.

John Ross is a key part of the Wreckettes' routines, typically joining his wife for at least one number. At one recent practice, it was a saucy saunter to Merle Haggard's

"Let's Chase Each Other Around the Room."

"I learned early on that dancing was a great way to attract the chicks," joked John Ross, who slid across the floor like a much younger man.

Wreckettes member Cindy Soffrin said that watching her mother suffer as she aged convinced her to stay active as she got older.

"My mom was sedentary the last 20 years of her life. It was pretty rough," said Soffrin, 74.

For 67-year-old Gail Kowalski, joining the Wreckettes three years ago meant finding new friends after her husband died and she moved from Utah to Tucson.

"Plus, it's so dang fun," Kowalski said.

The Wreckettes perform throughout the year, from holiday events to rodeo shows, dressing up in a series of matching sparkly costumes.

US adult cigarette smoking rate hits another all-time low

NEW YORK, May 30, (AP) — The cigarette smoking rate among US adults dropped to another all-time low last year, with 1 in 11 adults saying they were current smokers, according to government survey data released this week.

Cigarette smoking is a risk factor for lung cancer, heart disease and stroke, and it's long been considered the leading cause of preventable death.

The preliminary findings from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention were based on survey responses from more than 24,200 adults. In the survey, CDC officials defined current cigarette smoking as smoking at least 100 cigarettes in a lifetime and now smoking every day or some days.

In the mid-1960s, 42% of US adults were smokers. The rate has been gradually dropping for decades, due to cigarette taxes, tobacco product price hikes, smoking bans, public education campaigns and changes in the social acceptability of lighting up in public.



Cigarettes are arranged for a photograph in New York on Dec. 17, 2019. (AP)

Hamidan renewal talks continue

Ndoulfo offered to Qadsia as Kibanou set for exit

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: Qadsia's Congolese foreign player Neskins Kibanou is set to become the second overseas departure from the squad ahead of next season, after the club decided not to renew his contract.

The move follows the earlier exit of Algerian Sofiane Bouchar, who was the first foreign player to leave Al-Ahmar.

Meanwhile, reports suggest that a player agent has offered South African forward Sianda Ndoulfo to Qadsia as a potential signing.

Ndoulfo, born in 2003, currently plays for Lamontville Golden Arrows in South Africa and has attracted interest from major clubs such as Orlando Pirates and Mamelodi Sundowns.

Qadsia head coach Nabil Maâloul confirmed after his side's 3-0 win over Jahra in Round 17 of the Zain Premier League at Mohammed Al-



A file photo of Hamidan celebrating.

Hamad Stadium that negotiations are ongoing to renew the contract of Bahraini midfielder Mahdi Hami-

dan, while also acknowledging the departures of Bouchar and Kibanou. Qadsia rising star Abdullah Al-

Ghaniman said it is natural for the team to target qualification for Asian competitions, praising the team's performance in the victory over Jahra.

He added that Qadsia treat every match as a final, stressing that the inclusion of young players reflects the coaching staff's confidence in the squad and their ability to step up when needed.

The win saw Qadsia return to second place in the league standings after Al-Salmiya briefly overtook it earlier in the round following a 2-0 victory over Al-Fahaheel.

Qadsia now sits on 31 points, with Al-Salmiya on 29, while Jahra remains on 8 points in tenth place and are increasingly threatened by relegation, sitting seven points adrift of safety.

In another fixture, Al-Tadamon strengthened its survival hopes with a 2-0 away win over Al-Shabab at Al-Shabab Stadium. Both teams are now level on 15 points.

Top seed left seeking answers

Heat & cramp troubles haunt Sinner again at Roland Garros

PARIS, May 30, (AP): Two days after Jannik Sinner's shocking meltdown at the French Open, it's still unclear what exactly the issue was that led to him wasting a seemingly insurmountable advantage in his second-round match.

What is clear, though, is that the top-ranked player has had a series of issues with heat and cramps in big matches throughout his career.

Sinner said after wasting a two-set and 5-1 advantage in his five-set loss to Juan Manuel Cerundolo that he didn't feel well when he woke up the morning of Thursday's match.

Amid a week-long Paris heatwave, the temperature on Court Philippe-Chatrier rose to 32 C (90 F) during the match, and Sinner was clearly having a tough time cooling himself down as he reached for multiple ice bags and used a hand-held fan.

Still, he said the heat wasn't the issue.

"I think many things together caused this problem," he said. "I just need my time now to process what went wrong here."

It was Sinner's 12th loss in 18 career five-set matches.

Here's a look at some other matches during which Sinner had physical issues:

Less than two weeks before his French Open defeat, Sinner leaned on his racket bent over in exhaustion during an Italian Open semifinal against Daniil Medvedev.

Sinner had his right thigh treated by a trainer midway through the second set and drank cucumber juice to relieve cramps. He was seen vomiting or spitting something out in the corner of the court in the night match, which was held in humid conditions.

Still, he had regained control of the match before it was suspended overnight due to rain, and he came back the next day and finished it off in three sets and went on to win the title.

In the third round of this year's Australian Open, Sinner was limping and desperately trying to stretch out cramps in his arms and legs amid severe heat against Eliot Spizzirri.

