



# GROUNDBREAKING EFFORT SEEKS CLUES TO ORIGINS OF LIFE UAE unveils mission to asteroid belt

## Craft to investigate compounds

**DUBAI, May 30, (AP):** The United Arab Emirates unveiled plans Monday to send a spaceship to explore the solar system's main asteroid belt, the latest space project by the oil-rich nation after it launched the successful Hope spacecraft to Mars in 2020.

Dubbed the Emirates Mission to the Asteroid Belt, the project aims to develop a spacecraft in the coming years and then launch it in 2028 to study various asteroids.

"This mission is a follow up and a follow on the Mars mission, where it was the first mission to Mars from the region," said Mohsen Al Awadhi, program director of the Emirates Mission to the Asteroid Belt. "We're creating the same thing with this mission. That is, the first mission ever to explore these seven asteroids in specific and the first of its kind when it's looked at from the grand tour aspect."

### Opinion

## Abu Khaled: Even the mightiest have limits to achieve all their aspirations

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah  
Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

BEING frank without mincing any words is our policy. Whenever we spot a fault, we highlight it and call it out as it is without beating around the bush.

In this regard, when there is an official who is diligent, takes into account the trust entrusted to him, and works with conscience, we say that openly. This is what Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled is... He works silently and strives to carry out the role entrusted to him diligently. He does not shy away from the truth.

From the time he entered the arena of public affairs, the man has been distinguished by not burning the stages. He graduated and grew up the ladder until he became the CEO of the Kuwait Oil Tankers Company. Those who worked with him knew him and they knew that he always sought to give rights to their owners, and never hesitated to seek the help of national competencies.

That is why when he assumed the position of the Capital Governorate, he did not make his office a divaniya where his friends and loved ones would meet. Instead, he sought to operate on the street because he realized from day one that the Capital Governorate must be devoid of anything that would distort its aesthetics. Therefore, within a period of about three years, he was able to change the governorate, just as he made the position of governor a proper name.

There have been many remarks made about the country's internal security because some ministers were working far from the trust entrusted to them. Some of them abounded during his reign, and "connections", and some of them wanted to make the position a platform for benefiting and accumulating wealth. Others left matters to agents and officers, and for this reason, scandals abounded in various aspects.

Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled, to this day, has a different material, as he strikes with the sword of firmness against all drug dealers and smugglers. This is enough to cover up any other matter because such toxins are the mother of all crimes.

Within three years, the country began to be cleansed of the scourge of wretched smugglers. All people are equal in front of this scourge, irrespective of whether they are big or small, sheikh or influential. Here are the fruits, despite the fierce confrontation and the great difficulties faced by the minister. All sectors of the Ministry of Interior appear visible because it works firmly.

That is why, in a great confrontation of this kind, a person with determination usually manages to wade through the trials. The closest example to this is the persistent and responsible minister Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled, who sees that as the least difficult thing he goes through in order to preserve the social security of the country. Despite all his preoccupations, he does not leave any stone unturned. He follows up on everything, and does not ignore the grievances and complaints of people that are published in newspapers and social media and works to address them.

If the matter in the Ministry of Interior is like this, then he will restore prestige to the Ministry of Defense within a short period of time, rid it of commission brokers in armament deals or otherwise, and give everyone his right. He also made the ministry's institutions a source of pride for all. He sought the help of experienced people who seek to serve their country with a living conscience, and was keen about the security of the country.

These delicate authorities cannot be headed by a corrupt person, lest becoming a jungle where the mightiest rules. As for Abu Khaled, he strikes with an iron fist because he enjoys a high culture, and understands the meaning of his sensitive mission, which is the model that Kuwait needs in all sectors in order to clear the grim clouds that have been hovering over the country for quite some time.

Because of this, Abu Khaled deserves appreciation and gratitude as he continues to write a biography that many of the officials have been unable to write.

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A man hands out posters of Jordan's Crown Prince Hussein and his fiancée, Saudi architect Rajwa Alseif, during a concert at a sports stadium in Amman, Jordan, Monday, May 29, 2023. The free concert featuring well-known Arab singers, including Egyptian star Tamer Hosny, was part of the celebrations leading up to the couple's wedding later this week. Several thousand cheering and flag-waving Jordanians packed a sports stadium for a free concert in the capital of Amman as part of celebrations leading up to the kingdom's first major royal wedding in years. Crown Prince Hussein, 28, is to marry Saudi architect Rajwa Alseif, 29, on Thursday at Zahran Palace in downtown Amman, the same wedding venue previously chosen by the prince's father, King Abdullah II, and his grandfather, the late King Hussein. The nuptials come after a rough patch for the royals, including a public rift between the king and his half-brother, and are seen as a way of shoring up public support at a time of persistent economic difficulties. (AP)

### NewsWatch

**CAIRO:** A Libyan court Monday sentenced 23 suspected Islamic State group militants to death for launching deadly attacks that killed dozens of people, including Egyptian Coptic Christians. The appeals court in the western city of Misrata also sentenced 14 other militants to life in prison who were convicted on the same charges, which include destruction of police facilities and public property.

The court sentenced nine defendants to between three and 12 years in prison. It acquitted five suspects.

The court did not elaborate further details.

The Islamic State and other extremist groups exploited the chaos that engulfed Libya after the 2011 uprising that toppled and later killed long-time ruler Moammar Gaddafi. They seized the coastal city of Sirte, Gaddafi's birthplace, and other cities including Derna in eastern Libya. (AP)

**CAIRO:** Egyptian President Abdelفتاح El-Sisi and Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan agreed on Monday to immediately start upgrading diplomatic relations between the two countries and reinstating ambassadors.

The Egyptian Presidential Spokesperson Ahmad Fahmy said that the decision was taken during a phone call initiated today by President El-Sisi to congratulate President Erdogan on his election victory and winning of a new term in office.

The two leaders affirmed the deeply-rooted relations between the two countries and vowed to work for bolstering bilateral cooperation, Fahmy said.

For his part, the Turkish President expressed appreciation of President El-Sisi good gesture. (KUNA)

**BEIRUT:** Lebanese troops rescued a Saudi citizen kidnapped over the weekend in Beirut, the army said Tuesday. The man reportedly had been held for ransom.

A statement by the Lebanese military said Mushari al-Mutairi was released in a "special operation" along the Lebanon-Syria border, where the kidnappers held him hostage. It gave no further details.

Al-Mutairi was kidnapped after midnight Saturday in Beirut.

State-run Saudi TV station Al-Ekhabriya said that the kidnappers demanded a \$400,000 ransom for al-Mutairi, who works for Saudi national airlines Saudia. (AP)

**JERUSALEM:** Palestinian gunmen shot and killed an Israeli civilian on Tuesday near the entrance to a Jewish settlement in the occupied West Bank, the Israeli army said.

The Israeli military said the man was shot near the settlement of Hermesh, in the northern West Bank. Local officials identified the man as Meir Tamari, a 32-year-old resident of the settlement.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sent his condolences to the family and said forces were pursuing the gunmen "in order to settle accounts with them." Dimitar Tzantchev, the European Union's ambassador to Israel, condemned the attack, calling it a "cowardly and brutal act of violence." (AP)

The UAE became the first Arab country and the second country ever to successfully enter Mars' orbit on its first try when its Hope probe reached the red planet in February 2021. The craft's goals include providing the first complete picture of the Martian atmosphere and its layers and helping answer key questions about the planet's climate and composition.

If successful, the newly announced spacecraft will soar at speeds reaching 33,000 kilometers (20,500 miles) per hour on a seven-year journey to explore six asteroids. It will culminate in the deployment of a landing craft onto a seventh, rare "red" asteroid that scientists say may hold insight into the building blocks of life on Earth.

Organic compounds like water are crucial constituents of life and have been found on some asteroids, potentially delivered through collisions with other organic-rich bodies or via the creation of complex organic molecules in space. Investigating the origins of these compounds, along with the possible presence of water on red asteroids, could shed light on the origin of Earth's water, thereby offering valuable insights into the genesis of life on our planet.

The endeavor is a significant milestone for the burgeoning UAE Space Agency, established in 2014, as it follows up on its success in sending the Amal, or "Hope," probe to Mars. The new journey would span a distance over ten times greater than the Mars mission.

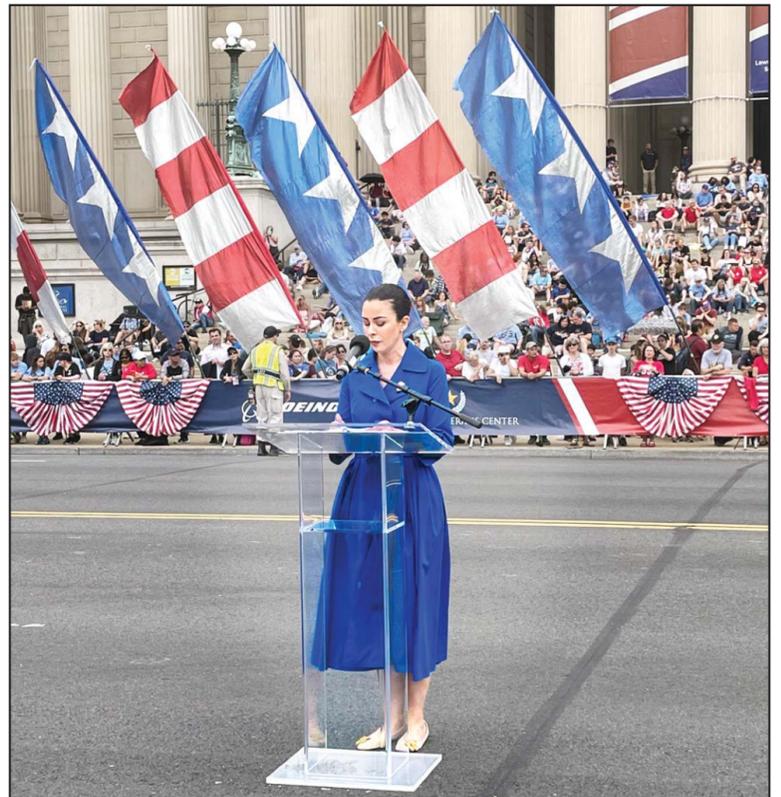
The explorer is named MBR after Dubai's ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, who also serves as the vice president and prime minister of the hereditarily ruled UAE. It will first make its way toward Venus, where the planet's gravitational pull will slingshot it back past the Earth and then Mars.

The craft will eventually reach the asteroid belt, flying as close as 150 kilometers (93 miles) to the celestial boulders and covering a total distance of 5 billion kilometers (around 3 billion miles).

In October 2034, the craft is expected to make its final thrust to the seventh and last asteroid, named Justitia, before deploying a lander over a year later. Justitia, believed to be one of only two known red asteroids, is thought to potentially have a surface laden with organic substances.

"It's one of the two reddest objects in the asteroid belt, and scientists don't really understand why it's so red," said Hoor AlMaazmi, a space science researcher at the UAE space agency. "There are theories about it being originally from the Kuiper Belt and where there's much more red objects there. So that's one thing that we can study because it has the potential for it to be water rich as well."

The MBR Explorer will deploy a landing craft to study the surface of Justitia that will be fully developed by private UAE start-up companies. It may lay the groundwork for possible future resource extraction from asteroids to eventually support extended human missions in space - and maybe even the UAE's ambitious goal of building a colony on Mars by 2117.



Kuwaiti Ambassador to the US Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah delivers a speech during the National Memorial Day celebration. — See Page 2

### Day by Day

IF YOU are busy destroying the life of others, you will not find time to build yourself. The swindlers who are busy making plans how to destroy others end up destroying themselves.

In the end people who seek to destroy others end up committing suicide and killing everyone close to them. These swindlers set their eyes on the dates of the Levant or the grapes of Yemen.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

### Iran blames fluctuations

## 'IAEA inquiry closed'

TEHRAN, May 30, (AP): Iran's state-run news agency claimed Tuesday that international inspectors had closed off two lines of inquiry they had over Tehran's nuclear program ahead of a scheduled quarterly report by the United Nations' nuclear watchdog.

The Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency, however, did not respond to questions over the report published by Iran's state-run IRNA news agency.

Citing "knowledgeable sources," IRNA said that the IAEA had closed off its inquiry over the recent discovery of traces of uranium enriched to 83.7% purity. A quarterly IAEA report in March said inspectors found the particles in Iran's underground Fordo nuclear site, further raising nonproliferation concerns as weapons-grade material is enriched to 90%.

Iran had blamed "unintended fluctuations" for the discovery at Fordo nuclear site. The Islamic Republic has been producing uranium enriched to 60% purity - a level which nonproliferation experts say Tehran does not need for civilian use.

Meanwhile, IRNA reported that the IAEA had also closed off its investigation of traces of man-made uranium found at Marivan, near the city of Abadeh, some 525 kilometers (325 miles) southeast of Tehran. Analysts had repeatedly linked Marivan to Iran's secret military nuclear program and accused Iran of conducting high-explosives tests there in the early 2000s.

The U.S., the IAEA and experts had said Iran gave up its military nuclear program in 2003. Iran has long insisted its atomic program is for peaceful purposes.

In June 2022, Iran alleged the uranium traces found at Marivan came from "sabotage" by a third country. The IAEA said in its report at the time that Tehran offered no evidence to support.



Mohsen Al Awadhi, Director of UAE Space Missions Department, (1st right), and Hoor AlMaazmi UAE, space science researcher, take part at a press conference revealing the latest news about the Emirates Mission to the Asteroid Belt, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Monday, May 29, 2023. The United Arab Emirates Space Agency unveiled plans Monday to build and send a spacecraft on an exploration of the main Asteroid Belt. Dubbed the Emirates Mission to the Asteroid Belt, the latest project by the oil-rich nation aims to develop a craft over six years and then launch it in 2028 to study various different asteroids. (AP)

## Sudan sides to hold truce

CAIRO, May 30, (AP): Sudan's warring sides on Monday agreed to extend a shaky cease-fire in their battle for control of the country, after two key international mediators signaled impatience with persistent truce violations.

The five-day extension of the cease-fire between Sudan's military and its rival, the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, was announced in a joint statement late Monday by Saudi Arabia and the United States.

"The extension will provide time for further humanitarian assistance, restoration of essential services, and discussion of a potential longer-term extension," the statement said.

The development came after both Riyadh and Washington on Sunday called out both warring sides for specific breaches of a week-long truce that is to expire Monday evening rather than issue another general appeal to respect agreements.

Sudan descended into chaos after fighting erupted in mid-April between the military, led by Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, and the RSF, commanded by Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo. The fighting has killed at least 866 civilians and wounded thousands more, according to the Sudan Doctors' Syndicate, which tracks civilian casualties. The toll could be much higher, the medical group said.

The conflict has turned the capital, Khartoum, and other urban areas into battlefields, forcing nearly 1.4 million people to flee their homes to safer areas inside Sudan or crossing into neighboring countries. Early on, foreign governments raced to evacuate their diplomats and nationals as thousands of foreign residents scrambled to get out of the African nation.

For weeks, the United States and Saudi Arabia have been mediating talks between the military and the RSF in the Saudi port city of Jeddah. So far, there have been seven declared cease-fires, all of which have been violated to some extent.

In Sunday's statement, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia noted that the military continued to carry out airstrikes, while the RSF was still occupying people's homes and seizing properties. Fuel, money, aid supplies and vehicles belonging to a humanitarian convoy were stolen, with theft occurring both in areas controlled by the military and by the RSF, the statement said.

Alan Boswell of the International Crisis Group think tank said the joint statement was meant to pressure both sides into greater compliance, at a time when the U.S. and Saudi Arabia don't have an alternative for the Jeddah talks.

"There is still no clear path to a successful cease-fire," said Boswell, who is project director for the Horn of Africa at the Crisis Group. "It's becoming clearer by the day that mediators can't afford to wait for a stable cease-fire to kick-start the wider political process needed to find a way out of the conflict."

Kholood Khalid, a Sudanese analyst with the Khartoum-based Confluence Advisory think tank, said the mediators' attention has apparently turned to negotiating an agreement on a cease-fire that's aimed at relaunching the political process.

"But with no consequences to cease-fire violations and the maintenance of flawed mediation logics, there seems to be little hope for success on those," she said.

The conflict has come to a stalemate as neither side has been able to deliver a decisive blow.

Cameron Hudson, a former U.S. diplomat, said selectively observed cease-fires and slow-moving talks in Jeddah are likely to continue.

## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 03:16    Asr ..... 15:20  
 Sunrise... 04:50    Maghrib .. 18:42  
 Zohr ..... 11:45    Isha ..... 20:12

# Local

**Expected weather for the next 24 hours:**  
**By Day:** Hot and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind to northerly wind with speeds of 15-40 km/h.

## Weather

**By Night:** Rather hot and partly cloudy with light to light northwesterly wind with speeds of 08-30 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	42	31

Location	Temp
Kuwait Airport	43
Abdaly	43
Jahra	44
Salmiyah	41
Ahmadi	41
Nuwaib	44
Wafra	44

BIOMETRIC/FINGERPRINT APPOINTMENT: <https://meta.e.gov.kw/En/>

## Vote solicitors play prominent role in electoral process: experts

# 'Poll candidates must highlight disabled individuals rights, needs'

By Muneera Al-Rabea and Sultan Al-Ajmi

KUWAIT CITY, May 30, (KUNA): Experts concerned with the Disability affairs urged the members of the upcoming National Assembly to fulfill the hopes of people with disabilities and meet their needs to overcome the obstacles that they face.

