

# AI voice imitation latest fraud lure

'Tone of voice'

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Information technology and security experts have warned of a new trick that has begun to spread. It involves the use of tone of voice through voice artificial intelligence programs. They said the new method of fraud is based on the fraudster calling for one goal, which is to record the tone of the caller's voice, and the fraudster then ends the call, then calls a friend or relative, asking them to transfer money using the voice modified by artificial intelligence, reports Al-Rai daily.

In this context, cybersecurity expert Engineer Saleh Al-Shammari said, "There is a direct relationship between technological development and cyber-attacks."

He said, "The latest that hackers around the world have achieved is the use of artificial intelligence in imitating voices. In this method, the fraudster takes a sample of the victim's voice, either recorded or via communication, after luring the victim into talking for an appropriate time period to record all the letters and tones of his voice. It is then used to bait relatives or acquaintances into being swindled."

Al-Shammari stressed "the need to be cautious about these methods and always check incoming calls to see if the person calling is actually a real person that they know or is a technical person inspired by the world of artificial intelligence."

In addition, information technology expert Qusay Al-Shatti said, "Electronic fraud methods are evolving with the development of technical and technological means and the new possibilities they offer."

There are some who use this technology for harmful and abusive goals such as electronic fraud to steal funds and accounts and achieve illegal financial return.

Previously, short messages were received from mobile phone numbers claiming that the bank card was suspended and that the call must be taken to collect the card data from the individual. After this, the pattern has changed to a call with an audio recording to deceive the caller into thinking that it was coming from a financial institution. Now we have reached the technique of transcribing voices."

In addition, security and strategic expert Khaled Al-Sallal said, "The danger of artificial intelligence systems lies in their ability to carry out deep falsification of voices, using "Deep Fake" technical programs that have become available. Through this, they can easily imitate someone's voice with a degree of accuracy that can deceive both humans as well as smart devices."

He cited the example of the "SV2TTS" application, which only needs a period of five seconds to produce an audio clip that is characterized by an acceptable imitation of anyone.

Al-Sallal added, "Microsoft has developed another program called the 'Vall E' application, which is an accurate tool for anyone looking to create a sound that sounds more natural than any other application, through an audio recording period that does not exceed three seconds only."

## \$180m recovered, says prosecution

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The Public Prosecution announced that within the framework of judicial cooperation with its counterpart in Bahrain, Kuwait has seized assets and money from the Kingdom worth \$180 million belonging to the former head of the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) late Fahd Al-Raja'an and his wife Mona Al-Wazzan, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The daily added, this comes in implementation of the verdict issued by the courts in Kuwait against the the convicts.

The Public Prosecution Office thanked its Bahraini counterpart, headed by Attorney General Dr. Ali bin Fadl Al-Buainain, for helping recover the Kuwaiti property.

On December 18, the Public Prosecution Office announced that it had recovered assets and funds from Bahrain amounting to \$100 million, in implementation of a ruling issued against Al-Raja'an and Al-Wazzan.

The daily learned that a delegation from the Public Prosecution and PIFSS recently visited Britain and a number of countries, including Egypt, to recover money of Al-Raja'an and his family based on verdicts issued by the criminal court against Al-Raja'an.



Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken are seen during official talks in Washington late Thursday.

KUNA photo

## Commitment to civilians

### Kuwait hails Sudan deal

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry on Friday applauded the Jeddah Declaration on sparing civilians in Sudan and facilitating delivery of relief supplies to those in need in the afflicted nation.

The ministry in a statement acclaimed the Saudi-US declaration with respect of the signing by representatives of the Sudanese Army and the Rapid Support Forces of the commitment to protect civilians and facilitate humanitarian works to meet the emergency need of the civilians, ensuring delivery of humanitarian aid in addition to steps to be taken later.

It appreciates that the efforts by Saudi Arabia and the US to urge the Sudanese parties sit at the negotiating table and sign this important obligation aimed at safeguarding the civilians.

The foreign affairs department also praised other components of the declaration and planned arrangements aimed at finding a mechanism to halt hostile acts "in a manner that would help in ridding Sudan of the current crisis."

The Ministry reiterated the State of Kuwait stance, calling for an immediate halt of the fighting and hostilities, pursuing the national dialogue for thrashing out the differences and reaching a viable and comprehensive solution to the current crisis for sake of safeguarding Sudan's security, stability and territorial sanctity.

The Jeddah Declaration, adopted by the Sudanese army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) early Friday, stressed joint commitment to protecting Sudanese civilians.

This came in recognition of the necessity of uplifting the plight and misery from people resulting from the ongoing fighting since April 15, 2023, in particular in the capital of Khartoum, responding to urgent humanitarian needs of civilian citizens.

Representatives of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) reaffirmed their core obligations under International Humanitarian Law to facilitate humanitarian action to meet the needs of civilians, according to the declaration.

They stressed unwavering commitment to the sovereignty of Sudan and to maintaining its unity and territorial integrity.

Recognizing that commitment to the Declaration of Commitment will not affect any legal, security, or political status of the parties signing it, nor will it be linked to participation in any political process, it said.

They welcomed the efforts exerted by Sudan's friends who can use their relationships and good offices to ensure respect for International Humanitarian Law and for international human rights law, including by committing to this Declaration and immediately implementing it.

None of the points listed displace any obligations or principles under International Humanitarian Law and/or international human rights law that apply in this armed conflict, in particular the Protocol Additional (II) of 1977 to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and that all parties must meet, said the document.



Supporters of Turkish CHP party leader and Nation Alliance's presidential candidate Kemal Kilicdaroglu wave Turkish flags during an election campaign rally in Ankara, Turkey, May 12, 2023. (AP)

## NewsWatch

**KUWAIT CITY:** His Highness the Amir **Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah** sent a congratulatory cable on Saturday to UAE President **Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan** on the first anniversary of his assumption of power.

His Highness applauded the UAE's developmental achievements in all fields, also hailing the two countries' strong historic relations. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf also wished Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed a long healthy life and more development and prosperity for the UAE under his leadership. (KUNA)

**KUWAIT CITY:** The Foreign Ministry expressed Friday Kuwait's condemnation and denunciation of the terrorist attack that occurred in **Tunisia's** Island of **Djerba** killing and wounding several people.

The Ministry renewed Kuwait's firm stance which rejects violence and terrorism in its various forms and manifestations, calling for the necessity of doubling international efforts to eradicate this dangerous phenomenon.

The Ministry affirmed Kuwait's solidarity with Tunisia and support to the country in all measures taken to maintain its security and stability. (KUNA)

**ISTANBUL:** Turkish politicians were holding final rallies in the last hours of campaigning on Saturday, the eve of pivotal presidential and parliamentary elections that could significantly shape the NATO member's future.

President **Recep Tayyip Erdogan**, who is facing the toughest challenge ever in his two decades of power, was speaking at neighborhood rallies in Istanbul, **Turkey's** biggest city. (AP)

**WASHINGTON:** US 5th Fleet is working with regional allies and partners to increase the rotation of ships and aircraft patrolling in and around the Strait of Hormuz, said Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs on Friday.

The remarks came following Iran's recent unlawful merchant vessel seizures.

The increased force presence supports multinational efforts to deter threats to commercial shipping and reassure regional mariners, the Command said in a press release. (KUNA)

# Kuwait & US reaffirm strategic relationship

Kuwait mediation role lauded

**WASHINGTON, May 13, (KUNA):** Official talks were held between Kuwaiti Foreign Minister **Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah** and US Secretary of State **Antony Blinken** in Washington late Thursday.

At the onset of the meeting, Sheikh Salem conveyed greet-

ings of His Highness the Amir **Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah** and His Highness the Crown Prince **Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah** to US President **Joe Biden** and Vice-President **Kamala Harris**, wishing the US continued growth, prosperity and progress.

Sheikh Salem commended Kuwaiti-US strategic partnership and distinguished cooperation between both friendly countries at all levels and in various fields, based on pillars of security and defense, promotion of investment, exchange of expertise and development of education and medicine and others.

He also spoke highly of firm and close cooperation between both sides at international gatherings, hoping that this level of bilateral coordination would continue.

On his part, US Secretary of State **Antony Blinken** voiced much gratitude to the State of Kuwait for its efforts in the evacuation of US citizens from Sudan amid critical and complicated security conditions.

He also commended distinguished friendship and existing strategic partnership with the State of Kuwait in all fields, hoping that it would be expanded to cover more domains.

The US secretary, further, lauded existing communication and coordination between both friendly countries on the international scene, while hailing Kuwait's wise and balanced foreign policy and fervent efforts to ensure regional security and peace.

During the official talks, both sides discussed the latest regional and international developments, including in Sudan, and shared views on a set of vital regional issues and ways of promoting bilateral cooperation to ensure peace and stability worldwide.

In this regard, the Kuwaiti foreign minister spoke highly of joint efforts being exerted by the US and Saudi Arabia to put an end to ongoing fighting between Sudanese rivals and resolve the crisis through dialogue.

They also addressed the developments of Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Yemen, vowing joint efforts to strengthen security and stability in the region.

The meeting was attended by Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States **Sheikha Al-Zain Sabah Nasser Al-Saud Al-Sabah**, Assistant Foreign Minister for the Foreign Minister's Office **Ali Al-Ahmad**, and a number of senior officials of Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the embassy in Washington.

This is the first official visit by the Kuwaiti foreign minister to Washington since he took up his position.

On Thursday, US Secretary of State **Antony Blinken** said the State of Kuwait plays a vital role in Middle East and world peace.

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## Visa suspension confirmed

# Kuwait, Manila prep talks

**KUWAIT CITY, May 13:** The firm measures taken by Kuwait recently, driven by popular support, to stop granting any visas to Filipino workers, and restricting entry only to those who have a valid residence permit is beginning to bear fruit before the upcoming joint committee meeting, reports Al-Rai daily.

Primarily, a delegation from the Philippine Ministry of Labor was scheduled to visit Kuwait from May 16 to 18 to attend the joint committee meeting on the thorny issue of employment, and now it has been reported that the government in the Philippines has now decided to replace the members of the delegation which now will comprise of officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs, according to what the diplomatic sources told Al-Rai daily.

The sources indicated the mission of the Philippine delegation is to try to bridge the gap that has widened between the two countries, after talks faltered regarding resolving the problem of recruiting workers from Manila, noting that after Kuwait's decision to stop visas for the Filipinos, "the issue has returned to square one." The labor file now will be dealt with by officials from the foreign ministries of the two countries since "there are matters that were not clear or well understood by both parties with regard to labor rights."

The labor sources said that "the large number of requests from the Filipino side under the pretext of ensuring the well-being of its workers led to worsening the situation," pointing out that "most of the requests that were raised were exaggerated and showed Manila's lack of commitment to the

bilateral agreement signed with Kuwait regarding employment.

The sources drew the attention to the broad popular support for the directives of the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Acting Minister of Defense **Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled** to stop visas for Filipino workers, and to demand that no concessions be made in the face of the Filipino side's attempts to achieve undeserved gains for its workers at the expense of citizens and employees.

In an indication that Manila has begun to ease its conditions and the high ceiling it has set since its decision to stop sending workers to Kuwait last February, Department of Foreign Affairs Assistant Secretary **Paul Raymond Cortes** told CNN in the Philippines that his country is committed to resolving any issues with Kuwait in an "amicable manner," saying the two countries enjoy "very friendly" relations.

**Cortes** added, "We are confident that we will be able to find a mutually satisfactory solution to any issues we feel is necessary to discuss with Kuwait."

Meanwhile, the Kuwait International Airport prevented 25 Filipinos from entering Kuwait in implementation of the decision to stop issuing visas for Filipino nationals and allow entry only to those who have valid residence permit. The ban includes also newcomers who were earlier issued entry visas, reports Al-Rai daily.

The daily said a majority of those who were barred entry were domestic workers.

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Smoke rises over the skyline following an Israeli airstrike, in Gaza, May 11, 2023. (AP)

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## Ali Alghanim Sons Automotive Company records Q1 profit

— Details Page 7 —

## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 03:28 Asr ..... 15:20  
 Sunrise .. 04:57 Maghrib .. 18:31  
 Zohr ..... 11:44 Isha ..... 19:58

# Local

CIVIL ID STATUS INQUIRY: <https://e.gov.kw/sites/kgenglish/Pages/eServices/PACI/CivilIDStatus.aspx>

**Expected weather for the next 24 hours:**  
**By Day:** Hot and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate northwesterly wind with speeds of 12-35 km/h.

## Weather

**By Night:** Mild with light to moderate northwesterly wind with speeds of 15-35 km/h.  
**Station Max Exp Min Rec**  
 Kuwait City 43 28  
 Kuwait Airport 43 23

Abdaly	43	21
Jahra	45	24
Salmiyah	33	27
Ahmadi	35	28
Nuwaisib	42	23
Wafra	43	21

## Partnership in multiple fields: Ambassador Al-Bannai

# 'Kuwait's 60th 'versary of UN joining marks vital phase in diplomacy'

NEW YORK, May 13, (KUNA): Kuwait's Permanent Representative at the United Nations Ambassador Tariq Al-Bannai said that the 60th anniversary of Kuwait's membership at the UN is an important phase in the history of Kuwaiti diplomacy.

In a statement to KUNA late Friday, commemorating Kuwait's joining of the UN on 14 May, 1963, Al-Bannai noted that Kuwait and the UN share strong ties, as the Kuwaiti leadership is continuously exerting efforts to enhance partnership with the international body.

The two sides have been cooperating with each other in different fields through the decades, especially in the humanitarian, peace, security, economic and development fields, he said.

Meanwhile, he underlined the UN Security Council's role in liberating Kuwait from the Iraqi Invasion in 1991.

He also spoke of Kuwait's prominent role in protecting international peace and security during its non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council from 1978 to 1979 and from 2018 to 2019.

Moreover, the ambassador noted Kuwait's strong partnership with the UN in supporting regional and international humanitarian work to ease the suffering of people affected by conflict and natural disasters, especially the country's recent contributions to face the aftermath of the violent earthquake that shook Türkiye and Syria earlier this year.

Kuwait marks Sunday six decades since it joined the United Nations (UN) amid fervent efforts to achieve peace and security and pro-

mote development and human rights worldwide, reflecting the country's foreign policy since it became the 111th member.

Kuwait has ever since proved its competence and efficiency among other UN members by becoming non-permanent UN Security Council (UNSC) member in 1978 and then 2018, and supporting global justice and the self-determination of nations and peoples.

Kuwait has defended Arab and Islamic issues, mainly including the Palestinian cause, humanitarian issues, UNSC mechanism development, promotion of preventive diplomacy and mediation and prevention of conflicts.

Since becoming a UN member, Kuwait has adopted an unwavering approach of foreign policy, chiefly centered on the delivery of humanitarian and relief to all needy countries only out of its belief in the significance of international partnership.

Over recent years, Kuwait has become in the forefront of international humanitarian action by playing a key role in this field through its official agencies and charities and organizing three world donors' conferences on Syria.

Kuwait's great humanitarian initiatives have prompted the UN to grant the Gulf country the title of a global humanitarian hub and to name late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah a global humanitarian leader in appreciation for his great humanitarian role.

As part of its highly commended relief efforts, Kuwait has recently pledged USD 90 million to support UN efforts to help refugees in the aftermath of recent powerful earthquakes in Syria and Türkiye.

UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths voiced gratitude to the State of Kuwait for this generous aid that would be immediately delivered to affected

families in earthquake-hit areas.

On this occasion, Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah vowed that his country would remain to be a staunch supporter of UN efforts in offering emergency humanitarian and relief aid.

The State of Kuwait was elected Vice President of the UN General Assembly for the 21st and 27th sessions, member of the Economic and Social Council for three years in 1967, chosen as council member in 1992, and elected member of the council's transcontinental cooperation committee in 1975.

It has also proved effective presence in several international organizations such as the Universal Postal Union, International Civil Aviation Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization, International Monetary Fund, World Bank and International Atomic Energy Agency.

In recognition of the significance of the United Nations, Kuwait opened the UN House in January 2009 in a ceremony that was attended by then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, reflecting deep relations between Kuwait and the UN.

In response to the anguish of many development countries, Kuwait has established a decent life fund with a capital of USD 100 million, aiming at developing and improving agricultural production in developing countries.

It also donated USD 150 million to an OPEC fund created in 2007 for research and studies pertinent to energy, environment and climate change.

Kuwait's aid makes up over 1.3 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP), exceeding the internationally allocated ratio of 0.7 percent. Kuwait set aside 10 percent of its voluntary contributions for supporting the UN and its agencies; having doubled this figure in September 2014.



Martin Griffiths



KUNA photo  
 Kuwait's permanent representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Tariq Al-Bannai, with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.



KUNA photo  
 The Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets his Canadian counterpart Melanie Joly in her office.

# 'PM committed to reforms'

One pulls out of race; tally stands at 212

## 'Italy-Kuwait ties exemplary'

## 'Training benefits Kuwaiti pilots'

ROME, May 13, (KUNA): Italy's Defense Undersecretary Matteo Perego di Cremona has expressed pride of his nation's friendship and strategic partnership with Kuwait and described relations between the two countries' air forces as exemplary.

Di Cremona, who was speaking during journalists' inspection of the International Flight Training School (IFTS), said that the facility trains pilots on fifth and fourth generations aircraft, indicating that the Kuwaiti airmen could benefit quite well from the skills taught by the trainers at

the advanced academy.

"We are fully holding to our partnership with Kuwait at the level of the air forces," he said, also indicating at the cooperation within framework of the international coalition for fighting the notorious militant group, Daesh.

The senior Italian military official expressed desire to host a large number of Kuwaiti cadet officers to get lessons on the latest innovations in the field of air navigation.

The facility is currently holding marathon training courses extending for 12 months. Participants are being trained on AM-346 aircraft.

The trainees are from several foreign and Arab countries, including Germany, Austria, Canada, Britain, Japan, Singapore, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

## 'Not for buying or selling'

## MoH defends blood fees hike

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The Ministry of Health said blood is not a commodity for sale and purchase and added people's lives depend on it, clarifying once again that the fees which have been recently announced are symbolic.

The Al-Qabas daily quoting the ministry said, after the decision that was issued a few days ago sparked confusion regarding imposing fees on blood bags for expatriates the committee which was formed to study the prices of services provided by the blood bank and laboratory analyzes, and the problem according to Administrative Resolution 8222 of 2021 if the Ministry of Health, confirmed that blood is not a commodity, pointing out that promoting community solidarity, urging donations, and preserving the strategic blood stock represent most of the lofty goals of the ministry.

The sources indicated that the recently approved fees for blood transfusion services are symbolic related to administrative procedures, such as preserving and transporting blood bags and laboratory tests, which are exempted if there is a donor, which came as an incentive to urge people to donate blood.

The sources explained that the prescribed symbolic fees came after about a year and a half of study through the committee of specialists in the ministry, and it is not a goal of the ministry in itself, as far as achieving the noble goals that the ministry seeks from realizing the value of the donation, taking into account "exemption of medical cases such as the emergency cases that require transfusion of blood and its derivatives, such as critical cases, children's cases, cancer, and other cases that are exempt from these fees.

The sources pointed out that the committee for studying the prices of services provided by the Blood Bank and laboratory analyzes made strenuous efforts in studying and comparing these fees with those in the countries of the region, as they are still nominal fees, compared to

## 'Fingerprinting must for incoming public'

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The Directorate General of Ports of the Ministry of Interior in cooperation with the Criminal Evidences Department and the Info Systems, has started implementing the decision to take the decimal fingerprint of all those coming to the country through the air, land and sea border crossings, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Informed security sources told Al-Jarida that the Criminal Evidence Department has finished installing automatic fingerprint devices at all border crossings, while the Information Systems Department has helped to link the devices to the Information Systems Center at the Ministry of Interior, pointing out that all travelers arriving in the country will have to abide by the decimal fingerprint decision.

**Repairing roads:** The government has set in motion the wheel to repair Kuwait's roads with the help of foreign companies and the details thereof are expected to be announced soon, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily has learned that about 10 contracts will be floated for bidding to international contractors from several countries. It has been reported about 30 foreign firms have shown interest in the road repairs.

The sources pointed out that the contracts are expected to be divided into 6 tenders, with a tender for road repair for each governorate, in addition to 4 other tenders related to the repair of main roads and bridges.

the actual cost of services and technical and administrative procedures involved in blood transfusion and preservation.

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh  
 Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 13: A total of 30 citizens, including four women, on Saturday filed their candidacies for the parliamentary election scheduled for June 6.**

So far, one candidate has withdrawn from the electoral race; so the number of candidates currently stands at 212 - 203 men and nine women.

Following are the candidates who registered on the penultimate day of the registration period:

- First Constituency  
 1- Ayman Ibrahim Al-Ashwak  
 2- Aziza Ismael Al-Banai  
 3-Essa Hajji Mousa  
 4-Maitham Abdullah Awad  
 5- Waleed Ahmed Al-Qabandi  
 6-Yousef Hashem Ashkenani  
 Second Constituency  
 1- Badr Hamed Al-Mulla  
 2- Jaber Ali Al-Holi  
 3- Gaed Abdullah Al-Mutairi  
 4- Hamed Mehri Al-Bazzali  
 5- Abdullah Meteb Al-Arada  
 6- Adnan Ibrahim Al-Saleh  
 7- Muhammad Barrak Al-Mutair  
 8- Medghesh Muhammad Al-Hajri  
 9- Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanim  
 Third Constituency  
 1- Saad Theql Al-Azmi  
 2- Faisal Soud Al-Hassawi  
 Fourth Constituency  
 1- Anwaar Kamel Al-Qahtani  
 2- Braikan Mejjaid Al-Sulaimani  
 3- Turkish Hamad Al-Khalidi  
 4- Jamal Faraj Al-Mutairi  
 5- Saad Ali Al-Rashedi  
 6- Fahd Hejab Al-Hayyan  
 7- Fahima Mashmi Al-Eashedi  
 8- Muhammad Baddah Al-Sulaimani  
 Fifth Constituency  
 1- Al-Saifi Mubarak Al-Saifi  
 2- Khalid Abdulrahman Al-Rashedi  
 3- Talal Fahd Al-Dabbous  
 4- Abbas Fadhel Awad  
 5- Hajer Sulaiman Al-Abdullah

Meanwhile, former Badr Al-Mulla said His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is a pro-reform figure. He pointed out that he did not ask for suspending the grilling motions and he is not involved in the suspicious bank deposits of politicians and MPs. He asserted the premier remains committed to his reform path, especially when he refused to take oath before a legislature rejected by the people.

He clarified that he agreed to be a member of the government to represent the pro-reform party. He then resigned from his position as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil in order to run for the election to represent the citizens.

Former Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim asserted that he is contesting the election away from political disputes, as his only aim is to serve in the interest of citizens.

He added his program matches the current era, affirming it will contribute to solving many problems and ending political crises.

## Singer passes away

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): The Ministry of Information mourned Abdulkarim Abdulqader; one of Kuwait and the Arab World's most renowned singers, who passed away earlier on Friday.

Heavy-hearted feeling of Minister of Information, Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdurrahman Al-Mutairi goes to family of the deceased, said Ministry Spokesperson Anwar Murad, recalling Abdulqader's massive artistic impact on the Gulf scene; enriching Kuwaiti and Arab musical heritage throughout his +60-year career.