Sinner acknowledged he was lucky when the extreme heat rules saved him and the roof was closed just as he went down a break in the third set. He won it in four sets.

The Italian star, who was the two-time defending champion in Australia, was beaten by Novak Djokovic over five sets in the semifinals.

Amid extreme humidity in the third round of his title defense at the Shanghai Masters in October, Sinner retired midway through the third set against Tallon Griekspoor.

He limped between points and frequently massaged his right thigh in



Jannik Sinner of Italy reacts as he plays against Juan Manuel Cerundolo of Argentina during their second round men's singles tennis match at the French Open tennis tournament in Paris. (AP)

the deciding set. On a changeover, he didn't sit and instead put his legs up on his bench to try and ward off a cramp.

Sinner retired 22 minutes into the Cincinnati Open final against Carlos Alcaraz last year because of illness, amid extreme heat.

He put an ice pack on his head during a changeover but was clearly having trouble from the start.

"Didn't feel great from yesterday," Sinner said. "Also during the night, I thought I would recover a bit better, but it was not the case. I just tried to go out for the fans, trying to give a match. But it was not meant to be for me today."

It was the first time in his career that he retired during a final. After he stopped playing, Alcaraz went over and put his arm around his rival as Sinner sat in his chair.

In the fourth round of the 2025 Australian Open against Holger Rune, Sinner advanced in four sets as both players struggled with the heat.

In the third set, Sinner's hand was trembling during a changeover. He asked for a trainer, and told a ball kid to bring him something to drink from his team. The player's pulse was checked, and then he trudged off with a towel draped around his neck and a bottle in each hand.

Sinner went on to win the title.

During a five-set loss to Medvedev in the 2024 Wimbledon quarterfinals, Sinner felt ill and dizzy and said he hadn't slept well the night before.

He was treated by a trainer and left the court during the third set, then briefly surged before faltering again.

Dream cruises past Fire as Reese posts double-double

Wheeler sparks late win over Mystics

PORTLAND, Ore., May 30, (AP): Angel Reese had 18 points, 12 rebounds and five assists, Rhyné Howard added 14 points and six steals, and the Atlanta Dream beat the Portland Fire 86-66 on Friday night.

Atlanta's lead was trimmed to 59-53 after Portland closed the third quarter on a 14-5 run, capped by Sarah Ashlee Barker's 3-pointer with 20.1 seconds left. But the Dream outscored the Fire 27-13 in the fourth.

Atlanta started the fourth on a 9-0 run to regain control. Then, Naz Hillmon grabbed an offensive rebound and put it back while being fouled with 4:49 to play. She made the free throw for a 20-point lead at 77-57.

Hillmon also finished with 14 points to go with five steals, and Allisha Gray added 13 for Atlanta (5-2). Gray surpassed 1,000 career made free throws and the Dream went 17 of 20 at the line compared to eight attempts for the Fire.

Barker led Portland (5-4) with 14 points. Carla Leite added 11, and Emily Engstler and Megan Gustafson each scored 10. Holly Winterburn made her first career WNBA start in place of Bridget Carleton (back) and had six points and seven assists.

Carleton is second on the team in scoring (15.3 per game) and averages 2.1 steals, second in the WNBA behind Atlanta's Jordin Canada (2.3).

Sparks 92, Mystics 87

In Los Angeles, Erica Wheeler scored eight of her 21 points in the final 70 seconds, Nneka Ogumike had 20 points and 11 rebounds, and the Los Angeles Sparks beat the Washington Mystics.

Ogumike moved into sixth place



Minnesota Lynx guard Olivia Miles (5) works toward the basket while defended by Atlanta Dream guard Jordin Canada (3) during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Minneapolis. (AP)

on the WNBA's career rebounding list with 3,312 and now has a franchise-record 2,339 made field goals for the Sparks. Ogumike moved past Lisa Leslie, who had 2,332 field goals for Los Angeles and 3,307 career rebounds.

Cameron Brink tied her season high with 16 points, 14 in the first half, including a 3-pointer with 17 seconds left to give Los Angeles (4-3) a 42-37 lead at the intermission. Dearica Hamby added 14 points, nine rebounds, seven assists and four steals.

Kelsey Plum (illness/right ankle), the WNBA's leading scorer at 26.8 per game, did not play for the Sparks. Shakira Austin made two free

throws that tied it at 81-all with 2:07 to play but Ogumike answered with a 3-pointer before Wheeler sealed it.

Lynx 79, Sky 58

In Minneapolis, Nia Coffey scored 20 points and made six 3-pointers, rookie Olivia Miles had 17 points, six rebounds and six assists, and the Minnesota Lynx beat the Chicago Sky.

Coffey was 6 of 9 from behind the arc to finish with her most points since dropping 23 against Seattle on May 27, 2018. Coffey also grabbed eight rebounds.

Minnesota took over in the third quarter, outscoring the Sky 31-16 to take a 64-46 lead. Natasha Howard

scored the opening six points of the third before Coffey made back-to-back 3-pointers to cap a 12-0 run for a 45-30 lead.

Miles scored eight points in the third, with six coming at the free-throw line.