In separate statements, the experts told KUNA that people with disabilities place a lot of hope on the parliament to enact legislations that concerning their vital needs.

In this regard, Director of the Legal Affairs Department and spokesperson for the Public Authority for Disability Affairs Mubarak Al-Bdah said that the authority guarantees the rights of people with disabilities to participate in politics just as equally as others, through candidacy or choosing their representatives.

The authority's keen to improve their participation in the elections and make it easier for them to enter polling centers in partnership with civil society institutions, noted Al-Bdah, adding that the authority seeks amending laws concerning people with disabilities.

For his part, Sign Language Interpreter Bader Karam called on the parliament candidates to have an interpreter in the election campaigns for people with disabilities, to better communication with them.

Karam pointed to the necessity of providing service offices for people with disabilities in all state institutions, to guarantee their rights as equals to others.

For her part, Vice President of the Board of Directors of Harek Association Eman Al-Khalidi said that the association is interested in delivering the demands of people with disabilities to the parliament candidates.

Al-Khalidi expressed Harek's hope, the first public benefit association concerned with the affairs of people with mobility disabilities, that the next parliament raises the issues of people with disabilities and their demands.

For her part, Vice President of the Kuwait Association for Follow-up of Disabled Issues, Kholoud Al-Ali said that the association seeks to amend the law for people with disabilities as well as the law for Kuwaiti women that takes care of a disabled person from a non-Kuwaiti husband, in addition to seeking to achieve their demands as well as

their parents'.

Al-Ali pointed out the necessity for the association to communicate with state institutions and decision-makers in explaining the rights of people with disabilities and integrating them with society in schools and government jobs, especially that they are capable of creativity, and success.

As democratic life began in Kuwait, election campaigns' vote solicitors play a prominent role in gathering support to their respective candidate.

This role require the person to be of particular social and political status.

Generally, solicitors follow the program and the political tendencies of the candidate to communicate with possible voters regarding issues of importance to them, making it a part of the candidates' electoral program to increase the chance of winning.

Traditionally, such individuals were usually of the candidates' family, however, things changed as we reached the age of social media and technology, as some started turning to the services of social media celebrities.

### Political

In this context, political social studies researcher Dr. Mohammad Al-Ajmi told KUNA on Tuesday that both men and women key figures play a huge role in the election process, saving time and efforts for candidates.

Key figures must have an effective personality with the ability to convince people with the candidates' ideas and program, he noted.

On his part, head of a media institution Mubarak Al-Qinae noted that candidates are nowadays using technology to enhance their media efforts, to reach the largest numbers of people through social media.

Sometimes, their online campaign is ran by inexperienced people in the field, rather than by specialized companies, resulting in an unprofessional content, he explained.

Meanwhile, political analyst Essa Al-Omairi said that the role of key figures does not only lie in visiting people and communicating with them but he/she has to have certain administrative skills to lead the campaign.

Moreover, media figure Nassar Al-Khalidi said that some key figures these days are pressuring people into casting their votes in exchange of favors, which is negative turn.



Kuwaiti float participating in National Memorial Day parade.

KUNA photo

## Hike salaries of poor citizens, says ex-MP

### Arrest warrants out for 2 candidates

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh

Arab Times Staff and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, May 30: Former MP and Fourth Constituency candidate Marzouq Al-Khalifa said increasing the citizens' salaries must be the top priority of the government at the beginning of the 2023 parliamentary term.**

He pointed out that it is not true the citizens are prosperous, adding this unrealistic image is promoted by traders and he found out the truth while he was in jail.

He will support the government if it cooperates with the Parliament in addressing important issues; otherwise, he and his colleagues will adopt a strong position against the failure of the government.

He disclosed that influential parties pushed for the dissolution of the 2022 Parliament, mainly due to the bill on amending the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry Law.

### Candidate

He expects former Parliament Speaker and Second Constituency candidate Marzouq Al-Ghanim and the latter's party to disrupt the next legislative session, but he and his colleagues will foil such attempts through the strict enforcement of the National Assembly Law.

Former MP and Fourth Constituency candidate Shuaib Al-Muwaizri pointed out that Kuwait is the only country wishing for the return of the old days and no one knows where it is headed.

He also stressed the need to combat corruption, calling on all eligible voters to participate in the upcoming election to block the corrupt who are keen on causing rifts in the State.

Former MP and First Constituency candidate Adel Al-Damkhi asserted in a recent campaign with the theme, "We will never give up," that corruption, backwardness, damaged streets

and former Speaker Al-Ghanim will not come back.

He intends to continue protecting public funds and unmask the corrupt if he wins in the election. He also promised to support the bills on granting more freedoms as long as they are in line with the Islamic Sharia Law.

### Respect

Second Constituency candidate Faleh Al-Hajri affirmed the people respect most authorities in the country, except the legislative and executive authorities. He pointed out that although the legislature represents the nation's will, most of the parliaments in the last 20 years were either dissolved or nullified.

He added His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah must be aware of the citizens' suffering and present his vision on addressing urgent issues and increasing salaries.

Meanwhile, the Public Prosecution has issued arrest warrants against two candidates contesting the parliamentary elections from the Fifth Constituency, following reports of vote-buying, reports Al-Qabas daily.

One of the candidates is believed to be a former MP. The main culprit is believed to be a Pakistani man who is well experienced in the vote-buying scandals.

The daily has learned from an informed source that the Investigation Department of the Ministry of Interior contacted the suspects and asked them to surrender themselves based on the summons of the Public Prosecution.

In the meantime, the Public Prosecution has released three defendants who were detained in the vote-buying case who are "a citizen and two expatriates," and decided to continue the detention of 7 others pending a hearing in the case.

The source said among the detainees, are the alleged main culprit, the Pakistani, the brother of a candidate and 5 others.

## Memorial Day marked

### Lasting bond between Kuwait, the US: envoy

WASHINGTON, May 30, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ambassador to the US Sheikh Al-Zain Al-Sabah stressed on Monday the "lasting bond of friendship and loyalty" between Kuwait and the US as the nation marks National Memorial Day.

In remarks at the National Memorial Day Parade, Sheikh Al-Zain said, "It is a pleasure to be given the opportunity to represent my country, The State of Kuwait, in a ceremony to honor the sacrifices of the United States Armed Forces."

She added, "I stand before you today, representing the good people of my nation and reaffirming that we will never forget the human stories of service and sacrifice as exemplified by the brave men and women of the US armed forces on or off the battlefields."

"Trust that we cherish and hold dear the strong and lasting bond of friendship and loyalty between our two nations," she noted.

### Forged

She continued, "It is a bond forged by war, strengthened by peace, and further cultivated by mutual trust and respect."

Furthermore, Sheikh Al-Zain mentioned the soon to be constructed Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial, saying, "A special memorial is getting ready to be constructed in the heart of the US capital, Washington, to further commemorate the efforts of our American heroes," which is scheduled to be unveiled in 2025.

Kuwait participated in the parade, which is the largest Memorial Day event in the nation, with a float that passed on Constitution Avenue to convey deep appreciation for those who served and those who fell in the fight to liberate the country.

Over 5,000 people march in the parade, which is considered the largest Memorial Day event in the nation. It is a day "to honor, remember and pay our respects to all those who served and sacrificed, on and off the battlefield."

## Senior Awqaf officials probed in funds scam

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) has referred some Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs supervisors and other employees to the Public Prosecution on suspicion of misappropriating public money, reports Al-Rai daily.

Nazaha affirmed the continuation of investigations into valid corruption reports, indicating the role of whistleblowers in combating corruption is highly appreciated and all the necessary measures are being taken to give them full protection.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Justice has notified the public that the message spread on some social media platforms about the need for citizens to complete the travel declaration transaction for domestic workers in the Documentation Department if they are traveling with the workers is incorrect, reports Al-Rai daily.

The ministry stressed that citizens are not required to complete such a transaction in case they intend to travel with the domestic workers under their sponsorship.

In another development, Finance Minister Manaf Al-Hajri recently appointed some ministry officials reports Al-Rai daily.

The appointees include Saad Akla Al-Alati as Assistant Undersecretary for the General Budget Affairs Sector, Kholoud Badr Al-Mutawa as Assistant Undersecretary for the Administrative Affairs Sector, Mishaal Mandil Al-Qahs as Assistant Undersecretary for the Warehouse Affairs and Procurement Systems Sector, and Fahd Samir Al-Mutawa as Assistant Undersecretary for the Public Accounting Affairs Sector.



PM Diwan photo  
 His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah poses for a picture with the guests.

## Pledge to help disabled citizens

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, received at Bayan Palace today, His Excellency the Minister of Social Affairs, Women's Affairs and Childhood Mai Jassem Al-Baghli, who was introduced to His Highness by the Director General of the Public Authority for the Affairs of People with Disabilities, Dr. Bibi Hamad Al-Amiri and the Deputy Director Dr. Nahed Abdul-Razzaq Al-Ateeqi, General of the Commission, on the occasion of their appointment to their new positions.

His Highness the Prime Minister

stressed the importance of facilitating all transactions of citizens with disabilities and providing them with all means of comfort by establishing special offices to receive them in the state ministries to overcome any difficulties they face.

His Highness pointed out the necessity of coordinating the Ministry of Social Affairs with various government agencies, each according to its competence, to cooperate with the Public Authority for Affairs of Persons with Disabilities and to harness all capabilities to meet the requirements of brothers and sisters with disabilities. (KUNA)

## 'Tight control on supply branches'

### 'Co-ops have no right to penalize'

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: Head of the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies Ali Al-Fahad affirmed the existence of tight control over the automated system in the catering branches of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Al-Fahad said, "The role of cooperative societies in terms of food supplies is limited to the roles of managing distribution, annual inventory and selling according to adherence to the quotas prescribed for each person on a monthly basis.

The operation related to selling these materials in any location do not fall within the responsibilities of any cooperative society branch that is used to disburse items through it, especially after leaving the branch in all regions.

The tightening of penalties for those who attempt to export these various types of food supplies outside the country falls on the General Administration of Customs, and for those who sell them in marketing outlets locally falls on the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The cooperative societ-

ies have no role in prosecuting any person who is later caught selling them, especially after they come out of the custody of cooperative societies. Some dispose of their rations willingly and give them to another person so that the latter sells them.

This matter is what explains their sale in some parallel commercial markets, which the Ministry of Commerce and Industry initiates to violate it, and take the necessary measures against it. The same thing is repeated when these supplies are seized at the ports by customs officers, as it is forbidden to export them outside the country.

There are other roles for cooperative societies with regard to supply branches that are subject to the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce. They include equipping the branch according to the requirements of the latter in terms of infrastructure, security means, internal control, quality of storage, and connecting computers to the ministry's network, as well as equipping the branch with trained workers to transport food supplies from supply companies, and from mills to the supply branch daily, and to communicate with them and the rest of the suppliers of supply commodities, with the aim of providing the branch with the quantities and items that are sufficient to spend on the rations for citizens during each month without shortage of any item or ration for any citizen."



Ali Al-Fahad

## Step towards resolving crisis

### Embassy's shelter house closed

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: As a step towards resolving the crisis of Filipino workers in Kuwait, informed sources told Al-Qabas daily that the Philippine embassy's shelter housing runaway domestic workers has been evacuated in cooperation and coordination between the Philippine embassy, the Public Authority for Manpower workforce and the residency affairs investigation department of the Ministry of Interior, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The sources said about 415 OFWs (Overseas Filipino Workers) were

in the shelter affiliated to the Philippine embassy, and they were all transferred to the shelter belonging to PAM and will be transferred to the deportation center in 3 batches, who will then be deported to their country in less than 48 hours.

The sources added that the deportation prison has been on high alert in preparation for receiving the first batch of the Filipinos, saying after carrying out all procedures, including examining and photographing them, and ending all other legal procedures they will be deported.

# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## 'Innovative ways vital for candidates to target young generation'

"IN RECENT years, there have been clear efforts by governments in some of the neighboring GCC countries to engage youth in politics, motivated by the recognition of the need to address the aspirations and concerns of the region's growing youth," columnist **Dr. Randa Diab Bahman** wrote for *Al-Anba* daily.

"Many governments in the GCC countries have implemented Gulf cooperation initiatives such as youth councils, forums and leadership programs with the aim of providing platforms for young people to express their views, contribute to policy discussions and participate in political activities.

"However, there is still a noticeable lack of youth attendance during elections, especially when compared with older age groups, and there are many factors that may contribute to this. In the first place, most young people may have limited knowledge of the political process and candidates.

"They are completely oblivious to the importance of their participation. In contrast, insufficient political education efforts mean a lack of interest.

"In addition, commitment and effort including studying candidates and understanding how to choose a decent leader, the younger generation seems to adopt an attitude such as, "This is not my interests", it's just their parents.

"It's important to note that this is a huge missed opportunity for candidates, as young voter turnout can vary widely depending on campaign efforts, especially if the candidates' agenda can be aligned with sustainability and future expectations.

"It is recommended that these candidates target the broad youth generation, while finding innovative ways to reach them. In addition to all this, education systems should be discussed frequently in order to keep students engaged, just like the subject of history imposed by the ministry enriches students with knowledge about Kuwait's past politics and leadership must be built into the pedagogy of classrooms in order to study not only the past, but also the future.

"Moreover, news outlets must also practice proactive approaches to reach this audience in a way that they can understand. As a general agreement, even some young people who are professional Arabic speakers find it difficult to understand the difficult terminology used in the scope of the elections.

"For example, one of the female candidates recently used a translation of what she said in English, which was warmly welcomed by the new generation. "General tips for choosing the right representative of the community should include looking at what does the candidate do, not just what he writes on paper, does the candidate really care about the ideologies or the issues he preaches? And do they actually prove that before they get into the election season?"

"Engaging young people, even long before they reach voting age, is as essential as teaching them mathematics at this stage, if we are to hope for a sustainable future."



Dr Bahman

Also:

"First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled expressed what stirred the hearts of the Kuwaiti people regarding what was said by the Philippine embassy inside the country, stressing that Kuwait's sovereignty and the dignity of its people are a red line, and he ordered to continue suspension of issuance of visas for Filipino workers," columnist **Tarek Hamadeh** wrote for *Al-Anba* daily.

"A call for a person's commitment to the values, culture, and laws of the society wherever he came from should be the norm.

"Everyone is welcome, and yes, any embassy has the right to support its citizens, but support does not mean incitement, breaking the law, and rebellion against the host nation.

"We do not deny the occurrence of transgressions by some citizens towards expatriate workers, which are unacceptable.

"There is a large segment of citizens who are committed to providing a good environment for employment, including domestic workers, and families deal with them in the best way and as a member of the family, and there are many examples of this.

"The Ministry of Interior did well by identifying the abuses committed by the Philippine embassy to explain to the world why Kuwaiti has taken this position, as the abuses included instructing domestic labor recruitment offices to intervene in case domestic workers facing trouble under the pretext that the worker had completed his contract, and pressuring the domestic labor recruitment offices to accommodate workers in private housing, although laws and regulations in Kuwait prevent these procedures.

"This is in addition to obliging offices to search for runaway domestic workers and play the role of the competent state institutions, pressure employers when renewing work contracts with new and strange contractual clauses, and contact citizens and labor recruitment offices to visit the embassy without a legal basis, as if it is an authority that must be respected.

"The silence on this blatant transgression, just as this position is a message to the embassies that have large communities, and just as Kuwait respects the laws and sovereignty of any country, it must be reciprocal.

"Thank you first deputy premier for this strict stance and insistence on the need for the Philippine embassy to admit that it has committed violations and transgressions and that laws, decisions and regulations in force in Kuwait have been violated the diplomatic norms not recognized between countries."

"In recent years, we have learned that the wheel of life will not stop because the government resigned or the National Assembly cannot convene for one reason or another! This means we do not need a government that does not rule, or an assembly that does not monitor or legislate!" columnist **Naji Al-Zaid** wrote for *Al-Jarida* daily.

"Theoretically, this could be a reflection of the reality in which we live and accustomed to ... We are accustomed to underdeveloped education, as well as deficient health and social services ... We are accustomed to repeating the danger of the spread of drugs ... We are accustomed to the continuity of violent crimes, thefts and indifference to the law.

"Likewise, forgery crimes continue without a deterrent. This means corruption is not confined to one group or personality, it is rather a recurrent corruption and it could be chronic.

"All this happens because the law is applied according to mood. It is not applied on everyone. This is in addition to the absence of justice, equality and a straight ruler for measurement through which everyone is equal.

"In order for society to rise from these recurring setbacks, we must see a glimmer of light that carries reform, not just call for it in theory! We are fervently hoping for a breakthrough that carries actual and comprehensive reform, instead of unfulfilled promises!"

"The 'Sahl' application is defined as a unified government platform for the electronic services of government agencies, through which citizens and expatriates can avail services and complete transactions easily and quickly, according to distinguished quality standards for providing a new experience in completing government transactions," columnist **Dr Bahija Bahbahani** wrote for *Al-Qabas* daily.

"This application was launched during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, as the government aimed for digital transformation to end paper transactions in government agencies, and in compliance with the precautionary measures taken by the country at the time.