## Two FMs discuss boost in ties

# Canada's role in preserving security of Kuwait praised

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, held Thursday talks with Canadian counterpart Melanie Joly on boosting bilateral ties and broaden coordination regarding regional and international issues of common interest.

The talks, during Sheikh Salem's current visit to Canada, focused on all aspects of the close historical relations that bind the two friendly countries and the efforts to strengthen and develop them at various levels to serve the common interests.

They also discussed intensifying joint coordination and cooperation on many regional and international issues and continuing joint efforts to maintain international peace and security.

Sheikh Salem Abdullah conveyed greetings of Kuwait's leadership, government and people to the Canadian leadership, government and people, and their wishes for continued growth, prosperity, progress and prosperity for Canada and its friendly people.

He lauded steady progress in cooperation between Kuwait and Canada at all levels, in particular in the humanitarian and development fields.

Kuwait's top diplomat appreciated the prominent role played by Canada and its armed military forces in Kuwait in preserving the security and safety of Kuwait and the countries of the region.

The two ministers reviewed regional and international developments including the security developments in Sudan, the international efforts to end the bloody conflict there.

They tackled the situation in Syria

and Yemen as well as the continuous escalation in the occupied Palestinian territories.

They touched upon the developments in Ukraine and its repercussions at the regional and international levels, international endeavors to resolve the crises ravaging the region, humanitarian efforts in this framework and joint action to help preserve the world order, promote the values and principles of international law, and maintain international peace and security.

For her part, Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Joly expressed her country's thanks and gratitude for Kuwait's hosting of Canadian Armed Forces on its territory and for the facilities provided by the Kuwaiti government in this regard.

She spoke highly about the high level of cooperation between the two friendly countries, hoping it would expand to broader horizons.

The Canadian top diplomat admired the wisdom of the State of Kuwait and its balance foreign policy as well as its efforts to consolidate security and peace in the region.

She expressed appreciation for Kuwait's humanitarian endeavors and efforts to support development and help people around the world.

The bilateral talks culminated in the signing of a memorandum of understanding regarding the establishment of a bilateral political consultation mechanism between the two foreign ministries, which reflected the determination of the two countries to develop and consolidate bilateral relations in all fields and at various levels.

## Bid to cut traffic chaos

# Bridge to link Al-Mutla'a, Capital

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Six members of the Municipal Council -- the Council's Chairman, Abdullah Al-Muhri, and members Khaled Al-Mutairi, Fahd Al-Abdul-Jader, Nasser Al-Azmi, Ismail Bebbhani, and Abdullah Al-Anzi, have submitted a proposal to construct a sea bridge to link the city of Al-Mutlaa with the Capital, to shorten the distance between the two cities to 29 kilometers from the current 41 kilometers, reports Al-Rai daily.

The construction of the bridge will

help motorists to bypass the Al-Jahra Road, especially since Al-Mutla'a is ranked as one of the model cities in the country, and its planning was carried out by international companies.

In the proposal, the members indicated that the population of the city of Al-Mutlaa is expected to reach 400,000, and therefore it has become necessary to link the city with the capital in order to facilitate traffic for its residents and reduce congestion.

# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

# 13 held as 22 recruitment offices temporarily closed

Three years imprisonment given for forging sick leave

**KUWAIT CITY, May 13:** The Public Authority for Manpower in cooperation with the Residence Affairs Investigations Department carried out an inspection campaign on domestic workers recruitment offices in the governorates of Hawalli, Farwaniya and Al-Ahmadi, reports Al-Jarida daily.



KUNA photo  
Dr. Abdullah Al-Maatouq tours Kuwait-funded schools in North Lebanon.

‘... hope for young refugees’

## Chairman of Islamic charity ‘visits’ Kuwait-funded schools in Lebanon

By Ayyoub Khaddaj

TRIPOLI, North Lebanon, May 13, (KUNA): Chairman of the International Islamic Charitable Organization and Special Adviser to the UN Secretary General, Dr. Abdullah Al-Maatouq, affirmed recently keenness on “educational empowerment for students constitute the real wealth for nations.”

Al-Maatouq, the head of the Kuwait-headquartered organization, made the remarks to KUNA while visiting a number of Kuwait-funded charitable schools that host more than 7,000 Syrian refugee students since ten years ago.

“These schools make hope” for the young refugees, he indicated while inspecting the schools with company of a delegation from “Al-Tamayuz” society headed by the chairman Khaled Al-Sbaihee.

Al-Maatouq underlined significant role of the special classes for students with learning difficulties.

Al-Sbaihee, for his part, said the schools sponsored by the two Kuwaiti associations are exemplary at the level of developing education for the Syrian refugees, noting that its students made high scores.

The Kuwaiti charitable schools have pursued various activities for the tenth year, establishing special classes for the gifted, providing psychological and social support.

The Kuwaiti delegation kick started its tour in the north in Tripoli, where they visited “Kuwait Al-Hekma School.” The city Mufti, Sheikh Mohammad Imam praised in a statement to KUNA the State of Kuwait for caring for Syrian refugees.

The Kuwaiti visitors proceeded to “Kuwait Al-Fajr Al-Thaniya” in the Beddawi region, north of the coastal city of Tripoli. Students greeted them with artistic works and paintings. The school rector, Ahmad Abbas, hailed the Kuwaiti charitable organization for supporting the students.

They also visited the center for students of teaching difficulties. The center’s rector, Ali Al-Jamal told KUNA that the personnel provide academic and psychological support for these students.

Accompanying the delegation were Dr. Mazen Al-Khatib, the director of higher education at the Lebanese ministry of education, the Kuwaiti First Secretary Yassin Al-Majed and a UN official.

## PART to continue until decision is taken

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport said it will continue to carry out its work of implementing the projects until a decision is taken to do away with the authority in line with the decision of the Council of Ministers, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The sources said the about 45 employees working for PART are appointed by the Civil Service Commission and their fate will be decided after the National Assembly issues its final decision to cancel the authority or its refusal to cancel it according to the study that will be prepared in this regard.

The sources pointed out that the authority employs about 600 personnel from the Ministry of Public Works and there is no problem with them, as they will be returned

to their original positions after parliament gives nod to purge the authority.

The sources indicated that one of the most important projects that the authority was paying great attention to during the current stage was the railway project, the study, design and preparation of tender documents for the “first phase”, and May 21 was slated to hold the preliminary meeting for the project.

It is noteworthy that the authority supervises the maintenance of many highways that have been implemented during the past 9 years, and that maintenance work will be transferred to the Ministry of Public Works (Roads Sector) in the event a decision is taken to do away with the authority.

## ‘Keep judiciary away from your conflicts & problems’

“THERE are those who build on the recent political developments in Kuwait to portray the matter as catastrophic, and that the Kuwaitis have entered a tunnel from which it is difficult to get out, and that the coming days will bear witness, and all parties without exception participated in pouring oil on the fire of these expectations among their permanent contributions to distract the mind in favor of charging, escalating, and perpetuating divisions and alignments,” columnist **Jassim Marzouk Boodai** wrote for Al-Rai daily.

“Some prudence is useful at this stage and every stage. Is there a political crisis? Of course, there is a crisis accompanied by problems that have made it more complicated.

“Rather, an objective view of the relations of the legislative and executive authorities in all countries of the world, especially the developed ones, reveal that the conflicts between them do not stop, but the constitutional and legal mechanisms prevent the impact of these conflicts getting out of hand that manages the state, development and people’s affairs.



Boodai

“We live today in Kuwait in the midst of a dispute between the two authorities. The disagreement was present and with greater force between them in the 2020 and 2022 councils.

“This disagreement will remain between future councils and future governments because the nature of the formation of these two authorities in various countries of the world is based on cooperation and consensus, as well as on lurking, obstruction and freezing.

“It suffices to follow what is happening in the parliaments of major countries in terms of accountability of ministers, sometimes around the clock, and real wars to prevent the issuance of a law or the amendment to a law.

“However, as we mentioned previously, the real problem lies in how to separate this relationship from the management of the affairs of the country and the people and avoiding paralysis in the various facilities and institutions, which we have written about repeatedly, especially in terms of the need to update and develop the constitution.

“His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmed Al-Nawaf will form the new government. He is the choice of His Highness the Amir of the country and his place of trust, and this is a matter that is appreciated and respected and is not open to discussion.

“We all wish him to make a good selection of the best competencies to manage their ministries in a way that is consistent with their oath on the one hand and what achieves the interest of the people on the other hand, and he must be given enough time to move the wheel of development in all facilities and sectors.

“His Highness Sheikh Ahmed Al-Nawaf knows that the performance and achievement are the foundation, and they are judged by history and people, not the political clamor that always fluctuates between highs and lows.

“Today, there is a dispute between the two authorities, and tomorrow the dispute may disappear and be replaced by cooperation, whether the council remained or changed... But everyone must be aware that the Speaker of the National Assembly and the MPs are transient at a certain stage and are not immortal, and that the prime minister and ministers are also transient at a certain stage and are not immortal.

“Therefore, it must be emphasized that the judiciary is the red line and the fortress of institutions and the shield of the homeland, which, if it remains with its loftiness, independence, and justice, remains the state, and if it shakes, it shakes.

“The concern of all Kuwaitis today is to remove all ongoing political disputes, problems and conflicts from the judiciary. This edifice is the title of safety in Kuwait, and it is a protective authority for all and its doors are open to reform, development, objection and doubt.

“Judicial rulings in Kuwait are issued in the name of His Highness the Amir, and it must be remembered that these rulings in all countries of the world are not interpretations similar to choices and matches where some tie. The judiciary has judgment and there is no equality, and everyone must accept the judgment, whatever it is, because it is issued by an authority that is the basis for stability.

“What is happening today is similar to what happened yesterday and decades ago. Praising a ruling if it is in the interest of a party and attacking it if it is against its interest.

“The majority of the 2022 parliament attacked the judiciary and the ruling of the Constitutional Court because they did not like it, and a large number of the 2020 MPs praised the judiciary and the ruling of the Constitutional Court because they liked it, and the two parties dealt with the judiciary from political rather than institutional considerations.

“That is, they looked at it in a way that serves their discourse, project, and goals. And if it is true that the government from its president and some of its ministers entered a party and asked the head of the Judicial Council to step down, then this forbidden, may God protect Kuwait from its repercussions.

“In short, the judiciary is the fortress of Kuwait and the shield of institutions. Countries that were lost and returned thanks to the existence of an honest judiciary with which the affairs of the country and the people were established, so it ruled with justice and safeguarded freedoms and adjudicated the validity of decisions and fought corruption and restored rights to their owners and maintained security and safety.

“The judiciary is not a piece of paper in a political file in order to burn it out of spite of an opponent or polish it out of spite of an opponent.

“If the precedents of interference in the judiciary are repeated and the political targeting of its men continues, it is as if we are demolishing the walls of our homes with our own hands and exposing ourselves to chaos.”

Also:

“The most dangerous thing that any country in the world can face is the conviction of the simple citizen that the state of institutions does not exist on the ground and that all talk about it is just slogans raised to achieve certain goals that the citizen has no interest in achieving.” **Nasser Al-Abdali** wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

“This will result in the voter not casting his/her ballot to choose who represents him in Parliament and the simple citizen will not pay heed to the promises of the government and ministers, and with time he will be convinced that nothing said holds water.

“There is a popular feeling that the “executive and legislative” institutions are facing a major dilemma represented in their inability to confront the challenges that dominate the local arena and respond to them as they should, which left a great void that prompted the distinguished national elements to move away from them, and in such a step weakened those institutions. Their role is diminished, allowing less efficient and privileged elements to fill that void.

“The reluctance to contest in the upcoming parliamentary is a dangerous indicator, especially with the growing talk about suspicions of fraud in the will of voters for the past and previous elections, and some talk about suspicions that affected the elections since 2012, because in this reluctance there is a heavy loss at all levels.

What has been rumored and the apologies and perhaps withdrawals of some of those who have filed papers to contest the elections has become a kind of phenomenon that deserves careful consideration.

“The democratic experience in the country has gone through many setbacks, most notably the relentless war waged by the Islamic movement on it through participation and sabotaging it from within in addition to questioning it and its inability to confront and resolve outstanding issues.

“But it managed to recover from those setbacks at every turn it faces, except this time we are facing a blatant challenge that may have obvious and hidden repercussions, just as the reluctance to participate in the executive authority has become clear over the past years, which has weakened the ability of governments to work politically and administratively as it should, until everyone is making fun of the various government formations, and it seems that the rest of the institutions are not good.

□ □ □

“The Information Ministry is thankful for the report that stirs historical feelings towards the caring mother – the tourist,” columnist **Mohamad Al-Saqr** wrote for Al-Anba daily.

“The report entitled, ‘The Spirit of Failaka in Audio and Photo,’ was released on April 28, 2023. It sheds light on the history of the island, including its loyal people and others who stayed there for centuries. Each of them has stories and narratives confirmed by the report.

“Every sincere Kuwaiti does not forget the role of those who are loyal and keen on protecting this beautiful island, after the evacuation of its inhabitants to rest within their affectionate homeland in all its governorates and exemplary residential areas. They emptied the island to be a landmark for tourism with its historical imprints, environmental and natural resources, and Greek and Roman antiquities.

“Being a pleasant island with its spring, winter and summer breezes, it is ready for investments as a tourist resort if it is linked by bridges with the Capital, Salmiya and Bubiyan Island to become an attractive castle for visitors.

“It would be preferable if some of its residents returned in light of their loyalty and commitment to its reconstruction with touches from international tourism specialists and the establishment of health or treatment centers with specialized international departments. In this manner, those wishing to benefit from its agriculture, architecture and tourism could do so. Let us restore its splendor with a modern spirit to its oldest name.”

□ □ □

“The experience of communist countries in Eastern Europe and those with military dictatorship in Western Europe like Spain, Portugal, Cyprus, Greece and Turkey, as well as countries with military rule in Latin America, showed their transformation from dictatorship into democracy without going through chaos, civil wars, blood and destruction, as it has been happening in our Arab countries,” columnist **Sami Al-Nisr** wrote for Annahar daily.

“Without being fortunate enough to have political science geniuses like ours, they promote the lie that democracy is not implemented without blood and destruction, forgetting that the destruction of countries may not be inflicted by urbanization. What is the benefit of democracy that does not find countries which are supposed to play the game with it?”

“Arab politicians, thinkers and theorists usually lack axioms that are closer to the Sun in the fourth part of the day, including the principle that democracy and political freedom are the ‘means’, not an ‘end’ regardless of the exorbitant prices paid to achieve them.

“Our Arab countries and peoples, such as Somalia, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen, have been experiencing a humanitarian crisis that is unprecedented in history. The dictatorship of the regimes of Saddam, Gaddafi, Saleh and Al-Bashir is not useful, and subsequent democracies are not useful.”

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary

## Comprehensive plan to develop Fatwa, Legislation Dept

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The head of the Fatwa and Legislation Department, Counselor Salah Al-Majed in a statement to Al-Qabas daily after his appointment spoke of a vision to develop work in Fatwa and Legislation Department, reports Al-Qabas daily.

He added, “I will rely in my work on the Kuwaiti element, which if developed and carried by the Secretariat, we will achieve development. I will also rely on teamwork, and once again em-

phasized in the interest in the national component and commitment to work as top priorities.”

He expressed his pride and thanked the political leadership for placing confidence in him explaining that the department will be a beacon of legal work and will return to its basic nature as a legal arm of the state.

Counselor Al-Majed went on to say, the next stage will witness a kind of development of work that leads to raising the

efficiency of the national element and the speed of achievement, as well as applying justice and devoting equality to all.

“We will also work to raise efficiency, enhance expertise, and complete tasks in an orderly manner, in addition to accountability for requesting an increase in time in completing tasks without justification, so that the files proceed with controlled procedures, in addition to monitoring from the higher authority,” he said.

## Call to register in ... ‘Safe Traveler’

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The Development Affairs and International Cooperation Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has asked the Ministry of Social Affairs to inform all charities about the need for all workers in the Kuwaiti humanitarian charitable field to register in the ‘Safe Traveler’ platform, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The department said the abovementioned workers must register in the platform ahead of their travel for relief, participation in humanitarian conference and charitable purposes.

This is to ensure the safety of the workers during travel by providing them support through the Kuwaiti embassies in different countries to fortify charitable work. It is the continuation of joint government efforts to organize Kuwaiti charitable and humanitarian activities to enhance its leadership role in the field.





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# MoE eyes fingerprint system for teachers, administrators

Dr Al-Adwani refers some officials for retirement

**KUWAIT CITY, May 13:** The Ministry of Education has announced that it will introduce a fingerprint system for approximately 90,000 teachers and administrators in government schools, starting from the next academic year, reports Al-Qabas daily.

This initiative aims to enhance attendance control and improve administrative efficiency within the education sector, says the daily.

The decision to implement the fingerprint system comes as part of the ministry's efforts to modernize and streamline operations in the education sector and with the help of the biometric technology, the ministry

seeks to accurately monitor and record the attendance of teachers and administrators in schools across the country.

The fingerprint system will enable the ministry to effectively track attendance, ensuring that teachers and administrators are present. This measure aims to enhance accountability and contribute to a more efficient educational environment.

The implementation of the fingerprint system is expected to have several benefits such as providing an accurate record of attendance, enabling the ministry to address any issues related to absenteeism or irregularities in a timely manner.

Meanwhile, Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Hamad Al-Adwani referred some officials for retirement after obtaining the approval of the concerned

authorities, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting sources.

Sources revealed these officials include an assistant undersecretary, directors of departments and observers; indicating the decision took effect on Thursday.

Sources said the minister also appointed a department director as an assistant undersecretary, in addition to his current work.

Sources affirmed these decisions are part of ongoing efforts to pump fresh blood into the workforce of the ministry and to give young employees a chance to prove their leadership abilities.

In the meantime, the Ministry of Education has suspended the recruitment of male Computer teachers for the primary level, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a circular, Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education Osama Al-Sultan explained the abovementioned suspension aims to stabilize the educational field and to ensure that its manpower needs are met according to the data of each educational stage. He said new Computer teachers will be appointed for the intermediate and secondary stages only.



Photos by Iehab Qurtal  
Bangladeshi Ambassador Maj-Gen Md. Ashikuzzaman and Chief Guest Ambassador Mansour Ayyad Al-Otaibi, Kuwait's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs during the celebration.

## Bangladesh Embassy in Kuwait marks 52nd anniversary of National, Independence Days

**KUWAIT CITY, May 13:** March 26, 2023 marks the 52nd anniversary of the National Day and Independence Day of Bangladesh. As a part of the celebration, Bangladesh Embassy in Kuwait hosted a reception program at the Crown Plaza on 11 May at 07:00 pm. More than 400 guests attended the program including ambassadors and members of diplomatic corps in Kuwait, high officials & dignitaries of Kuwait, member of Bangladesh Military Contingent, members of local press & media and members of Bangladesh Community in Kuwait. His Excellency Ambassador Mansour Ayyad Al-Otaibi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, the State of Kuwait was present as the Chief Guest at the reception program. H.E. Major General Md. Ashikuzzaman, ndc, afwc, psc, G, Ambassador of Bangladesh in Kuwait and his spouse Mrs. Nahid Niazshilu and other officers of the embassy and their spouses welcomed the guests.

The colorful reception program began with the playing of national anthems of Bangladesh & Kuwait. After that, H.E. Major General Md Ashikuzzaman, in his welcome speech, thanked His Excellency Ambassador Mansour Ayyad Al-Otaibi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, the State of Kuwait for gracing the occasion as the Chief Guest. He also thanked ambassadors and all distinguished guests. In his speech, the ambassador expressed his deep gratitude to the Amir, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Crown Prince, His Highness Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the government and the people of the State of Kuwait for their continued support to Bangladeshi nationals living in Kuwait. The ambassador also recalled with great reverence the greatest Bengali of all times, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh MujiburRahman. He also paid tribute to the four national leaders, three million martyrs, two hundred thousand dishonored women of the War of Liberation and the greatest sons of the nation - the freedom fighters, whose supreme sacrifices made independent-sovereign Bangladesh. The ambassador also thanked all those foreign countries and nationals who contributed to our War of Liberation both morally and physically in achieving the victory of Bangladesh.

In his speech the ambassador also mentioned that, since the establishment of Diplomatic Relation in 1974, Bangladesh and Kuwait are enjoying excellent bilateral cooperation in a wide range of areas including political, economic, export and import, trade and investment, manpower, agriculture, education, tourism and defence sector. For mutual benefits, both the countries vowed to identify new areas of mutual cooperation such as food security, health security, climate change, renewable energy, green technology, ICT and digitalization etc. He expressed that under the dynamic leadership of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmed Al Jaber Al Sabah and visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, the bilateral relationship between two friendly countries will reach a new height.

In his speech, the ambassador said the government of Bangladesh has been consistent in upholding our foreign policy "Friendship to all, malice towards none" as enunciated by the Father of the Nation. As a friendly gesture, Bangladesh has sent Rescue Team and humanitarian aids to friendly country Turkiye and Syria after the recent devastating earthquake. Despite being a densely populated country, Bangladesh has set a unique example of humanity in the world by sheltering millions of Rohingya, the forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals. Bangladesh believes in a peaceful solution to this problem.

The ambassador also mentioned that, Bangladesh has graduated from least developed country to developing country. In continuation of this, Vision 2041 "Smart Bangladesh" has been announced to turn Bangladesh into a developed and knowledge based prosperous country. "Smart Bangladesh" is a vision and policy of the Government to build a digitally enabled, smarter, and more sustainable country. It aims to leverage the power of technology to improve the quality of life for all citizens, create new economic opportunities, and drive sustainable development. Building Smart Bangladesh by 2041, will be achieved by establishing Smart Citizen, Smart Economy, Smart Society, and Smart Government. He expressed that, the State of Kuwait will be a comprehensive partner of Bangladesh in this exciting new journey. He also stated that Bangladesh has established 100 Special Economic Zones to attract the potential investors. The main objective of this initiative is to act as a change agent for faster economic growth by creating investment friendly environment and attracting foreign direct investment. To facilitate



A ceremonial cake being cut.



A dance performance.



Top and above: Some more photos from the reception program.

the investment environment, Bangladesh Government has undertaken number of mega projects to improve or develop the communications network both internally, regionally and globally. On behalf of the government of Bangladesh, the ambassador invites Kuwait and all the friendly countries of the world to invest in economic zones and share benefits of mutual growth and prosperity.

In his speech he also focused on the tourism sector of Bangladesh. Depicting Bangladesh in a land of beauty, the ambassador requested all to visit Bangladesh to enjoy the natural beauty and hospitality of Bangladeshi people.

The ambassador called upon all Bangladeshi people living in Kuwait to contribute to their maximum in making Bangladesh "Sonar Bangla" Golden Bengal as dreamt by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Videos on the development activities of the government, archeological attraction of Bangladesh and contribution of Bangladesh Military Contingent in Kuwait were also projected during the program.

A cake was cut by the ambassador and the chief guest on the occasion. The whole program is anchored by Mr. Niaz Morshed, First Secretary & Head of Chancery.



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## '4,000 people practicing this martial art in Kuwait'

### Korean embassy organizes Taekwondo Spectacle

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Kuwait, last Thursday, organized the 'Kuwait Taekwondo Spectacle 2023' which was attended by a large number of taekwondo enthusiasts at the Sheikh Sa'ad Al-Abdullah Sports Hall Complex (Volleyball Court).