Howard finished with 14 points for Minnesota (6-2), which improved to 4-0 on the road this season. Courtney Williams added 10 points, and Kayla McBride missed her first six 3-pointers and scored nine points on 3-of-13 shooting.

Kamilla Cardoso had 12 points and 13 rebounds, and Skylar Diggins also scored 12 points for Chicago (3-5), which is winless in four home games this season.

76ers land Gansey as president

Sweeney closing in on Spurs head coach job

WASHINGTON, May 30, (AP): Sean Sweeney's wait to become a head coach is about to be over. The Orlando Magic is set to give him the shot he's wanted for years.

Sweeney is in the final stages of completing a deal that will make him the next coach of the Magic, according to a person with knowledge of the move who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Friday because the hiring has not yet been revealed publicly.

The Magic declined comment. ESPN first reported that an agreement between Sweeney and the Magic was being finalized.

Sweeney - currently the associate head coach for the San Antonio Spurs - is getting the job over, among other candidates, longtime coaches Billy Donovan and Jeff Van Gundy. The 41-year-old Sweeney will replace Jamahl Mosley, who was let go by the Magic after five seasons and three consecutive first-round playoff exits. Mosley has since been hired as coach of the New Orleans Pelicans.

Sweeney is expected to remain with the Spurs through the end of their season. The Spurs play Oklahoma City in Game 7 of the Western Conference finals on Saturday night, and if they win would meet the New York Knicks next week in the NBA Finals.

Sweeney is a defensive guru, widely considered one of the brightest young coaches in the league on that side of the ball. In his lone season with the Spurs, he turned what was a porous defense a year ago into one of the league's most airtight - his scheme centered around Victor Wembanyama, the unanimous winner of the Defensive Player of the Year award this season.

Wembanyama has spoken highly of Sweeney all season long. So, too, has Spurs coach Mitch Johnson - who thought so much of Sweeney that he made him the associate head coach on his first staff



In this file photo, Dallas Mavericks assistant coach Sean Sweeney directs the team during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Minnesota Timberwolves in Minneapolis. (AP)

in San Antonio.

"I just took a liking to his ability to articulate his basketball philosophy and what he thought about the game and NBA coaching in general, in terms of competitiveness and how hard you should coach and holding guys accountable," Johnson said earlier during this postseason, in comments published by the San Antonio Express-News. "But also the modern, creative part and thinking outside the box."

Meanwhile, the Philadelphia 76ers have found their replacement for Daryl Morey and have agreed to hire Mike Gansey as their president of basketball operations, a person with knowledge of the move told The Associated Press on Friday.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the hiring has not yet been revealed publicly.

Gansey joined the Cavaliers in 2011 and has worked as their general manager since 2022.

The 43-year-old Gansey is a Northeast Ohio native. He played collegiately at West Virginia, where he was a first-team All-Big East selection. Gansey previously served as GM for the Cleveland Charge of the NBA's G League.

He replaces Morey, who was fired earlier this month after the 76ers were eliminated in the second round of the Eastern Conference playoffs.

The 76ers were easily ousted by the New York Knicks to end Morey's sixth season in charge, and the organization quickly decided that someone else would lead the basketball operations department.

The Sixers went 270-212 in the regular season under Morey but just 28-26 in the postseason, failing to advance past the second round. They returned to the playoffs this season after missing them for the only time in Morey's tenure in 2024-25, when they went 24-58.

Bob Myers, the former Golden State Warriors general manager, led the search for Morey's replacement.

Myers built the Golden State teams that won NBA championships in 2015, '17, '18 and '22. He worked as a commentator at ESPN after leaving the Warriors before joining Harris Blitzer Sports & Entertainment in October 2025 as president of sports.

His first major move with the Sixers is adding Gansey to the front office. The 76ers decided when they fired Morey to keep Nick Nurse as their coach.

Gansey worked under Cleveland President Koby Altman and helped shaped the Cavaliers into an Eastern Conference playoff team.

American shaped women's tennis rise

WTA co-founder Larry King Dies

GRASS VALLEY, Calif., May 30, (AP): Larry W. King, the former husband of Billie Jean King who partnered with her on the creation of the WTA Tour and the "Battle of the Sexes" tennis match, died Friday. He was 81.

King died at his home of prostate cancer, said his wife, Nancy Bolger King.

Larry King and Billie Jean King met at Cal State-Los Angeles and married in 1965. Billie Jean King credited him as "one of the unsung heroes in the establishment of women's professional tennis in the early 1970s."

"Larry's intelligence, love, commitment and humor helped me navigate my career for more than 20 years," Billie Jean King added in a statement, saying: "We were married for 22 years and in business together for decades. He was involved behind the scenes when the Original 9 signed our \$1 contracts and he and I co-owned several tournaments on the Virginia Slims Tour."

Together, Larry and Billie Jean King founded World TeamTennis, after Billie Jean was long interested in a team format for the sport. Larry King designed the colorful courts and revamped scoring system that helped popularize the sport.

He played a major role in a breakthrough for women's tennis in 1973. The WTA Tour was formed that year, before King went on to beat Bobby Riggs in the "Battle of the Sexes," which remains the most-watched tennis match in history.