"However, the approval of the 'My Identity' application is a prerequisite for using the governmental electronic platform. It requires that the user's current photo taken through the mobile phone camera matches the photo in his civil identification card.

"This is a problem for the elderly, as the photos in their civil IDs are old, hence, they do not match the current photos. Their features have changed a lot since their youth, considering that renewal of the civil ID for citizens and expatriates over the years does not require updating the photo in the card! At present, the 'My Identity' application is ineffective for the elderly.

"The elderly must visit the civil information service centers to complete the application on their mobile phones. This is necessary for them, because they have residence permits for domestic workers, some of whom use cars under the employers' names. These employers are required to renew car registration books, which necessitate using the 'My Identity' application. Therefore, the elderly - most of whom suffer from chronic diseases and move with difficulty or use the wheelchair - must go to the Public Authority for Civil Information kiosk, many of which are located in banks."

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary



Heads of the two delegations exchanging mementos.

KFF photo

### Kuwaiti team visits CBRN facility

A Kuwaiti military and security delegation visited on Tuesday NATO's Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defense Centre of Excellence to enhance security cooperation between Kuwait and the Czech Republic and to discuss (Train the Trainer) national project.

The delegation also visited the Czech ministry of Defense headquarters as well as centers, institutes and exhibitions specialized in the CBRN field, said Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) in a press release.

The delegation comprised of representatives from the Defense ministry, the National Guard and KFF. (KUNA)



KUNA photo

The exercise included surveying and disinfecting marine moorings for filling oil tankers.

### Kuwait, France joint exercise

The Kuwaiti Naval Force carried out the 'Arabian Breeze' exercise, with the participation of the divers battalion, the explosives disposal branch of the land force, and the divers units of the French forces stationed in Abu Dhabi, from May 25 June 8, 2023.

The Ministry of Defense said in a press statement on Monday, that the ex-

ercise included surveying and disinfecting marine moorings for filling oil tankers. It indicated that the exercise aims to raise combat readiness, exchange experiences between the two sides, and train on the latest technologies used in the field of clearing naval mines and disposing of explosives.

Plan to cost KD28 million: DGCA

## Air navigation services upgrade

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: According to reliable sources, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has developed an integrated plan to develop the air navigation services and equipment sector at Kuwait International Airport by studying three contracts worth more than KD 28 million, in preparation for their signing soon, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

The sources explained that DGCA received bids for three practices that allow Kuwait International Airport to enjoy the finest air navigation and communications systems available, especially with the increase in the number of flights and passengers through the airport, ensuring the safety, efficiency and regularity of air traffic, and preserving the safety of lives and properties of more than 15 million passengers, yearly.

The first contract is for the design, manufacture, supply, installation and operation of training, warranty, maintenance and technical support services for the advanced guidance and control system of surface

traffic at the airport. The value of the contract is KD 12.9 million.

As for the second contract, its value is KD 8.5 million. It is concerned with designing, manufacturing, supplying, installing, operating and providing training, warranty, maintenance and technical support services for a group consisting of -

System No. 1: Wind Shear Early Warning System (LIWAS)

System No. 2: Airstrip Disturbance Detection System with Consulting

System No. 3: Integrated Doppler Weather Radar Network (CDWRN) system at Kuwait International Airport and across the country

As for the third contract, its value amounts to KD 6.7 million. It is intended for the design, manufacture, supply, installation, operation and provision of training, warranty, maintenance and technical support services for the Surface Observation System (ASOS) and the Meteorological System (AMS).

## 'Exam cheats to face law'

Strict steps taken to prevent negative phenomenon

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The Ministry of Education affirmed that it will not hesitate to implement legal procedures in the event of any negative phenomena affecting the integrity of the year-end exams, reports *Al-Jarida* daily.

In a press statement, the official spokesperson of the Ministry of Education Ahmad Al-Wahida expressed appreciation for the cooperation and response of the Ministry of Interior in this aspect.

He explained that the year-end exams in intermediate and secondary schools are proceeding as per the prepared plan and under direct follow-up of the Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr. Hamad Al-Adwani.

Strict administrative measures have been implemented to prevent any negative phenomenon that may occur and affect the conduct of exams or their results.

The leaders and officials of the ministry have been following up the progress of the committees on the ground on a daily basis.

Reports are submitted directly to the minister to follow up the process closely with strict application of the regulations without complacency or laxity towards any individual or collective cases that obstruct the progress of the examination process.

The ministry's procedures in following up the examination committees, since their launch on May 23, have been met with great satisfaction in the educational field from students and teachers who praised the good organization and the reduction of negative phenomena that appeared previously.

Al-Wahida highlighted the positive responses from the students' parents, which reflects the ministry's keenness to come up with realistic results that reflect the students' real academic ability and give each student his right in order to maintain the quality of education and the outputs of the Ministry of Education.

He stressed the keenness to ensure a comfortable atmosphere for students both mentally and physically in the examination halls, as well as to provide them with all amenities.

### 'Collect 217,000 Civil IDs in self-service machines'

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) has advised the concerned citizens and expatriates to immediately claim their civil identification cards through the self-service machines, reports *Al-Qabas* daily quoting an official source from the authority.

The source revealed that 217,000 civil IDs are currently in 96 self-service machines, indicating the authority is studying procedures to address the problem of the accumulation of cards in self-service machines for months.

He said the authority is considering the possibility of imposing fine on those who do not take their civil IDs within the specified period or destroy the cards if they remain unclaimed within a certain period.

He added these measures will contribute to the ongoing efforts to expedite the issuance of civil IDs and linking it to the renewal of residency permits.

PACI office is open from Sunday to Thursday. The new working hours of PACI is 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

### Other Voices

## Differences between two Cassation Court verdicts

By Ahmad alsarraf

At the end of last week, the Court of Cassation issued a verdict to restore the nationality to a group of citizens and more such verdicts are expected to be issued in favor of some individuals.

The recent verdicts caused some confusion because of the fact that the Board of Courts of Cassation issued a decision one year back stating that judging the cases concerning citizenship is not part of the judiciary tasks since it falls within the jurisdiction of the sovereignty authority.

I consulted a specialist friend who considered my confusion and stating that both rulings are correct namely the one issued last week by the Court of Cassation and the one issued one year back by the Board of Courts of Cassation.

In the past, there were disagreements between the different heads of the discriminatory departments. There is a head of a department who believes that nationality issues, especially withdrawals, are not a matter of sovereignty, and that his department has the right to decide on them. Other heads of departments see the opposite. Therefore, it was necessary to unify the position of the different circles of discrimination on this issue. Therefore, the "General Commission for Discrimination Chambers, the Commission for Unifying Principles," met and ruled that all nationality issues are acts of sovereignty.



alsarraf

Meanwhile, a group of nationality cases, the number of which is not known, were being considered by the courts, and one of them reached the Cassation circuit headed by Counselor Muhammad Al-Sayed Youssef Al-Rifai, who is a supporter of the principle that cases of withdrawal of nationality are subject to judicial oversight.

Upon examining the case file, it was found that the Court of First Instance had ruled to restore the nationality of the plaintiffs. As for the Court of Appeal, it ruled to annul the ruling of the Court of First Instance, and ruled that it lacks state jurisdiction, meaning that it is not competent as a court to consider the application or the case, and this prompted Counselor Al-Rifai to return the case to appeal to change its ruling.

Thus, the case returned to appeal, and then to the counsel of Al-Rifai in Cassation, who decided to postpone the judgment in it pending the issuance of the ruling of the "Cassation Chambers Authority", which was issued indicating that nationality decisions are acts of sovereignty, and the judiciary has no right to interfere in it, by earning, withdrawing, overturning or re-establishing and so the matter ended, and the door was closed.

Later on, the case came back to Al Refai who decided to adjourn the ruling until the decision of the Board of Courts of Cassation is issued. Afterwards, it was decided that the cases which have been heard by the court before the issuance of the decision of the Board of Courts of Cassation not to be subject of that decision since the cases have been filed earlier than the issuance of the decision. The case which was judged last week is one of those cases.

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# HH Crown Prince receives credentials of newly-appointed envoys



Ambassador of Philippines



Ambassador of Malaysia



Ambassador of Malta

## '4,500 scholarship seats allocated'

Move aims at disbursing national labor subsidy

**KUWAIT CITY, May 30:** The Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education, Lamia Al-Melhem, announced between 4,000 and 4,500 seats are available for students on foreign scholarship for the next academic year 2023-2024, reports Al-Rai daily.

In a statement to reporters after the tour of the headquarters of the "Guide Me" campaign in the Avenues Mall, Al-Melhem indicated that "the ministry recently announced the scholarship plan for the next academic year, which included new specializations, most notably immunology and pathology in Australia, in addition to expanding to offer specializations in new countries" such as the Department of Aeronautical Engineering, Speech Science and Radiology.

She stated that the campaign was launched last Thursday, through the ministry's social media department, in addition to the establishment of a center in the Avenues Mall, to respond to students and parents' queries about foreign missions, calling on all students to visit the campaign center to get answers to their queries.



Al-Melhem

She stressed that in the interest of higher education students this campaign will continue until the first of next June, in order to achieve the desired goal.

For her part, Wafaa Al-Sarraf, Assistant Undersecretary for Scholarships, Equations and Cultural Relations Affairs, revealed the dispatch of scholarships to many foreign countries, most notably the United States of America,

Canada, France and other countries, while Arab countries, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Emirates and others.

She said, the "Direct Me" campaign aims to guide students and introduce them to the scholarship system and the services that are provided to students, and I invite students to read the scholarship regulations before deciding to study abroad.

For her part, Wesal Al-Zamil, Media Adviser to the Minister of Education and Higher Education, confirmed that the ministry is keen to organize such campaigns for high school graduates to direct them to the right path, and to know the mechanism for admission to scholarships.

**Labor subsidy:** First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled has asked the Council of Ministers to amend Resolution Number 391 of 2001 in order to disburse the national labor subsidy for owners of independent and small enterprises specified by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry; provided that the owners are 21 years old and above, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) affirmed that the ministry is keen on empowering youths, generating job opportunities for them and revitalizing the local economy through youth competencies. This is one of the Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled's pro-reform steps towards addressing the lopsided demographic structure issue and to develop the local labor market.

PAM affirmed that the directive is in line with Kuwait's vision to increase the percentage of nationals employed in the private sector by encouraging citizens to go into entrepreneurship through independent and micro enterprises; generate opportunities for Kuwaiti youths; and create an atmosphere that stimulates creativity, innovation and a competitive work environment which encourages the youths to be self-employed and make it easier for them to start their business.

**KUWAIT CITY, May 30, (KUNA):** His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Tuesday the credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador of the Philippines Jose Almodovar Cabrera III, Ambassador of Malaysia Alaeddin

bin Mohammad Noor, Ambassador of Malta Dr. George Saeed Zammit.

Furthermore, His Highness received the credentials of Ambassador of the Philippines Jose Almodovar Cabrera III, Ambassador of Malaysia Alaeddin



Ambassador of Chad Taher Al-Nadif Khater.

KUNA photos

## Municipality, Mol joint panel meets

### 'Move to facilitate voting process according to an integrated plan'

**KUWAIT CITY, May 30, (KUNA):** Acting Director General of Kuwait Municipality Saud Al-Dabous affirmed, Tuesday, that all capabilities will be harnessed for the voting process in the 2023 National Assembly elections, in order to make the democratic wedding a success and to enhance Kuwait's international position in democracy.

This came in a press statement by Al-Dabous on the sidelines of a meeting of the joint committee between Kuwait Municipality and the Ministry of Interior to complete all necessary preparations for the polling day scheduled for June 6.

Al-Dabous added that an integrated field plan was adopted to ensure the smooth movement of entry and exit of voters from polling stations in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, in implementation of the provisions contained in the National Assembly Elections Law, and for the concerned authorities to carry out the work and tasks assigned to each party.

He pointed out that the meeting reviewed the total number of licenses for electoral headquarters, which amounted to 128 electoral headquarters, while the electoral advertisements amounted to 81, which were issued by the municipality's branches in the six governorates.

He stated that cleaning and road occupancy teams were formed in the five constituencies to carry out follow-up cleaning

work, distribute containers in the surrounding areas of the polling stations, clear school parking lots designated for the polling process of any neglected cars or offered for sale, and cooperate with the Ministry of Interior by setting up barriers for these parking lots to regulate the entry and exit process for movement of traffic.

He indicated that a safety zone was allocated in front of the polling centers, which number 118 schools and includes 759 committees at the level of the five constituencies, to be free for security by policemen, and not to set up any booths or advertisements for the candidates in the areas surrounding the polling centers.

He added that the presence of trucks in the parking lots of those schools will be prohibited and any violation of the regulating laws will be removed by the municipality teams who are present 24 hours a day before, during and after polling day and after the polling process.

He pointed to the continuation of cleaning work and road occupancy in all committees, including general cleaning of the streets and sidewalks surrounding the headquarters, washing containers, removing and seizing any waste or obstacles, including external cleaning work for specific schools, removing cars and mobile vehicles to facilitate the entry and exit of voters to polling stations.

## Actual full operation to begin in June

### PAAAFR launches online dispensing of subsidized feed: Eng Al-Quraifa

**KUWAIT CITY, May 30:** The Director General of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) Eng. Meshal Al-Quraifa announced the start of dispensing the subsidized feed online from Monday as a trial stage, provided that the actual full operation will begin from the beginning of June, after ensuring the success of the experiment and the discipline of the process during the current month, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a press statement, Al-Quraifa explained that this achievement comes in line with the directives of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf to keep pace with the digital and technological development, similar to other government agencies. It is also based on direct directives from the Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi after transferring the authority's affiliation to him. This will represent a

quantum leap in its achievements since its inception, and will be a first step in the procedures for automating PAAAFR's transactions.

He stressed the importance of reducing manipulation and forgery in obtaining subsidized feed and applying for agricultural plots and animal pens, indicating that PAAAFR is about to launch an introductory video on YouTube with steps to disburse the feed via online.

Al-Quraifa stated that the trial operation of this pilot phase will be in the Citizen Service Building, where a small number of clients will be received and the online support system will be operated, in coordination with the Mills Company.

He said the public will be invited to introduce the new mechanism and train on the system two or three days after the success of the experience, as well as introduce them to the correct steps for optimal use.

## News in Brief

**Special unit for biometric:** Kuwait Oil Company Workers Union Head Abbas Awad has announced the allocation of a special unit for oil sector workers to complete biometric procedures at the Petroleum and Petrochemical Workers Union Center in Ahmadi, reports Al-Rai daily.

Awad thanked First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled for supporting the union, particularly the positive response to the demand of oil sector workers unions to provide fingerprint devices at the abovementioned headquarters to save the employees' time and effort.

**Written message received:** The Ambassador of Czech Republic to Kuwait, Yaroslav Siro has handed a written message to the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Jan Lipavský, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two friendly countries, reports Al-Qabas daily.

During the meeting both sides discussed a number of topics of common interest, and ways to enhance bilateral relations and cooperation in all fields and levels.



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## LOCAL



Photos during the Azerbaijan National Day celebration.

Photos by Mohamad Morsi

## Azerbaijan celebrates National Day

The Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Kuwait Emil Karimov said the relations between Azerbaijan and Kuwait, the two friendly countries have developed over a period of time, especially in the field of agriculture, light industry and education sectors, reports Al-Qabas daily.

He added, we have a great potential in the tourism sector and disclosed "last year alone more than 22 thousand Kuwaiti tourists visited Azerbaijan."

Speaking on the occasion of his country's National Day celebration, he stated travel between both countries has been made easy following the in-

roduction of "direct flights between our two countries which take less than two hours," and called on Kuwaitis to visit his country.

He concluded saying his country and Kuwait cooperate closely on a bilateral basis, as well as within the framework of international organizations such as the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and OPEC +.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, speaking on the sidelines of the celebration said there have been no new developments in the area of exempting Kuwaitis from the 'Schengen' visa requirements and called on the citizens wishing to travel to the Schengen areas to submit their visa applications early to avoid problems of delay in getting the visa.

He went on to say, "We issued a statement to Kuwaitis wishing to travel that it is preferable to submit applications early, and on the other hand, we do not want to see Kuwaitis standing in queue to obtain a visa or someone dealing with them in an inappropriate manner. All these things are unacceptable to us, and if there are observations, we are always in constant contact with the concerned embassies."

Hosts in the session, which was attended by KUNA Director General Dr. Fatima Al-Salem, and Ministry of Information Assistant Undersecretary for the Press, Publications and Publishing Sector, Lafi Al-Subaie, called for the on in the importance of obtaining information from its official sources, in addition to monitor the concerned agencies in the country for everything that is published on social networking sites, particularly in terms of false information.

# 'Virtual anchor'... is it 'prestige' or basic for metaverse, AI revolution

KUNA launches its space on Spatial metaverse platform

By Mohammad Abu Bakr

**KUWAIT CITY, May 30, (KUNA):** World media organizations are vying for drawing upon the amazing applications of the artificial intelligence (AI) revolution involving algorithms that show appealing material and commercials, metaverse space and virtual anchors.

Tapping this wonderful revolution, Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) has already launched its space on the Spatial metaverse platform to become the region's first news agency to take such a significant step.

Spatial is a metaverse platform enabling users to create avatars and spaces to collaborate, brainstorm, and produce content remotely through virtual reality.

However, this begs a significant question: Is the virtual anchor an added-value necessity for media organizations or just some sort of "prestige" for modernization?