Speaking on the occasion, HE Chung Byung-ha, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the State of Kuwait expressed his sincere gratitude to Kuwait Taekwondo Federation and the Korean community in Kuwait for all their support to make this event happen.

"I would also like to thank," the Ambassador said, "all the players who have competed in Ambassador's Cup Championship during the last couple of days.

#### Sport

Taekwondo, he said, is a well-known traditional martial art of Korea. "As we speak, around 100 million Taekwondo practitioners worldwide are strengthening their body and mind through this wonderful sport. As such, few other things can be referred to as a better example than Taekwondo for becoming global from being local.

"In Kuwait, Korean Taekwondo masters have set out to instruct Taekwondo since the 1980s. Now we assume more than 4,000 people are practicing this martial art in Kuwait.

"As you may know, Taekwondo has held a special place in the sport history of Kuwait. The very first medal (bronze) that Kuwait won at the Olympics was by Mohammad Al-Qaimi's bronze medal in Taekwondo, in 1992 Barcelona, despite it being a demonstration sport back then. "From then on, Kuwait has been one of the active countries in this Olympic sport, winning medals in various competitions," he added.



The Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Kuwait organized the 'Kuwait Taekwondo Spectacle 2023' which was attended by a large number of taekwondo enthusiasts.

The ambassador highlighted the five pillars of Taekwondo -- courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control and indomitable spirit.

In this regard, this event is our special campaign for all of us, including our young generations and more, to have a

chance to think about this simple truth, the Korean envoy said.

Today is the day, he said, that "Kuwait, Korea and all of us here in this stadium come together through Taekwondo," to cement the strong bonds of friendship between Korea and Kuwait.

The US secretary also voiced gratitude to Kuwait for its efforts aiming at resolving the Sudanese crisis.

For his part, the Kuwaiti foreign minister said that Kuwait and the US have a very strong strategic partnership and friendship, saying that he would discuss with his US counterpart how to promote this partnership.

He said the US plays an important role in keeping peace and security in the region, hoping that it would continue playing its role in maintaining regional stability.

He added that amid the numerous regional and international crises, the State of Kuwait, as a bridge-builder, tries to resolve such conflicts by peaceful means.

Speaking to KUNA following the meeting, the Kuwaiti foreign minister said he had a "good" meeting with his US counterpart in Washington, adding that he had asked Blinken to convey the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to US President Joe Biden.

# Kuwait close & reliable ally of EU: Varanavicius

'Agreement reflection of close ties'

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Chargé d'Affaires of the European Union (EU) delegation in Kuwait Gediminas Varanavicius affirmed that Kuwait has long been a close and reliable friend of the EU, and was the first Gulf country to sign a Cooperation Agreement with the European External Action Service in July 2016, reports Al-Qabas daily.

He pointed out: "The agreement in itself is a reflection of our close ties. We view Kuwait as a like-minded partner in a dynamic region, especially when it comes to humanitarian issues and advocating for peace and diplomacy."

On the occasion of Europe Day 2023, he said: "It is important to note that this enduring cooperation would not have been possible without the support of the Kuwaiti authorities."

#### Unity

He explained: "Europe Day is an annual celebration of peace and unity in the European continent. It marks the anniversary of the Schuman Declaration, which in 1950, set out the idea for integration as a new form of political cooperation. It was the beginning of what is now the European Union."

He disclosed that "EU delegations are considered the diplomatic face of the union. Close coordination with EU member-states is one of the most important roles we play. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ambassadors and charge d'affaires of 16 member-states who are here with us today for their support and for rallying behind the EU flag in line with the Team Europe approach. In May last year, the union unveiled its 'Strategic Partnership with the Gulf'. It is a roadmap for broadening and deepening cooperation between the EU and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member-countries including Kuwait. The Strategic Partnership offers opportunities for expanding ties across several fields including economic affairs, digitization, energy, security, humanitarian issues, human rights, and institutional cooperation.

"The document also highlights the need for EU-GCC collaboration on the green energy transition and fight-

## Expatriates' remittances reached KD 5.4 bln

### Kuwaitis reportedly spent KD 4 bln on travel in 2022

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Kuwaitis have reportedly spent 4 billion dinars on travel in 2022, a jump of 69.5% bringing their total spending to more than 4 billion dinars, compared to an expenditure of 2.36 billion dinars, according to the preliminary data of Kuwait's balance of payments for the past year issued by the Central Bank of Kuwait, reports Al-Anba daily.

The expenditure hiked after the Kuwait International Airport became fully operational and the resumption of summer flights, nearly two years after the closure of the Airport and the tightening of travel procedures to prevent the spread of the Corona epidemic.

According to the daily, money spent by Kuwaitis on the travel item during the past year is considered the highest since the outbreak of the Corona pandemic, and the total spending during the first quarter of last year was 1.13 billion dinars, and in the second quarter 835.8 million dinars, and in the third quarter 1.1 billion dinars and in the fourth quarter it was 935 million dinars.

In terms of spending by tourists inside Kuwait, it witnessed an increase, as their total spending reached 333 million dinars during 2022.

On the other hand, the Central Bank data showed that expatriates' remittances during 2022 reached 5.4 billion

dinars, declining by about 2.17% compared to 2021, which was 5.5 billion dinars.

The balance of payments showed that commodity exports by Kuwait during the past year witnessed an increase of 49%, or the equivalent of 10 billion dinars, to reach 30.7 billion dinars, of which 28.8 billion dinars were oil exports, compared to commodity exports that amounted to 20.6 billion dinars, of which 19 billion dinars were oil exports.

The significant increase in the value of Kuwait's merchandise exports came in conjunction with the increase in the value of the country's oil exports by about 51.1%, or the equivalent of 9.7 billion dinars, as a result of the rise in oil prices, which recorded their highest levels ever during the past year.

In terms of the country's imports of goods, their value was 8.6 billion dinars during the past year, compared to 8.4 billion dinars during 2021, with an increase of 3.3%, or the equivalent of 280 million dinars.

The preliminary CBK data of the balance of payments for 2022, as well as the amended data for 2021, showed that the current account (which shows a summary of receipts and payments between the local economy and other economies with regard to transactions of goods, services, and income) recorded a surplus during 2022.

ing climate change — one of the most pressing issues our world is facing today. A recent poll shows that over half of Kuwaitis believe more action is necessary to combat climate change.

"The EU has led global climate action for years, deploying vast financial and human resources to help countries around the world counter this ongoing emergency. We stand ready to support Kuwait and our Gulf partners to tackle this issue head on.

"Another important area of our relationship is facilitating people-to-

people ties, with particular emphasis this year on building skills. The EU is celebrating 2023 as the Year of Skills, part of a wider initiative to drive innovation, develop talent, and empower women and youth, especially in the areas of green and digital transition.

"As our High Representative for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell said: 'Youth holds the key to a better future.' Youth empowerment is indeed a core priority across our policies in the European Union, including building the skills and capacities of the younger generations.

## Kuwait, Manila

Continued from Page 1

The sources said that this comes in implementation of the instructions of the Ministry of Interior to the General Directorate of Civil Aviation not to accept any passenger of the Filipino nationality even if he had a prior visa, and to allow only those who have a valid residency in Kuwait.

Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi confirmed that the ministry has informed the Philippines about the decision to suspend the issuance of all types of visas for Filipinos, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a statement to the daily during the Independence Day celebration at the Embassy of Bangladesh on Thursday, Al-Otaibi disclosed: "The notification given to the Philippines is based on the directive of First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Al-Khalid to stop granting all types of visas for

Filipinos."

Earlier, the Ministry of Interior issued a circular to the Director General of Civil Aviation "to stop the entry of Filipino passengers even if they obtained a visa prior to the issuance of the directive and only those with valid residency will be allowed to enter the country."

In a related development, sources from Kuwait International Airport said any foreigner who violates entry related procedures, decisions and circulars will be deported by the same airline that transported them here.

## Kuwait &

Continued from Page 1

Blinken made the remark during official talks held with visiting Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdulah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in Washington, saying that both sides share views on a variety of issues including Syria, Yemen and the entire Middle East region.



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A group photo from the event.

### Event highlights cultural enrichment and empowerment

## International Women's Group celebrates IWG Member's Day

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The International Women's Group Kuwait (IWG) held a mesmerizing event celebrating "IWG Member's Day" on Sunday, May 7 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Farwaniya.

In her opening speech, Mrs. Ghada Shawky, President of the IWG and wife of the ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt, thanked H.E. Sheikh Hanouf Bader Al Muhammad Al Sabah, Honorary President of the group, for her support and guidance throughout the year. She praised, as well, the outstanding teamwork of the IWG Executive Board. In her remarks honoring Member's Day, Mrs. Shawky stressed the group's core values of camaraderie, cultural enrichment and

empowerment through understanding. Saying that everyone is unique and special in their own way and that the beauty of the IWG is in its diversity, emphasizing the importance of always trying to learn from each other and connect to one another. In closing, Mrs. Shawky acknowledged and thanked all who had supported the group during her presidency.

On behalf of the Executive Board, Vice President and wife of the ambassador of the state of Palestine, Mrs. Rima Khalidi, delivered a speech in recognition of the distinguished achievements of Mrs. Shawky during the period of her presidency, stressing that she is a great example of a successful Arab woman and an excellent representative of her country, Egypt.

The event then continued with a video display of images from all the many events organized in the year 2022 - 2023.

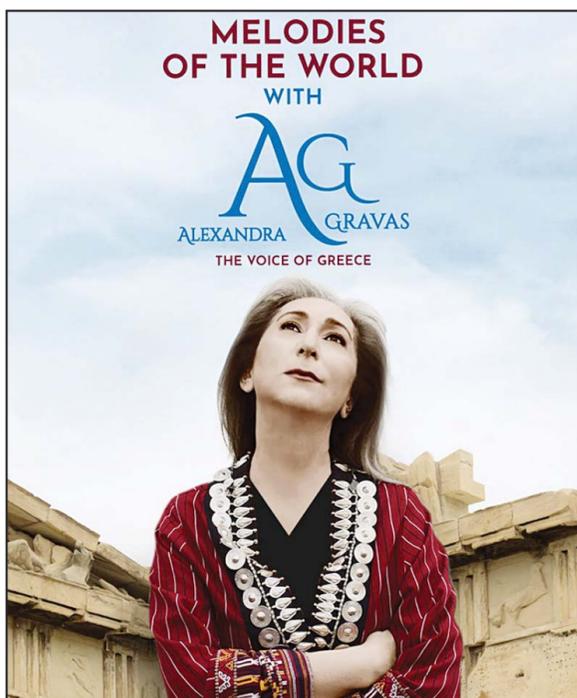
Fascinated by the different cultures of the people of the world, and starting a special hobby since childhood, Mrs. Sanaa Kamelia Al Mutawa, Executive Board member of IWG, displayed a huge collection of dolls from around the world with their traditional dresses.

Members admired the dolls and were happy to participate in a quiz, where they had to identify the represented country of each doll. In honor of their diverse cultures, members were dressed in their traditional attires, and were proud to show their beautiful dresses and give a short explanation about their special culture.

cial culture.

The IWG celebration also included a brilliant musical performance on the Qanun instrument played by Mrs. Nourhan Al Fiky. At the end of the program, Mrs. Ghada Shawky honored a number of journalists and presented them with certificates of appreciation and symbolic gifts as an expression of the International Women's Group's appreciation for their support.

The event was followed by a raffle kindly offered by Beverly Hills Optics, La Reve, and ACE. Members then enjoyed a delicious International buffet prepared by the chefs of the Crowne Plaza Hotel.



A flyer of the event.

### 'Melodies of the World' concert

The Contemporary Art Platform is pleased to announce the performance of Greek opera singer, Alexandra Gravas at Sheikh Jaber Cultural Centre (JACC).

For the first time in Kuwait and the Arab world, internationally renowned Greek singer Alexandra Gravas will

perform her acclaimed concert 'Melodies of the World' at Sheikh Jaber Cultural Centre on May 24th.

Date: May 24, 2023; Location: Drama Theatre, JACC; Running Time: 140 minutes including intermission; Intermission: 20 minutes; Age limit: 10 years and above.

### Papers explore various facets of digitalization

## AUK presents research papers in SIMDTE 2023

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The American University of Kuwait (AUK) faculty and students from the College of Business and Economics (CBE) presented their research papers in the Conference of Sustainable Innovations in Management in the Digital Transformation Era (SIMDTE 2023). It was organized by the College of Administrative and Financial Sciences at the University of Technology in Bahrain.

The conference brought together global professionals, academics, and experts to discuss the challenges and opportunities that digital transformation presents in the context of sustainable management.

Presenting at the conference was AUK assistant professor of management, Dr. Ahmad Al-Saber, who discussed his research on Kuwait's banking sector and the recruitment of Kuwaiti nationals in small and medium private enterprises in Kuwait.

Dr. Al Saber also assisted and supervised the research papers of four AUK students: Yousef Al-Khashem, Ali Al-Mass, Maen Al-Mutairi, and Fatma Al-Khoder. Their papers explored various facets of digitalization, cybersecurity, entrepreneurship, and innovation.

The students showcased their proficiency in statistical analysis, and their work exhibited a strong



AUK students and Dr. Ahmad Al-Saber at the conference.

grasp of various statistical techniques. They demonstrated the ability to apply these techniques to real-world datasets, transforming

raw data into actionable insights.

AUK's support of its faculty and students reflects its commitment to fostering the next generation of

innovators and change-makers in digitalization and innovation, providing a stepping stone for their future career prospects.



Photos from the event.



### 336 students participate

## ICSK Senior hosts 25th CBSE Kuwait cluster chess tournament

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The Indian Community School, Senior hosted the 25th CBSE Kuwait Cluster Chess Tournament, Mixed and Girls category from May 2-6 with 336 participants from 20 different CBSE schools in Kuwait. The 4-day chess tournament commenced with the inaugural ceremony scheduled on Tuesday, May 2. The occasion was graced by Ravi Ayanoli, Principal FAIPS and Convenor, Kuwait Chapter, Gulf Sahodaya, the esteemed Chief Guest and Rajesh Nair, Principal Amman and Sports Coordinator, ICSK.

The programme began with the invocation of the Islamic prayer followed by a melodious prayer song by the school choir, Swaranjali. The gathering paid tribute to the nation by honoring the National Anthem of Kuwait.

A cordial welcome to the gathering was extended Dr V. Binumon. In his address, he stressed on the importance of chess to improve the logical thinking, analytical reasoning and problem-solving ability of an individual. He congratulated the participants for seizing the opportunity to represent their respective schools and appreciated the mentors and

coaches for training the students in the game of masterminds.

Addressing the gathering, Rajesh Nairs spoke about the importance of success and failures in moulding the life of a person. He quoted the words of Winston Churchill 'Success is the ability to go from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm.'

In his address, the Chief Guest by Ravi Ayanoli guided the participants for the competition and stressed on the importance of fair play and confidence. He conveyed his blessings for the game and declared the tournament open. It was followed by the auspicious light of the ceremonial lamp by the dignitaries.

The performance that captivated the

audience was the energetic song presented by Ruth Ann Toby.

Dr. V. Binumon accompanied by Rajesh Nair felicitated the Chief Guest, Ravi Ayanoli with a memento. Mrs. Susan Rajesh, Vice Principal of ICSK, Senior proposed the vote of thanks, which drew curtain to the formal stage programme and commencement of the

competition. The gathering rose to honor the Indian National Anthem.

With the opening of the tournament, 336 highly enthusiastic participants were all geared up to beat their opponents in nail-biting matches. Live results were shared through YouTube. The audience witnessed the young budding masterminds playing their moves with

rapt concentration and confidence. The various twists and turns during the game had the audience on the edge of their seats and the opponents proved their mettle by overcoming the obstacles with wit and tenacity.

In Under 11 Girls category, FAIPS - DPS emerged as winners and Under 11 Mixed category the winners' position was bagged by Smart Indian School. Gulf Indian School emerged as winners Under 14 Girls and Under 14 Mixed category. The Indian Community School, Senior bagged the winners' position in Under 17 Girls category and Caramel School, Kuwait were the winners for Under 17 Mixed category. FAIPS - DPS stood as winners in the Under 19 Girls category and Gulf Indian School emerged as winners in Under 19 Mixed category.

The tournament concluded with the Prize Distribution Ceremony on Saturday, May 6. Dr. V. Binumon honoured the winners with medals and congratulated them for their successful win. The tournament was a grand success and was appreciated by the participants and the audience.



Some of the schools at the tournament.



	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts		
JAPAN	- Nikkei	+0.90	29,388.30	UAE	- DFM	-0.27	3,559.09
PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	+0.39	41,325.63	PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	-1.46	6,487.58
SAUDI	- Tadawul	+0.88	11,392.78	EGYPT	- EGX 30	-1.28	17,270.69

# Business

## Net profits see a 47% increase

# Ali Alghanim Sons Automotive Company records net profit of KWD 6 mln for first quarter of 2023

■ Fahad Alghanim: Positive financial results for the first quarter  
 ■ Ali Alghanim Sons Automotive exceeds expectations with 47% growth in net profits compared to the same time last year  
 ■ The company recorded KWD 6.2 in total revenues for the period ending 31 March 2023



Fahad Alghanim

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Ali Alghanim Sons Automotive Company K.S.C.P. recorded a net profit of KWD 6 million for the period ending 31 March, 2023, announcing a 47% increase in profits, in comparison to the same period from last year. The company also recorded KWD 62.6 million in total revenues, marking a 58% increase, where the growth ratio of Earnings Per Share witnessed a 48.91% increase, reaching 21.86 fils per share, in comparison to the first quarter in 2022.

Moreover, the company's total assets came in at KWD 194,811,625, a 28.41% increase from the same time last year, with total equity attributable to Parent Company coming in at KWD 70,694,957.

Commenting on the positive financial results, Ali Alghanim Sons Automotive Chairman, Engineer Fahad Ali Alghanim said: "We take great pride in the positive financial results recorded by Ali Alghanim Sons Automotive Company, for the first quarter of 2023. We continue to exceed the financial forecast initially announced during the listing of the company last year, and this year's first quarter results are a true testament to the exceptional achievement."

1. Total Revenue: 62,693,208 KD.
2. Net Profit attributable to Parent Company: 5,990,604 KD
3. EPS 21.86 Fils per share.

4. Total Assets: 194,811,625 KD.
5. Total equity attributable to Parent Company: 70,694,957 KD.
6. Growth Ratio of Revenue: 57.58 % (comparison with 31/03/2022)
7. Growth Ratio of Net Profit attributable to Parent Company: 47.10 % (comparison 31/03/2022).
8. Growth Ratio of EPS: 48.91 % (comparison with 31/03/2022).
9. Growth Ratio of total Assets: 28.41 % (comparison 31/03/2022).
10. Growth Ratio of total equity attributable to Parent Company: 26.07 % (comparison 31/03/2022).



The New Range Rover Sport



Rolls-Royce Spectre



The XM



The 7

## Current price of \$75 per barrel not enough

### OPEC plans further reductions, forecasting future oil demand

By Kamel Al-Harami  
Independent Oil Analyst

IT seems OPEC is planning further crude oil production cuts to correct oil prices, as it is not within the organization's targets.

The current level of \$75 a barrel is not enough to meet OPEC's budget requirements.

It is also not enough to cover its investment costs for sending more fresh barrels into the market. It is the lowest level since 2021.

This is despite the fact that OPEC produced less volume by about 200,000 barrels of oil, mainly from Nigeria and Iraq; Nigeria due to technical problems and Iraq mainly due to legal issues between Baghdad, the North and Turkey. However despite such reductions, OPEC produced 28,600 million barrels per day less than the agreed volume last month.

The oil price remained weak, causing OPEC to act with more reductions. Further cuts are expected in the coming months in line with supply and demand rate for the coming months.

Banking concerns, with the inflation and lower economic activities, cause the oil price to remain weak, with OPEC's concerns about the unannounced target price, which is below its expectations.

As if this is not enough, the financial results of the first quarter for OPEC were poor when compared to the same quarter last year,

causing lower income for oil producing countries to meet its commitments towards mega projects and catch up with their development's plans.

In Saudi Aramco, the drop in earnings in the first quarter was about 19 percent, as compared to the same period last year, earning \$31.9 billion against \$39.5 billion. It maintained dividends to its shareholders of \$19.5, which is the same as last year. This is a strong message that the company is working towards achieving its target and long-term plans. Here is the main reason for adjusting the supply to meet the current low demand for oil.

Most oil producing countries, if not all, are faced with the same results of lower income and earnings due to lower oil prices and drop in oil production. This forces them to take action to bring prices to a comfortable level by reducing the throughput.

Lower oil production to balance the current oil demand will also help other oil companies like shale producers as well international oil companies, who have been minimizing their investments in fossil oil, imposing on OPEC to invest and spend while they benefit from OPEC's efforts and sacrifices in the end.

Nevertheless, this is happening despite OPEC's efforts to stabilize oil markets by providing continuous and adequate supply and avoiding any shortages. The organization will be met with criticism, as not to reduce supply and not interfere; regardless of how low the oil price will fall.

The question, however, remains as to who will pay for OPEC's cost in investing and exploring for new barrels.

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Al-Harami

# Wall Street 'slips' as households get more nervous; European shares rise

Asia drops over US banks, China growth worries

NEW YORK, May 13, (AP): Another seemingly listless week on Wall Street came to a quiet close on Wall Street Friday, but big worries continue to roil under the surface.

The S&P 500 dipped 6.54 points, or 0.2%, to 4,124.08 to cap a sixth straight week where it moved by less than 1%. The Dow Jones Industrial Average slipped 8.89, or less than 0.1%, to 33,300.62, while the Nasdaq composite lost 43.76, or 0.4%, to 12,284.74.

Despite the seemingly placid moves for the overall market, big swings have swirled underneath the surface amid worries about a possible recession, high inflation and the U.S. government inching toward what could be a catastrophic default on its debt.

It's not just Wall Street that's concerned. Sentiment among U.S. consumers is tumbling, according to a preliminary survey by the University of Michigan. That's a worry because strong spending by consumers has been one of the main forces preventing a recession as the economy slows.

Joanne Hsu, director of the Surveys of Consumers, pointed to the looming June 1 deadline when the U.S. government could run out of cash to pay its bills unless Congress allows it to borrow more.

"If policymakers fail to resolve the debt ceiling crisis, these dismal views over the economy will exacerbate the dire economic consequences of default," she said in a statement.

President Joe Biden and congressional leaders postponed a meeting set for Friday on the debt limit crisis to next week. The delay was billed as a sign of positive exchanges, and staff-level talks are expected to continue through the weekend.

One area under heavy pressure this week looking to stabilize was PacWest Bancorp's stock. It's been under heavy scrutiny as Wall Street hunts for the next possible U.S. bank to fail following three high-profile collapses since March.



People walk in front of an electronic stock board showing Japan's Nikkei 225 index at a securities firm Thursday, May 11, 2023, in Tokyo. Asian shares were mixed in choppy trading Thursday after a report showed evidence that inflation in the United States was cooling, even if it remains too high. (AP)

PacWest fell 3% after flipping from a gain in the morning. A day earlier, it slid sharply after disclosing a flight of deposits from the prior week. Its stock lost 21% this past week.