Larry and Billie Jean King divorced in 1987. He later married Nancy Bolger King, whom he met on the women's tour in the late 1980s. They moved a few years later to Grass Valley, where he co-founded Roller Hockey International, a professional roller hockey league played on inline skates; and Bridge Pro Tour, a professional bridge tour.

Besides his wife, King is survived by son Sky King and daughter Katie King, and their families.

Best of the Rest

Protesters arrested at Brisbane stadium site: Five people were arrested Friday and other protesters moved away from the site of a proposed main stadium for the 2032 Brisbane Olympics which has become the center point over the future of a heritage-listed park in the city.

The dispute centers around Victoria Park, the site of the proposed 3.6 billion Australian dollar (\$2.6 billion) Brisbane Olympics main stadium.

The five people were taken into custody for obstructing and assaulting police officers, a police spokesperson said, adding that one of those arrested was later released without charge.

"Queensland Police Service officers are supporting partner agencies as they undertake engagement, offers of support services and compliance action, if necessary, with a focus on maintaining community safety and ensuring the safety of all involved," the spokesperson said. (AP)

US midfielder gets wedding leave: American midfielder Brenden Aaronson had a good excuse to miss the U.S. World Cup team's training session Friday - he was getting married.

The Leeds midfielder was marrying longtime girlfriend Milana D'Ambr, a daughter of Saint Joseph's men's soccer coach Don D'Ambr. Aaronson, also a member of the 2022 U.S. World Cup squad, left camp after Thursday's session and was due back in time for training Saturday.

Unable to attend the wedding himself, fellow midfielder Gio Reyna was being represented by wife Chloe.

"We don't know if it's a no-phones wedding. We're trying to get clarity on that," said Cristian Roldan, another U.S. midfielder. "Gio's wife will be FaceTiming in and we'll all be able to watch kind of like a live stream if it is a phone wedding."

Marsch has not named starter between Crépeau and Dayne

Davies named in Canada's World Cup squad despite hamstring injury

MONTREAL, May 30, (AP) — Alphonso Davies was named to Canada's World Cup squad although it's too soon to tell whether he'll be ready for the team's opener because of a hamstring injury.

The defender, who plays for Bayern Munich, was injured earlier this month in the loss to Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League semifinals.

Davies is Canada's captain and among the most prominent players named to the team, along with Juventus forward Jonathan David, Southampton forward Cyle Larin and Villarreal midfielder Tajon Buchanan.

Coach Jesse Marsch named nine defenders, 10 midfielders, four forwards and three goalkeepers to the 26-player roster for the World Cup, which opens on June 11.

Marsch included Davies on the team's latest 32-player training camp roster earlier this week, but he did not immediately join the team, instead remaining in Germany to continue his recovery.

The team trained this past week in Charlotte, North Carolina, ahead of a pair of preparation matches against Uzbekistan on Monday in Edmonton and against Ireland on June 5 in Montreal.

Canada is co-hosting the World Cup with the United States and Mexico. The Canadians are in Group B along with Switzerland, Qatar and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which eliminated Italy in the European playoffs.

The Canadians will have all three of their group-stage matches on home soil. Ranked No. 30 in the world, Canada opens against Bosnia and Herzegovina on June 12 in Toronto.

Canada has been to the World Cup twice before, in Mexico 1986 and 2022, but the team has never advanced past the group stage. The team finished at the bottom of its group in Qatar four years ago, but Davies scored the nation's first



In this file photo, Canada defender Alphonso Davies during the first half of an international friendly soccer game against the United States in Kansas City, Mo. (AP)

World Cup goal in a 4-1 loss to Croatia.

Other players coming off injuries with their club teams included forward

Promise David, who just had hip surgery for a ruptured tendon in February, and defender Moise Bombito, who has not played for the national team since breaking his leg in a 2-2 draw with Monaco in October.

Midfielder Jacob Shaffelburg also made the roster although he also injured his hamstring earlier this month.

Marsch has not named a starter between goalkeepers Maxime Crépeau and Dayne St. Clair. Both will play in the upcoming friendlies before Marsch makes a decision.

"We know what's coming in terms of a decision and we're both mature enough to understand our role for the team, whatever the decision is," Crépeau said on the Canadian television broadcast announcing the squad. "We understand that we'll be here for one another and for the team on and off the field."

Canadian Squad:

Goalkeepers: Maxime Crépeau (Orlando City), Owen Goodman (Barnsley), Dayne St. Clair (Inter Miami).

Defenders: Moise Bombito (Nice), Derek Cornelius (Rangers), Alphonso Davies (Bayern Munich), Luc de Fougerolles (Dender EH), Alistair Johnston (Celtic), Alfie Jones (Middlesbrough), Richie Laryea (Toronto), Niko Sigur (Hajduk Split), Joel Waterman (Chicago Fire).

Midfielders: Ali Ahmed (Norwich City), Tajon Buchanan (Villarreal), Mathieu Choinière (LAFC), Stephen Eustáquio (LAFC), Marcelo Flores (Tigres UANL), Ismaél Koné (Sassuolo), Liam Millar (Hull City), Jonathan Osorio (Toronto), Nathan-Dylan Saliba (Anderlecht), Jacob Shaffelburg (LAFC).