Replying to this question, Dr. Bashayer Al-Sanea, a professor of communication and digital media at Kuwait University, opined that she would not mind watching a virtual presenter with simulated reality.

More than 230,000 virtual anchors broadcast music, dance and game videos to audiences mainly in the 18 to 35 age group since 2019 on Bilibili, a short-video sharing platform popular with young people. The air time of virtual influencers on the platform last year surged by 200 percent year-on-year, according to Alarabiyaneet.

Virtual stars have recently proved a resounding success at numerous galas hosted by television stations and video platforms to attract young audiences.

## Digital avatars

Designed to increase human interaction, these digital avatars are created by technology powered by artificial intelligence (AI).

Li Shiyuan, who heads tech company Baidu's virtual people and robotics business, was quoted as saying that as the tech improves, costs have dropped by about 80 percent since last year. It costs about 100,000 yuan (USD 14,300) a year for a three-dimensional virtual person, and 20,000 yuan for a two-dimensional one.

Li expected that the virtual person industry overall would keep growing by 50 percent annually through 2025, according to the same source.

Virtual people are a combination of animation, sound tech and machine learning that create digitized human beings who can sing and even interact on a livestream.

Against the backdrop of this eye-catching development, similar experiments came to the surface in the Arab region like Egypt's virtual anchor "Anna" in February 2023, Qatar's Noora and Ibtikar in March 2023 and Kuwait's Fedha in April 2023.

China's Xinhua news agency unveiled its first virtual news anchor Zhang Zhao in November 2018, followed by South Korea's Kim in November 2020.

Amid this growing technological competition in the media field in particular, Al-Sanea said Kuwaiti media is trying hard to vie for a place in the artificial intelligence (AI) space through several media platforms and news services.

She pointed out that Kuwait News Agency's recent launching of its space



Attendees in a seminar organized by KUNA.

KUNA photo

## Ministry cancels previous qualification applications for Zour, Khairan projects

**KUWAIT CITY, May 30:** The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, through the Public-Private Partnership Projects Authority, has canceled previous qualification applications and issued new applications for contracts to develop independent water and power producers in the country, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The Partnership Authority expects interested developers to submit their Statements of Qualifications (SOQs) to bid for contracts by July 11, MEED reported.

The Az-Zour North 2 and 3 and

Al-Khairan 1 projects will be developed as two separate power and water production contracts, and the Az-Zour North 2 and 3 will integrate the previously planned second and third phases. It will have a generating capacity of 2,700 megawatts and a desalination capacity of 120 million imperial gallons per day.

The project is located about 100 kilometers south of Kuwait City, and will be adjacent to the western borders of the first northern Az-Zour facility for power generation and water desalination, which is currently operating.

on the Spatial metaverse platform in a bid to keep abreast of this cutting-edge technological advancement is "very significant" since it is a really developed media body that is eager to show Kuwait's image worldwide.

However, Dr. Merhan Mohsen, an assistant professor of communication and media technology at Gulf University in Bahrain, said viewers at present need much strength of influence to draw and convince them and this could only be achieved through human communication with the anchor.

"Human communication largely influences and interacts with viewers, depending on the requirements of content introduced, unlike the situation when a rigid robot is only given information to read out," she lamented.

When compared with humans in view of work energy, this would not be in the interest of people at all, Dr. Sara Nasr, a professor of political media at Egypt's Higher Institute for Media and Communication believed.

"The virtual anchor has astonished so many people given the fact that it

works tirelessly," she added.

The Egyptian media professor spoke highly of the virtual anchor as having the ability to speak many languages, especially relevant costs are not too much.

But, she suggested that AI would not be able to vie with humans in all fields in the same efficient mode since interviewers, for instance, need much spontaneity and cleverness.

On the other hand, Dua' Al-Shami, a writer and journalist with Qatar's Al-Jazeera news channel, said she was against using the help of avatars and even vowed that she would throw much weight behind the human anchor in his or her battle with virtual opposite numbers.

She lashed out at the avatar as having no sentiments and failing to fathom out the nature of societies or even the significance and meaning of words and phrases. Echoing Al-Shami's views, Mustafa Makhoulouf, a content producer, said that the anchor's feelings, facial expressions, body language and maneuvering are all essential tools in the media field in general.

## Class XII science students briefed on gas turbines

# Indian Public School organizes field trip

**KUWAIT CITY, May 30:** The students of the Class XII Science Stream of Indian Public School had a splendid opportunity to go on a field tour to the Simulation and Monitoring Diagnostic Room of the General Electricals recently.

They were taken in groups to the Training Bay and finally to the Laboratory followed by a presentation at the cafeteria.

At the Simulation Room, the students were briefed about the working of the company, the control systems of

the gas turbines; at the Monitoring and Diagnostic area the students learned how the machines at different places across the globe are connected and monitored round the clock.

The students were briefed on the gas turbines, the challenges faced by the company as such plants are responsible for up to 40 percent of the CO2 emissions as a byproduct and the measures the company is taking to combat these challenges to reduce their carbon print on the planet.

The students were also informed about the technology being developed to replace the methane fuel used with hydrogen, so that the byproduct would be H2O instead of CO2.

At the Training Bay which is responsible for the installation of power plants and providing equipment and training for the various power plants, the students were briefed on the working principle of the turbine, how chemical energy is converted to kinetic energy; steam turbines, which is an alternative to gas turbines, Aero Derivative Machines, Non-Destructive technology used to check damage in machines, Electrical Panels and Control System.

At the laboratory, they were briefed on the specialized PPE used and its purpose, how material analysis is done, hard disk test, loom oil test, oil sample test, and root cause analysis of the damage in equipment and chemistry of a point on the object.

The students had the opportunity to look at a few of the machines like the tensile machinery, 3D scanner etc. The trip enabled the students to have an overall understanding of the working of the gas turbines and power plants.



Indian Public School Class XII students tour of General Electricals.



Indian Public School Class XII students being briefed about gas turbines.

# What's On



AACD team with AUK president, Dr. Rawda Awwad; and executive vice president, Ms. Amal Al-Binali



AUK alumni representing their companies.

## Event paves way for students' future achievements

# American University of Kuwait hosts 18th annual Career Growth Fair

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The American University of Kuwait (AUK) held its 18th Annual Career Growth Fair where employers from leading companies across Kuwait visit campus to discuss future employment opportunities with AUK students and alumni. This initiative is part of AUK's commitment to providing its community with opportunities to meet face-to-face with future employers to explore possible career options. The Career Growth Fair was organized by AUK's Office of Alumni Affairs and Career Development (AACD) and took place at the AUK gymnasium.

This year's event was sponsored by Alghanim Industries, United Real Estate Company, Burgan Bank, SLB, and Kuwait Airways (Platinum Sponsors); Al-Tijari, KA-

MCO Invest, and Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. K.S.C.C. (Gold Sponsors); City Centre, MC Group, Taw9eel, AlShaya Group, City Group Co. (Silver sponsors). Meditation Nation was the official wellness partner, and 15 general participants were involved.

AUK president, Dr. Rawda Awwad, inaugurated the fair with a speech and a tour during which she discussed with the participating organizations their job offerings and required student qualifications. In her opening statement, Dr. Rawda highlighted the distinctiveness of AUK students, "Welcome to our annual university Career Growth Fair, a great event where we bring together academia and the real world. It's all about bridging that gap between education and the great opportunities out there.

This fair is about connecting our students with different industries and showcasing their amazing talents. We want to show how our education seamlessly connects with the job market. Our students are truly great. They have got that curiosity, adaptability, and creativity that will help them thrive in this rapidly changing world."

Abir El Tannir, AACD director, commented on the success of this year's career fair, "We are excited to host the AUK Career Growth Fair, an event designed to ignite students' professional development and pave the way for their future achievements. Our goal is to provide students with exceptional networking opportunities, valuable learning experiences, wellness tips, and insights from industry leaders, all of which will empower them to confi-

dently embark on their chosen career paths. We are also proud to collaborate with Meditation Nation, one of our esteemed alumni, to emphasize our dedication to holistic development and fostering a supportive environment that addresses employees' well-being. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our alumni who represented their companies at the event, as well as to Eminds, a member of the Wolf Pack and our talented event planner. Lastly, we express our deep appreciation to our amazing sponsors whose support played a pivotal role in making this event a resounding success!"

Attendees interacted with the companies. Gift bags, brochures, contact details, and CVs were exchanged, creating a welcoming space to grow, develop, and learn.

## Indian Cultural Society to present musical concert on June 2

# Rasika embraces India's diverse cultures with her music

By Chaitali B. Roy  
Special to the Arab Times

On Friday, June 2, Indian Cultural Society, a cultural organisation popularly known for presenting some of the biggest concerts to Kuwait will move out of their comfort zone and present Rasika Shekar, a prodigiously talented artist known for her eclectic taste in music at the AIS auditorium Maidan Hawally. Rasika is true to her name, which means a connoisseur, or a person of taste steeped in beauty or excellence. Like her name, she immerses and floats through diverse musical landscapes owning them all at the same time. Her personal life too exemplifies this ability to transition and willingly embraces diverse cultures. Indian Cultural Society, the local organization presenting her has a reputation for bringing professionally managed entertainment with many successful featuring artists.

### Community

Rasika Shekar is an Indian born in Dubai and raised in New Jersey, USA. She is a gifted singer, flautist and composer, who plays the bamboo flute. She is trained in various traditions of music including Carnatic and Hindustani Classical music, both vocal and instrumental. Music is her way of going back to her roots. Rasika agrees. "Absolutely. Growing up in the US, music was one of the strongest ways to feel connected to my community," she said in an exclusive interview to Arab Times. "It was like a feeling of home. There was comfort. Moreover, the more I dug deep into music, I found myself getting more connected and going into the depths of languages and different cultures of our regions."

Rasika started training in Carnatic flute at the age of 14. It was her mother, who caught a floating comment from her school going daughter, and promptly got her a teacher. From then, there was no looking back. But her introduction to music had started much earlier in her initial years. "Growing up, there was a lot of Indian folk music playing at home on my father's side - Music from the folk cultures of Tamil Nadu. On the other hand, I was exposed to Carnatic classical music from my mother's side. It was a good mix!" she recalls. Rasika began her formal training in Dubai, a place where she was also exposed to diverse traditions of music. "I started training in classical vocals from my aunt in Dubai, where I grew up. Luckily, Dubai was a place where I was exposed to music and people from all over the world including Bollywood, Arabic music, classical, western pop and more. When I was seven, my parents gifted me a small toy Casio keyboard and that was my first journey of playing music."

Despite being born out of India, growing up in Dubai, shifting to the States, and getting immersed in the western traditions of music at Berklee and outside, Rasika Shekar did not lose cultural contacts with India. "Both Dubai and the US have a strong Indian community luckily," she shares. "People are very happy to be connected to their roots, and one can find a number of events and resources that keep you connected. Every weekend, you can find musical events across Indian genres, art workshops, lecture demonstrations, community meetups and religious events. There was never a dearth of opportunities to connect. Moreover, I have to thank my parents for instill-



Rasika Shekar to perform in Kuwait on June 2.

ing that interest in me from childhood."

### Trained

Despite having trained in music from her childhood, Rasika was unsure of her professional trajectory in the beginning leading her to graduate in Chemical Engineering from Rutgers University. "As much as I was drawn to music from childhood, it was not until my last year of college that I felt I wanted to take it more seriously. Until then, I had no idea what it meant to be professional musician," she explains when asked about why she trod the well beaten path in her early years. Her tryst with her musical destiny came later. "I was learning and exploring music for the pure joy of learning. After high school, I was genuinely interested in mathematics and chemistry and the engineering stream felt like a natural fit. At no point then did I think I would make music my profession! But I have to confess, I would spend a lot of time at home, in front of the mirror, with a brush in my hand, imagining that I was singing in front of many people. I guess some sort of manifesting."

After graduating, Rasika started spending more time in India, training and performing music. At that time, she was chosen to tour with the legendary Ustad Ghulam Ali Khan as a vocalist where she performed a repertoire of ghazals. It was baptism by fire, as the maestro is one of the best ghazal singers of his generation and Rasika was yet to make a mark pro-

fessionally, but she rose to the occasion admirably. Her years of training and community performance helped. "The tour with Ustad Ghulam Ali Khan was the first tour I went on right after college," she recalls. "It was before Berklee and somewhere I'm extremely grateful I got that early exposure. While in college, I was singing in many community events over the weekends and at one such event, I decided spontaneously that I would sing one of my favorite ghazals. One of the promoters was in the audience and offered me the opportunity to tour with the legend. While studying for my engineering degree, I spent all my free time listening to hours and hours of music from across genres. I would sit alone in my room and imitate different styles of singing. It opened my ears, heart and appreciation towards so much more music and styles. It helped me straddle across genres. Right after that, I started touring with Shankar Ehsan Loy in India and it was after a few years of that, when I decided to go to Berklee."

### Empowered

The tour that followed with the electrifying Shankar, Ehsan and Loy empowered her further. "It was truly a blessing!" she says. "I learnt so much from them individually and collectively. They set such high standards for artistry all while being gems of human beings. It's truly a rarity. I'm grateful I got to see their music making up close. Touring was a lot of fun! They're just incredible people and have immense energy

and respect for music. The beautiful thing was to see three artists from very different musical backgrounds come and collaborate to make such masterpieces. The respect and love they have for each other's art is beautiful."

In between touring, training and performing, Rasika Shekar studied Jazz and Western contemporary music at Berklee, further honing her ability to straddle genres. By that time, she had done playback singing in Bollywood films like 2 States, Kill Dil, Katti Batti and Love Games. Despite having no connections in Bollywood and having spent her growing up years outside the country, Rasika was able to make inroads in the music industry. Was it Challenging? "No doubt, it was completely a new territory for me when I came to Mumbai," she answers. "I had to learn and adapt to the workings of the city and the industry. It's undoubtedly challenging as a newcomer just like in any other industry or walk of life. The sense of belonging wavered. In retrospect, what truly kept me going was the pure love for music. I surrendered to the exploration of it. It kept the naivety and childlike passion for it alive. In doing that, the actual challenges blurred out."

As a flautist, she started performing solo Carnatic flute concert in the United States, Dubai, Chennai and Mumbai. Once again, she broke the glass ceiling and joined the small, exclusive club of female flute players. "I used to often be met with a

surprised look when I told people I played the bamboo flute," she explained when asked about stereotypes associated with women playing flute. "The first thing I heard was something like 'oh that must require a lot of strength. I've never heard of a girl play.' I believe it's a stereotype and nothing else. In my opinion, the challenge of playing the flute is not gender based. As far as the instrument is concerned, it takes a little getting used to it and working on your breathing a lot. The resources to learn the Indian flute are slightly more limited in comparison to other instruments. And that perhaps adds to the limited feeling of accessibility. But that said, every instrument is an ocean in itself."

### Traditions

Rasika Shekar is an exceptionally talented flautist, singer and composer, disciplines that require a strict training regimen. When asked if she finds it difficult to balance her artistic identities, she answers, "In the years I was learning to straddle with both, I was always caught trying to choose one over the other. Most people discouraged me from doing both. But my heart just couldn't pick! They both were and are very honest ways of my musical expression and rather than having to pick, I jumped deeper to understand the breathing required for both. One does overtake the other depending on the context the music. But it's all within the honest expression musically. If I had to take a pick, I prefer to sing for myself."

Rasika is a barve artist who has

embraced different traditions of music, both Indian and Western. She has collaborated with artists like John McLaughlin, AR Rahman and many others. She has also performed in a variety of spaces cutting across mediums. With Bombay Jaysree and ResulPookutty, she has appeared in theatre director Roysten Abel's Weaving Voices. She has composed music and song in different Indian languages. She can move effortlessly through Punjabi folk to moving ghazals to AR Rahman compositions and popular Bollywood numbers. Her versatility is striking. Through her flute she explores the traditional and experimental, sometimes adding a jazz component to the seemingly traditional.

At her Kuwait concert on June 2, she promises her audience a musical journey that spans across genres of new and old Bollywood, ghazals, Punjabi folk, fusion music, her original compositions on the flute. "I'm super excited to be able to sing and dance together with them! I hope to give them an evening where they feel joy, love and soak into the music!" Speaking of the platform provided by Indian Cultural Society, she says, "I'm extremely grateful and very humbled by this invitation by the Indian Cultural Society to perform at Kuwait. Ashfaq Khan and the entire team have been so supportive and given us the beautiful creative freedom to come and perform our music there. It's always lovely to see such genuine music and art lovers. I'm truly excited and looking forward!"

## Gulf Bank provides instant sign language interpreting services

As part of its efforts to consolidate the principles of sustainability in the society and following the requirements of the Central Bank of Kuwait, Gulf Bank announced its cooperation with SignCom, to provide instant translation services using sign language, for people with special needs, which provides Video Relay Services (VRS) as a mean of communication for deaf people, which is now accessible across six branches.

The bank provides an iPad inside each of the branches, that is designated for people with special needs, through which direct communication takes place via video calls with the call center. Hence, the customer is received by a sign language interpreter,

who then translates the customer's needs to an employee in the branch and vice versa.

Gulf Bank's Deputy General Manager of Consumer Banking, Mr. Basel Al-Assad, commented on this new service, stating: "We are keen to provide additional, and distinguished, services in our branches to support our customers' experience, especially for those with special needs – ensuring that all their transactions are completed swiftly and with ease at all times."