### Europe

European benchmarks rose Friday after Asian shares mostly declined on looming worries over U.S. banks and lagging demand from China, the region's major driver of growth.

France's CAC 40 rose 1.0% in early trading to 7,451.96. Germany's DAX added 0.6% to 15,931.25. Britain's FTSE 100 gained 0.5% to 7,767.52.

### Asia

"Asian equities struggled for direction after weak inflation data in China pointed to weakening demand," said Stephen Innes, managing partner at

### SPI Asset Management.

Recent data reflect very low inflation and weak credit extensions in China, which all indicate slowing growth following an initial jump after the nation dropped pandemic-related restrictions, he said.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 gained 0.9% to finish at 29,388.30 as companies like Nissan Motor Co. gained after reporting relatively favorable earnings. But SoftBank Group Corp. slumped after reporting its second year in a row of losses.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 edged up nearly 0.1% to 7,256.70. South Korea's Kospi dropped 0.6% to 2,475.42. Hong Kong's Hang Seng slipped 0.6% to 19,627.24, while the Shanghai Composite dove 1.1% to 3,272.36.

Investors have been hunting for the next possible victim in the U.S. banking industry after high interest rates

helped lead to three failures since March.

Helping to limit the losses for the overall market was a report showing U.S. inflation at the wholesale level was a bit cooler last month than economists expected. It followed a report from the prior day that showed inflation at the consumer level was also behaving largely as forecast.

### Oil

In energy trading, benchmark U.S. crude lost 46 cents to \$70.41 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, shed 56 cents to \$74.42 a barrel.

### Currencies

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar rose to 134.77 Japanese yen from 134.52 yen. The euro cost \$1.0904, inching down from \$1.0921.

## US jobless claims filings highest since '21, but job market remains healthy

WASHINGTON, May 13, (AP): The number of Americans filing for jobless claims last week rose to its highest level in a year-and-a-half, though the labor market remains healthy by historical standards.

Applications for unemployment ben-

efits for the week ending May 6 rose by 22,000 to 264,000, the Labor Department reported Thursday. That's up from the previous week's 242,000 and the highest since November of 2021. The weekly claims numbers are seen as representative of the number of U.S. layoffs.

**'Iraq's oil-gas reserves are growing'**

Iraqi Oil Minister Hayyan Abdulghani said the nation's crude oil reserves have grown by ten billion barrels and the gas reserves by eight trillion cubic feet. The minister was speaking on sidelines of inaugurating a new project within Majnoon field in southern governorate of Basra, according to a statement released by the ministry of oil. Abdulghani said these amounts of the fossil fuel have been added to the reserves after an agreement between the Iraqi Oil Exploration Company and Ma-

jun field administration to conduct a 3-d survey of the locations Hartha, Al-Zubair and Mishref. He inaugurated the project of water injection at Majnoon field at a capacity of 80,000 barrels per day. River water is employed for injection at four main reservoirs. The minister has also laid the corner stone for the second gas separation station in the same field at a capacity of 120,000 barrels per day. Iraq boasts the world's fourth largest oil reserve estimated at more than 145 billion barrels. (KUNA)

**hot employment market shows signs of cooling**

The hot jobs market has been defying a weakening economy and confounding the Federal Reserve for months, but now shows signs of cooling. The latest set of employment data from the government shows that job openings fell in March to their lowest level since April 2021. Layoffs rose to 1.8 million, their highest level since December 2020. Employers are also slowing the pace of hiring. While hiring remained strong in April, the government lowered its hiring figures for February and March. More

broadly, job gains for February through April marked the weakest three-month average since January 2021. The persistently strong labor market has bewildered the Fed and economists for more than a year as higher interest rates meant to slow economic growth did little to loosen a historically tight job market with record low unemployment. That resistance is now slowly fading, according to analysts. "The labor market is usually the last to break in an economic downturn, and when it does, things can change quite

rapidly," said David Kelly, chief global strategist at JPMorgan Funds, in a note. Factors including tighter business conditions, weak sentiment and declining job openings will likely keep factoring into future labor data. "The labor market can't dodge a downturn indefinitely," Kelly said. The strong job market and higher wages for workers have resisted the Fed's efforts to cool inflation, while also keeping a weakening economy from slipping into a recession. (AP)

# Agility reports KD 15.3 mln net profit for Q1 2023

Revenue grows to KD 320.5million

**KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Agility, a long-term investor and operator in supply chain services, infrastructure, and innovation, today reported first quarter 2023 earnings of KD 15.3 million, or 6fils per share, an increase of 20% over the same period in 2022. Agility's EBITDA increased 78.1% to KD 60.4 million and revenue grew 142.7% to KD 320.5million.**

On a like-for-like basis – excluding the performance of Menzies Aviation and HG Storage International, which were acquired in August 2022 – Agility's EBITDA increased 30% to KD 44 million, and revenue grew 17%.

**Q1 2023 Performance**

Agility Vice Chairman Tarek Sultan said: "Agility's first quarter results reflect the healthy growth in our controlled businesses. Two of our large 2022 acquisitions – Menzies and HG Storage International – contributed to Q1 earnings for the first time.

On the investment side, equity markets improved in Q1 which was reflected in our investments. That said, we continue to look beyond short-term movement in equity markets, focusing instead on the strategic value, growth and returns that these investments can deliver for our shareholders over the long term.

Like all global businesses, we view ongoing inflation, high interest rates, currency volatility and other factors as reasons for continued caution about the near-term economic outlook. We are also closely watching the Kuwait land contracts issue.

Even so, we are excited by the strategic transformation that has taken place in Agility since 2021. We believe we are positioned to grow and drive value for our shareholders, customers, employees and communities as we evolve further."

**Agility Controlled Businesses**

Agility's controlled businesses are the businesses the company controls and operates and whose performance is consolidated and reported through Agility's profit and loss statement. In Q1, the combined EBITDA of our controlled businesses was KD 56.8 million on revenue of KD 320.5 million, increases of 55% and 142.5%, respectively, over Q1 2022.

Performance of the company's controlled businesses is reported under three groups:

**Aviation Services**

Menzies Aviation's revenue was KD 154.4 million in Q1 2023, and EBITDA KD 20.2 million for the same period. These Q1 results include the results of Menzies Aviation, acquired in Q3 of 2022, and the legacy National Aviation Services (NAS) business, now combined with Menzies. Agility's aviation services re-

sults for Q1 2023 represent an 816.5% increase in revenue relative to Q1 2022, when Agility was reporting solely on NAS's results. The combined entity's EBITDA margin is 13.1% today.

There was a broader underlying recovery in aviation volumes in Q1 2023 compared with Q1 2022. In the first quarter of 2023, ground handling volumes and fueling volumes grew, offsetting declines in cargo volumes and revenue relative to Q1 2022.

The consolidation of Menzies and NAS has resulted in a larger global company with operations in more locations.

**Fuel Logistics**

Tristar's Q1 consolidated revenue grew 85.5% vs. Q1 a year earlier. EBITDA increased 29.2% in Q1, driven mainly by growth in the Maritime and Fuel Farms segments. Tristar acquired a 51% ownership stake in HG Storage International (trading as Aquarius Energy) at the end of August 2022. Tristar's growth can be attributed to the addition of HG Storage International; renewal of two large long-term peacekeeping contracts that make Tristar the No. 1 supplier to the UN (as listed on UN procurement website); and the booming maritime business. Tristar remains focused on growing and deepening relationship with its blue-chip clients and is positioned to deliver sustainable, long-term value to shareholders.

**Other Controlled Businesses**

As a group, Agility's other controlled businesses reported EBITDA of KD 23.3 million and revenue of KD 82.2 million, increases of 10.5% and 17.5%, respectively, over Q1 2022.

**The main contributors were:**

Agility Logistics Parks (ALP). ALP reported 10.2% first-quarter revenue growth. ALP Kuwait performed well but still faces a challenge to future operations at certain facilities situated on land leased from the Kuwaiti government. Elsewhere, ALP is continuing to pursue its growth strategy by increasing and optimizing its existing land bank, developing new projects, and looking to acquire additional land, especially in the Middle East and Africa.

United Projects for Aviation Services Company (UPAC) reported a 13.7% increase in revenue for in Q1. The increase was primarily attributable to a rebound in airport-related services and parking, following the reopening of Kuwait International Airport and the removal of COVID restrictions, as well as the Hala-Feb holiday season, which boosted passenger volume and UPAC revenue.

UPAC is a co-investor in the \$1.3 billion Reem Mall on Abu Dhabi's Reem Island. The mall officially opened to the public in February 2023, with 82 units currently occupied and operating. UPAC expects additional openings by more tenants over the coming months. The mall is the region's first, fully integrated omnichannel retail ecosystem with digital, e-commerce, and logistics



Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy of Calif., (left), listens as President Joe Biden speaks before a meeting on the debt limit in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington. (AP)

	Q1 2023 (Million KD)	Q1 2022 (Million KD)	Variance (%)
Revenue	320.5	132.1	142.7%
Net Revenue	187.1	67.1	178.6%
EBITDA	60.4	33.9	78.1%
Net Profit	15.3	12.8	20.0%
EPS (fil)	6.00	5.06	18.6%

Numbers above are rounded

capabilities. It brings together all consumer and retail services to ensure a seamless customer experience.

Global Clearinghouse Systems (GCS). At GCS, Agility's customs-modernization company, first quarter revenue grew 12.1% vs. the same period in 2022. GCS is focused on delivering optimal efficiency and services to its customers.

**Agility's Investments**

Agility holds non-controlling minority stakes in a number of businesses, both listed and non-listed. In Q1 2023, the carrying value of those stakes was roughly KD 1.6 billion in line with Q1 2022 value. "We have witnessed a relative improvement in the global equity markets, which has been reflected in our investment values. However, as a long-term investor, Agility is focused on investing in sectors it believes will drive value and in companies with strong management that have showcased the ability to generate value,"

Sultan said.

Given continued market uncertainty and the significance of the DSV stake in determining Agility's overall value, Agility has entered into multi-year, funded equity collar agreements with several banks to protect the value of the investment and shareholders' value.

**Recap of Agility Q1 2023 Financial Performance**

- Agility's net profit grew 20% compared to the same period in 2022.
- Agility's EBITDA increased 78.1% to KD 60.4 million.
- Agility's revenue increased 142.7%, to KD 320.5 million and net revenue increased 178.6%.
- Agility enjoys a healthy balance sheet with KD 3.6 billion in assets. Net debt stood at KD 821.6 million as of March 31, 2023 (this excludes lease obligations). Reported operating cash flow was KD 39.8 million for the first quarter of 2023.

**'Recouping unspent COVID funds on the table'**

## Talks push US toward new era of deficit cuts

WASHINGTON, May 13, (AP): One outcome is clear as Washington reaches for a budget deal to end the debt ceiling standoff: The ambitious COVID era of government spending - to cope with the pandemic and rebuild in its aftermath - is giving way to a new fiscal focus on tailored investments and stemming deficits.

President Joe Biden has said that recouping unspent COVID-19 funds is "on the table" in budget talks with Congress. And while the White House has threatened to veto Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy's debt ceiling bill with its "devastating cuts" to federal programs, the administration has signaled a willingness to consider other budget caps.

The end result is a turnaround from just a few years ago, when Congress passed and then-president Donald Trump signed the historic \$2.2 trillion CARES Act at the start of the COVID crisis in 2020. And it's a dramatic realignment even as Biden's bipartisan infrastructure law and Inflation Reduction Act are now investing billions of dollars into paving streets,

shoring up the federal safety net and restructuring the U.S. economy.

"The appetite to throw a lot more money at major problems right now is significantly diminished, given what we've seen over the past several years," said Shai Akabas, director of economic policy at the Bipartisan Policy Center, a nonpartisan organization in Washington.

The Treasury department has warned it will begin running out of money to pay the nation's bills as soon as June 1, though an estimate Friday by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget office put the deadline at the first two weeks of June, potentially buying the negotiators time.

The contours of an agreement between the White House and Congress are within reach, even if the political will to end the standoff is uncertain. Negotiators are considering clawing back some \$30 billion in unused COVID-19 funds, imposing spending caps over the next several years and approving permitting reforms to ease construction of energy projects and other developments, according to those familiar with the closed-door staff discussions.

**Hesitant**

The White House has been hesitant to engage in talks, insisting it is only willing to negotiate over the annual budget, not the debt ceiling, and Biden's team is skeptical that McCarthy can cut any deal with his far-right House majority.

"There's no deal to be had on the debt ceiling. There's no negotiation to be had on the debt ceiling," said White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre.

But McCarthy allies say the White House has fundamentally underestimated what the new Republican leader has been able to accomplish - first in the grueling fight to become House speaker, and now in having passed the House bill with \$4.5 trillion in savings as an opening offer in negotiations. Both have emboldened McCarthy to push hard for a deal.

"The White House has been wrong every single time with understanding where we are with the House," said Russ Vought, president of Center for American Renewal and Trump's former director of the Office of Management and Budget. "They're dealing with a new animal."

The nation's debt load has ballooned in recent years, to \$31 trillion. That's virtually double what it was during the last major debt ceiling showdown a decade ago, when Biden, as vice president to Barack Obama, faced the new class of "tea party" Republicans demanding spending cuts in exchange for raising the debt limit.

While the politics of the debt limit have intensified, the nation's debt is nothing new. The U.S. balance sheets have been operating in the red for much of its history, dating back to the pre-Civil War era.

**G7 avoids mention of China**

## Finance leaders vow to contain inflation, strengthen supply chains

NIIGATA, Japan, May 13, (AP): The Group of Seven's top financial leaders united Saturday in their support for Ukraine and their determination to enforce sanctions against Russia for its aggression but stopped short of any overt mention of China.

The finance ministers and central bank chiefs ended three days of talks in Niigata, Japan, with a joint statement pledging to bring inflation under control, help countries struggling with onerous debts and strengthen financial systems.

They also committed to collaborating to build more stable, diversified supply chains for developing clean energy sources and to "enhance economic resilience globally against various shocks."

The statement did not include any specific mention of China or of "economic coercion" in pursuit of political objectives, such as penalizing the companies of countries whose governments take actions that anger another country.

Talk this week of such moves by China had drawn outraged rebukes from Beijing. Officials attending the talks in this port city apparently balked at overtly condemning China, given the huge stake most countries have in good relations with the rising power and No. 2 economy.

The finance leaders' talks laid the groundwork for a summit of G-7 leaders in Hiroshima next week that President Joe Biden is expected to attend despite a crisis over the U.S. debt ceiling that could result in a national default if it is not resolved in the coming weeks.

Japanese Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki said that Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen mentioned the issue in a working dinner, but he refrained from saying anything more.

While in Niigata, Yellen warned that a failure to raise the debt ceiling to enable the government to continue paying its bills would bring an economic catastrophe, destroying hundreds of thousands of jobs and potentially disrupting global financial systems. No mention of the issue was made in the finance leaders' statement.

The G-7's devotion to protecting what it calls a "rules-based international order" got only a passing mention.

The leaders pledge to work together both within the G-7 and with other

countries to "enhance economic resilience globally against various shocks, stand firm to protect our shared values, and preserve economic efficiency by upholding the free, fair and rules-based multilateral system," it said.

G-7 economies comprise only a tenth of the world's population but about 30% of economic activity, down from roughly half 40 years ago. Developing economies like China, India and Brazil have made huge gains, raising questions about the G-7's relevance and role in leading a world economy increasingly reliant on growth in less wealthy nations.

China had blasted as hypocrisy assertions by the U.S. and other G-7 countries that they are safeguarding

a "rules-based international order" against "economic coercion" from Beijing and other threats.

China itself is a victim of economic coercion, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said Friday.

"If any country should be criticized for economic coercion, it should be the United States. The U.S. has been overstretching the concept of national security, abusing export controls and taking discriminatory and unfair measures against foreign companies," Wang said in a routine news briefing.

China accuses Washington of hindering its rise as an increasingly affluent, modern nation through trade and investment restrictions. Yellen said they are "narrowly targeted" to protect American economic security.

Despite recent turmoil in the banking industry, the G-7 statement said the financial system was "resilient" thanks to reforms implemented during the 2008 global financial crisis.

"Nevertheless, we need to remain vigilant and stay agile and flexible in our macroeconomic policy amid heightened uncertainty about the global economic outlook," it said.

Meanwhile, inflation remains "elevated" and central banks are determined to bring it under control, it said. Since prices remain "sticky," some countries may see continued rate hikes, said Kazuo Ueda, Japan's central bank governor. "The impact of the rate hikes has not been fully realized," he told reporters.

Japan won support for its call for a "partnership" to strengthen supply chains to reduce the risk of disruptions



The G-7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' Meeting opening session starts at the Toki Messe convention center in Niigata, Japan. (AP)

Total operating income almost KD 17.2 mln

# KIB announces net profit of KD 3.5m for Q1 of 2023

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Sheikh Mohammed Jarrah Al-Sabah, Chairman of Kuwait International Bank (KIB), announced the financial results for the first quarter of 2023. The Bank achieved net profit attributable to shareholders amounting to KD 3.5 million, Earnings per share (EPS) was 3.15 fils, which grew by 42% compared to KD 2.5 million, 2.22 fils for the first quarter of 2022. Total operating income was almost KD 17.2 million, which grew 7% compared to the first quarter 2022.



Sheikh Mohammed Jarrah Al-Sabah, Chairman of KIB.



Raed Jawad Bukhamseen, Vice-Chairman and CEO of KIB.

Commenting on the latest financial results, Al-Jarrah said: "The first quarter results validate the Bank's stable financial standing and steady, sustainable growth trajectory. They also reflect KIB's long-term plan, centered around innovating new banking products, services and digital solutions that are in line with customers' modern lifestyles and market trends."

Regarding the Bank's interim financial statements for the first quarter 2023, Al-Jarrah noted that the assets growth was driven by the increase in size of the financing portfolio, which increased by KD 143 million to reach almost KD 2.57 billion by end of March 2023, compared to almost KD 2.43

billion at the end of March 2022, achieving a growth of 6%.

In terms of KIB's investment securities portfolio, Al-Jarrah revealed that the portfolio, which included primarily high quality Sukuk, grew by KD 5.7 million, reaching almost KD 305 million by the end of Q1 2023, compared to KD 300 million during Q1 2022. According to Al-Jarrah, this increase confirmed the Bank's efforts

toward developing and expanding its scope of financing and investment activities, locally, regionally and internationally. Similarly, KIB's depositors' accounts witnessed a notable growth of almost KD 78 million, an increase of 4% to reach KD 2.23 billion as of 31 March 2023, compared to KD 2.15 billion as of 31 March 2022, while the shareholders' equity totaled KD 255 million.

On the topic of credit ratings, Raed Jawad Bukhamseen, Vice Chairman and CEO of KIB, said that Fitch Rating Agency, as per its latest report, maintained KIB's Long-term Issuer Default Rating (IDR) affirmed at 'A' with a stable outlook and affirmed Viability Rating at 'bb-' on ratings watch negative (RWN). He said: "This is a testament to the Bank's consistent strategy implementation and solid market position." Bukhamseen further noted that KIB sustained adequate levels of Basel III total capital adequacy ratio, which was 17.4% at end of Q1 2023.

### Progress

Bukhamseen also said: "We remain confident in our transformative and innovation-focused strategy to achieve sustainable growth. During the first quarter, KIB continued to progress in implementing its dynamic and agile strategy, which seeks to offer a next-level customer experience that keeps pace with the market's evolving trends and responds to customers' aspirations and requirements. In addition, KIB continued to invest in its digital infrastructure and embrace new technologies as part of efforts to build a more advanced and fully devel-

oped business model. These efforts resulted in new solutions involving innovative digital technologies that are in step with the rapid changes in the local and regional markets."

Bukhamseen highlighted that the first quarter of 2023 witnessed a quantum leap in KIB's social responsibility program, with the launch of the KIB | The Stadium sporting initiative - the biggest CSR activity of its kind. He also underlined that the Bank announced the official opening of the headquarters of its KIB Mubader Center, a start-up incubator and accelerator. In this vein, Bukhamseen said: "The KIB | The Stadium initiative set a new benchmark of excellence for CSR initiatives within the banking and financial sectors, while the launch of KIB Mubader Center marked a new era for supporting Kuwait's aspiring entrepreneurs and SME business owners."

Regarding the Bank's capital increase, Bukhamseen mentioned that KIB obtained the approvals of both the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Capital Markets Authority for an increase in the Bank's capital by issuing 428 million new shares, at the share premium of 40 fils per share to be added to the

nominal value of the share of 100 fils, all in line with its ambitious strategy to achieve further development and growth. KIB will use this capital increase to strengthen its capital base and improve its competitive position in the market. The intended capital increase will support the Bank's operational activities and banking services, allow it to invest more in its technological infrastructure and digital transformation, and increase its market share.

KIB will continue to complete all necessary measures related to the process of issuing shares and announcing the schedules of corporate actions, by proceeding with the obtainment of the required regulatory approvals, which are being announced via Boursa Kuwait platform.

Concluding their statements, Al-Jarrah and Bukhamseen praised their team's dedication, efforts and contribution to achieving strong results so far in 2023. They also expressed their sincere appreciation to the Board of Directors and Executive Management for their continuous support and guidance to continue strengthening the Bank's financial position and meeting its ESG requirements.

### Markaz as structuring advisor

## Sultan Center completes issuance of first convertible bond in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Sultan Center Food Products Company K.S.C.P. ("Sultan"), as the Issuer, and Kuwait Financial Centre ("Markaz"), as the Structuring Advisor and Lead Manager, announced in a joint statement the success of completing the first KD-denominated convertible bond issuance for Sultan with a nominal value of 9.65 million Kuwaiti Dinars for a 10-year term. The securities were issued through a private placement with a total fixed coupon rate of 8.0% per annum, payable partly in cash and partially deferred, on a semi-annual basis; the convertible bonds can be converted at the option of the bondholder during the first five years of the bonds' terms into common ordinary shares in the capital of the issuer.

The Bonds were issued as part of a financing restructuring plan that Sultan started in 2017, and the net proceeds from the issue of the bonds will be utilized for general corporate purposes.

Ms. Khadija Oubala, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), said: "We at Sultan have reached a new distinguished milestone with the issu-

ance of the convertible bonds. The success of the offering will further improve the outlook of the company. It will reinforce our efforts to enhance our financial performance and creditworthiness and allow us to move forward with our growth plans. It is also a strong testimony to the Kuwaiti capital market's standing as a flourishing investment destination providing creative and lucrative opportunities for issuers and investors."

### Equitable

Mr. Haitham Shalaby, Sultan's Chief Financial Officer (CFO), said: "We are happy to work with Markaz; the Bond is timely, we issued it on equitable terms for all stakeholders, and it was efficiently executed."

Mr. Ali H. Khalil, Markaz's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), stated: "As the Structuring Advisor and sole Lead Manager, we take pride that our name is associated with the first KD convertible bond to be issued in Kuwait. The prominence and the long-standing name of The Sultan Centre in the Kuwaiti market contributed to its success." He also expressed

Markaz's sincere gratitude to the Capital Markets Authority for their support and continuous cooperation for innovative investment tools and the development of the Kuwaiti capital market.