Forwards: Jonathan David (Juventus), Promise David (Royale Union Saint-Gilloise), Cyle Larin (Southampton), Tani Oluwaseyi (Villarreal).

Gujarat storms into IPL final



Gujarat Titans' captain Shubman Gill plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Gujarat Titans and Rajasthan Royals in New Chandigarh, India. (AP)

Bengaluru awaits

NEW CHANDIGARH, India, May 30, (AP) — Gujarat Titans will face defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the Indian Premier League final after chasing down Rajasthan Royals.

A 167-run partnership between opening batters Shubman Gill and Sai Sudharsan steered Gujarat to the seven-wicket win with eight balls to spare.

Gujarat pulled off its highest successful chase at 219-3, in reply to Rajasthan's 214-6 propped up by another superlative innings from 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, who smashed 96 off 47 balls.

He was trumped by Gujarat captain Gill, who hit 104 off 53 balls, including 15 boundaries.

The final on Sunday in Ahmedabad will be a rematch of the first playoff on Tuesday when Bengaluru beat Gujarat by 92 runs in Dharamsala.

Opting to bat, Rajasthan made a shaky start against Gujarat's pace at 9-2 after 11 balls. That forced Sooryavanshi to bat slower than usual and he still powered to 50 off 31 balls and lifted



Rajasthan Royals' Yash Raj Punja bowls a delivery during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Gujarat Titans and Rajasthan Royals in New Chandigarh, India. (AP)

Rajasthan to 70-2 in the powerplay.

He put on 127 off 65 balls with Ravindra Jadeja, who anchored with 45 not out off 35 balls. Jadeja retired hurt for a short time.

Sooryavanshi was dropped in the 11th over and wickets were falling at the other end but he hit another 46 off 16 balls with five sixes and three fours.

He and Jadeja came together for a second time in the 13th over, rescuing the innings

from collapse. Sooryavanshi was out caught off Kagiso Rabada in the 18th over, four shy of a hundred.

In his previous game, the wonderkid scored 97 off 29 balls against Sunrisers Hyderabad. Sooryavanshi finished the season with 776 runs in 16 innings at a strike rate of 237.31.

In reply, Gill was in a punishing mood as he hit a stylish fifth IPL hundred and his first this season.

Gill made 50 off 30 balls as Gujarat scored 69-0 in the powerplay. Sai Sudharsan showed quicker pace - 50 off 26 balls with seven fours and a six - as Gujarat's 100 came up in only 52 balls.

The pair had 167 off 77 and seemed unstoppable until Sudharsan was out hit wicket for a second game running in the 13th over. His bat slipped out of his gloves and hit the stumps, again. He'd made 58 off 32.

Gill scored the fastest hundred for a Gujarat batter, off 47 balls. He improved his 49-ball effort from 2023 against Mumbai Indians, also in the knockouts. He's the first batter to score multiple hundreds in the playoffs.

When Gill was out leg before to Jofra Archer in the 15th over, Gujarat needed only another 33 from 30 balls.

'I am ready for the responsibility'

England forward Gordon impresses with his Spanish in 'dream' move to Barcelona

BARCELONA, Spain, May 30, (AP) — England forward Anthony Gordon joined Barcelona on a five-year contract as the Spanish champion quickly moved to retool its attack less than a week since the season finished.

The announcement did not include any financial details. But, despite its financial troubles, Barcelona reportedly paid Newcastle some 70 million euros (\$81 million) to acquire the 25-year-old winger.

Gordon said it was his dream since he was little and growing up in Liverpool to one day play for Barcelona. In fact, he said, that was why he could speak fluent Spanish - a skill rarely shown by English players in Spain - at his presentation to the local media.

"As soon as I knew that Barca was interested, there was never any question. This is the stuff I dreamed of as a child," Gordon said. "I wanted to speak Spanish because when I was kid I believed



Barcelona new signing soccer player Anthony Gordon poses with his jersey during his official presentation in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

I would play for Barca, believe it or not."

Gordon arrived in Spain on Thursday and underwent a medical exam. His presentation originally scheduled for midday Friday at an auditorium outside Camp Nou stadium was delayed for about nine

hours due to what he called "small details" that needed to be hammered out in the transfer paperwork. Gordon said he was calm throughout the delay as he waited with his family and agents at a hotel.

Gordon arrives as a relatively unknown player for many Barcelona fans, and he acknowledged his price for a club that has fought for years with heavy debt will saddle him with high expectations. "I am ready for the responsibility," he said.

He scored 17 goals for Newcastle this season, including 10 in the Champions League. One of those goals came in a loss to Barcelona in the Champions League round of 16, when he apparently made an impression on his then rival.

Gordon, a left winger, will join a club that has won La Liga for two years in a row but is revamping its attack after the exit of Robert Lewandowski. Gordon will likely have to compete with Raphinha

for playing time at his position, opposite teen star Lamine Yamal.

When asked if his skills resembled more those of Yamal or Raphinha, Gordon chose the Brazilian. "I would say Raphinha in terms of my intensity, work rate, and speed" and ability to score goals, he said.

Gordon is in England's squad for the World Cup. England's first game is against Croatia in Arlington, Texas, on June 17.