Al-Assad pointed that Gulf Bank provides services to customers with special needs at six different branches distributed across Kuwait, specifically in the areas of: Bayan, Daiya, Adan, Jeleeb Al-Shuyoukh,

Al-Ayoun and Hadiya. This comes as part of Gulf Bank's commitment to promote financial literacy in society, and its continuous support towards the Let's Be Aware "Diraya" campaign.

Hestated that through its cooperation with SignCom, Gulf Bank seeks to provide more convenient alternatives for people with special needs – whether through direct communication with the branch employees or through the instant sign language interpretation services – indicating that the new service aims to reduce the waiting period for customers visiting the branches, especially in the event of an increase in the number of visitors.



Basel Al Assad, Deputy General Manager of Consumer Banking

## Market Movements

30-05-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
UAE - DFM	+0.67	3,567.30	PHILIPPINES - PSEI	-1.25	6,510.67
JAPAN - Nikkei	+0.30	31,328.16			
PAKISTAN - KSE 100	+0.76	41,665.85			
SAUDI - Tadawul	+0.04	11,139.98			
EGYPT - EGX 30	+1.88	17,534.59			

# Business

## The Conversation

# What Erdogan's reelection means for Turkey's political system, economy and foreign policy

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

By Ahmet T. Kuru

San Diego State University

Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been reelected as president, ensuring his term as leader of Turkey will extend to a quarter century.

The electorate returned Erdogan to power in a runoff vote on May 28, 2023, with 52% of votes. But with 48% of voters siding with opposition leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu, Erdogan will have to govern a divided nation in its centennial year.

As a professor of political science, I have analyzed Turkish politics for many years. The election provided a stark choice for Turkey's voters: To end or extend Erdogan's two-decade-long creep toward authoritarian-style governance. The decision to opt for the latter will dictate the country's future in key ways, both domestically and in terms of its relationships with Western countries.

Turkey had its first democratic election in May 1950. Since then it has had a multiparty competitive system, albeit one that has been sporadically interrupted by several military coups.

In the last 10 years, Erdogan has taken Turkey down a more autocratic, one-man-rule style of governance. This has included restrictions on freedom of speech, freedom of the press and free assembly.

There is a little reason to believe that Erdogan, emboldened by a fresh mandate, will reverse this trajectory.

Erdogan won the election without making any promises about restoring or expanding rights and freedoms. Rather, his campaign signaled an intention to continue Turkey's path toward being a conservative, religious state - a far cry

from the vision of a modern, secular nation of founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

In the run-up to the election, Erdogan presented himself as the leader of religious conservatives - reciting the Quran in Hagia Sophia and addressing the people in another mosque following the Friday prayer. He also presented himself as a militarist leader, using battleships, drones and other weapons as campaign instruments and uploading a new Twitter profile photo with an air force pilot jacket. This posturing combined with his accusations that the opposition was collaborating with the PKK - a Kurdish separatist organization designated as a terrorist organization by Turkey - suggests that Erdogan continues to promote Turkish nationalism and militarism.

The runoff victory for Erdogan comes just two weeks after his Justice and Development Party and coalition partners won a parliamentary majority. It means that the opposition will have no executive or legislative power to restrict Erdogan's agenda.

Another important and consistent characteristic of Erdogan's presidential campaign was his criticism of the West in general and the United States in particular.

Erdogan has accused the U.S. of a variety of perceived slights and Washington's stance on issues affecting Turkey. In the past year, the Turkish leader has criticized over Washington's support of the Syrian affiliate of the Kurdish PKK and protested the deployment of U.S. armored vehicles on two Greek Islands. Meanwhile, he has pointedly distanced himself from NATO allies on the issue of Russian sanctions, and instead talked up Turkey's "special relationship" with Russia.

In mid-April, Erdogan framed the election as a chance for voters to "send a message to the West" which, he claimed, was supporting the opposition candidate. "This country does not look at what the West says, neither when fighting terrorism nor in determining its economic policies," he said.

Some of this was campaign rhetoric. And Erdogan may make some attempts to heal rifts with Western countries, such as approving Sweden's NATO membership bid - something he has to date refused to do over what Turkey sees as the Nordic country's harboring of Kurdish terrorists.

But even such a concession would not amount to a transformation of Erdogan's deeply critical attitude to Western countries overall.

Indeed, the only factor that may force Erdogan to return Turkey to a pro-Western position is Turkey's ongoing economic crisis - which might necessitate the support of wealthy Western states and institutions.

Since 2018, the Turkish economy has shown symptoms of a crisis. Turkey's currency, the lira, has fallen in value precipitously. In March, it fell to a new low of 19 to the dollar. Moreover, in 2022, the annual inflation rate surpassed 80%.

In order to win the elections, Erdogan pursued several policies that appealed to voters but may further stress the economy and bleed national reserves. They include dropping the retirement age and giving a 45% pay raise to public workers.

Meanwhile, economic crisis and authoritarian policies have resulted in a "brain drain" with many educated young people moving to Western European countries.

If the election result leads to a further exodus of skilled, educated workers, then it will only weaken Turkey's capability of confronting its economic crisis. Such thinking could nudge Erdogan towards a rethink over policies that alienate younger, secular Turks.

It could also force Erdogan to reevaluate his foreign policy. At present, the Turkish leader has looked to Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Russia for financial support. If this appears to be insufficient, Erdogan may be forced to seek stronger relations with the United States to facilitate financial aid from the International Monetary Fund and other international organizations.



Ms. Rasha Othman, Executive Vice President of Investment Banking (Capital Markets and Fixed Income) standing alongside Mr. Abdulrazzaq Razooqi, Senior Vice President of Investment Banking (Advisory and M&A), and Mr. Abdulrahman Alsanad, Manager of MENA Real Estate.

## Investment bank bags 2 awards

## Markaz receives praises at MENA Banking Excellence Awards 2023

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: Kuwait Financial Centre 'Markaz' announced receiving two prestigious awards, namely "The MENA Investment Bank of the Year" and "The Excellence in Real Estate Investment Award", at the MENA Banking Excellence Awards 2023. The event was organized in Dubai this May by MEED, a prominent business intelligence and information platform focused on the Middle East region. The Awards serves as a platform to acknowledge and celebrate the remarkable achievements and contributions of leading financial institutions and professionals across the Middle East and North Africa region.

Representing Markaz at the event was Ms. Rasha Othman, Executive Vice President of Investment Banking (Capital Markets and Fixed Income), Mr. Abdulrazzaq Razooqi, Senior Vice President of Investment Banking (Advisory and M&A), and Mr. Abdulrahman Alsanad, Manager of MENA Real Estate. The remarkable wins further augment Markaz's list of achievements and recognitions throughout 2023 thus far, solidifying its position as the foremost partner in wealth creation. The selection criteria took into consideration Markaz's outstanding operational efficiency, its key differentiating factor when dealing with its clients, and the competitive nature of projects carried-out by the company over the past year.

Being recognized as the investment bank of the year stands testimony to Markaz's position in the market as a leading institution that promotes outstanding investment banking offerings in various areas such as equity capital markets, debt capital markets, initial public offerings (IPOs), listings, capital structure advisory, restructuring, and mergers and acquisitions advisory. Since 1997, Markaz has effectively

conducted investment banking transactions worth more than USD 6.3 billion (as of March 31st, 2023). The team's proven expertise extends across a wide spectrum of different industries such as financial services, real estate, light and medium manufacturing, retail, oil & gas, and logistics, among others.

The award for excellence in real estate investment acknowledged Markaz's solid performance and adherence to the highest industry standards in catering to both institutional and individual investors. With a successful track record in actively managing real estate assets, Markaz's MENA Real Estate currently manages KD 287 million in assets in Kuwait, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia. Markaz partially manages the National Real Estate Portfolio, owned by the Kuwait Investment Authority, with a value up to KD 250 million. In addition, Markaz Real Estate Fund has an AUM of KD 70.5 million across 17 properties.

**About Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz"**

Established in 1974, Kuwait Financial Centre K.P.S.C "Markaz" is one of the leading asset management and investment banking institutions in the MENA region with total assets under management of over KD 1.13 billion as of 31 March 2023 (USD 3.67 billion). Markaz was listed on the Boursa Kuwait in 1997. Over the years, Markaz has pioneered innovation through the creation of new investment channels. These channels enjoy unique characteristics and helped Markaz widen investors' horizons. Examples include Mumtaz (the first domestic mutual fund), MREF (the first real estate investment fund in Kuwait), and Forsa Financial Fund (the first and only options market maker in the GCC since 2005), all conceptualized, established, and managed by Markaz.

# Key test ahead on debt deal that could prevent disastrous default

Biden calls lawmakers for support

Global shares also mixed

WS mixed as DC moves to avoid default

WASHINGTON, May 30, (AP): President Joe Biden says he feels good about the debt ceiling and budget deal negotiated with House Speaker Kevin McCarthy as the White House and congressional leaders work to ensure its passage this week in time to lift the nation's borrowing limit and prevent a potential disastrous U.S. default.

Signaling the tough days still ahead, McCarthy urged skeptical colleagues to "look at where the victories are."

The Republican speaker said Tuesday he will be sitting down and talking with lawmakers as they return to Washington from the long Memorial Day weekend.

"This is just the first step," McCarthy said of his agreement with Biden.

In an appearance on "Fox & Friends," he sought to shore up support amid rising opposition from conservatives in his party. Unhelpfully for Biden, he said of the Democrats, "There's nothing in the bill for them."

A key test was coming late Tuesday when the House Rules Committee was to consider the package and vote on sending it to the full House for a vote expected Wednesday.

Quick approval by both the House and Senate would ensure government checks will continue to go out to Social Security recipients, veterans and others. The agreement includes expanded work requirements for some food aid recipients but not as stringent as many Republicans wanted.

A number of hard right conservatives are criticizing the deal as falling short of the deep spending cuts they wanted, while liberals decry policy changes such as new work requirements for older Americans in the food aid program.

Biden spent part of the Memorial Day holiday working the phones, calling lawmakers in both parties.

"I feel very good about it," Biden told reporters Monday. "I've spoken to a number of the members," he said, among them Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, a past partner in big bipartisan deals who largely has been sitting this one out.

To progressive Democrats raising concerns about the package, the president had a simple message: "Talk to me."

As lawmakers size up the 99-page bill, few are expected to be fully satisfied with the final product. But Biden, a Democrat, and McCarthy, a Republican, are counting on pulling majority support from the political center, a rarity in divided Washington, to join in voting to prevent a federal default.

NEW YORK, May 30, (AP): Wall Street was drifting in mixed trading Tuesday after Washington reached a tentative deal to avoid a potentially disastrous default on its debt.

The S&P 500 was up 0.1% in mid-day trading, remaining near its highest level in nine months. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 124 points, or 0.4%, at 32,967, as of 12:18 p.m. Eastern time, while excitement about artificial intelligence helped the Nasdaq composite lead the market with a 0.5% gain.

President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy struck a deal over the weekend to allow the U.S. government to borrow more money, which would let it avoid a default on its debt. They now must convince Congress to approve it before the U.S. government runs out of cash to pay its bills, which could happen as soon as Monday.

Some on Capitol Hill are unhappy about the deal's details, and Biden and McCarthy are both working to gather votes. The House could vote on the matter Wednesday.

The wide expectation on Wall Street has been for Washington to reach a deal in the 11th hour because failure would likely mean tremendous pain for the economy and financial markets. But even if there is no default, all of Washington's grandstanding and partisan brinkmanship leading up to this moment could erode more faith and trust in the U.S. government. That could trigger another downgrade to its credit rating, following Standard & Poor's rating cut in 2011.

Beyond the drama around the nation's debt limit, financial markets have been battling a long list of concerns. The economy is slowing, inflation is still high and interest rates may be heading even higher, which would further tighten the reins on the economy and financial markets.

The worries are also global, with China's economic recovery weaker than expected following its relaxation of anti-COVID restrictions.

Wall Street re-opening Tuesday wasn't quite sure. Stock prices were mixed at midday. U.S. markets had been closed when the deal was struck over the weekend.

McCarthy acknowledged the hard-fought compromise with Biden will not be "100% of what everybody wants" as he leads a slim House ma-



Currency traders watch monitors near the screen showing the Korea Composite Stock Price Index (KOSPI) at the foreign exchange dealing room of the KEB Hana Bank headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, Tuesday, May 30, 2023. Asian shares were mixed in directionless trading Tuesday following a U.S. holiday, as optimism about a deal on the U.S. debt mixed with worries about the regional economy. (AP)

## Global

Global shares were mixed amid concerns over risks to the economic outlook in China and elsewhere.

France's CAC 40 shed 0.4% to 7,273.34. Germany's DAX rose 0.3% to 16,002.44, and Britain's FTSE 100 edged 0.2% lower to 7,615.05. The future for the Dow Jones Industrial Average was 0.2% higher while that for the S&P 500 rose 0.5%.

## Asia

In Asian trading, Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 rose 0.3% to 31,328.16. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 edged down 0.1% to 7,209.30. South Korea's KOSPI jumped 1.0% to 2,585.52. Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained 0.2% to 18,595.78. The Shanghai Composite gained less than 0.1%, to 3,224.21.

Analysts say investors remain concerned about the a possible "second wave" of COVID-19 cases in China, although the economic impact is expected to be more limited than from the earlier pandemic wave.

China's recovery from virus-related disruptions during the past several years appears to be faltering, adding to worries over the regional economy.

"To say China's economic opening has been a disappointment could be an understatement, especially as reflected in local stocks that are now on the cusp of a bear market," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary.

Markets are closely watching for U.S. consumer confidence data set to be released later Tuesday.

## Oil

In other trading, U.S. benchmark crude fell \$1.50 to \$71.17 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude, the international standard, declined \$1.66 to \$75.44 per barrel.

## Currencies

The U.S. dollar edged down to 140.17 Japanese yen from 140.44 yen. The euro cost \$1.0725, up from \$1.0711.

tority powered by hard-right conservatives.

Facing potential blowback from his conservative ranks, the Republican speaker will have to rely on upwards of half the House Democrats and half the House Republicans to push the debt ceiling package to passage.

Overall, the package is a tradeoff

that would impose some spending reductions for the next two years along with a suspension of the debt limit into January 2025, pushing the volatile political issue past the next presidential election. Raising the debt limit, now \$31 trillion, would allow Treasury to continue borrowing to pay the nation's already incurred bills.

### Dubai World Trade Centre events fuel Dubai economy

A key driver of MICE sector growth and the largest operator across the wider MENASA region, Dubai World Trade Centre's (DWTC) event calendar remained an economic catalyst for the Emirate - generating sustainably high returns for adjacent industries connected to the MICE ecosystem. 63 Large scale events held at DWTC welcomed nearly 1.2MM attendees with 40% being international - an

impressive 49% YOY increase in foreign participation, emphasizing Dubai's leadership as a global mega-event hub. "Dubai continues to attract businesses and talent from around the world, with DWTC providing an effective connectivity platform to collaborate, accelerate innovation, and showcase next-generation products and services to far-reaching markets. This sustained impact of in-per-

son events is a clear indicator of the MICE industry's role in supporting economic growth and achieving investment returns for all stakeholders," said H.E. Helal Saeed Almarri Director General of DWTC Authority. According to DWTC's 2022 Economic Impact Assessment Report, released today, DWTC's 63 large-scale events (>2,000 attendees) grew by 26% YOY. (PR Newswire)

### Toyota, others joining forces in ecological technology

German truck maker Daimler, Japan's top automaker Toyota and two other automakers said Tuesday they will work together on new technologies, including using hydrogen fuel, to help fight climate change. The companies said Mitsubishi Fuso Truck and Bus Corp., whose top stakeholder is Daimler Truck, and Hino Motors, the truck maker in the Toyota group, will merge. Daimler Truck and Toyota Mo-

tor Corp. will equally invest in the holding company of the Mitsubishi-Hino merger, they said without giving a dollar amount for the deal. The companies plan to cooperate in reducing carbon emissions and developing other technologies such as autonomous driving, net-connected services and electric vehicles. "This collaboration among our four companies is a partnership for creating the future of com-

mercial vehicles in Japan and the future of a 'mobility society,' said Toyota Motor Corp. Chief Executive Koji Sato. The two truck companies will work on commercial vehicle development, procurement and production to become globally competitive, the executives said. "We at Daimler Truck are very proud of our products, because trucks and buses keep the world moving." (AP)

### Bid to raise electronic fraud awareness

# ABK participates in live radio broadcast with Marina FM

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: Within the framework of its steadfast commitment to the Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association's 'Let's Be Aware' Diraya banking awareness campaign, Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) demonstrated its unwavering dedication by participating in a live radio broadcast.

In this endeavor, ABK was represented by Ali Bu Hamad, Head of Complaints and Customer Protection, on Marina FM's 'Diwaniya' program to impart his expertise on the optimal methods for safeguarding customers from electronic fraud.

Commenting on the initiative, Loai Muqames, CEO-Kuwait at ABK, expressed his unwavering support for the campaign by stating, "It brings us great pleasure to continue our effective and resolute support of the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign as it epitomizes our firm commitment towards promoting financial literacy among members of the local community while simultaneously striving to achieve financial inclusion at all levels, within the framework of our commitment to the Central Bank of Kuwait, Kuwait Banking Association, and society in general."