Ms. Rasha Othman, Executive Vice President, Investment Banking (Capital Markets and Fixed Income) at Markaz stated: "The new debt issuance showcases our capabilities in structuring innovative products. It also adds to our long track record of placing and executing successfully large and unconventional transactions helping our corporate clients from various sectors meet their financing needs. In addition to structuring the first convertible bond, Markaz's track record includes the first BOT-Backed bonds in Kuwait, the first sukuk for a Kuwaiti real estate company, and the first high-yield bonds in the country. It is our highly qualified team of investment banking professionals with extensive experience, outstanding technical execution capabilities, and in-depth industry knowledge that enables us to continue serving the needs of capital market players, businesses, and investors."



The Burgan Bank team at the Baiti Exhibition.

More than 100 companies participate

## Burgan Bank 'serves' as gold sponsor at the first-of-its-kind Baiti Exhibition

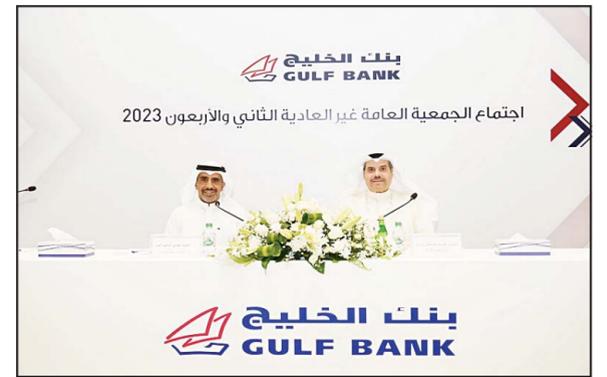
KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Burgan Bank announced its gold sponsorship of Baiti Exhibition, the largest housing exhibition in Kuwait, designated for the development of the Al-Mutlaa area. The Bank's initiative comes as part of its strategic commitment to playing a leading and effective role in social progress and sustainable development, in addition to providing banking solutions that meet the needs of all customer segments.

Burgan Bank's participation in this unique housing exhibition provides a variety of financing solutions and banking services that suit the lifestyles of customers and meet their aspirations for a better future. Burgan will enable them to get housing finance that allows them to build the homes they always dreamed of in the Al-Mutlaa area.

### Participation

Commenting on the Bank's sponsorship, Team Leader - Central Sales at Burgan Bank, Ms. May Al-Sabti, said: "Burgan Bank's participation in this first-of-its-kind exhibition in Kuwait embodies its continuous commitment and great interest in meeting the needs of members of society in general, and realizing its customers' dreams in particular. It is also an advanced step within our strategy aimed at elevating the level of our banking services and solutions, in a way that suits the modern lifestyle of our customers."

Al-Sabti added: "We are proud of our gold sponsorship of Baiti Exhibition that is held especially for families residing in the Al-Mutlaa area. We are participating in the exhibition alongside more than 100 companies from various vital sectors in Kuwait. Accordingly, Burgan's sales team will have an opportunity to reach out to a wide segment of customers who wish to obtain flexible and secure financing solutions that save time and effort during the different stages of building their homes." She pointed out that during its presence throughout the days of the exhibition, the Burgan's sales team will present all its banking services



A photo from the Gulf Bank's Extraordinary General Assembly.

Increase of KD 150 million

## Gulf Bank assembly approves increase of authorized capital

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The Extraordinary General Assembly of Gulf Bank's shareholders was held yesterday with an attendance quorum of 76%, in the presence of Gulf Bank's Chairman, Mr. Jassim Mustafa Boodai. The assembly approved the increase of the authorized capital, and approved to amend two articles: Article four in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and Article five in the Articles of Association (AOA).

The assembly approved increasing the company's authorized capital from KD 336,056,100.600 (Three Hundred and Thirty-Six

Million, Fifty-Six Thousand, One Hundred Kuwaiti Dinars and 600 Fils) to be 486,056,100.600 (Four Hundred Eighty-Six Million, Fifty-Six Thousand, one hundred Kuwaiti Dinars and 600 Fils) by KD 150,000,000 (One Hundred and Fifty Million Kuwaiti Dinars), divided into 4,860,561,006 shares of 100 Fils each.

These measures enable Gulf Bank to obtain the necessary approvals to conduct its banking business, and to accommodate any potential bonus share distribution, that may be approved by the bank's Extraordinary General Assembly in the upcoming years.

and solutions and financing offers available for individual customers. It is worth noting that Burgan Bank spares no effort to affirm its role as a leader among local banking institutions through providing services, products, and special offers that contribute to ensuring customers' comfort and meeting all their needs. Among many such products is Al Rateb account, and a range of differ-



Challa J. Abhijna First - 98.6%

Evelin Lal Second - 98%

Aabida Chikte Third - 97.6%

Shruthika Third - 97.6%

Anamika Third - 97.6%

100% result with 121 attaining above 90%

## ICSK students gleam in CBSE X results

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The Indian Community School is soaring high with its splendid performance of students in Class X results published by CBSE on Friday, 12th May 2023. The institution shines bright in its glory with 100% students passing out the examination with brilliance. It is a matter of great pride for the school that out of the 471 students, the largest number of examinees in Kuwait, who appeared for the examination, 416 students attained distinction and 121 students scored an aggregate of 90% and above. In our commitment towards excellence since 1959, we have bestowed the society with a sparkling treasure trove of alumni, capable of leading the world with vision and accountability.

### Position

Cementing their place amongst the toppers, Challa J. Abhijna bagged the first position with an aggregate of 98.6%. Evelin Bernice Kishor Lal secures the second position with 98% followed by Anamika Karthik, Shruthika Sivakumar and Aabida Rafik Chikte in the third position with an aggregate of 97.6%.

ICSK celebrates in glory as centum scores are achieved by 39 students; 4 students in French, 3 in Mathematics, 2 in Social Science, 4 in Information Technology and 26 in Artificial Intelligence. Subject toppers are Arpita Rachael Philip - French - 100, Fida Lahir-

French -100, Aabida Rafik Chikte - French - 100, Evelin Bernice Kishor Lal - French - 100, Challa J Abhijna-Mathematics - S-100, Aabida Rafik Chikte-Mathematics S-100, Jothan John Anthony Cardozo-Mathematics S -100, Anamika Karthik-Hindi-98, Aabida Rafik Chikte-Science-98, Challa J Abhijna- Social Science-100, Jothan John Anthony Cardozo -Social Science -100, Amritha Sanjay Nair-English-98, Shruthika Sivakumar-English-98, Sana Sudhir-English-98, Rida Faisal Khan-Mathematics-B -97, Fida Lahir - Information Technology - 100, Isaam Thalath - Information Technology - 100, Anamika Karthik - Information Technology - 100, Christelle Ann D Souza - Information Technology - 100, Omar Abdu Salam - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Sabina Leora Nazareth - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Theertha Manojkumar - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Joyalin Lijo Thaikkattil - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Anam Anwar Kazi - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Aabida Rafik Chikte - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Akshaya Jeyakumar - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Evelin Bernice Kishor Lal - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Isaac Mathew Thomas - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Nadira Noorul Nazer - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Reyhaan Riyas - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Helena Shiju - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Jo-

than John Anthony Cardozo - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Mohamed Umar Ali Azam - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Roshna Bindhu Jeemon - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Susanne Grace Varghese - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Yashasvne Baskar - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Alriya Jayce Quadros - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Nesrin Niyas - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Sana Sudhir - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Aafiya Asif Koth - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Aayush Vaibhav Kadam - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Midhat Fatema - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Rida Faisal Khan - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Shree Hari - Artificial Intelligence - 100, Elaine Rose Sunil - Artificial Intelligence - 100.

With the motto 'From Darkness to Light', ICSK has successfully enlightened the minds of the many young pillars of the future and it is truly evident in their performance year after year. The zeal and dedication of the students to prove themselves is unparalleled and unmatched. The perseverance, hard work and perfection of the students along with expert guidance, continuous monitoring and tireless dedication of the management, mentors and parents have enabled the students in conquering this feat of achievement.

ICSK extends hearty congratulations to all, for their commendable achievement and success.



Photos from the event.

**Lulu Hypermarket honors nurses on International Nurses Day**

Lulu Kuwait, a leading retail chain in Kuwait, has recently announced that it successfully honored the invaluable contribution of nurses to the healthcare sector on International Nurses Day, May 12th, 2023. As part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts, Lulu Hypermarket offered a range of exciting discounts and gifts to nurses across the country as a token of appreciation for their unwavering commitment to patient care.

To show recognition for the tireless efforts of nurses, Lulu Kuwait announced a 25% discount on all garments and footwear, in addition to free gift hampers for all nurses who showed their work ID card. These offers

were exclusively available to nurses at any Lulu Hypermarket outlet in Kuwait on May 12th and 13th.

Lulu Hypermarket took pride in supporting the nursing community by allocating a special checkout counter exclusively for nurses during the two-day promotion period. The company believed that nurses play a vital role in the healthcare sector, and it hoped that these initiatives served as a fitting tribute to their efforts.

Lulu Kuwait is committed to recognizing the contribution of healthcare professionals and has always been supportive of the healthcare sector. The company invited all nurses in Kuwait to visit their nearest Lulu Hyper-

market outlet on May 12th and 13th to take advantage of these exclusive offers.

The discounts and gifts offered by Lulu Kuwait aimed to bring a smile to the faces of nurses across the country and serve as a small token of appreciation for their dedication and hard work. The company thanks all the nurses for their unwavering commitment to patient care and looks forward to supporting the nursing community in the future.

Overall, Lulu Kuwait's efforts to honor nurses on International Nurses Day demonstrated the company's commitment to social responsibility and the healthcare sector.

**'Lifesaving tool'**

**1st AI healthcare radio streaming thru Spotify**

SAN DIEGO, May 13: Surgical teams have a new tool to help them improve accuracy and efficiency in the operating room with Lifesaving Radio, the world's first artificial-intelligence-powered healthcare radio station from NextMed Health, now streaming on LifesavingRadio.com through Spotify.

Lifesaving Radio features over 30 hours of music clinically suited for peak surgical performance. Surgical teams can receive custom-curated OR playlists and personalized shout-outs and commentary from DJ AI Angus simply by entering their names, hospital/facility, and procedure at LifesavingRadio.com and then signing into their Spotify Premium account. Recent clinical research found that listening to music from world-renowned rock band AC/DC can help surgical teams increase accuracy and efficiency.

The radio station streams the new AC/DC-inspired album, featuring songs like "Back in Black" and "Thunderstruck" and The parody album is also available for free on LifesavingRadio.com without the AI integration.

"We're excited to bring the high energy of this evidenced-based music to ORs around the world through Spotify," said NextMed Health Founder & Chair Daniel Kraft, M.D. "Surgical teams are relied upon and known for their orchestration, timing, and harmonization in the OR. Now, with the help of Lifesaving Radio and artificial intelligence, their playlists can be personalized to help them achieve individual and team flow state, ultimately improving outcomes for patients."

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**Guide**

Lifesaving Radio is the latest cutting-edge effort to bring the worlds of music and AI together. In February, Spotify announced the launch of an AI DJ guide that builds playlists based on listeners' individual musical preferences. With today's announcement, Lifesaving Radio pairs Spotify's industry-leading music analytics with DJ AI Angus' AI-powered commentary to create a one-of-a-kind listening experience specifically catered to surgical performance.

Klick Health developed the medicine-meets-music concept for NextMed Health, using its creative, tech-

nology, and data science expertise to bring Lifesaving Radio and to life. The team leveraged Spotify Analytics to analyze millions of song metrics (including BPM, key, camelot, loudness, energy, valence, stability, and speechiness) to identify music clinically suited for peak surgical performance.

Klick also reimagined 11 AC/DC hits for different surgical disciplines and produced the album. The music is performed by some of the world's best AC/DC tribute musicians, including Chile's Ivan Gac and Albany, N.Y.-based Michael Vincent on vocals-hitting every unmistakable falsetto to perfection, while Sarasota, Florida's Fil Olivieri recreates every face-melting riff on guitar. A lifelong AC/DC fan and founder of SoloDallas, Olivieri makes guitar technology that gives artists like AC/DC, Guns 'N Roses, and Metallica their unmistakable sounds.

**Energy**

"Contributing to Lifesaving Radio and has truly been a project of a lifetime," said Olivieri. "What I love about AC/DC's music is the rhythmic, physical, and intellectual energy and I'm excited that surgeons can now breathe in that energy to ultimately help heal others."

The high-fidelity album and AI radio station were previewed in March to hundreds of clinicians, scientists, patients, and public health experts at NextMed Health. The annual in-person, full-sensory gathering explores pressing challenges and promising gains in health and medicine with innovators who are designing better, more equitable health experiences and outcomes.

NextMed Health explores what's "Now, Near and Next" in health and biomedicine. Building on 10 years of the highly acclaimed Exponential Medicine program, NextMed Health is chaired and curated by Daniel Kraft, M.D. and Shawna Butler R.N., MBA. Focused on catalyzing novel ideas and grand challenges across the healthcare continuum, NextMed Health blends physical and virtual gatherings, eye-opening content and curation tied together by an extraordinary, diverse and engaged community of mavericks, icons, and rising stars.



Photos from the event.

**Co's model is unique in healthcare sector in the region**

**DHAMAN hosts Pakistani ambassador, explores ways to cooperate in provision of medical staff**

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Health Insurance Hospitals Company (DHAMAN) hosted His Excellency Mr. Malik Muhammad Farooq, Pakistan Ambassador to Kuwait where he was briefed on the latest developments achieved by the company towards the integrated operation of its health system and the start of receiving its basic segment of beneficiaries and the medical services provided by the company. During the visit, a number of topics related to medical teams and technical personnel related to healthcare were discussed.

The Pakistani Ambassador's visit included a comprehensive field tour of DHAMAN Hospital in Ahmadi governorate, accompanied by CEO Mr. Thamer Arab and a number of company leaders and embassy representatives where he learned about the hospital's possibilities, accompanied by a practical explanation of the flow of patients from reception to various clinics, radiology, laboratory services and treatment rooms.

In addition, a discussed ways of cooperating jointly and taking advantage of Pakistan's medical teams needed by the company in various specializations in DHAMAN hospitals and primary healthcare centers, due to the competence and expertise of Pakistani medical personnel in various medical fields such as medicine, nursing and technical fields such as radiology and laboratories.

During his visit, H.E. Mr. Malik Farouk stressed the important role that DHAMAN model will play through its primary healthcare centers and hospitals in developing the level of healthcare in Kuwait as well as several major projects underway in the health sector.

The Ambassador highlighted Pakistan's close

working relations with Kuwait in the health sector and looked forward to further cooperation in healthcare and the quality of services provided to residents.

In his welcoming speech, Mr. Thamer Arab appreciated the Ambassador's visit, which is part of the company's plan to communicate with diplomatic missions in order to familiarize them with the possibilities and preparations offered by the DHAMAN Healthcare System. Thamer Arab explained that the company's model is unique in the healthcare sector in the region, where it will provide its integrated services to a large segment of residents in Kuwait, pushing the company towards investment in infrastructure and looking for solutions and innovations to develop modern services and mechanisms that place the patient at the center of attention and provide a comprehensive vision for population health management.

**Goals**

Through a presentation, Thamer Arab reviewed the evolution of the company's business and the development goals of the project to achieve sustainable healthcare that conforms to the standards of international organizations, noting that DHAMAN works to promote and improve quality and raise healthcare indicators of Kuwait and building a healthy society based on prevention and treatment systems together. In addition, Thamer Arab provides an overview of the role of the company in providing health assurance certificates and coverage of integrated health services to all communities residing under Article 18 and their families for the purpose of achieving its role in the healthcare

pillar in the National Development Plan and Vision Kuwait 2035.

The CEO presented also the company's operational readiness to receive the company's target segment and an overview of its health system, which includes primary healthcare centers, hospitals, and health screening. In turn, the diplomatic delegation exchanged discussions on the next phase arrangements in cooperation between the company and embassy to coordinate the mobilization of beneficiaries from the Ministry of Health to DHAMAN.

The company explained that it has worked since its inception on a pioneering vision for healthcare and the future directions of this vital sector. Through this vision, it aims to build a healthier society through the implementation of sustainability programs, especially in the healthcare field, as the future issuer of the mandatory healthcare assurance certificate for residents working in the private sector and their families, whose number exceeds 1.8 million people, through a network distributed in various governorates of Kuwait, covering a wide range of primary and secondary medical specialties, which include primary healthcare centers, currently operating as private centers that receive those wishing to obtain healthcare in family medicine, dental and pediatric clinics, plus radiology and laboratory services, in addition to two hospitals in Ahmadi and Jahra governorates with a capacity of 660 beds, covering a wide range of basic medical specialties in hospitals along with all specialties of outpatient clinics, pharmacies, laboratories and related radiology services.

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### Chris Stapleton wins top honor

# Wilson triumphs at Academy of Country Music Awards

FRISCO, Texas, May 13, (AP) — Lainey Wilson was seemingly everywhere at the Academy of Country Music Awards, collecting four trophies on a night that saw Chris Stapleton win the entertainer of the year honor.

Wilson performed twice Thursday -- back-to-back -- and delivered heartfelt speeches after her wins, which put her next to fellow winners and country music legends.

She won album of the year for "Bell Bottom Country," accepting the honor slightly breathless after performing her song "Grease."

Wilson called the album a "labor of love" and said she wrote 300 songs during the pandemic. She said people often tell her how much the album means to their lives, and she said writing them "saved mine."

When she won female artist of the year, co-host Dolly Parton handed her the trophy. "I can't believe I just met Dolly Parton, first of all," Wilson said.

She gave credit to the female artists who preceded her and the sacrifices she knew they had all made: "I'm up here because of y'all. Because of people like Dolly Parton, paving the way."

"For the little girls watching this, this stands for hard work," Wilson said, referencing her trophy. "If you're going to be a dreamer, you better be a do-er."

Stapleton owned the stage at the end of the night, winning the ACMs' top honor.

"I am shocked, truly," Stapleton said. "By any imaginable metric, I don't deserve this. ... I've never thought of myself as somebody who

would win this award."

He dedicated the award to his children at home, saying they sacrifice a lot of time with him and his wife because of his career.

Breathless moments weren't uncommon during the performance-heavy show. Cole Swindell won the night's first award, song of the year, for "She Had Me at Heads Carolina." He had just performed the song with Jo Dee Messina.

Swindell later won single of the year for the same song. "Thank you country music fans, that's all I've ever been," he said. "I don't know what I ever did to get this fortunate."

### Relate

Singer-songwriter HARDY entered the show as the leading nominee and collected four awards. "Wait in the Truck," his duet with Wilson, who was the second-leading nominee, won the music event award.

"Thank you Lainey, you absolutely killed it," HARDY said. He credited her with making people believe in the song, which references domestic violence and seeking revenge.

"This was a song about real life," Wilson said. "I didn't want people to relate to this song, but a lot of them do."

Old Dominion frontman Matthew Ramsey used the band's win for group of the year to address recent divisiveness and gun violence. He referenced the party atmosphere of the show but said he also recognized that "there are people obviously hurting in the world right now trying to figure out how to make sense of the divisiveness and shoot-

ings and things like that."

Ramsey continued: "We are most proud to be able to make music for people that are hurting right now. So thank you for including us in the party and allowing us to make music for whoever needs it."

Garth Brooks and Parton hosted the two-hour awards show, streamed live on Amazon Prime from the Ford Center at the Star in Frisco.

The easy banter between Brooks, in his first hosting gig, and Parton carried the show's early moments. Parton closed out the show with a performance of a song from her upcoming rock album.

A later routine involved the pair video conferencing with Willie Nelson to wish him happy birthday. The country legend recently turned 90, and the ACMs honored him with a performance of Nelson's hit with Waylon Jennings, "Mammas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to be Cowboys" by Cody Johnson.

The show opened with Keith Urban performing, fittingly given the location of the show, his song "Texas Time."

Texas references and celebrities ran throughout the show. Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott and Hall of Famer Emmitt Smith presented the first award.

HARDY was also a nominee as a songwriter for Morgan Wallen's "Sand in my Boots." The country superstar didn't perform as planned due to a vocal cord injury that's halted his tour and was not in attendance when he won best male artist. Brooks took off his hat to honor Wallen, saying missing out on the show "must be killing him."

Hailey Whitters and Zach Bryan have won best new artist honors.

## Variety



This image released by Netflix shows Jennifer Lopez in a scene from 'The Mother.' (AP)

## Film

A superhuman, spy and one-woman army

# JLo anchors action pic 'The Mother'

By Lindsey Bahr

The most interesting part of "The Mother," a decent if forgettable action pic starring Jennifer Lopez, is the one that is left largely unexplored. The movie is a high-concept thriller that boils down to just a few words: She's a mother and an assassin. OK, you're probably thinking, fine.

Misha Green's script was a hot commodity in 2017, around the time "Wonder Woman" opened, which had left some studios scrambling for action movies fronted by women. There were condescending headlines propping it up as a "female empowerment" script. And, eventually, with Niki Caro signed on to direct and a movie star like Lopez on board to star and produce, it was enough for greenlight and a Netflix budget. The final film also credits Peter Craig and Andrea Berloff for the script.

But history has unfortunately taught us to be suspect of a Mother's Day rollout. The greeting card holiday is where studios always seem to dump mediocre material that happen to have women at the center. If the movies were better, you start to suspect, maybe they wouldn't need the lame hook. Happy Mother's Day! Here's a woman doing... something!

This is a bit unfair to "The Mother," which at worst is just what you expect it to be -- a mostly generic action trifle that's very self-serious and wants to be a lot of different kinds of films. Lopez's character is basically Jason Bourne, James Bond, John Wick and Nikita rolled into one, at least when it comes to her skills which are vast and seemingly just the product of her tours in Afghanistan She's. Just. That. Good.

After her military service, she's left with few job prospects so she becomes a guard in Guantanamo and gets entangled, professionally and personally, with a few handsome arms dealers, Adrian (Joseph Fiennes) and Hector (Gael García Bernal). A bit of this is revealed in a brief prologue, in which she gives

birth and has to give up the baby before even holding her. It's for everyone's safety and her only wish is that the kid gets placed with the most boring, stable family out there -- that and that FBI Agent Cruise (Omari Hardwick) sends updates on her birthdays.

There is a "Mamma Mia"-esque mystery about who the father is and an even bigger mystery about if this pregnancy was planned or expected or wanted. And all of this is very interesting in theory. But the movie itself is set 12 years later when Mother learns that the daughter (who does get a name, Zoe) is in danger. This brings her out of her glamorously rugged Alaska retirement and back in action as a superhuman spy/assassin/one-woman army.

### Emotional

At first, Mother denies her Mother-hood to Zoe (Lucy Paez), whose foster parents get about as much character development and screen time as a couple in a cell phone commercial. This is supposed to be a big emotional journey for Mother and Zoe and the viewing audience, but I can't say this movie ever really convinces you to care about this relationship, which is especially odd because there have been plenty of random pairings of adult assassins and non-blood relation children in movies that I've felt invested in. "The Mother" just expects that you're on board with some essential connection, which Paul Raci (nice to see him again on screen) tries his best to sell.

As expected, Lopez is an athletic and capable action hero (maybe too capable, but that could also be said of most of the guys out there, too). This is taken much more seriously than the over-the-top "Shotgun Wedding" and Caro and her filmmaking team ably capture Lopez in all her glory, whether walking through the Alaskan snow framed by a fur hood, jumping out of multi-story parking garages and sliding over cars in a chase, or dancing with Fiennes in a body hugging dress. It's all a much better

showcase for Caro as a director in this big budget arena than the live-action "Mulan" was.