Barcelona sports director Deco is reportedly looking for a striker as well in the summer market. Spanish media reports that Barcelona is interested in pulling Argentina striker Julián Álvarez from Atletico Madrid.

England forward Marcus Rashford played at Barcelona on loan from Manchester United last season. Barcelona is considering whether to pay 30 million euros (\$35 million) to make Rashford's stay permanent.

Mexico president Sheinbaum gifts her World Cup ticket to Indigenous athlete

MEXICO CITY, May 30, (AP) — Mexico President Claudia Sheinbaum delivered a promise on Friday by giving away her ticket to the World Cup opening match.

Sheinbaum, the first female president in the country's 200-year history, donated her ticket No. 00001 to Yolett Cervantes Cuaquehua, a 21-year-old Indigenous woman from the eastern state of Veracruz.

Mexico plays the opening match against South Africa on June 11 at Azteca Stadium.

Cervantes Cuaquehua was selected by a jury after winning a contest for her ball-handling skills.

"They are the pride of Mexico. They will not represent the president, or the head of government, they will represent Mexico," Sheinbaum said at a press conference to give away the ticket to Cervantes Cuaquehua.

Sheinbaum also gave away tickets to other matches being played in Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Monterrey - the Mexican venues for the

World Cup - to three other amateur athletes aged 16, 22, and 23. They were also selected by the jury as part of a contest organized by the government.

"Thank you so much for considering us," Cervantes Cuaquehua said.

Sheinbaum in March ruled out attending the opening game, stating she wanted to give prominence to young Mexican female soccer players.

"I think a young woman who plays soccer is a great representative of our country. Very few people will be able to attend the opening," Sheinbaum said at the time. She added she will watch the game at the Zócalo, the capital's main square, where a Fan Fest will be set up.

The president's announcement generated mixed reactions in Mexico. While some considered it a commendable decision, others criticized it, arguing that it was a missed opportunity to promote the country.

NZ steamrolls Ireland by innings and 79 runs

BELFAST, Northern Ireland, May 30, (AP) — New Zealand completed its match preparation for the England tour by beating Ireland by an innings and 79 runs in a one-off test at Stormont.

Ireland was bowled out for 232 in the second innings just before tea on day three of the four-day test.

Blair Tickner starred with his first test five-for, 5-76, in his fifth match. Fellow seamer Nathan Smith started the day with five maidens and took 2-53 and eight wickets in the match.

"We like coming over to this part of the world," skipper Tom Latham said when asked about their confidence going into the three tests with England starting next Thursday at Lord's.

"We have a good opportunity to put our best foot forward, play our brand of cricket, and if we do that we know we will give ourselves a good chance."

In reply to New Zealand's 490-8 declared, Ireland was dismissed for 179 on Thursday and forced to follow on, and began the day at 65-2 with a target of 312.

A team with three debutants, missing its best player Paul Stirling, and playing its first home test in nearly two years dug the foxhole a little deeper in order to endure New Zealand's pace attack.

Nightwatchman Thomas Mayes lasted only five overs then Tickner got Harry Tector to edge to second slip.

Stephen Doherty, 36 overnight, reached his maiden test fifty off 96 balls. Then Curtis Campher retired hurt with a suspected broken left hand hit by a Ben Sears delivery.

A Tickner snorter prised out Doherty for 57 and Ireland was 131-5 but effectively six wickets down when lunch was taken a few minutes early because of drizzle.

Ireland scored only 66 runs in 29.1 overs in the morning session and lost four wickets.

Lorcan Tucker counterattacked for his fourth test fifty off 69 balls then was out next ball to a Smith bouncer, and the end came quickly to the only test of Ireland's summer.

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Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus returns to Daria Kasatkina of Australia during their third round women's singles tennis match at the French Open tennis tournament in Paris. (AP)

Sports

PSG wins back-to-back Champions League titles

Heartbreak for Arsenal

BUDAPEST, May 30 (AP): Paris Saint-Germain won back-to-back Champions League trophies by beating Arsenal on penalties in a dramatic final in Puskas Arena on Saturday.

Arsenal defender Gabriel Magalhaes fired the last of his team's penalties over the bar to hand PSG a 4-3 shootout victory.

"It's incredible, back to back," PSG captain Marquinhos said. "From the very first day of this season the coach said it's hard to win, and winning twice is even more difficult. So we all had to get back to work. That was the mentality."

The game was 1-1 at the end of regulation time and extra time, sending the game to spot kicks.

Arsenal led after six minutes when Kai Havertz broke away and blasted past PSG goalkeeper Matvey Safonov. But the defending champion dominated possession and Ousmane Dembélé leveled from the penalty spot in the 65th to take the final to extra time for the first time in 10 years.

Eberechi Eze also missed an earlier spot kick, but David Raya saved from Nuno Mendes to keep Arsenal level.

Lucas Beraldo scored the last of PSG's spot kicks, meaning Gabriel had to convert to take it to sudden death. But he blasted high over the bar to spark celebrations from PSG players and fans inside Puskas Arena.

"It's even more special because we knew before the match how difficult it would be," PSG coach Luis Enrique said. "I think it's deserved over the

course of the whole season, even if the final was very closely contested."