Moreover, Muqames reaffirmed that ABK is devoted to placing customer protection from electronic fraud in the vanguard of its priorities. As the utilization of digital platforms continues to skyrocket, ABK ensures that its systems undergo regular updates and that the highest security standards are upheld while providing unparalleled banking services and products to all customers. Furthermore, in keeping with



Ali Bu Hamad, ABK's Head of Complaints and Customer Protection, at Marina FM

ABK's mission to make a positive impact in the society it serves, it regularly disseminates crucial awareness messages via both its online platforms and physical branches across Kuwait to educate the public on ways to avoid fraud, particularly with the recent upsurge of online shopping.

In addition, Muqames expounded upon ABK's commitment to staying at the forefront of technological advancements in the banking sector. He elucidated that the continually shifting tactics employed by hackers and fraudsters necessitate a constant effort to raise customer awareness and provide them with the necessary tools to steer clear of fraudulent activities in all its various forms.

Muqames further emphasized ABK's unwavering dedication to en-



Loai Muqames, CEO-Kuwait at ABK

sureing that its staff is equipped with the best practices for safeguarding customers, thereby augmenting its competitive edge. To this end, ABK heavily invests in a multitude of training programs, workshops, and roundtable discussions that are designed to sharpen employees' skillset and ultimately enhance overall customer satisfaction.

During the enthralling live radio broadcast, Bu Hamad proffered an array of invaluable tips for customers to safeguard their sensitive banking data from the nefarious attempts of cybercriminals. He astutely pointed out that contemporary fraudulent operations now rely on preying on customers' emotional vulnerabilities and convincing them into surrendering their sensitive account information under the



Ali Bu Hamad, stressing on a point during the program.

guise of winning valuable prizes. It was revealed that these types of incidents prevail undeterred, notwithstanding the tremendous efforts made by banks in raising customer awareness about the criticality of being vigilant in detecting such suspicious activities.

To ensure optimal security at all times, Bu Hamad advised customers not to click on suspicious links or reveal passwords and PIN codes to anyone. Furthermore, he highlighted the paramount importance of only using secure ATMs, shopping solely on authorized and highly secure websites, and not responding to any dubious calls or messages soliciting customer information.

In a bid to bolster the campaign's reach, Bu Hamad urged customers to report any changes to their account in-

formation, like phone numbers, and immediately inform the Bank if there is any suspicion of unauthorized transactions. He also advised customers to follow the 'Let's Be Aware' Diraya campaign on social media and to heed the instructions on avoiding hacking and fraud.

Additionally, Bu Hamad assured that ABK is always available to address inquiries and provide more information to boost overall financial literacy. Finally, he stressed that cooperation between all stakeholders is of utmost significance to the campaign's success in achieving its desired ends.

Since its establishment in 1967, ABK has progressed to become one of the leading Kuwaiti banks in the region that is today known for offering a simpler banking experience.

# Batch 5 of the 'Sanabil 500' MENA Seed Accelerator Program 2023 announced

Interest in program continues to rise

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, May 30, (Business Wire): 500 Global, a leading multi-stage venture capital firm, and Sanabil Investments, a financial investment company focused on global private investments in venture capital, growth, and small buyouts, today unveiled the 14 startups in Batch 5 of the Sanabil 500 MENA Seed Accelerator Program 2023.

The final set of companies that have been chosen are focused on developing solutions within a diverse range of sectors, including Fintech, Foodtech, SaaS, ML & Software, E-Commerce, and Proptech. Applicants come from the Middle East & North Africa, with Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Egypt as the top three countries. The 14 companies chosen were selected out of more than applicants from MENA - making it one of the most competitive Batches since the inception of the Program.

The Sanabil 500 MENA Seed Accelerator Program provides pre-seed and seed-stage startups across the Middle East and North Africa with the foundation they need to validate and scale their business regionally and globally. More than 50 companies have already graduated from the program.

"We have been closely working with Batch 5 founders since March 2023 to help them pave their way to success. They join the 54 companies that have already graduated from the Sanabil 500 MENA Seed Accelerator Program since our launch back in early 2021. Despite global economic headwinds, we continue to strongly believe in the potential of the Saudi and MENA startup ecosystem," said Amal Dokhan, General Partner at 500 Global MENA.

"We continue to see growing interest in the Sanabil 500 MENA Seed Accelerator Program as a new generation of entrepreneurs looks to develop their ideas and scale their businesses for success here and abroad. We're attracting and enabling the brightest minds and best technologies that are improving the lives of people around the world, fortifying the economy and making the world a better place for all. We can't wait to show the region and the world this next wave of innovators, thinkers, and builders," said a Sanabil spokesperson.

The 12-week program offers founders one-on-one mentorship with a focus on business strategy development, fundraising and growth. It culminates on June 14, 2023 with Demo Day at The Four Seasons Hotel in Riyadh, in front of a live audience of key stakeholders, including accredited investors,



Jehad Al-Humaidhi receives the honoring from Kuwait Food Bank

### Kuwait Food Bank honors Ahli United Bank

Mrs. Jehad Al-Humaidhi, Chief Executive Officer and Board Member of Ahli United Bank received a delegation from the Kuwait Food Bank (KFB) in the presence of Mrs. Faten Al-Tamimi, Head of Corporate Communications Department at AUB and a number of AUB employees.

The delegation praised the bank's leading social role and its diligent efforts in supporting meaningful humanitarian and charitable activities. They presented a commemorative shield to the Bank, in appreciation of its prominent social and humanitarian role and its continuous support for the humanitarian activities launched by

KFB.

During the visit, the two sides exchanges views and friendly talks about joint cooperation between AUB and KFB. The visit also witnessed activating cooperation frameworks to achieve the goal of sustainable development in a way that benefits all segments of society.

Mrs. Jehad Al-Humaidhi expressed her pleasure with the visit of KFB delegation, the prominent humanitarian institution, and its initiative to honor Ahli United Bank in appreciation of its leading role over many years of partnership and cooperation in supporting and assisting KFB activities.

corporates, and industry professionals. The event will also be livestreamed to a general audience on YouTube.

The following is the list of Batch 5 companies that have made it through to the final round:

Barakah (Saudi Arabia): Online marketplace for food retailers to sell their surplus products and meals.

Blassa (Tunisia): Optimizes the collection of user delivery information to help eCommerce players eliminate delivery failures and increase conversion rates.

byanatt (Oman): Offers a SaaS analytics platform for telcos and utilities to scale and maintain their connected infrastructure.

CADO (UAE): Marketing tool for corporates to send custom gifts to their employees and clients, while being able to measure ROI.

Dillx (Egypt): Automates investment due diligence to mitigate risk and maximize returns.

Fintesa (Jordan): SaaS platform that allows any business to compliantly collect payments in over 200 countries for their products and services in just 10 minutes.

Konn (Jordan): SaaS platform that enables real estate developers to build

fully customized homes.

LISAN (Saudi Arabia): AI-writing assistant that detects errors, understands and generates high quality content in Arabic.

LivLyt (UAE): Tech subscriptions platform that helps businesses to select and manage devices and software for their teams.

LNKO (Morocco): D2C eyewear offering affordably priced trendy eyewear by digitizing the optical value chain.

NoBueno (UAE): A talent matching platform that perfectly pairs the right companies with the right candidates.

Qardy (Egypt): A lending marketplace in MENA for Financial Institutions to fund Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises.

Sadq (Saudi Arabia): Enables individuals and businesses to execute and verify documents online to make them legally binding in seconds.

Taskheer (Saudi Arabia): An online platform that facilitates ROSCA deals and guarantees timely payments.

500 Global is a multi-stage venture capital firm with \$2.7B in assets under management that invests in founders building fast-growing technology companies. We focus on

markets where technology, innovation, and capital can unlock long-term value and drive economic growth. We work closely with key stakeholders and advise governments on how best to support entrepreneurial ecosystems so startups can thrive. 500 Global has backed over 5,000 founders representing more than 2,800 companies operating in 80+ countries. We have invested in more than 50 companies valued at over \$1 billion and 150+ companies valued at over \$100 million (including private, public, and exited companies).

Our 190+ team members are located in 28 countries and bring experience as entrepreneurs, investors, and operators from some of the world's leading technology companies.

Sanabil is a financial investment company that commits approximately \$2 billion in capital per annum into private investments that include venture capital, growth, and small buyouts. Since our 2009 inception with \$8 billion in paid-up capital, we have seen firsthand how bold ideas can disrupt traditional business models; ideas that enable new and improved ways of producing, consuming, and experiencing things. We choose to partner with the architects of these ideas.

### 'Happy working with US company'

## Zain KSA inks deal with Netcracker for cloud-based managed services

WALTHAM, Mass., May 30, (Business Wire): Netcracker Technology announced that Zain KSA has extended its partnership with Netcracker by adding cloud-based Managed Services to its deployment of Netcracker Digital BSS, Digital OSS and Customer Engagement. Capitalising on great opportunities for collaboration, this complete end-to-end digital transformation project in the Middle East and marks another milestone for Zain KSA to expand its ecosystem, continue to deliver a customer experience and offer new 5G products and services.

Zain KSA will be able to leverage Netcracker's extensive managed services offerings to support its existing deployment of Netcracker and third-party solutions and deliver a digital experience to its customers. As a telecom operator and digital services provider, Zain KSA is investing to unlock high-value opportunities for customers by building on its digital offerings and further reducing time to market, thereby cementing its pioneering position in driving nationwide digital transformation to support Saudi Vision 2030 and contribute to transforming Saudi Arabia into a digital economy.

"We have been happy working with Netcracker and strengthening our collaboration by adding managed and support services on top of the existing solutions," says Abdulrahman AlMufadda, CTO at Zain KSA. "By leveraging Netcracker's expertise in cloud-based managed services, we will be able to provide our customers with a more seamless and personalised experience of IoT and cloud computing services such as virtualised network functions, software-defined networking and network slicing, among others, while streamlining our internal operations and improving our network agility and scalability to accelerate our time to market."

"It's been an honor for Netcracker

to partner with such a forward-looking, rapidly growing and market-leading company like Zain KSA," says Benedetto Spaziani, GM at Netcracker. "By leveraging our expertise in managed services, Zain KSA has placed a great deal of trust in us that is a validation of what we can achieve together."

Rapid digitization is disrupting the status quo of today's communications markets. Constantly evolving customer needs and behaviors require service providers to adapt quickly and diversify their businesses to deliver the outcomes that their customers expect. Building digital ecosystems, anticipating customer requirements and delivering a digital-first experience are essential for service providers to accelerate innovation, expand into new markets and become the disruptors in the 5G era.

Netcracker Technology, a wholly-owned subsidiary of NEC Corporation, has the expertise, culture and resources to help service providers around the world transform their businesses to thrive in a digital economy. Our innovative solutions - including our flagship cloud-native Netcracker Digital Platform - value-driven services and unbroken delivery track record of three decades help service providers to achieve their digital transformation goals, drive the telco to techco evolution within their organizations and realize business growth and profitability. For more information, visit [www.netcracker.com](http://www.netcracker.com).

Zain KSA is a leading digital service and solutions provider in Saudi Arabia, offering its customers award-winning and value-added services including Telecom services, 5G network and applications, Fintech services, Cloud computing, IoT solutions, Fiber services, Drones, Digital entertainment and many others while championing corporate sustainability and ensuring that ESG goals and principles continue to remain at the core of our business.

## 'Sam Bankman-Fried's arguments to dismiss charges are meritless'

NEW YORK, May 30, (AP): Sam Bankman-Fried's lawyers made meritless arguments in a bid to convince a judge to toss out criminal charges alleging that the FTX founder stole from investors in his multibillion dollar cryptocurrency fund, federal prosecutors said Monday.

In papers filed in Manhattan federal court, prosecutors responded to early May filings in which Bankman-Fried's lawyers insisted that the United States overreached in its case against Bankman-Fried, making federal crimes out of regulatory issues.

"These motions are meritless," prosecutors wrote in a nearly 100-page filing. "The charges track the relevant statutes and the defendant's alleged misconduct falls within the heartland of what these statutes prohibit."

Bankman-Fried, 31, has been living with his parents in Palo Alto, California, after posting a \$250 million personal recognizance bond after his December extradition from the Bahamas. Bankman-Fried has pleaded not

guilty to charges that he cheated investors and looted customer deposits on FTX to make lavish real estate purchases, donate money to politicians and make risky trades at Alameda Research, his cryptocurrency hedge fund trading firm. U.S. Attorney Damian Williams has called it one of the biggest frauds in U.S. history.

In March, new charges added to the indictment alleged that Bankman-Fried violated the anti-bribery provisions of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act by directing the payment of \$40 million in bribes to a Chinese official or officials to free up \$1 billion in cryptocurrency that was frozen in early 2021.

In requesting all charges be dismissed, defense lawyers said eight counts in the original indictment were too vague and non-specific to proceed to trial and that additional charges were barred by an Extradition Treaty between the U.S. and the Bahamas that prohibited charges not approved at the time of extradition.

## The Conversation

## 'Think before you ask'

## Some tips for women to negotiate a higher salary and wage

By Alexandra Mislin  
American University

Equal Pay Day was on March 14 — a date determined by how long into the new year American women must work to catch up to American men's earnings the previous year. In 2022, women earned 82% of what men earned. The wage gap for Black and Hispanic women is even higher — these groups made 70% and 65%, respectively, of what white men made.

Some of the gender pay gap can be attributed to differences in how women negotiate. This is not to say that women don't negotiate as well as men, or even less often. Women are negotiating well and self-advocating in their careers every day — sometimes more actively and effectively than their male counterparts. Women have been observed to negotiate exceptions to typical work or business practices more than men. This includes, for example, negotiating a remote work arrangement prior to the pandemic.

But when it comes to salary and wage negotiations, research suggests that women are more reluctant to ask and less effective when they do.

That's because salary negotiations are generally seen as competitive situations that favor men and masculinity. In such settings, self-advocating violates societal norms that women should be kind and communal. According to the authors of one study, women anticipating backlash from attempting to negotiate "hedge their assertiveness, using fewer competing tactics and obtaining lower outcomes."

The fear of backlash is reasonable. Men and women alike say they are less willing to work with women who ask to be paid more.

I research negotiation and conflict management and teach a variety of negotiation courses to undergraduate and graduate students.

Here are tips that you can start applying today to be more effective in your workplace negotiations. These strategies benefit women but represent best practices for anyone seeking higher pay regardless of where they identify on the gender spectrum.

## ■ Think before you ask

Consider what you really want before you launch into your negotiation — hit pause and take a step back. How does what you're asking for fit into your bigger work or life aspirations? You might start with a focus on a salary increase, but what you really want is an accelerated promotion track.

Negotiating professional development opportunities and your role at work may do more to help close the pay gap than getting paid more than you are currently earning. So, take stock of your goals and make sure you are focusing on negotiating about the right issues.

## ■ Communicate your value

Once your purpose and objective are clear, figure out how to articulate your value. Women are more persuasive and reduce the risk of backlash when they explain why what they are asking for is appropriate and justified. As you do this, put yourself into the hiring manager's or your boss's shoes and consider how the request you are making is legitimate from their perspective. How can, for example, your data visualization skills help your team communicate more successfully at the next client meeting? How can you position what you are asking for, such as a promotion to senior analyst, in terms of bigger business goals, like expanding the client base?

## ■ Ask for more than just salary

Gender differences are most likely to arise when it is less clear whether negotiating is appropriate. This might be a job that doesn't explicitly indicate that wages are negotiable, or where the salary range is not disclosed. In these cases, women are less inclined to negotiate because they anticipate backlash. This applies not just to salary or wage negotiations, but also negotiations for other opportunities, including promotion, work assignments, developmental opportunities and resources.

When you are not sure whether negotiating is appropriate, ask around and gather

information from trusted sources. Use your network, but also stretch beyond your network. You may want to seek advice from, for example, men in male-dominated work settings. People tend to connect with others who are similar in age, gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status, so information from your close network can be skewed. Find out what people are negotiating at work and reduce the social risk of asking by decreasing ambiguity around whether negotiating is appropriate.

## ■ Check your mindset

Whether you see yourself as a reluctant negotiator, a competitive negotiator or a people-pleaser, what matters more is your mindset going into the negotiation. A review of individual differences in negotiations identified the single best predictor of performance as having a positive mindset — confidence in one's own ability and confidence that it is appropriate to negotiate.

A positive mindset also means approaching negotiations with curiosity. Make it about trying to work out a problem, not winning a fight. This approach is more aligned with social expectations that women are communal, and it is also a best practice that produces better results.

## ■ Don't skip the small talk

On the other side of the negotiation is a person, and you will find it easier to reach a solution together if you get along. Small talk before the negotiation helps build the relationship and can have a positive effect on your negotiations. Familiarity with the employer may even give women a bigger boost than men. So get to know the person you will be negotiating with personally, and don't skip the small talk.

Practice these tips and keep negotiating. The more experience you have negotiating, the better you will do. And the better results women get from negotiating well will help shrink the gender pay gap between men and women. (AP)

## Women pay more

## How to fight 'pink' tax amid inflation

By Kimberly Palmer  
NerdWallet

Trae Bodge, a shopping expert who lives in the New York City area, sees higher prices for products and services marketed to women everywhere: Socks, razors, shampoo and apparel are a few of the product types aimed at women that tend to cost more.