Lopez's output has been prolific lately as she and her closest collaborators continue to look for interesting projects for her, undeterred by any Hollywood or societally imposed ideas about movies a woman in her 50s should be making. Romantic comedies, action movies -- they're all fair game, which is great. You just wish the movies could match the ambition.

"The Mother," a Netflix release currently streaming, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for "violence, some language and brief drug use." Running time: 115 minutes. Two stars out of four.

### Also:

**LOS ANGELES:** Greta Lee cried through her first reading of **Celine Song's** "Past Lives," out June 2. The writer-director had written a deeply personal story about childhood friends, and possible soulmates, who reconnect in **New York** decades later. Nora's in a relationship but wondering "what if" in this aching romance.

"Telling a love story from that point of view felt so radical to me," Lee said. "It read so quiet, but I was struck by how cosmic it was too. It's connective. It's universal. It's just about life and how short life is and how do we reconcile this."

Lee, a stylish chameleon with comedic chops, has always made the most of every scene she's in, whether it's cooing "Sweet Birthday Baby" hundreds of times to **Natasha Lyonne** in "Russian Doll," frustrating Marni as Soojin in "Girls" or telling the divas of "The Morning Show" the hard truth. But Nora would be something different.

"There is a hiding in plain sight-ness in character work, with costume or the way people talk," Lee said. "This felt so emotionally X-rated to me, so brutally exposing in a way. It was utterly terrifying." (AP)

**NEW YORK:** CNN is facing a backlash over its town hall featuring former president **Donald Trump**, an event that swiftly turned chaotic in a stark display of the tightrope facing journalists covering a leading 2024 Republican candidate who refuses to play by the rules.

The town hall recently was the first major television event of the 2024 presidential campaign, and CNN defended its decision to hold it as a chance to put Trump in front of a wider audience, outside of the conservative media bubble he has largely kept to since early in his presidency.

Critics said the event, which was staged in front of Republicans and unaffiliated voters who were expected to vote in the GOP primary, instead turned into a Trump campaign rally and allowed him to repeat longstanding falsehoods while dodging difficult questions.

**Tom Jones**, a senior writer at the media research institute Poynter, said he had favored the idea of CNN holding the town hall at St. Anselm College in **New Hampshire**. But he said he was surprised by the conduct of the audience, which he had expected to be more neutral.

Instead, the crowd gave Trump a standing ovation when he walked onstage, applauded some of his most provocative comments and laughed at many of his quips, including when he criticized **E. Jean Carroll**, the advice columnist who accused him of raping her in 1996 and this week won a \$5 million judgment against him.

Jones said the atmosphere put CNN's moderator, **Kaitlan Collins**, in an almost impossible position as she tried to elicit straightforward answers from Trump and fact-check his comments about the Jan 6 storming of the Capitol by his supporters and the 2020 election, which he still falsely insists he won.

The event was indicative of the new era of leadership at CNN and management's efforts to lure back viewers who turned to Fox News and other conservative outlets over the past decade. (AP)

**GENEVA:** A ruby ring and a diamond necklace fetched less than their pre-sale estimates at a Christie's auction recently of a vast jewelry collection of a late Austrian heiress that was bought with riches from a retail empire dating back to

the Nazi era in **Germany**. Groups criticized the auction.

The auction house defended the sale of some 700 pieces of jewelry, saying proceeds are going to charitable causes, including a **Vienna** art museum and medical research. The collection belonged to **Heidi Horten**, whose German husband built a retail empire starting in the



Trump



Collins

1930s. She died last year. Advocacy groups defending the rights of Holocaust survivors and victims had urged Christie's not to go through with the sale.

The nearly 26-carat "Sunrise Ruby" -- which Horten bought for the equivalent of about \$30 million in 2015 -- went Wednesday for just over 13 million Swiss francs (about

\$14.6 million), including fees and the "buyer's premium." The pre-sale estimate was for it to fetch 14 million to 18 million francs.

Earlier, the 90-carat "Briolette of India" diamond -- the centerpiece of a necklace adorned with smaller diamonds -- sold for 6.3 million francs including fees. Its pre-sale estimate range had been

for 9 million to 14 million francs. The buyers of the two star items were not immediately identified.

Overall, Christie's said the sale on Wednesday -- the first in-person portion of an auction that already had been taking place online this month -- tallied \$156 million, above the low estimate to reap \$139 million in the day's event. (AP)

## People & Places

### Music

#### Trio to kick off tour

## Jonas Bros' Album is a celebration of love

LOS ANGELES, May 13, (AP): If, like many of us, you got burned trying to get tickets to the Jonas Brothers recent tour, their latest work "The Album" is a sweet consolation to keep your mind off it.

The Jonas Brothers are all about love in their latest project. Married with kids, every lyric hides a nudge to their homes. And while their music is focused on that familiar tender feeling, the experimentation into new genres makes it more special and fresh.

From the get-go with the track "Miracle" we are introduced by a sexy groove with show stopping high-pitched verses, while keeping that carefree vibe they are known for.

Even romantic ballads gain extra spice, such as "Vacation Eyes," a track with great potential to be a first dance tune at weddings for the new generation. "I got vacation eyes, I'm gonna have them for the rest of my life." The upbeat drums and the use of a chromatic harmonica elevate the song, making it more engaging and amusing - a jollification of your classic, slow love track.

The trio of Nick, Joe and Kevin released their single "Wings," with "The White Lotus" actress and super fan Haley Lu Richardson leading in a music video that resembles a "get ready with me" tutorial from heaven.

Followed by their second early released single "Waffle House," which focuses on the brothers' competitive dynamic that every sibling knows way too well. "Headstrong father and a determined mother. Oh, that's why some nights we try to kill each other."

#### Lyrics

In the lyrics the brothers reveal that no matter what happens, everything will be figured out when we share a special ordinary moment with our loved ones. "Deep conversations at the waffle house," they sing in the chorus.

On the topic of love and family, there's an impossible record to miss heartfelt acoustic melody about fatherhood and their baby girls, titled "Little Bird."

The brothers, who broke hearts all over the world as they said, "I do," reflect about that bittersweet moment in the future when they will not be their girls' No. 1 guy anymore. "Cause I know if I'm doing my job correct/ Nights like these will happen less/ So please just keep me in your heart/ When you fly into somebody else's arms."

Jonas Brothers' "The Album" is a celebration of love in all its forms, perfect for people that see life through adoring rose-tinted glasses.

After two decades in the spotlight, the Jonas Brothers are still chasing butterflies.

Joe, Kevin and Nick Jonas released their sixth studio record "The Album" on Friday, before embarking on an US tour in August. Nick says the band of brothers are putting themselves in new positions so they can feel "butterflies and excitement" before stepping onstage.

One of those butterfly moments will come when the trio kicks off their tour at Yankee Stadium on Aug. 12.

"It's our favorite baseball team's stadium for our entire lives," Nick says. "We got to go and kind of go to a game and meet some of the players about a month ago. And we were just looking around, thinking the 10-year-old version of us that was sitting up in the highest nosebleed section seat would not believe that we're going to play this place twice."

All three band members now have young families and Joe says this means the brothers are "quicker to return home" after touring. But that doesn't mean that they are any less excited about hitting the road.

"We're treating this like the best tour we've ever done. And I think, we intend to make it that experience for fans as well," Joe says.

They're also looking forward to hanging out as brothers too, with Nick saying that touring "doesn't feel like work."

The tour will criss-cross the US from mid-August until October, with the trio being ultra careful to avoid burnout. The band's physical and mental health is a priority, says Joe, who believes they can look after themselves and have "a blast while doing it."

"We've been burnt out before and then you're like, 'I still got 20 more shows on this tour,'" he says. "So we all have our own perspective ways of going about that, and we just make sure that that's prioritized and also that we think the three of us are communicating as best as we can."

The brothers have set aside a period for family after the release and promo duties for "The Album," before gearing up to tour in August.

#### Also:

**NEW YORK:** Last summer's surprise set by **Joni Mitchell** at the Newport Folk Festival has been turned into a live album.

Mitchell took the stage alongside **Brandi Carlile** and friends in her first full-length performance since 2002, performing "Big Yellow Taxi," "Shine," "Help Me" and "Come In From the Cold." She also played a solo instrumental version of "Just Like This Train."

On July 28, Rhino Records will release the 11-track live album, "At Newport," produced by Carlile and Mitchell, with liner notes by noted music writer **Cameron Crowe**. It will be available on streaming services and a two-LP or two-CD set.

Carlile had been expected to perform at the festival on July 24, 2022, alongside **Wynonna Judd**, **Lucius**, **Holly Laessig**, **Mumford & Sons**, **Marcus Mumford** and more, but Mitchell was a surprise. Judd, was seen wiping away tears while Mitchell sang 1966's "Both Sides Now."

Mitchell has been returning to the public eye since suffering a life-threatening brain aneurysm in 2015. In June, she will headline a concert at the Gorge Amphitheater in **Quincy, Washington**.

Mitchell was honored as MusiCares' Person of the Year during this year's Grammy festivities and she accepted a Grammy for best historical album. She was also the 2023 recipient of the Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song, and performed a sultry version of "Summertime."



Nick



Iru of Georgia performs during dress rehearsals for the second semi-final at the Eurovision Song Contest in Liverpool, England, Wednesday, May 10. (AP)



This cover image released by Republic Records shows 'The Album' by the Jonas Brothers. (AP)



Armstrong



Amendola

### Variety

**NEW YORK:** The pioneering mommy blogger **Heather Armstrong**, who laid bare her struggles as a parent and her battles with depression and alcoholism on her site Dooce.com and on social media, has died at 47.

Armstrong's boyfriend, **Pete Ashdown**, told The Associated Press that he found her Tuesday night at their **Salt Lake City** home.

She had two children with her former husband and business partner, **Jon Armstrong**, began Dooce in 2001 and built it into a lucrative career. She was one of the first and most popular mommy bloggers, writing frankly about her children, relationships and other challenges at a time that personal blogs were on the rise.

She parlayed her successes with the blog, on Instagram and elsewhere into book deals, putting out a memoir in 2009, "It Sucked and then I Cried: How I Had a Baby, a Breakdown and a Much Needed M..."

That year, Armstrong appeared on "The Oprah Winfrey Show" and was on the Forbes list of the most influential women in media.

In 2012, the Armstrongs announced they were separating. They divorced later that year. She began dating Ashdown, a former US senate candidate, nearly six years ago. They lived together with Armstrong's children, 19-year-old **Leta** and 13-year-old **Mario**. He has three children from a previous marriage who spent time in their home as well.

Ashdown said Armstrong died by suicide. He told the AP that she had been sober for more than 18 months, and recently had a relapse. He did not provide further details.

Armstrong didn't hold back on Instagram and Dooce, the latter a name that arose from her inability to quickly spell "dude" during online chats. Her raw, unapologetic posts on everything from pregnancy and breastfeeding to home-work and carpooling were often infused with curses. As her popularity grew, so too did the barbs of critics, who accused her of bad parenting and worse.

One of her posts on Dooce spoke of a previous victory over drinking. (AP)

**LOS ANGELES:** Renowned Associated Press photojournalist **Elise Amendola** - a determined, joyous and patient journalist who masterfully photographed pivotal global news and sporting events spanning decades - has died. She was 70.

Amendola, who recently retired from the AP, died Thursday at her home in **North Andover, Massachusetts**, after a 13-year battle with ovarian cancer, her wife and fellow photographer **Mary**

### Music

#### Displaced Ukrainians flock to contest

## Eurovision Song Contest fetes Ukraine

LIVERPOOL, England, May 13: This weekend's Eurovision Song Contest is taking place in a city brimming with Ukrainian flags, Ukrainian food, Ukrainian musicians and Ukrainian fans: Liverpool.

The English port city that gave the world The Beatles is using the contest to offer displaced Ukrainians a taste of home -- free from war, and glittering with sequins and sparkle.

Britain is hosting the glitzy pancontinental music competition for the first time in 25 years after stepping in to hold it on behalf of last year's winner, Ukraine. Organizers have vowed to make the event a celebration of Ukrainian spirit and culture.

"I want all life to be like this - whole life Eurovision village, and whole life Eurovision celebration," said Daryna Borodaikivych, 29, one of more than 200,000 Ukrainians who have moved to Britain since Russia invaded its neighbor almost 15 months ago.

"Whole life united by music," she added, echoing the motto of this year's Eurovision competition.

The contest's live final show at the Liverpool Arena on Saturday was planned to have a distinctly Ukrainian flavor. Co-hosted by Ukrainian singer Julia Sanina, it will feature a performance by last year's Eurovision winner, Kalush Orchestra, and other Ukrainian performers. Images of Ukraine will precede each of the 26 performances by acts representing nations from across Europe and beyond.

Sanina said Friday that she hoped "that in these dark times we bring some joy and some light to Ukrainian homes and families."

Eurovision is Europe's biggest musical party, and tens of thousands of music fans have flocked to Liverpool, which won a competition among UK cities to stand in for Ukraine. The city on the River Mersey has thrown itself into the party spirit, with many pubs and venues holding Eurovision parties.

Businesses fly blue and yellow Ukrainian flags, and a Ukrainian village inside the waterfront Eurovision fan zone dishes out borsch soup and varenyky - potato-filled dumplings -

alongside lessons in Ukrainian art and history.

"We feel like (we're) at home in Ukraine," said Iryna Scherbuk, 30, of Kyiv, who came from her new home in southeast England to watch Thursday's Eurovision semifinal. "It's a very beautiful atmosphere."

One thing missing will be Ukraine's leader, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Eurovision organizers say they turned down his request to make a video address to Saturday's contest final. The European Broadcasting Union, a grouping of national public broadcasters that runs Eurovision, said that letting Zelenskyy participate would breach "the nonpolitical nature of the event."

Zelenskyy's request "to address the audience at the Eurovision Song Contest, whilst made with laudable intentions, regrettably cannot be granted by the European Broadcasting Union management as it would be against the rules of the event," the organization said.

#### Promote

Zelenskyy spokesman Sergiy Nykyforov denied that the president had asked to speak to the event, which will be watched by an estimated 160 million people.

"The Office of the President of Ukraine did not address the organizers of the Eurovision Song Contest to offer (Zelenskyy's) online performance during the finals or at any other stage of the contest," Nykyforov said on Facebook.

During Russia's invasion and war, Zelenskyy has addressed dozens of global gatherings to promote his country's cause. He has spoken to legislatures around the world by video - and a few times in person - and appealed to crowds at the Glastonbury music festival, the Grammy Awards and the Berlin Film Festival.

But he reportedly was denied permission to speak at the Academy Awards in March, and Ukraine says that FIFA, international soccer's governing body, also refused Zelenskyy's request to send a video message to the World Cup in November 2022.

Founded in 1956 to help heal a con-

tinued shattered by war, Eurovision strives to keep pop and politics separate. Overtly political lyrics, signs and symbols are banned.

But politics can't be shut out entirely. Russia was banned from the contest after it invaded Ukraine in February 2022. Belarus was kicked out the previous year over its government's clampdown on dissent.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesman said the UK government was "disappointed" by Eurovision organizers' decision, though there were no plans to challenge it.

"The values and freedoms that President Zelenskyy and the people of Ukraine are fighting for are not political, they're fundamental," Sunak spokesman Max Blain said.

Liverpool is a city that has known its share of hardship. It weathered World War II bombing, the decline of its once-bustling docks and mass unemployment before reinventing itself as a center for culture and nightlife. It's a story of resilience that strikes a chord with many Ukrainians.

"Obviously, all of the Ukrainians would have preferred for this to have been hosted in Ukraine, if it was safe," Maria Romanenko, who has taken more than 200 people on Ukrainian-language walking tours of Liverpool in recent days, said.

"But we are based in the UK, now, until Ukraine wins, and we are just glad that we can come to Liverpool," she added. "It feels absolutely fantastic to see all of the flags and all of the stuff that has been rolled out."

Borodaikivych, who joined one of the tours, said she appreciated the chance created by Eurovision to "feel support, feel a little bit special maybe. To hear lots of Ukrainian language - I miss it so much."

"It's a celebration, but I can't be relaxed 100%," she said. "I am always thinking about my people and my homeland."

What includes a Swedish diva, a Finnish rapper who loves pina colodas, a band of Croatian agit-rockers and an Austrian duo possessed by a long-dead writer? It could only be the Eurovision Song Contest.

**Schwalm** said Friday.

Amendola documented many important moments in history, including the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Boston

Marathon bombing, the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, US presidential campaigns, and many Super Bowls, Olympics, World Series and other major

sporting events.

"I owe the AP for our beautiful life," Schwalm told the AP Friday. "I first met Elise when I was a photo runner at the Summer Olympics in **Sydney, Australia**. By **Athens** in 2004, I was a staff photo editor on the sports desk and we'd become friends. I had the pleasure to edit her photos ... It was so easy, she never missed."

The two worked together for years - Schwalm in **New York** and Amendola in **Boston**, often collaborating on assignments.

In the fall of 2006, Schwalm said she left her photo editing position in New York to live with Amendola in North Andover. "Seventeen years of pure joy, 11 of them as her wife," she said. "I am heart broken."

Her longtime friend and teammate, fellow Boston photographer **Charles Krupa**, described one of his favorite photographs that Amendola made when the two were on assignment together covering golf. **Davis Love** had just won the PGA championship in 1997.

"After a hard week of work in the rain," Krupa remembered, "Love tipping his cap to the crowd with a panoramic rainbow tying the moment together as one." (AP)



Sam Ryder performs during dress rehearsals for the grand final at the Eurovision Song Contest in Liverpool, England, Friday, May 12. (AP)

## Energy

## Conserve water

## Floating solar farms are 'booming' in US

NEW YORK, May 13, (AP) — When Joe Seaman-Graves, the city planner for the working class town of Cohoes, New York, Googled the term "floating solar," he didn't even know it was a thing.

What he did know is that his tiny town needed an affordable way to get electricity and had no extra land. But looking at a map, one feature stood out.

"We have this 14-acre water reservoir," he said.

Seaman-Graves soon found the reservoir could hold enough solar panels to power all the municipal buildings and streetlights, saving the city more than \$500,000 each year. He had stumbled upon a form of clean energy that is steeply ramping up.

Floating solar panel systems are beginning to boom in the United States after rapid growth in Asia. They're attractive not just for their clean power and lack of a land footprint, but because they also conserve water by preventing evaporation.



Zeng

A study published in the journal Nature Sustainability in March found that thousands of cities — more than 6,000 in 124 countries — could generate an amount equal to all their electricity demand using floating solar, making it a climate solution to be taken seriously. In the process, they could save roughly enough water each year to fill 40 million Olympic-sized swimming pools.

Zhenzhong Zeng, a contributor to that study and associate professor at the Southern University of Science and Technology in Shenzhen, China, said in the United States, counties across Florida, Nevada, and California have the potential to generate more power than they use. Of course, they would need a mix of energy to actually provide power all hours of the day, Zeng said.

The concept of floating solar is simple: attach panels onto rafts so they float on water instead of blocking off land that could be used for agriculture or buildings. The panels are sealed and act as a lid that brings evaporation down to nearly zero, benefiting regions like California that repeatedly experience periods of drought. The water also keeps the panels cool, allowing them to generate more electricity than their land-mounted counterparts, which lose efficiency when they get too hot.

## Advantage

"We hear from our installers that they like it because it's something different," said Chris Bartle, director of sales and marketing for floating solar company Ciel & Terre, which has built 270 projects in 30 countries. "They get to go out on the water as opposed to on a rooftop. We joke that you need life jackets instead of ladders," he said.

Bartle's company has launched 28 floating solar projects in the US.

Limited land may have spurred some countries in Asia like Japan and Malaysia to expand floating solar, and other countries just took advantage of the steep plunge in prices for solar that has dramatically changed the economic picture for solar adoption globally.

A report by London-based Fairfield Market Research says the region currently accounts for 73% of revenue from floating solar and "spears the global landscape," but predicts that policy incentives in North America and Europe will spur significant growth.

One of the biggest floating solar farms in the US is the 4.8 MW project in Healdsburg, California, built by Ciel & Terre.

"It's funny, I don't think a lot of people in Healdsburg know about it," said David Hargreaves, a local realtor and YouTuber who lives nearby. People may not know that solar panels can be placed on water, so they don't look out for it, he said.

The world's largest array so far is the 320 MW Dezhou Dingzhuang Floating Solar Farm in Shandong, China. North America's largest, by comparison, is a fraction of that — 8.9 MW at the Canoe Brook Water Treatment Plant in Millburn, N.J., owned by New Jersey Resources Clean Energy Ventures, which operates utility-scale commercial as well as residential solar systems across the Northeast.

"We're excited to see it start gaining traction in the US," said Robert Pohlman, vice president of NJRCEV.

But high up costs up front remain a barrier. Bartle estimates floating solar costs 10-15% more than land solar initially, but owners save money in the long run. Deeper water can increase installation costs, and the technology can't operate on fast-moving water, on the open ocean, or shorelines with large waves.

Engineers are working on other challenges. If the solar panels cover too much of a water body's surface, dissolved oxygen levels could change and water temperature will drop, which could harm aquatic life. Researchers are looking into whether the electromagnetic fields generated by cables could negatively influence aquatic ecosystems, however, there's no evidence of that yet.

Duke Energy, the large US utility that owns some 50,000 MW of energy capacity, is aiming to achieve net zero carbon emissions from electricity production by 2050. It just launched a small floating solar pilot, just shy of 1 MW in Bartow, Florida.

"The favorite part of my job is that I get to come out here," said Tommy Oneal, an environmental specialist at Duke Energy, as he gestured towards new panels floating on top of the cooling pond of an adjacent gas power plant.

"I see eagles, alligators, and all kinds of cool stuff... It's fun, these issues make my job different every day. When I went to college, I never thought I'd be dealing with alligator issues," said Oneal.

In Cohoes, public officials are preparing for the installation of their project later this year at an estimated final cost of \$6.5 million. The federal government is paying almost half of that through a federal Housing and Urban Development grant. Another \$750,000 is covered by the utility National Grid. The city is also looking into New York solar incentives and the Inflation Reduction Act.

As far as he knows, Seaman-Graves said, it's the first municipally-owned floating solar project in the country.

## Also:

**DULUTH, Minn.:** Federal authorities have proposed new regulations that would force the Minnesota and Michigan iron mining industry to slash its mercury emissions.