Still, it has been a great season for the team, which won the Premier League title for the first time in 22 years after three runner-up finishes.

In the last three seasons, Arsenal has had the following finishes in the Champions League: Quarterfinals, semifinals, and runner-up.

Is the next step the title in 2026-27?

"It's incredible, back-to-back. From the very first day of this season, the coach said it's hard to win, and winning twice is even more difficult. So we all had to get back to work. That was the mentality. Today we had the full squad, and the players who came on made their mark on this team, like Gonçalo (Ramos) and (Lucas) Beraldo, who did the job and took the penalties. Thanks to everyone who is in Paris: enjoy yourselves, but in moderation. Don't cause trouble!"

Flares go off in the PSG end as their fans celebrate the team successfully defending the title.

PSG becomes only the second team - after Real Madrid in 2016-18 - to do that in the Champions League era.

It's a cruel moment for Gabriel Magalhaes whose miss ended Arsenal's title hopes. He is embraced by PSG captain Marquinhos, who is likely to play alongside him at the World Cup for Brazil.

The French team converted four of its five penalty kicks in the shootout.

Eberechi Eze and Gabriel Magalhaes missed for Arsenal.

Paris Saint-Germain is European champion once again.

It's the eighth time a shootout has been needed to settle the title match



PSG players celebrate with the trophy after winning the Champions League final soccer match against Arsenal in Budapest, Hungary. (AP)

since the European Cup was rebranded as the Champions League in 1992.

The last one was in 2016, when Cristiano Ronaldo converted the decisive kick for Real Madrid and flexed his muscles after removing his jersey.

No big chances so far in the second half of extra time.

PSG are passing the ball around but not finding paths through Arsenal's defense.

Arsenal appear content to sit back and let this end in a penalty shootout.

It's still 1-1 at Puskas Arena.

Boos from Arsenal fans rang around the stadium after the referee turned down a penalty appeal by Noni Madueke following a challenge by Willian Pacho.

Arsenal's Declan Rice was livid that a spot kick wasn't given and took his disgruntlement too far, getting a yellow card from the referee.

Al-Azraq departs for Bangkok

Sosa names 26-man Kuwait squad for Thailand friendly

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: Kuwait players leave this morning for Bangkok to begin a training camp that will include a friendly match against Thailand next Wednesday, as part of preparations for upcoming competitions.

The camp is part of Kuwait's build-up to the Gulf Cup "Gulf 27" in September and the AFC Asian Cup scheduled for January in Saudi Arabia.

Head coach Portuguese Helio Sosa has named a 26-player squad for the June international window camp.

Originally, Kuwait was also set to face Oman on June 9, but the fixture was cancelled after Oman withdrew due to being drawn in the same group as Kuwait in both the Gulf Cup and Asian Cup.

The squad features Saud Al-Houshan, Khaled Al-Rashidi, Abdulrahman Al-Fadhli, Mahdi Dashti, Fahad Al-Hajri, Rashid Al-Dosari, Khaled Sabah, Jasesm Al-Matar, Redha Hani, Youssef Al-Haqan, Abdulwahab Al-Owaidi, Abdullah Al-Qarza'i, Abdullah Al-Owaidi, Ali Hassan, Nasser Falih, Montaser Abdul Salam, Muath Al-Dhafiri, Fawaz Al-Mubaylish, Bandar Al-Barazi, Khaled Al-Murshid, Shabib Al-Khaldi, Youssef Nasser, Mohammed Dahham, Youssef Majed, Mohammed Khaled, and Eid Al-Rashidi.

Sosa has also included several young players who impressed in recent performances, rewarding them with places in the squad. They include Abdullah Al-Owaidi, Abdullah Al-Qarza'i, Youssef Al-Haqan, Ali Hassan, and



Ali Hassan among the standout players joining Al-Azraq squad.

Bandar Al-Barazi.

The list also sees the return of several players who were previously absent from national team selections, including Abdulrahman Al-Fadhli, Mahdi Dashti, Jasesm Al-Matar, Montaser Abdul Salam, Fawaz Al-Mubaylish, and Mohammed Khaled.

Meanwhile, several established names from previous squads - particularly those involved in last year's Arab Cup in Qatar - have been left out, including Suleiman Abdulhafour, Ahmed Al-Dhafiri, Sultan Al-Anzi, Fawaz Ayed, Hassan Hamdan, Adhbi Shihab, Mohammed Al-Sharifi, and Muath Al-Asima.

Kuwait handball team ramps up Asian Games preparations

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The Kuwait national handball team continues its intensive daily training sessions at Shaheed Fahad Al-Ahmad Hall as it enters the technical and tactical phase of preparation for upcoming Asian Games, following the completion of a recent physical conditioning program at the "Spark" sports center.

The coaching staff is focusing on improving team cohesion and implementing tactical systems that will be used in the next stage, with strong commitment and high morale evident among the players.

Kuwait is set to begin an overseas training camp in early July, which will feature a number of friendly matches aimed at reaching peak technical and physical readiness ahead of the continental competition.

National team director Faisal Soan confirmed that preparations are progressing according to plan, praising the players' dedication and positive attitude throughout the training period.