"I don't know why brands think this is acceptable," Bodge says. "It's another punch to the gut as we're trying to manage our budgets right now," she adds, referring to rising prices across consumer goods categories due to inflation.

The phenomenon known as the "pink tax," when products and services aimed at women cost more than their counterparts aimed at men, is well-documented across many goods and services. A 2021 paper co-authored by Stephanie Gonzalez Guittar, assistant professor in the sociology department at Rollins College in Florida, found that women pay more for deodorants and lotions, and that personal care products are increasingly differentiated by gender. For example, lotion for women cost an average of \$2.97 per ounce compared to \$1.86 for men.

While Equal Pay Day on March 14 focuses on the pay gap between men and women, it can also be a reminder to consider why being a woman so often comes with a higher price tag — and what to do about it.

Here are ways to avoid paying the pink tax.

## Gender-neutral products

As Gonzalez Guittar points out, there is no reason why women need to use lavender scents while men stick with pine. Companies also often market multiple products to women — such as separate shampoo, body wash and conditioner — while marketing a three-in-one product to men.

"These are basic hygiene products that don't need to be gendered," she says. Shoppers can save by purchasing more generic or gender-neutral products instead of the gendered versions, she says. "Ultimately, (these products) are pigeon-holing what femininity looks and smells like, and that comes at a price."

## Study fine print

Gonzalez Guittar urges consumers to take a close look at the ingredients and size information on the packaging to help make more informed decisions before they buy.

"Look at the price per ounce, because women's products tend to be smaller," she says, and you can often get a better deal by purchasing unscented products in larger quantities instead. At grocery and drugstores, you can often find the unit pricing on the shelf tag in front of the product.

## Comparison shop

Ian Ayres, a professor at Yale Law School, first identified that car dealers often offered the best deals to customers who were white men with research in the 1990s. Follow-up studies since then have affirmed the persistence of discriminatory pricing along with some progress, especially at online and no-haggle dealerships, Ayres adds.

Consumers can help protect themselves by researching car costs to be more informed negotiators and by checking out financing options in advance.

"You can get a competitive interest rate by shopping around and you don't need to go through the dealerships," Ayres says.

## Equal pricing

When it comes to services such as dry cleaning or haircuts, men's prices tend to be lower, but Bodge says they don't have to be.

"If I'm having a cotton oxford shirt cleaned, I just ask for the men's option, especially if the pricing is posted," she says. "With haircuts it's trickier, but if you have a short pixie cut, ask for the men's price."

## Know your rights

California and New York have passed laws against gender-based pricing, which provides a legal recourse for consumers who notice price discrimination based on gender. You can report violations to the New York State Division of Consumer Protection or the California Department of Consumer Affairs. Other states have proposed similar legislation.

"We have to look at how we push back with legislation. When we think about economic justice, we often only think of equal pay, but that's not the only area where women are experiencing economic injustice," says Christian F. Furth, president of the National Organization for Women, an advocacy group dedicated to defending women's rights.

"They charge you more, but also underpay you," says Nunes. "It's harder to have a sustainable life."

## Prioritize saving

Given the wage gap and women's longer expected lifespans, it's essential for women to amass savings to get through the post-retirement years, says Cindy Hounsell, president of the Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement, a nonprofit that advocates for women's retirement security. "People always say, 'I wish I had saved more,'" she says. (AP)



A man walks along the south bank of the River Thames backdropped by the Elizabeth Tower, known as Big Ben, of the Houses of Parliament, in London on Jan. 17, 2023. As in-person classes resume around the globe, American high school seniors are increasingly applying to undergrad programs abroad in pursuit of cheaper (or free) tuition and more focused degree programs. But where your wallet is concerned, attending college abroad isn't automatically the best bet. (AP)

## Living cost varies in different nations

## Can college abroad actually save you money?

By Eliza Haverstock  
NerdWallet

When Emma Freer was a high school senior in 2011, her impression of American campus culture — sororities, football games, broad course requirements — didn't appeal. Her parents had saved enough money to cover her in-state tuition, but, she says, "I knew I didn't want to go to Ohio State."

College abroad offered a solution. Freer graduated from Scotland's University of St. Andrews in 2016, debt-free and with a master's degree in English and social anthropology.

"I got a really excellent academic education as well as a second education in travel, living abroad and being an outsider in a new culture," Freer says. "I never wished I had gone to school in the US."

Lured largely by promises of cheaper tuition, college-bound Americans are increasingly eyeing programs abroad.

Over the past five years, UK universities have seen the number of US undergraduate applicants spike by 49%, according to the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, which manages the UK public university admissions system. The number of Americans studying in France has risen 5% over the past five years and jumped 50% from 2020 to 2021, according to Campus France, a French government agency that promotes higher education to foreign students. Meanwhile, Google searches in the US for "college abroad" have more than doubled since February 2021.

But college affordability depends on more than just tuition. Understand the key costs of an international education before you book a one-way plane ticket.

## Tuition

"The tuition is what draws people in, what catches their attention," says Jennifer Viemont, founder of Beyond the States, a company that helps American students find degree programs in Europe.

Tuition abroad can vary depending on which city, country and type of school you choose. Germany, for example, abandoned public university tuition fees for all students — international included — in 2014. On the other hand, at England's prestigious Oxford University, international students pay up to about \$53,900 each year.

American students can sometimes use federal aid for international schools, including loans. Additionally, undergraduate degrees from schools abroad typically take three years, rather than four, saving students a full year's worth of tuition and expenses.

## Cost of living

Cost of living varies in different cities and

## Some ways to simplify, reduce your money clutter

By Liz Weston  
NerdWallet

Professional organizers might define household clutter as a pile of unmade decisions. Money clutter is much the same.

Those credit cards you no longer use but haven't closed? That's money clutter. So is the retirement account you left behind three jobs ago and the financial paperwork you keep but no longer need. Money clutter also can include broken systems that should be mended, such as a bill payment routine that leads to overdrafts or late fees.

You can simplify your financial life by dealing with those long-delayed decisions now and streamlining how you manage your money going forward. Here are five tasks to consider.

## Consolidate accounts

The more financial accounts you have to monitor, the more stress you're likely to feel, says Chicago financial planner Sheila Padden, president of the Alliance of Comprehensive Planners. It's too easy to lose track of an account, miss a due date or fail to notice a fraudulent transaction.

"Like any machinery, if there's a lot of moving parts, then it's more likely to break down," Padden says.

One relatively easy way to consolidate is to combine workplace retirement accounts. You

countries, affecting how much you pay for housing, food and other basic expenses beyond tuition.

For example, Norway has long offered free tuition to all students regardless of origin — but the average student there should budget about \$1,260 per month for living expenses, according to the University of Bergen.

But in Portugal, basic expenses run half that. A student will need about \$640 per month to get by, according to ISPA, Lisbon's Institute of Applied Psychology.

## Exchange rates

Fluctuating exchange rates can make it difficult to predict the full cost of your education, says Jessica Sandberg, dean of international enrollment at Duke Kunshan University, a joint venture between Duke University in North Carolina and China's Wuhan University.

may be able to transfer old 401(k) accounts to your new employer's plan, for example, or roll them into a single individual retirement account, or IRA.

Closing unused credit cards is another task worth considering, although shuttering accounts may ding your credit scores. Minimize potential damage by hanging on to your oldest and highest-limit cards. If you have multiple cards with the same issuer, ask whether the credit limit on a card you want to close can be reallocated to one you want to keep. And don't close cards if you're about to apply for a major loan such as a mortgage or an auto loan.

## Get it all on one page

Budgeting apps allow you to link your bank accounts, credit cards and investment accounts so you can view all your transactions in one place. Your bank or brokerage may offer a similar feature that allows you to link outside accounts.

Learning how to use these tools takes a little time, but getting this overview can help you better manage your money without having to log in to multiple accounts, says Pamela Ladd, senior manager of personal financial planning at the Association of International Certified Professional Accountants.

"You can get a really good snapshot of your finances in one place," Ladd says.

## Automate what you can

Automating bill payments can help you avoid late fees and damage to your credit scores from missed payments. Start with bills that stay consistent, such as your mortgage or auto loan. Bills that vary each month can be trickier. Many people worry an unexpectedly large utility or credit card bill could overdraft their checking accounts if they don't have a sufficient cash cushion. A "set it and forget it" mentality also can set in, Padden notes.

"It's handy, but then if you never look at your credit card statement, then that is the downside," she says. Where automating really shines is with saving, Padden says. She recommends figuring out how much you need to save for your goals, such as retirement or an emergency fund, and then automating regular contributions.

Reduce paper clutter

Ladd admits she was a latecomer to the digital world and didn't switch to paperless statements and bills until a few years ago. Now she relies on email reminders to check her monthly statements and bills rather than receiving a paper "trigger" in the mail. Financial institutions typically store statements for six or more years, so she doesn't have to deal with filing or shredding paperwork. She finds the change "liberating."

"It's less clutter, one less thing to do," Ladd says. (AP)

Travel. Students who want to use free time to travel should budget for these expenses. Emergencies, like a family member getting sick, could lead to bigger travel bills. "It's more expensive when things go wrong," advises David Hawkins, founder of UK-based college admissions consultancy The University Guys, so put money aside for a last-minute flight home. Credit cards suited for study abroad could help reduce some travel expenses.

Visas. Most countries or regions require student visas or residency permits. Though these typically aren't huge expenses, some mandate "proof of financial means," explains Sandra Furth, a certified educational planner and founder of World Student Support. In the UK, for example, you must show enough savings to cover the first year of tuition, plus at least about \$11,200 for living expenses. (AP)

Health care. Many countries require that students pay an annual fee to access their national health care system. While this may cost a few hundred dollars each year, coverage is generous. When Viemont's son broke his wrist in the Netherlands, there was zero out-of-pocket expense. (AP)

The Conversation

Outcome depends on what doctors use them for

# Race in clinical algorithms can both cut, up health inequities

By Anirban Basu  
University of Washington

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

Health practitioners are increasingly concerned that because race is a social construct, and the biological mechanisms of how race affects clinical outcomes are often unknown, including race in predictive algorithms for clinical decision-making may worsen inequities.

For example, to calculate an estimate of kidney function called the estimated glomerular filtration rate, or eGFR, health care providers use an algorithm based on age, biological sex, race (Black or non-Black) and serum creatinine, a waste product the kidneys release into the blood. A higher eGFR value means better kidney health. These eGFR predictions are used to allocate kidney transplants in the US.

Based on this algorithm, which was trained on actual GFR values from patients, a Black patient would be assigned a higher eGFR than a non-Black patient of the same age, sex and serum creatinine level. This implies that some Black patients would be considered to have healthier kidneys than otherwise similar non-Black patients and less likely to be assigned a kidney transplant.

In 2021, however, researchers found that excluding race in the original eGFR equations could lead to larger discrepancies between estimated and actual GFR values for both Black and non-Black patients. They also found adding an additional biomarker called cystatin C can improve predictions. However, even with this biomarker, excluding race from the algorithm still led to elevated discrepancies across races.

**Factors**

I am a health economist and statistician who studies how unobserved factors in data can result in biases that lead to inefficiencies, inequities and disparities in health care. My recently published research suggests that excluding race from certain diagnostic algorithms could worsen health inequities.

Researchers use different economic frameworks to understand how society allocates resources. Two key frameworks are utilitarianism and equality of opportunity.

A purely utilitarian outlook seeks to identify what features would get the most out of a positive outcome or reduce the harm from a negative one, ignoring who possesses those features. This approach allocates resources to those with the most opportunities to generate positive outcomes or mitigate negative ones.

A utilitarian approach would always include race and ethnicity to improve the prediction power and accuracy of algorithms, regardless of whether it's fair. For example, utilitarian policies would aim to maximize overall survival among people seeking organ transplants. They would allocate organs to those who would survive the longest from transplantation, even if those who may not survive the longest due to circumstances outside their control and need the organs most would die sooner without the transplant.

Although utilitarian approaches do not take fairness into account, an approach that does would ask two questions: How do we define fairness? Are there conditions when maximizing an algorithm's prediction power and accuracy would not conflict with fairness?

To answer these questions, I apply the equality of opportunity framework, which aims to allocate resources in a way that allows everyone the same

chance of obtaining similar outcomes, without being disadvantaged by circumstances outside of their control. Researchers have used this framework in many contexts, such as political science, economics and law. The US Supreme Court has also applied equality of opportunity in several landmark rulings in education.

There are two fundamental principles in equality of opportunity.

First, inequality of outcomes is unethical if it results from differences in circumstances that are outside of an individual's own control, such as the income of a child's parents, exposure to systemic racism or living in violent and unsafe environments. This can be remedied by compensating individuals with disadvantaged circumstances in a way that allows them the same opportunity to obtain certain health outcomes as those who are not disadvantaged by their circumstances.

Second, inequality of outcomes for people in similar circumstances that result from differences in individual effort, such as practicing health-promoting behaviors like diet and exercise, is not unethical, and policymakers can reward those achieving better outcomes through such behaviors. However, differences in individual effort that occur because of circumstances, such as living in an area with limited access to healthy food, are not addressed under equality of opportunity. Keeping all circumstances the same, any differences in effort between individuals should be due to preferences, free will and perceived benefits and costs. This is called accountable effort. So, two individuals with the same circumstances should be rewarded according to their accountable efforts, and society should accept the resulting differences in outcomes.

Equality of opportunity implies that if algorithms were to be used for clinical decision-making, then it is necessary to understand what causes variation in the predictions they make.

If variation in predictions results from differences in circumstances or biological conditions but not from individual accountable effort, then it is appropriate to use the algorithm for reward but not compensation, such as allocating kidneys so everyone has an equal opportunity to live the same length of life, but not for reward, such as allocating kidneys to those who would live the longest with the kidneys.

**Predictions**

In contrast, if variation in predictions results from differences in individual accountable effort but not from their circumstances, then it is appropriate to use the algorithm for reward but not compensation.

To hold machine learning and other artificial intelligence algorithms accountable to a standard of equity, I applied the principles of equality of opportunity to evaluate whether race should be included in clinical algorithms. I ran simulations under both ideal data conditions, where all data on a person's circumstances is available, and real data conditions, where some data on a person's circumstances is missing.

In these simulations, I unequivocally assume that race is a social and not biological construct. Variables such as race and ethnicity are often proxies for various circumstances individuals face that are out of their control, such as systemic racism that contributes to health disparities.

I evaluated two categories of algorithms.

The first, diagnostic algorithms, makes predictions based on outcomes

Firm to advance innovative best- and first-in-class medicines

## BeiGene ASCO presentations reinforce its promise across 'oncology portfolio'

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., May 30: BeiGene (NASDAQ: BGNE; HKEX: 06160; SSE: 688235), a global biotechnology company, has announced the presentation of new data showcasing the range of BeiGene's research expertise and the productivity of one of the industry's largest research and development teams at the 2023 American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting in Chicago. These results include data for BeiGene's cornerstone therapies, Brukinsa (zanubrutinib) and tislelizumab, as well as early results for BeiGene's OX40 agonist and BCL-2 inhibitor.

"The data presented at ASCO demonstrate the strength of BeiGene's oncology portfolio, from early data supporting the differentiated biological hypotheses for our BCL-2 inhibitor and OX40 agonist and continuing results from the global development programs for our innovative medicines, Brukinsa and tislelizumab, as monotherapies and in combination regimens," said Lai Wang, Ph.D., Global Head of R&D at BeiGene. "At BeiGene, we believe the patients we serve come first, and we will continue to partner with patients to advance innovative potential best- and first-in-class medicines."

In a risk factor analysis of Rationale-301, a Phase 3 study of tislelizumab vs sorafenib as first-line treatment of unresectable hepatocellular carcinoma, tislelizumab demonstrated numerically longer median overall survival (OS) versus sorafenib in the biomarker subgroups of grade 1 (19.9 months vs. 16.9 months),  $\leq 141$  (19.4 months vs. 14.5 months), and  $\leq 3$  (20.9 months vs. 15.2 months), suggesting the potential for prognostic value.

**Response**

In a European/North American (EU/NA) subgroup analysis of Rationale-301, numerically longer median OS, median duration of response, and a higher objective response rate (ORR) were seen with tislelizumab versus sorafenib. Notably, the EU/NA subgroup had a higher rate of patients with non-viral etiology and a slightly lower number of patients with advanced-stage disease (BCLC Stage C) compared with the overall population from Rationale-301.

Additionally, incidence of grade  $\geq 3$  treatment-emergent adverse events (TEAEs; 46% vs 66%), grade  $\geq 3$  treatment-related TEAEs (TRAEs; 17% vs 50%), and TRAEs leading to discontinuation (9% vs 15%) were lower with tislelizumab versus sorafenib in

the EU/NA subgroup respectively and similar to incidences observed in the overall study population.

In an updated analysis of the Rosewood study, Brukinsa in combination with obinutuzumab demonstrated clinically meaningful activity and manageable safety profile in patients with heavily pretreated relapsed/refractory (R/R) follicular lymphoma (FL). The combination of Brukinsa and obinutuzumab represents a potentially new therapy for patients with R/R FL.

Demonstrating a commitment to developing rigorous evidence for potential new treatments for rare hematologic malignancies, BeiGene will detail the trial design of its ongoing Phase 3 Mahogany study of Brukinsa plus obinutuzumab versus lenalidomide plus rituximab in R/R FL or marginal zone lymphoma during the Trials in Progress session.