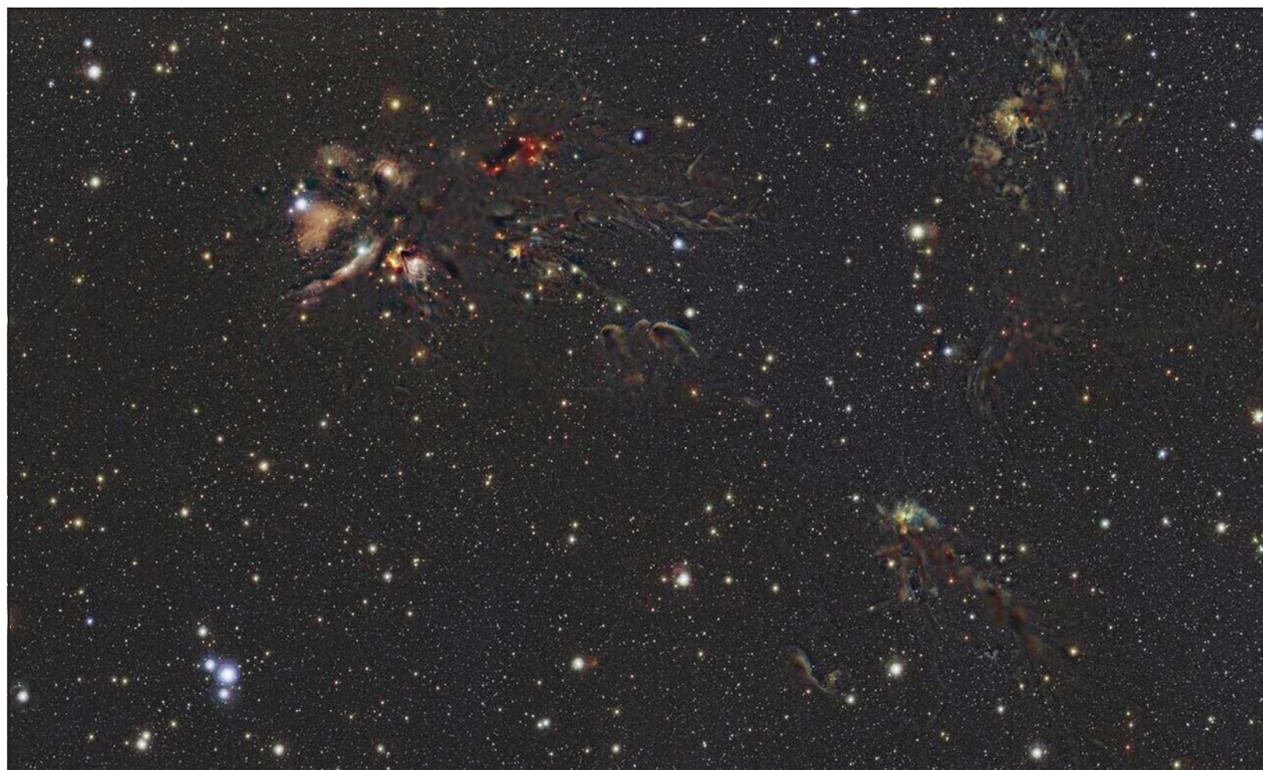
The rule announced by the US Environmental Protection Agency last week follows two decades of litigation and other pressure by tribes and environmental groups who have long urged the agency to adopt mercury limits.

The six iron ore processing plants in northeastern Minnesota would be required to cut their emissions by 57% by the end of 2026. They're the largest source of mercury pollution in Minnesota, accounting for about half its emissions. The rule also applies to two mining operations in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Virtually all US iron ore processing occurs at those Michigan and Minnesota mines.

"We're glad to see some limits at long last on this pollution," James Pew, an attorney with Earthjustice, told Minnesota Public Radio. He sued the EPA on behalf of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and two environmental groups.

But Pew said the EPA should have gone further, especially considering that limits were supposed to be put in place decades ago. Congress in 1990 first required the EPA to set mercury emission standards for the plants by 2000, but the agency never did.

"Instead the agency has allowed it to build up for the last 20 years, and mercury is a persistent pollutant, so we've still got all the mercury that was emitted over the last 20 years in the environment," Pew said.



This image provided by European Southern Observatory shows the L1688 region in the Ophiuchus constellation. Astronomers have created a stunning mosaic of stellar nurseries hiding in our galactic backyard. The montage, published Thursday, May 11, reveals five vast star-forming regions less than 1,500 light-years away. (AP)

## Stunning mosaic of baby star clusters created from 1 mn telescope shots

Astronomers have created a stunning mosaic of baby star clusters hiding in our galactic backyard.

The montage, published Thursday, reveals five vast stellar nurseries less than 1,500 light-years away. A light-year is nearly 6 trillion miles (9.7 trillion kilometers).

To come up with their atlas, scientists pieced together more than 1 million images taken over five years by the European Southern Observatory in

Chile. The observatory's infrared survey telescope was able to peer through clouds of dust and discern infant stars.

"We can detect even the faintest sources of light, like stars far less massive than the sun, revealing objects that no one has ever seen before," University of Vienna's Stefan Meingast, the lead author, said in a statement.

The observations, conducted from 2017 to 2022,

will help researchers better understand how stars evolve from dust, Meingast said.

The findings, appearing in the journal *Astronomy and Astrophysics*, complement observations by the European Space Agency's star-mapping Gaia spacecraft, orbiting nearly 1 million miles (1.5 million kilometers) away. Gaia focuses on optical light, missing most of the objects obscured by cosmic dust, the researchers said. (AP)

## Health

## New menopause drug gets FDA approval

## Mpox no longer global emergency

LONDON, May 13, (AP) — The World Health Organization said Thursday that the global outbreak of mpox, which initially baffled experts when the smallpox-related disease spread to more than 100 countries last year, is no longer an international emergency, after a dramatic drop in cases in recent months.

Last July, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus declared mpox, also known as monkeypox, to be an "extraordinary" situation that qualified as a global crisis. In doing so, he overruled WHO's expert committee, which didn't recommend the emergency designation.

Tedros said the novel way mpox was infecting people, via sexual contact in many countries that had never before identified cases, raised numerous concerns that warranted more attention. It was the biggest-ever outbreak of mpox.

He said at a media briefing on Thursday that his expert committee had concluded that the dramatic decline in cases in recent months, with about 90% fewer cases in the last three months, was no longer an acute concern.

"We now see steady progress in controlling the outbreak based on the lessons of HIV and working closely with the most affected communities," Tedros said. "I'm pleased to declare that the mpox is no longer a global health emergency."

The announcement Thursday comes after WHO downgraded COVID-19 last week, when it said the worst part of the pandemic was over and that the coronavirus should be managed like other respiratory diseases.

Mpox has been established in parts of central and west Africa for decades, where people are mainly infected by animals like wild rodents. But the disease wasn't known to spark big outbreaks beyond the continent or to spread easily among people until last May, when dozens of epidemics emerged in Europe, North America and elsewhere.

Mpox most often causes symptoms

including a rash, fever, headache, muscle pain and swollen lymph nodes. The skin lesions can last up to a month and the disease is spread via close physical contact with an infected patient or their clothing or bedsheets. Most people don't need medical treatment to recover.

Scientists ultimately concluded that the unprecedented outbreak was tied to sex among gay and bisexual men at raves in Spain and Belgium, marking a significant departure from the mpox's typical pattern of spread in Africa, where outbreaks haven't spilled across borders.

Shortly after Tedros classified monkeypox as a global emergency last year, the epidemics in Europe and North America declined, and there were no signs of widespread transmission beyond men who were gay, bisexual or had sex with other men. European health authorities said that 98% of mpox patients are men and of those, 96% are men who have sex with men.

## Vaccines

Mpox vaccines in rich countries were quickly rolled out and reports of severe illness were relatively rare. Cases have since slowed to a trickle in Europe and North America. To date, WHO says there have been more than 87,000 cases and 140 deaths worldwide. In the last week, WHO said cases spiked by 64% compared to the previous week, with most cases in the Americas and the Western Pacific.

The U.S. has reported the biggest outbreak, with more than 30,000 cases. This week, the US Centers for Disease Prevention and Control said that it was investigating a recent surge in cases around the country, including Chicago.

In central and west Africa, mpox cases are continuing to rise, mainly driven by a spike in Congo. WHO said there has been about a 7% jump in new infections in the last two weeks, and Tedros said the routes of transmission were still not well understood. Cases have also been reported in the Central African Republic, Nigeria, Liberia and Ghana.

While rich countries including Britain, the US and Germany rushed to vaccinate their at-risk populations after the mpox outbreak emerged, Africa didn't receive its first big shipment of vaccines until last December.

## Also:

**WASHINGTON:** US health regulators on Friday approved a new type of drug for women dealing with uncomfortable hot flashes caused by menopause.

The Food and Drug Administration approved the once-a-day pill from Astellas Pharma to treat moderate-to-severe symptoms, which can include sweating, flushing and chills.

Astellas' drug, Veozah, uses a new approach, targeting brain connections that help control body temperature. The FDA said the medication will provide "an additional safe and effective treatment option for women," in a statement.

More than 80% of women experience hot flashes during menopause, the FDA noted, as the body gradually produces lower levels of reproductive hormones between the ages of 45 and 55.

The most common treatment consists of hormonal pills aimed at boosting levels of estrogen and progesterone. But the treatment isn't appropriate for some women, including those with a history of stroke, blood clots, heart attack and other health conditions. Large studies have found that the hormones can increase the chances of those problems recurring, although the risks vary based on a number of individual factors.

The new pill is not a hormone. It carries an FDA warning about potential liver damage. Women will need to be screened for liver damage or infection before getting a prescription, then get a blood test every three months for nine months to monitor for safety problems, according to the FDA label.

Astellas said the drug will cost \$550 for a one-month supply. That's the price before insurance coverage and other discounts typically negotiated by insurers and pharmacy benefit managers.



In this undated product photo released by Astellas Pharma, a box and container of Veozah drug are displayed. US health regulators on Friday approved a new type of drug for women dealing with uncomfortable hot flashes caused by menopause. (AP)



Nelson



Magee

## Discovery

**Stuck antenna freed:** A crucial radar antenna on a European spacecraft bound for Jupiter is no longer jammed.

Flight controllers in Germany freed the 52-foot (16-meter) antenna Friday after nearly a month of effort.

The European Space Agency's Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer, nicknamed Juice, blasted off in April on a decade-long voyage. Soon after launch, a tiny pin refused to budge and prevented the antenna from fully opening.

Controllers tried shaking and warming the spacecraft to get the pin to move by just millimeters. Back-to-back jolts finally did the trick.

The radar antenna will peer deep beneath the icy crust of three Jupiter moons suspected of harboring underground oceans and possibly life. Those moons are Callisto, Europa and Ganymede, the largest moon in the solar system.

Juice will attempt to go into orbit around Ganymede. No spacecraft has ever orbited a moon other than our own.

The news wasn't so good for NASA's Lunar Flashlight spacecraft. After struggling unsuccessfully for months to get the Cubesat into orbit around the moon, the space agency called it quits Friday. NASA Administrator is **Bill Nelson**.

Launched in December, the Lunar Flashlight was supposed to hunt for ice in the shadowed craters of the lunar south pole. Now it's headed back toward Earth and then into deep space, continually orbiting the sun. (AP)

**'Metallic object was meteorite':** A metallic object that punched a hole in the roof of a central New Jersey home this week, smashing into a hardwood floor and bouncing around a bedroom, was a meteorite, experts announced.

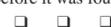
Scientists with The College of New Jersey determined the 6-by-4-inch object, which weighs about 2.2 pounds, is a rare stony chondrite meteorite. They came to that conclusion after conducting a visual examination, making density measurements and scanning electron microscope images. They were assisted in their work by Jerry Delaney, a retired meteorite expert from Rutgers University and the American Museum of Natural History.

"Getting the chance to examine the meteorite (Wednesday) was a rare and thrilling opportunity for me, as well as for a group of physics students and professors at TCNJ," said **Nathan Magee**, chair of the school's physics department. "We are excited to be able to confirm that the object is a true chondrite meteorite, in excellent condition, and one of a very small

number of similar witnessed chondrite falls known to science."

The family that owns the home discovered the black, potato-sized rock in a corner - still warm around 12:30 p.m. Mon-

day. The experts believe it hit the home a short time before it was found. (AP)



**Animals trapped in crossfire:** Doz-



This image provided by Hopewell Township Police Department shows a metallic object believed to be a meteorite on a hardwood floor at a residence in Hopewell Township, N.J. The object punched a hole in the roof of the central New Jersey home, smashing into a hardwood floor and bouncing around a bedroom. The family who owns the home discovered the black, potato-sized rock in a corner - still warm. (AP)

ens of zoo animals in Sudan's capital - including an elderly crocodile, parrots and giant lizards - are feared dead after street battles between the country's rival forces made the location unreachable.

At least 100 animals, all kept inside enclosures, will have gone more than three weeks without food or water, said Sara Abdalla, the head zoologist at the zoo, which is part of the Sudan Natural History Museum.

Millions of people in Sudan have endured shortages of food, water and medicines after the conflict halted the most basic services. But as the sounds of explosions ring across the Sudanese capital of Khartoum, Abdalla has been wracked with worry over her animal charges, particularly those that are increasingly rare to find in their natural habitats in Sudan.

"I feel a great deal of misery and sadness, as well as helplessness," she said in a telephone interview from Khartoum. "I have assumed that we lost the birds and mammals."

The zoo is home to species including an African grey parrot, a vervet monkey, giant lizards known as Nile monitors, a desert tortoise, a horned viper snake and a Nubian spitting cobra. Prior to the fighting, these were all fed twice a day. But the last time they received their meals and for some, medications, was on April 14, the day before fighting broke out, according to Abdalla. (AP)

## SPORTS

# Mullins hits for cycle as Orioles top Pirates

## Blue Jays shut out Braves

**BALTIMORE, May 13, (AP):** Cedric Mullins hit for the cycle for Baltimore, and his three-run homer in the eighth inning helped the Orioles to a 6-3 victory over the Pittsburgh Pirates on Friday night.

Mullins hit a single in the third, a triple in the fifth and a double in the seventh before completing the cycle with a drive to right in his final plate appearance. He became the seventh Oriole to accomplish the feat and first since Austin Hays on June 22, 2022 against Washington.

The Pirates have lost 10 of 11 since starting the season 20-8. Up 2-1 in the seventh, Jose Hernandez (0-1) allowed consecutive doubles by Mullins and Adley Rutschman with one out to tie it. Ryan Mountcastle put the Orioles ahead with a two-out single. Mullins' two-out homer in the eighth made it 6-2.

### Blue Jays 3, Braves 0

In Toronto, Chris Bassitt pitched a two-hitter, Daulton Varsho homered and Toronto beat Atlanta.

Bassitt (5-2) struck out eight and walked two in the Blue Jays' first individual shutout since Mark Buehrle accomplished the feat against Washington in 2015. Bassitt threw 70 of his 103 pitches for strikes to win his fourth straight decision. The shutout was Toronto's sixth this season.

Atlanta lost a series-opening road game for the first time this season after winning six straight to start the year. The Braves came in with a majors-best 15-3 road record.

### Dodgers 4, Padres 2

In Los Angeles, Mookie Betts and Freddie Freeman homered back-to-back to regain the lead in the seventh inning, and NL West-leading Los Angeles defeated division-rival San Diego for its third straight win.

The Padres tied it 2-all with two outs in the top of the seventh. Ha-Seong Kim doubled off starter Dustin May, scoring Xander Bogaerts and pinch-runner Rougned Odor.

Betts hit a 426-foot shot to left field and Freeman followed with a 370-foot drive to right off Tim Hill (1-1) for a 4-2 lead.

### Cardinals 8, Red Sox 6

In Boston, Nolan Gorman hit a go-ahead, two-run homer off Kenley Jansen in the ninth inning and St. Louis beat Boston.

Lars Nootbaar's single off Jansen (1-1) tied the game before Gorman belted his homer to right. The veteran closer did not record an out.

## BASEBALL

The Cardinals won their second straight series opener after losing their first 11. Nolan Arenado had a two-run homer during his four-hit night and Willson Contreras added a solo shot for St. Louis.

Ryan Helsley (1-2) worked two scoreless innings as Boston lost for just the third time in 12 games.

### Yankees 6, Rays 5

In New York, Anthony Rizzo homered twice on his bobblehead giveaway night, the second a go-ahead, two-run drive in the eighth inning that lifted New York over Tampa Bay.

After Josh Lowe's three-run homer off Michael King in the eighth put the major league-leading Rays ahead 5-4, Aaron Judge walked against Jason Adam (0-1) in the bottom half and Rizzo homered to right.

Rizzo hit a solo homer in the first against Trevor Kelly. Clay Holmes (1-2) stranded a pair of runners in the eighth. Wandy Peralta earned his first save this season by striking out two in a one-hit ninth.

### Mets 3, Nationals 2

In Washington, Francisco Lindor hit a three-run single in the sixth inning to lift struggling New York over last-place Washington.

New York had lost four of five and 13 of 17 to fall to fourth place in the NL East before rallying against the Nationals' bullpen.

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Baltimore Orioles third baseman Gunnar Henderson throws a pitch for the out on Tampa Bay Rays' Christian Bethancourt during the seventh inning of a baseball game in Baltimore. (AP)

Carl Edwards Jr. (1-2) entered with runners on second and third and two out in the sixth. Brandon Nimmo walked, setting up Lindor's single to right-center. With all three runners going on a full-count pitch, Nimmo scored from first as the Nationals made a slow relay.

### Angels 5, Guardians 4

In Cleveland, Brandon Drury's sacrifice fly capped a two-run rally in the ninth inning and Los Angeles snapped a 10-game losing streak at Cleveland.

Drury's shot to center off Emmanuel Clase (1-3) enabled the Angels to get their first win at Cleveland since Aug. 3, 2018. They had been 1-21 on the road against the Guardians since 2015.

Cleveland loaded the bases in the ninth off Carlos Estevez, who struck out Will Brennan for his ninth save.

### Phillies 6, Rockies 3

In Denver, Bryce Harper broke an eighth-inning tie with a two-run double, Kyle Schwarber hit a two-run homer Philadelphia rallied past Colorado for its fourth straight win.

Phillies catcher J.T. Realmuto left in the seventh with a sprained right pinkie.

Rockies starter Austin Gomber retired his first 14 batters and faced the minimum 19 until Alec Bohm's 433-foot solo shot to left field. Three batters later, Schwarber hit a 430-foot fly to center to put Philadelphia ahead 3-1.

### Reds 7, Marlins 4

In Miami, Jake Harper homered twice, including a tie-breaking three-run shot in the ninth inning that sent Cincinnati past Miami.

Eury Pérez, the Marlins' 20-year-old top prospect, struck out seven over 4 2/3 innings in his major league debut. He gave up Fraley's two-run homer in the fifth.

The Reds erased a 4-2 deficit on Spencer Steer's two-run double in the seventh.

Stuart Fairchild hit a leadoff single against reliever Dylan Floro (2-2) in the ninth and advanced two bases on José Barrero's single to right field. Floro struck out Jonathan India before Fraley homered to right.

### Cubs 6, Twins 2

In Minneapolis, Rookie Matt Mervis crushed a tying RBI double in the seventh inning and Chicago rallied to beat

Minnesota.

Yan Gomes had the go-ahead single in the seventh. Christopher Morel tacked on a two-run homer in the ninth and Drew Smyly (4-1) pitched six strong innings to fuel the Cubs on the opening night of a nine-game trip.

Sonny Gray, the major league ERA leader among qualified pitchers at 1.39, gave the Twins another stellar turn, allowing one run and striking out nine in 5 1/3 innings. Griffin Jax (2-5) stumbled in the seventh and lost the lead on four straight one-out hits.

### Brewers 5, Royals 1

In Milwaukee, Corbin Burnes pitched six scoreless innings and Owen Miller went 3 for 4 with a homer and a double as Milwaukee beat Kansas City.

Burnes (4-2) struck out seven, walked four and allowed two hits.

The Brewers took the lead with an unearned run in the first against opener Josh Taylor (0-1).

### Mariners 9, Tigers 2

In Detroit, Julio Rodríguez had three hits, including a homer, and drove in four runs as Seattle beat Detroit.

Marco Gonzales (3-0) gave up two runs on five hits and



Chicago Cubs' Seiya Suzuki hits an RBI double off St. Louis Cardinals starting pitcher Jordan Montgomery during the third inning of a baseball game in Chicago. (AP)

two walks in six innings.

Detroit starter Matthew Boyd (2-3) allowed six runs - five earned - on five hits and four walks in 1 1/3 innings.

### Athletics 9, Rangers 7, 10 innings

In Oakland, Brent Rooker hit a three-run homer off Brock Burke in the bottom of the 10th inning, rallying Oakland over Texas to snap a five-game losing streak.

Estevy Ruiz homered and drove in four runs for the Athletics. Kevin Smith and Carlos Pérez also connected for the major league-worst A's (9-31), who won on a walk-off hit for the third time this season.

This one came after Rangers pinch-hitter Adolis García delivered a go-ahead single off Zach Jackson in the top of the 10th. Former A's shortstop Marcus Semien followed with an RBI single to give Texas a two-run lead before Oakland came back in front of another small crowd of 6,575 at the Coliseum.

### Astros 5, White Sox 1

In Chicago, J.P. France pitched three-hit ball into the seventh inning in his second major league outing. José Abreu got a warm reception in his return to Chicago and Houston beat the White Sox 5-1.

The teams waited out more than a two-hour rain delay at the start. The White Sox honored Abreu with a pregame video tribute, and he responded by popping out of the dugout and pumping his fist as the crowd cheered.

Kyle Tucker got Houston's first hit when he chased starter Michael Kopech (1-4) with an RBI double in the fifth. The Astros scored two more in the sixth on back-to-back RBI doubles by Martín Maldonado and Mauricio Dubón against Gregory Santos. Yordan Alvarez homered in his second straight game when he led off the ninth with a long drive to right.

### Diamondbacks 7, Giants 5

In Phoenix, Dominic Fletcher hit his first major league homer, doubled in the go-ahead run in the sixth inning and had four RBIs to help Arizona rally past San Francisco, ending a three-game slide.

Fletcher, who made his debut April 30, raised his batting average to .457. Hitting ninth in the order, he tied the score 3-3 with a three-run homer in the second off Ross Stripling.

Fletcher singled in the fourth and then doubled off Jakob Junis (2-2) for a 5-4 lead.

## MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, May 13, (AP): Results and standings from the MLB games on Friday.

Toronto	3	Atlanta	0	Milwaukee	5	Kansas City	1
NY Yankees	6	Tampa Bay	5	Oakland	9	Texas	10
Baltimore	6	Pittsburgh	3	Cincinnati	7	Miami	4
St. Louis	8	Boston	6	NY Mets	3	Washington	2
LA Angels	5	Cleveland	4	Philadelphia	6	Colorado	v3
Houston	5	Cleveland W. Sox	1	Arizona	7	San Francisco	5
Chicago Cubs	6	Minnesota	2	LA Dodgers	4	San Diego	2

American League				National League				
East Division				East Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB	
Tampa Bay	30	10	.750	—	Atlanta	25	13	.658
Baltimore	25	13	.658	4	Philadelphia	19	19	.500
Toronto	22	16	.579	7	Miami	19	20	.487
Boston	22	17	.564	7-1/2	New York	19	20	.487
New York	22	18	.550	8	Washington	16	22	.421
Central Division				Central Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB	
Minnesota	21	18	.538	—	Milwaukee	21	17	.553
Detroit	17	20	.459	3	Pittsburgh	21	18	.538
Cleveland	17	21	.447	3-1/2	Chicago	19	19	.500
Chicago	13	27	.325	8-1/2	Cincinnati	17	21	.447
Kansas City	12	28	.300	9-1/2	St. Louis	14	25	.359
West Division				West Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB	
Texas	23	15	.605	—	Los Angeles	24	15	.615
Los Angeles	21	18	.538	2-1/2	Arizona	21	18	.538
Houston	20	18	.526	3	San Diego	19	20	.487
Seattle	19	19	.500	4	San Francisco	17	21	.447
Oakland	9	31	.225	15	Colorado	16	23	.410

## Mushfiqur 'shines' as Bangladesh edge Ireland in thrilling ODI finish

CHELMSFORD, England, May 13, (AP): Mushfiqur Rahim finished the chase that Najmul Hossain Shanto started for Bangladesh to win a thrilling one-day international against Ireland in the last over.