He added that the team is aiming to deliver a strong and honorable performance that reflects the development of Kuwaiti handball, stressing that everyone is working together to represent Kuwait in the best possible way on the international stage.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Club is also



Kuwait handball squad undergoes intensive training at Shaheed Fahad Al-Ahmad Hall.

stepping up preparations for the 28th Asian Club Championship for Men, which serves as a qualifier for the Super Globe World Cup - Egypt 2027, and will be hosted by Kuwait from June 6 to 15.

Kuwait Club has bolstered its squad with three foreign professionals: Qatari Francois Marzo, Montenegrin Vladan Lipova, and Portuguese Victor Eitoriza, along with Macedonian Filip Kuzmanovski for the Asian competition.

Burgan, Kuwait's second representative in the tournament, wrapped up its overseas training camp in Cairo with a

match against Qatar's youth national team. The side had previously played two friendlies against Egypt's youth team and is scheduled to return home today.

The tournament draw has produced tough group-stage battles. Host Kuwait Club has been placed in Group B alongside Bahrain's Al-Najma, Saudi Arabia's Al-Khaleej, and Qatar's Al-Arabia, while Burgan will compete in Group A with UAE's Sharjah, China's CHA, and Qatar's Al-Duhail. Burgan will begin its campaign on June 6 against the Chinese side.

Shock at Liverpool

Slot sacked year after winning Premier League title

BUDAPEST, Hungary, May 30, (AP): Liverpool fired manager Arne Slot on Saturday following a troubled second season in charge, just a year after he won the Premier League title.

Fenway Sports Group, the club's American ownership, said it made a "difficult" decision after Liverpool finished fifth and trophy-less in a disappointing title defense.

"We have collectively come to the conclusion that change is necessary in order for the club to keep moving forward," the ownership said in a statement. "Again, it must be stressed that this is not a decision which has been reached lightly, anything but."

Slot replaced club icon Jurgen Klopp in the summer of 2024 and led Liverpool to a record-tying 20th English league title.

Liverpool spent an unprecedented \$570 million to strengthen the squad for his second season but most of the expensive signings, including Florian Wirtz, Jeremie Frimpong and injury-hit striker Alexander Isak, underwhelmed.

The club also was affected by the death of Portugal forward Diogo Jota last summer.

A person with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press that the decision did "not sit easily" with Liverpool and "on a human level" did not "feel entirely fair."

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the club had already issued a public statement.



In this file photo, Liverpool's manager Arne Slot sits on the bench prior to the start of the English Premier League soccer match between West Ham United and Liverpool, in London. (AP)

The person said it was increasingly inevitable that a change of coach was required and it was better to act sooner to avoid disrupting preparations for next season.

The process to assess Slot's replacement has begun, with Liverpool seeking a manager who will play a more "aggressive and urgent" style of soccer. Andoni Iraola, the Spanish coach who left Bournemouth at the end of this season, would fit that description and is the frontrunner to come in.

Slot, 47, appears to have paid the price for fail-

ing to emulate a debut campaign that exceeded expectations.

Filling the boots of a club icon was always going to be an arduous task. So, for the Dutchman to match Klopp's one Premier League title at the first time of asking was a remarkable feat and emulated the likes of Jose Mourinho, Carlo Ancelotti and Antonio Conte by being crowned champion in his first year in the league.

While a fifth-place finish that secured Champions League qualification does not represent a terrible campaign, Liverpool's slump in form was notable and prompted boos from fans.

A public fallout with the legendary winger Mohamed Salah did not help either.

Slot was adamant there would be an improvement in the third and final year of his contract, but Liverpool's hierarchy was unconvinced.

"That this was a difficult decision for us to make as a club goes without saying," the club statement said. "The contribution Arne has made to Liverpool FC in the time that he has been with us has been significant, meaningful and - most importantly of all to supporters and ourselves - successful."

"As such, our appreciation for everything he has achieved could not be greater, particularly as it was underpinned by a work ethic, a diligence and a level of expertise which further underlined our view that he is a leader in his field."

Winter Games Club chief: Kuwait to host world champ'ship in April

KUWAIT CITY, May 30, (KUNA): The Kuwait Winter Games Club (KWGC) announced that the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) has renewed its confidence in Kuwait to host the 2027 Ice Hockey World Championship Division IV, scheduled for April.

Speaking to KUNA, KWGC chairman Faheed Al-Ajmi said the decision was taken during the IIHF Annual Congress currently being held in Zurich, Switzerland, with the participation of several federation members, including Kuwait's representative Meshal Al-Ajmi.

Al-Ajmi noted that the decision was approved by a wide majority, despite the cancellation of the 2026 edition, which had been scheduled for last April due to geopolitical circumstances in the region. He praised the strong support and confidence shown by IIHF members.

He added that the move reflects Kuwait's strong standing in administrative, organizational, and technical aspects, as well as the success of the 2024 edition hosted in the country.



KUNA photo KWGC chairman Faheed Al-Ajmi

Al-Ajmi further said that hosting this global championship reaffirms Kuwait's prominent position in international winter sports and its strong relationship with the IIHF.

He also commended the efforts of the Kuwaiti delegation at the congress, which contributed to securing this renewed hosting approval.