A delayed start due to rain reduced the match to 45 overs each, and Ireland amassed 319-6 thanks to a team-record 140 by Harry Tector.

Najmul's 117 laid the foundation in Bangladesh's reply, and when four runs were needed from the last four balls, the wicketkeeper Mushfiqur hit a boundary to give Bangladesh a 1-0 lead in the series after two matches.

The first ODI on Tuesday

was washed out. The last match, also in Chelmsford, is on Sunday.

Tamim Iqbal and Liton Das were out early in the chase and Shakib Al Hasan hit five boundaries in his 26. His dismissal brought Towhid Hridoy to the crease, and his partnership with Najmul regained the momentum for Bangladesh.

## CRICKET

Their stand of 131 in 17 overs had Bangladesh cruising. But in the same over that Najmul reached his maiden ODI hundred, Hridoy holed out for 68.

"Hridoy batted well. His intent helped me," Najmul

said.

Najmul was out after facing 93 balls by pulling Curtis Campher once too often.

After Mehidy Hasan Miraz's 19-run cameo, Bangladesh needed only 34 off 32 balls but drama ensued.

Mushfiqur barely survived a run out chance, and in the final over he hit Mark Adair straight to square leg, but the high full toss was declared a no ball. Mushfiqur ramped the extra ball over the wicket-keeper to the boundary to win the match.

The slick, cold conditions and small ground disadvantaged the bowlers, but the Ireland openers were out quickly.

## Yadav's maiden IPL hundred earns Mumbai win over Gujarat

MUMBAI, India, May 13, (AP): Suryakumar Yadav's masterful maiden Indian Premier League hundred set up Mumbai Indians' 27-run win over the high-flying Gujarat Titans.

Yadav's unbeaten 103 off 49 balls, featuring 11 fours and six sixes, propelled Mumbai to 218-5, and made the Indians the first team to register 200-plus scores five times in one season.

## CRICKET

The total held up. Gujarat could reach only 191-8 despite Rashid Khan's unbeaten 79 off 32 balls from 10 sixes and three fours.

Even after its fourth defeat, Gujarat still topped the table and was favorite to qualify for the playoffs with two games in hand. Mumbai rose to third.

"Felt like only Rashid Khan turned up from our team, batted and bowled incredibly well," Gujarat captain Hardik Pandya said. "Rashid ensured there wasn't a big dent to



Mumbai Indians Rohit Sharma plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Mumbai Indians and Royal Challengers Bangalore in Mumbai, India. (AP)

our net run-rate.

"People have spoken enough about 'Sky' (Suryakumar Yadav), one of the best batters in

T20 cricket. Really tough to set fields for him.

He kept putting pressure on our bowlers." Yadav brought the packed home crowd on

its feet at Wankhede Stadium after Ishan Kishan (31) and captain Rohit Sharma (29) provided a rollicking start of 61 in the powerplay.

Yadav smashed the fast bowlers and upped the ante when he completed his half-century off 32 balls, raising his second fifty off just 17 deliveries.

Afghanistan legspinner Rashid finished off in style when he caught Tim David off his own bowling for 4-30, but his departure left Yadav to take apart the pacers in the last three overs.

Yadav smacked Mohit Sharma for three fours and a swept six over square leg and reserved his best hit for Mohammed Shami when he smacked the seamer for a six over short third man with his powerful wrist work.

Yadav needed three off the final ball to complete his coveted century and he reached the landmark in style with his trademark swept six over square leg against Alzarri Joseph.

Mumbai fast bowler Akash Madhwal, playing in his fourth IPL game, proved a perfect impact substitute when his 3-31 helped to put Gujarat on the mat at 103-7.

# Eichel's '3-point game' helps Golden Knights top Oilers 4-3, take 3-2 lead



Florida Panthers forward Nick Cousins (21) celebrates after his winning goal against the Toronto Maple Leafs during overtime of Game 5 of an NHL hockey Stanley Cup second-round playoff series in Toronto. (AP)

## Panthers advance to East final

**LAS VEGAS, May 13, (AP): Vegas gave up three power-play goals Friday night, but the Golden Knights are one victory from the Western Conference Final largely because of their penalty kill.**

Clinging to a two-goal lead and entering the third period facing 4:36 of a major penalty against the NHL's most lethal power play, the Knights gave up just one more goal and remained in front to beat the Edmonton Oilers 4-3.

"That could've been a turning point in the game big time, and we got through it," Vegas coach Bruce Cassidy said. "Even though we lost the special teams battle three goals to two, I think in our minds we won."

Jack Eichel had a goal and two assists as the Knights took a 3-2 series lead. Mark Stone, Reilly Smith and Nic Hague also scored, and Jonathan Marchessault tied a franchise play-off record with three assists for the Golden Knights. Adin Hill had 31 saves.

### ICE HOCKEY

Connor McDavid scored two power-play goals for the Oilers, Zach Hyman had a goal and an assist and Evan Bouchard and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins each totaled two assists. Stuart Skinner was pulled late in the second period after giving up four goals on 22 shots, and Jack Campbell stopped all nine shots he faced in relief.

Game 6 is on Sunday at Edmonton, Alberta.

Both teams played without key defencemen. The Knights were without Alex Pietrangolo, who was suspended for this game for slashing Leon Draisaitl toward the end of Wednesday's Game 4. Edmonton's Darnell Nurse sat after he was suspended for instigator and misconduct penalties in the same game.

McDavid and Hyman scored in the first 10 minutes to give Edmonton a 2-1 lead. McDavid's goal occurred just 3:02 into the game to continue a trend.



Vegas Golden Knights right wing Mark Stone (61) celebrates after scoring against the Vegas Golden Knights during the second period of Game 5 of an NHL hockey Stanley Cup second-round playoff series. (AP)

The Oilers have scored within the first 6:46 in each game this season and in the first four minutes all but once. Vegas responded to the early deficits to come back and win Games 1 and 3, but never recovered in the other two of what became one-sided Oilers victories.

The Knights, however, scored three goals in 1:29 of the second period to surge in front 4-2. That was the fastest three goals in a playoff game in Vegas' six-year history.

"It's not like we don't want to score the first goal," Cassidy said. "Don't take yourself out the game in the first period. One goal shouldn't do that, whereas the other night in Edmonton, it did."

Two goals came on essentially the same power play - Stone at 5-on-3 and Smith's first of this playoffs on a 5-on-4. Hague soon after scored from near the blue line to chase Skinner, the third time this postseason he has been pulled in favor of Campbell.

"Jack came in and did his job," Oilers coach Jay Woodcroft said. "He gave us a chance to win the game, and I thought our team pushed hard in that third period. I thought that the power play did its thing right off the bat. We had numerous chances to tie it up."

That five-minute power play came just when it appeared Vegas would take all the momentum into the third period. Keegan Kolesar then shoved Edmonton's Mattias Ekholm into the boards with 20.9 seconds left. Kolesar was sent off with a game misconduct penalty.

McDavid scored 2:40 into the third period, but that was the only goal of the power play, allowing the Knights to remain ahead at 4-3. That was McDavid's seventh goal of this playoffs.

"That's the difference in the game," Hill said. "You give two there and and it's a tie game and who knows what happens from there? Our guys did a great job bearing down."

### Panthers 3, Maple Leafs 2

In Toronto, Nick Cousins scored at 15:32 of overtime and Sergei Bobrovsky made 50 saves as the Florida Panthers beat the Toronto Maple Leafs 3-2 in Game 5 of their second-round playoff series on Friday night to advance to the Eastern Conference final.

Aaron Ekblad and Carter Verhaeghe each had a goal and an assist for the Panthers.

Morgan Rielly and William Nylander scored for the Maple Leafs, who had advanced in the playoffs for the first time in 19 years when they beat Tampa Bay in the first round. Rookie goalie Joseph Woll had 41 saves in his first home playoff start.

In the extra period, Cousins buried his second goal of the playoffs off the rush short-side on Woll to send the Panthers to the conference finals for the first time since 1996.

Florida - the team with the fewest points to qualify for the postseason - won all three games in Toronto and improved to 6-1 on the road in the playoffs after also upsetting the record-setting Boston Bruins. The Panthers will next face the Carolina Hurricanes, who also beat the New Jersey Devils in five games.

# Crusaders edge Blues in Super Rugby Pacific as Hurricanes 'pile on' points

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, May 13, (AP): The Christchurch-based Crusaders scored a single try in each half to beat the Auckland-based Blues 15-3 in a pivotal match in Super Rugby Pacific on Saturday.

The match between the fourth-place Blues and fifth-place Crusaders was much-anticipated and watched by a capacity crowd of 17,000 in Christchurch. But while it was physically intense, it provided little in terms of excitement.

The Crusaders hogged possession, especially in the first half when the few shreds the Blues obtained, usually in their own half, were wastefully kicked away by flyhalf Beauden Barrett.

Possession evened out to about 60-40 in favor of the Crusaders during the second half but they retained the

advantage in terms of territory and the Blues weren't able to marshal a coherent attack.

"The game was won with our defense," Crusaders captain Scott Barrett said. "To hold them to three points was a huge testament. At times it was a bit ugly and we didn't fire too many shots. But I think we closed down their game and a lot of their firepower didn't get into the game."

Thirty minutes passed before the first points came with a try to Crusaders backrower Quinten Strange. Beauden Barrett kicked a penalty and Mo'unga another and that ended the first-half scoring.

In the third minute of the second half, winger Leicester Fainga'anuku finished a long-distance try from a wayward Blues' kick. The next 37 minutes were scoreless.

"There was plenty of defense out there tonight and some sore bodies," Blues captain Beauden Barrett said. "They just took their opportunities. There weren't many in that game. When we sped the ball up in the sec-

ond half we started to see some opportunities through the middle. But we weren't good enough to execute and finish."

The scoring action came in Wellington, where the Hurricanes scored their first try inside two minutes and added 10 more in a record 71-22 win over Moana Pasifika, their eighth win from 11 matches. The Hurricanes posted their highest score in a Super Rugby match, bouncing back from last week's shock loss to the Fijian Drua.

Three of those tries went to captain Ardie Savea, whose tireless ball-carrying kept the Hurricanes on the front foot.

"I'm proud of the boys' effort tonight," Savea said. "We knew what Moana would bring. I'm just happy the boys bounced back after last week and produced a good performance in front of our fans."

Moana Pasifika also had a try inside five minutes and were competitive at first in a match that produced 48 first-half points. The Hurricanes led 29-19 at halftime then outscored Moana Pasifika 42-3 in the second spell, adding six tries including Savea's hat trick.

The scrum was a weapon for the Hurricanes in the first half and in the second their fast passing and offloading ability was too much for Moana Pasifika.

Kini Naholo scored two tries and Billy Proctor, Jordie Barrett and Aidan Morgan also touched down for the Hurricanes in the first half. Jacob Devery, Salesi Rayasi and Caleb Delaney added to Savea's three tries in the second half.

In a later match at Sydney, the New South Wales Waratahs beat the Melbourne Rebels 38-20 after overcoming a 14-0 deficit for their third win in a row.

The Waratahs scored 14 of their points while the Rebels were a player down. Skipper Brad Wilkin and lock Josh Canham were both yellow-carded for trying to pull down Waratahs mauls.

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Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James (6) reacts after scoring during the second half of Game 6 of an NBA basketball Western Conference semi-final series against the Golden State Warriors in Los Angeles. (AP)

# Sports

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Newcastle held by Leeds in thriller as Howe accosted by fan

## Southampton relegated, United ignite push for CL qualification

### Lakers 'close out' GSW, advance to West finals

Heat back to East finals

LOS ANGELES, May 13, (AP) — Six months and a day after the Los Angeles Lakers fell to 2-10 to start the regular season, they emphatically eliminated the defending NBA champions to reach the Western Conference finals.

Although the Lakers' transformation has become increasingly incredible over the past several weeks, the primary forces behind it are LeBron James and Anthony Davis. The superstars won a ring together only three years ago, and they shared a joyous hug Friday night after they led their team to its biggest home victory in over a decade.

James had 30 points, nine rebounds and nine assists and the Lakers ended the Golden State Warriors' reign with a 122-101 victory in Game 6 of the second-round series.

#### BASKETBALL

Davis had 17 points and 20 rebounds for the seventh-seeded Lakers, who never trailed in their third home victory over Golden State in seven days. Austin Reaves scored 23 points - highlighted by a 54-footer from midcourt at the halftime buzzer - along with six assists and five rebounds while Los Angeles inexorably pulled away, weathering every attempt by Stephen Curry to will the Warriors back into it.

After the Lakers unseated the champs with remarkable style, they will face Nikola Jokic and the top-seeded Nuggets in the Western Conference finals starting Tuesday night in Denver. It's a rematch of the conference finals in the 2020 Florida bubble, won in five games by Los Angeles.

While routing the Warriors one last time, the Lakers improved to 7-0 at home since the regular season ended. They also snapped Golden State's streak of 28 playoff series with at least one road victory - an NBA-record run encompassing Curry's entire career.

James, Davis and the Lakers are the first team since 2014 to eliminate Curry's Warriors from the playoffs before the NBA Finals. Golden State has played in six of the last eight NBA Finals, missing the playoffs entirely in the other two seasons.

Curry scored 32 points while missing 10 of his 14 3-point attempts for the sixth-seeded Warriors, whose pursuit of their fifth championship in nine seasons ended with three straight road losses and an inept offensive performance by Curry's teammates in Game 6, including a 3-of-19 effort by Klay Thompson, who missed 10 of his 12 3-point attempts.

The Splash Brothers were far too dry when it mattered against the Lakers: Thompson went 10 for 36 on 3-pointers in the series' final four games, while Curry was 14 for 49.



Miami Heat guard Kyle Lowry goes up for a shot against New York Knicks center Mitchell Robinson (23) during the second half of Game 6 of an NBA basketball second-round playoff series in Miami. (AP)



Wolverhampton Wanderers' Diego Costa (left), duels for the ball with Manchester United's Aaron Wan-Bissaka during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and Wolverhampton at the Old Trafford stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

Donte DiVincenzo had a playoff-high 16 points for the Warriors, but Curry was their only starter in double figures, with the other four shooting 11 for 38.

The Lakers took charge early, survived the Warriors' rallies and blew it open in the fourth quarter with a balanced effort led by the 38-year-old James, who produced his first 30-point playoff game since the 2020 NBA Finals.

The 20-year veteran can still assert his will as forcefully as almost any elite player, and he quarterbacked the Lakers' offensive effort while Davis - who left Game 5 early after taking a shot to the head - played another stand-out defensive game.

D'Angelo Russell scored 19 points as the Lakers capably survived the third-quarter ejection of Dennis Schröder, the sparkplug guard and primary defender on Curry. Schröder had five assists and defended doggedly in his first start of the postseason for the Lakers, but the German point guard was ejected with his second technical foul on a curious call after Green pushed the ball into Schröder's face.

His absence scarcely seemed to help

the Warriors, who simply couldn't make their open shots.

Heat coach Erik Spoelstra walked into the postgame interview room, a cup of a celebratory beverage in his hand, took a seat and began explaining how difficult the journey has been for Heat.

The regular season was a struggle. They needed to survive the play-in. They were three minutes away from going home before the playoffs even started, needing a rally just to earn the right to play top-seeded Milwaukee.

All forgotten. They're in the NBA's final four - getting there as a No. 8 seed.

Jimmy Butler scored 24 points, Bam Adebayo added 23 and the Heat are headed back to the Eastern Conference finals after topping the New York Knicks 96-92 in Game 6.

Maybe for some franchises. Not for Miami. The Heat are headed there for the 10th time overall, the seventh time in the last 13 years and the third time in the past four seasons. They'll play Game 1 at either Boston or Philadelphia on Wednesday; those teams will decide their East semifinal series Sunday.

SOUTHAMPTON, England, May 13, (AP) — Southampton became the first team to be relegated from the Premier League after losing to Fulham 2-0 on Saturday, ensuring the south-coast team's 11-year stay in England's top division is coming to an end.

Southampton's fate was sealed with two games remaining of its first full season since last year's takeover by Sport Republic, an investment firm in the sports and entertainment industry run by Serbian businessman Dragan Solak.

Goals by Carlos Vinicius and Aleksandar Mitrovic, in his first game back after an eight-game ban for grabbing

a referee, earned Fulham the victory at St. Mary's stadium, where British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak - a Southampton fan - was in the stands.

Southampton is eight points from safety with games to go against Brighton and Liverpool.

Manchester United's home form looks like being enough to earn the team a return to the Champions League.

United beat Wolverhampton 2-0 for a fourth straight home win at Old Trafford in the English Premier League, with Anthony Martial and Alejandro Garnacho scoring.

Erik ten Hag's team lost its previous two games 1-0 and both were away,

against Brighton and West Ham.

United moved level on points with third-placed Newcastle and both were four clear of fifth-placed Liverpool, with all three teams having three games left. Significantly, two of United's are at home against Chelsea and Fulham.

Martial slotted home in the 32nd minute after a square ball from Brazil winger Antony to give United the lead and only an impressive display by Wolves goalkeeper Dan Bentley, making his league debut, kept the score down.

Garnacho sealed the victory after beating the offside trap to race onto Bruno Fernandes' pass and providing the finish in the fourth minute of stoppage time.

Wolves arrived at Old Trafford knowing it was safe from relegation.

Newcastle dropped more points in its push for Champions League qualification by drawing 2-2 at Leeds, which remained in the Premier League relegation zone after a thrilling game that ended with Newcastle manager Eddie Howe being accosted by a fan.

Howe wasn't hurt in the incident and said he "was struggling to make sense" of a chaotic match that saw Leeds have a penalty saved, concede two more converted by Calum Wilson and have Junior Firpo sent off in stoppage time.

Rasmus Kristensen's deflected shot in the 79th minute ultimately earned Leeds a point but the team now managed by Sam Allardyce will come away from the match with big regrets because of errors by Patrick Bamford and Firpo.

Leeds was leading 1-0 through Luke Ayling's seventh-minute goal when Bamford was given a chance to double the advantage from the penalty spot after Firpo was tripped by Joelinton.

Bamford saw his penalty saved by goalkeeper Nick Pope and, three minutes later, Newcastle striker Wilson converted a spot kick at the other end after Alexander Isak was bundled over by Max Wober.

#### SOCCER

Firpo then had a moment of madness when he raised his hand following a cross into the area, with the ball brushing his fingertips to give away a penalty.

Wilson converted that one, too, right down the middle in the 69th only for Kristensen to equalize.

Firpo was sent off for a second yellow card in the first minute of stoppage time, during which there was an alarming incident that saw a spectator walk up to Howe in the technical area and barge him in the chest before being escorted away by security.

It wasn't immediately clear whether it was a Leeds or Newcastle fan.

Leeds is one point from safety with two games left, at West Ham and at home against Tottenham.

Tottenham dropped out of contention for Champions League qualification after a 2-1 loss at Aston Villa, which moved level on points with its beaten opponent. They are fighting for berths in the two minor European competitions - the Europa League and the Europa Conference League - with Brighton, which is two points further back in eighth place but has three games in hand.

Crystal Palace beat Bournemouth 2-0 in the other game.

Taiwo Awoniyi's second goal of the day helped relegation-threatened Nottingham Forest draw with Chelsea 2-2 in the English Premier League on Saturday after Raheem Sterling's quick-fire goals at Stamford Bridge.

Awoniyi, who also netted twice last week, opened the scoring in the 13th minute with a powerful header and nodded home again just past the hour mark, shortly after Sterling equalized and put Chelsea in front with goals seven minutes apart.

The draw inched Forest closer to safety, with Steve Cooper's team in 16th place and three points above the relegation zone with two games remaining. Forest hosts Arsenal next weekend and ends its season at Crystal Palace. Chelsea is winless in its past six league games at Stamford Bridge as its disappointing season grinds toward completion. The Blues are in 11th place.

Sterling's performance was a positive development for interim manager Frank Lampard. The England forward scored from Trevor Chalobah's pass in front of the net in the 51st minute and then beat a defender to curl one home seven minutes later.

Awoniyi just needed a glancing header from Orel Mangala's pass to level the score in the 62nd.

Forest has just one win from 18 away games this season.

## Bavarians close in on title, Union on Champs League

BERLIN, May 13, (AP) — Bayern Munich captain Thomas Müller scored on a rare start as the defending champion took another step toward a record-extending 11th consecutive Bundesliga title by routing Schalke 6-0 on Saturday.

Bayern moved four points clear of Borussia Dortmund before the late game. Dortmund could restore the one-point gap by beating Borussia Mönchengladbach at home, while it must also maintain hope in Bayern dropping points in its final two games.

Bayern next plays Leipzig and Cologne, while Dortmund plays Augsburg and Mainz for its last games of the season.

Bayern missed a couple of good chances before Müller finally made the breakthrough in the 21st minute.

#### SOCCER

Müller, who is captain while Manuel Neuer works on his comeback from a broken leg, was making his first start since April 22.

"I was happy to get the 'can-opener' today. It was a brilliant feeling. The stadium exploded - and then we kept going," Müller said.

Joshua Kimmich made it 2-0 10 minutes later with a penalty awarded through VAR after Cedric Brunner caught Jamal Musiala in the face with his arm. The Schalke defender was booked and Musiala showed no lasting damage.

Serge Gnabry added two more goals in the second half. Mathys Tel added another, and Noussair Mazraoui completed the scoring in injury time.

It continued a long tradition of Bayern routing Schalke. Schalke hasn't beaten the Bavarian powerhouse in 23 league games since a victory in December 2010, with Bayern clocking up 71 goals in that run.

Union Berlin made its own big step toward Champions League qualification after winning at home over chief rival Freiburg 4-2. Union's win lifted it three points clear of fifth-placed Freiburg. The top four qualify for Europe's premier competition.



Munich's scorer Joshua Kimmich (front left), celebrates with his teammates after scoring his side's second goal during the German Bundesliga soccer match between FC Bayern Munich and FC Schalke 04 in Munich, Germany. (AP)

Sheraldo Becker set up Kevin Behrens to put Union ahead in the fifth minute, then scored the second himself in the 36th after surging past a couple of defenders and playing a one-two with Robin Knoche before shooting between Freiburg goalkeeper Mark Flekken's legs.

Becker celebrated with a Spiderman mask, for which he was booked, and he responded a minute later with another goal, again set up by Knoche.

But Vincenzo Grifo sent in a corner for Manuel Gulde to head one back for Freiburg in the 56th, then added a penalty in the 70th to ensure an exciting finale. But the outstanding Becker wasn't finished, sprinting clear after Jordan Pefok won the ball in midfield and setting up Aissa Laidouni to seal the win on a counterattack in the 80th. It was Laidouni's first goal for Union since his winter switch from Ferencvaros. Few can be as important.

Bochum climbed out of the relegation zone with a 3-2 win over Augsburg. Bochum moved a point above Schalke with two games remaining.