**Discovered**

BeiGene's investigational BGB-A445 is a novel monoclonal antibody OX40 agonist that does not compete with endogenous OX40 ligand binding. The molecule is being studied as a single agent or in combination with tislelizumab in patients with advanced solid tumors in an ongoing, Phase 1 dose escalation and expansion study.

In first-in-human results presented at ASCO, BGB-A445 monotherapy or in combination with tislelizumab was generally well-tolerated across all doses with no dose-limiting toxicities and demonstrated preliminary antitumor activity in patients with advanced solid tumors.

As further evaluation, the dose expansion phase is currently enrolling patients into non-small cell lung cancer and head and neck squamous cell carcinoma cohorts.

BGB-11417 is a potent and highly selective BCL-2 inhibitor, and a dose-finding results showed that single agent treatment was well tolerated at all tested doses up to 640 mg/d as monotherapy in B-cell malignancies, with no dose-dependent toxicity increase. BGB-11417 monotherapy also showed promising initial efficacy results in R/R chronic lymphocytic leukemia/small lymphocytic lymphoma, with patients achieving responses at lower dose levels.

Brukinsa is a small molecule inhibitor of Bruton's tyrosine kinase (BTK) discovered by BeiGene scientists that is currently being evaluated globally in a broad clinical program as a monotherapy and in combination with other therapies to treat various B-cell malignancies.

opportunity approach, diagnostic models that do not take race into account would increase systemic inequities and discrimination. I found similar results for prognostic models intended to compensate for individual circumstances. For example, excluding race from algorithms that predict the future survival of patients with kidney failure would fail to identify those with underlying circumstances that make them more vulnerable.

Including race in prognostic models intended to reward individual efforts can also increase disparities. For ex-

ample, including race in algorithms that predict how much longer a person would live after a kidney transplant may fail to account for individual circumstances that could limit how much longer they live.

Better biomarkers may one day be able to better predict health outcomes than race and ethnicity. Until then, including race in certain clinical algorithms could help reduce disparities.

Although my study uses an equality of opportunity framework to measure how race and ethnicity affect the results of prediction algorithms, re-

searchers don't know whether other ways to approach fairness would lead to different recommendations. How to choose between different approaches to fairness also remains to be seen. Moreover, there are questions about how multi-racial groups should be coded in health databases and algorithms.

My colleagues and I are exploring many of these unanswered questions to reduce algorithmic discrimination. We believe our work will readily extend to other areas outside of health, including education, crime and labor markets. (AP)

nancies. Because new BTK is continuously synthesized, Brukinsa was specifically designed to deliver complete and sustained inhibition of the BTK protein by optimizing bioavailability, half-life, and selectivity. With differentiated pharmacokinetics compared to other approved BTK inhibitors, Brukinsa has been demonstrated to inhibit the proliferation of malignant B cells within a number of disease relevant tissues.

Brukinsa is supported by a broad clinical program which includes more than 4,900 subjects in 35 trials across 29 markets. To date, Brukinsa is approved in more than 65 markets around the world, including the United States, China, the European Union, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, South Korea, and Switzerland.

Tislelizumab is a humanized IgG4 anti-PD-1 monoclonal antibody specifically designed to minimize binding to Fc-gamma (Fc $\gamma$ ) receptors on macrophages, helping to aid the body's immune cells to detect and fight tumors. In pre-clinical studies, binding to Fc $\gamma$  receptors on macrophages has been shown to compromise the antitumor activity of PD-1 antibodies through activation of antibody-dependent macrophage-mediated killing of T effector cells.

**Patients**

The global development program for tislelizumab includes more than 12,000 patients and encompasses more than 20 potentially registration-enabling clinical trials in more than 30 countries and regions.

Tislelizumab is approved in 11 indications in China, including a recent approval for use in combination with chemotherapy, for the treatment of patients with previously untreated advanced or metastatic esophageal squamous cell carcinoma. Tislelizumab is not currently approved for use outside of China.

BGB-11417 is a highly potent and selective Bcl-2 inhibitor designed to produce deeper and more sustained target inhibition.

Compared with venetoclax, BGB-11417 exhibited greater potency (>10-fold) and higher target selectivity and showed signs of overcoming treatment resistance in pre-clinical studies and tumor models.

BGB-A445 is an investigational agonistic antibody directed to the OX40 antigen. BGB-A445 is a non-ligand competing antibody that does not disrupt OX40 to OX40 ligand engagement. Preclinical experiments showed

that BGB-A445 had increasing effectiveness at higher doses versus an antibody that was ligand-competing, which showed falling effectiveness at higher doses.

Fatal and serious hemorrhage has occurred in patients with hematological malignancies treated with BRUKINSA monotherapy. Grade 3 or higher hemorrhage, including intracranial and gastrointestinal hemorrhage, hematuria and hemothorax have been reported in 3.6% of patients treated with Brukinsa monotherapy in clinical trials, with fatalities occurring in 0.3% of patients. Bleeding of any grade, excluding purpura and petechiae, occurred in 30% of patients.

Bleeding has occurred in patients with and without concomitant antiplatelet or anticoagulation therapy. Coadministration of Brukinsa with antiplatelet or anticoagulant medications may further increase the risk of hemorrhage.

Monitor for signs and symptoms of bleeding. Discontinue Brukinsa if intracranial hemorrhage of any grade occurs. Consider the benefit-risk of withholding Brukinsa for 3-7 days pre- and post-surgery depending upon the type of surgery and the risk of bleeding.

Fatal and serious infections (including bacterial, viral, or fungal infections) and opportunistic infections have occurred in patients with hematological malignancies treated with Brukinsa monotherapy. Grade 3 or higher infections occurred in 24% of patients, most commonly pneumonia (11%), with fatal infections occurring in 2.9% of patients. Infections due to hepatitis B virus (HBV) reactivation have occurred.

Consider prophylaxis for herpes simplex virus, pneumocystis jirovecii pneumonia, and other infections according to standard of care in patients who are at increased risk for infections. Monitor and evaluate patients for fever or other signs and symptoms of infection and treat appropriately.

Grade 3 or 4 cytopenias, including neutropenia (22%), thrombocytopenia (8%) and anemia (7%) based on laboratory measurements, developed in patients treated with Brukinsa monotherapy. Grade 4 neutropenia occurred in 11% of patients, and Grade 4 thrombocytopenia occurred in 2.8% of patients.

Monitor complete blood counts regularly during treatment and interrupt treatment, reduce the dose, or discontinue treatment as warranted. Treat using growth factor or transfusions, as needed.

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**New limits aim to curtail foreign influence on Italian culture**

**La Scala unveils 2023-24 season as new govt decree creates uncertainty**

MILAN, May 30, (AP) — The French general manager of Milan's famed Teatro alla Scala is facing the threat of a tenure cut short, even as he unveiled a star-studded 2023-24 season and announced record sponsor revenues on Monday.

A government decree adopted earlier this month would require any general manager of a lyric opera theater in Italy, birthplace of the art form, to step down on their 70th birthday. The new limits imposed by the far-right-led government are widely seen as seeking to curtail foreign influence on Italian culture.

For La Scala's general manager, Dominique Meyer, that would be in August 2025, precluding a customary second mandate. His first runs out in the spring of that year.

Milan Mayor Giuseppe Sala, who serves on the La Scala board, acknowledged the government's moves created "an uncomfortable situation," also given the long advance time necessary to sign talent for opera seasons. The decree becomes law once it is officially published.

"I think that our government should know that we are speaking of an important reality, of theaters like La Scala," Sala, who belongs to the opposition Democratic Party, told a press conference. "It is not OK to leave things up in the air, with this possible change in the norms."

But he expressed confidence that La Scala would weather whatever changes it faced, citing the professionalism of its management.

Meyer said he was calm and continuing to work as usual. "We are trying to secure the biggest artists in the world also in the future," he said.

The 2023-24 season opens on Dec. 7 with a new production of Ver-

di's "Don Carlo," conducted by La Scala's music director, Riccardo Chailly, and featuring Anna Netrebko, Rene Pape, Francesco Meli and Luca Salsi.

Eleven of the 15 operas next season are by Italian composers, including Puccini's "La rondine," conducted by Chailly, and "Turandot," conducted by Daniel Harding. The theater is also launching a new Wagner ring cycle, starting with "Das Rheingold" in October 2024.

**Performances**

La Scala's orchestra and choir will conduct a rare nine-city European tour, with stops including Vienna, Amsterdam and Paris. Riccardo Muti returns with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra on Jan. 27, 2024, as part of a guest orchestra series.

The ballet season opens Dec. 15 with "Coppelia," by acclaimed choreographer Alexei Ratmansky, while La Scala's principal dancer Roberto Bolle will star in four performances of "Madama Butterfly" in February and March 2024. A gala honoring the late prima ballerina Carla Fracci will be held on April 19, 2024.

While introducing the season, Meyer underlined recent milestones, including hitting a record 43 million euros (\$46 million) in revenues from sponsors last year. He noted that revenues overall last year were up 25% over the last pre-pandemic year in 2019, with performances averaging 90% of capacity, even though last-minute lower-cost ticket sales were down by nearly half.

"It is no longer true that you can just show up at La Scala and find tickets. You need to reserve," he said.

The government's decree on the age of opera house general managers would have a more immediate effect, at the San Carlo Opera House in Naples, ending Frenchman Stephane Lissner's tenure in June. Lissner, a former La Scala general manager, has indicated he plans to challenge the measure, which some experts have suggested is unconstitutional since it would have a retroactive impact.

**Also:**

**MILAN:** Italian composer **Francesco Filidei** has been commissioned by Milan's Teatro alla Scala and the Paris Opera to write a new opera based on **Umberto Eco's** most famous novel "The Name of the Rose," the opera houses announced recently.

The world premiere has already been scheduled, at La Scala on April 27, 2025, conducted by **Ingo Metzmacher** and starring mezzo-soprano **Kate Lindsay** and baritone **Lucas Meachem**.

La Scala's general manager, **Dominique Meyer**, called the new commission "a very important opera."

"The Name of the Rose" was Eco's debut novel, a medieval thriller set in a monastery. It catapulted him to international celebrity and was made into a 1986 film starring **Sean Connery**. Eco died at home in Milan in 2016.

Filidei is working on two versions, one in Italian and one in French, the second to premiere at the Paris Opera. The 50-year-old Filidei has composed two previous operas: "Giordano Bruno," which premiered in **Porto, Portugal** in 2015 and "L'inondation," performed during the 2019 season of the Opera Comique in Paris.

Music

**Variety**



This image released by A24 shows Tobias Menzies, (left), and Julia Louis-Dreyfus in a scene from 'You Hurt My Feelings.' (AP)

**Film**

Louis-Dreyfus reteams with Holofcener

**In 'You Hurt,' truth shatters trust**

By Jake Coyle

If I didn't like Nicole Holofcener's latest film, would I tell her?

OK, sure, it wouldn't be so odd for a critic to give an unvarnished opinion. But what about a sibling? Or a spouse? If they didn't care for Holofcener's movie, what's more important: Being honest or making a loved one feel good about themselves? Do any of us really want straightforward feedback or do we just want emotional support?

That's the rich vein that Holofcener, a master of nagging neuroses, mines so expertly in "You Hurt My Feelings" — a film that I very much adored. I swear.

For Holofcener, something as commonplace as little white lies between a married couple is just as fertile territory as, say, time travel is to Christopher Nolan. To her, such a minefield of insecurity is a playground. And in "You Hurt My Feelings," it's glorious — albeit in a profoundly awkward way that can be mortifying — to watch her at play.

Beth (Julia Louis-Dreyfus), a writer, and her husband, Don (Tobias Menzies), a therapist, are a long-married New York couple whose harmonious if humdrum life runs into a crisis at Paragon Sports on Broadway. The trouble isn't infidelity or even a nasty fight over athletic socks. Don is chatting there with his brother-in-law, Mark (Arian Moayed of "Succession"), when Beth and her sister Sarah (Michaela Watkins) come to meet them.

They approach slowly, wanting to hear what they're talking about. When they get near, Beth is horrified to hear Don confessing that he hates Beth's new book. He has always supported her writing. He's read every draft and only offered encouragement. So this revelation is for Beth like a betrayal, and it shatters her trust in him.

Middle-aged Manhattanites with hurt feelings,

of course, may not seem like the end of the world. Surely Holofcener's title is a little ironic, like something a child would say. But she is brilliant in finding the major heartache in minor slights. For Beth, her husband's confession isn't just a blow to her ego but goes to the heart of whether her husband truly loves her. Beth's work is herself, she thinks, so how can he not like it?

Louis-Dreyfus, working with Holofcener for the second time following 2013's also great "Enough Said," is incredibly good here. We all know by now that Louis-Dreyfus is one of our greatest comic actors ever, but she's a much stronger dramatic performer than tends to be acknowledged. When Beth's need for reassurance and validation crashes in "You Hurt My Feelings," Louis-Dreyfus is movingly crestfallen.

**Characters**

This isn't the only story running here, either, though. With a terrific ensemble, "You Hurt My Feelings" digs into the half-truths that keep self-doubt at bay in all of these characters.

Don, himself, might not be such a great therapist, a realization that he's coming to. "He's an idiot," one patient (Zach Cherry) mutters while exiting an appointment. David Cross and Amber Tamblyn, married in real life, play a bitterly bickering couple who agree on nothing except that they want their money back from Don after years of sessions. Sarah, too, is nursing Mark's acting dreams with words of encouragement while her interior-design clients reject all her ideas.

No one in "You Hurt My Feelings" seems to be all that great at their jobs. Holofcener's film is remarkably perceptive in its characters' faults while subtly arguing that we should overlook them.

After a prolonged argument, Beth begins to realize how she, too, sweetly lies to prop up her

husband. It really crystallizes as a parent. When their son, Elliot (Owen Teague), is depressed after a breakup, what mother or father in their right mind would do anything but tell him what he wants to hear? White lies, maybe, make the world go round.

Would you, too, agree? This was a good review, right? Please be honest.

"You Hurt My Feelings," an A24 release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for language. Running time: 93 minutes. Three and a half stars out of four.

**Also:**

**LOS ANGELES:** Molly Gordon grew up in and around the entertainment industry, acting alongside her best friend **Ben Platt** in productions of "Fiddler on the Roof" and "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying" before she'd even turned 6.

She was Triple A in "Booksmart" and **Melissa McCarthy's** daughter in "Life of the Party," but this summer is forging her own path forward as a writer-director-actor in the loving satire "Theater Camp" (July 14).

Gordon plays **Rebecca-Diane**, who teaches music theory to kids at a crumbling but beloved summer camp in upstate **New York**. She co-directed with her friend **Nick Liebermann** and they share writing credits with co-stars Platt and **Noah Galvin** too.

"I felt so inspired by so many collectives of people that had come up together, like Christopher Guest, The Groundlings, The Lonely Island, who made (stuff) with their friends and wrote specifically for their friends," Gordon said. "We thought, let's make something about a world that we know really well and a world that we love and because we love it, we can make a lot of fun of it." (AP)

**LOS ANGELES:** Céline Dion has canceled all her scheduled tour dates through April 2024 as she continues treatment for a rare neurological disorder.

"I'm so sorry to disappoint all of you once again," the singer said in a statement on social media. "I'm working really hard to build back my strength, but touring can be very difficult even when you're 100%. It's not fair to you to keep postponing the shows, and even though it breaks my heart, it's best that we cancel everything now until I'm really ready to be back on stage again."

A total of 42 European dates have been canceled, including stops in the **Netherlands, France, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Poland, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Austria, England, Scotland and Ireland.**

Earlier this year, Dion said stiff person syndrome was causing spasms that affect her ability to walk and sing.

"Unfortunately, the spasms affect every aspect of my daily life, sometimes causing difficulties when I walk and not allowing me to use my vocal cords to sing the way I'm used to," she said.

Stiff person syndrome causes rigid muscles and painful muscle spasms, which can be triggered by such things as loud noises or light touch. The cause isn't known, but it is thought to be an autoimmune disorder. Severe cases can cause difficulty walking and hunched posture.

Dion, who has five Grammy Awards and two Academy Awards, is the bestselling female artist of all time with hits like "I'm Alive" and "My Heart Will Go On." (AP)

**ISLAMABAD:** A prominent Pakistani television journalist who went missing last week, apparently because of his public support to former prime minister **Inran Khan**, returned home early Tuesday after being released by his captors, his family and his employer said.

**Sami Abraham's** brother, **Ali Raza**, took to Twitter to confirm his release. BOL TV confirmed his release in a news announcement.

Abraham went missing Thursday when eight people in four vehicles intercepted his car on his

way back home from work in the capital, Islamabad, and took him away, according to his family and BOL TV where Abraham works.

No one had claimed responsibility for Abraham's abduction, but it is widely believed that he was being held by the country's security agencies, which are notorious for abducting, harassing and torturing



Dion



Ibrahim

journalists. (AP)

**NEW DELHI:** A government official in **India** has been suspended from his job after he ordered a water reservoir to be drained so he could retrieve his smartphone, which he had dropped while taking a selfie.

Food inspector **Rajesh Vishwas**

dropped his Samsung smartphone in **Kherkatta** dam in the central Indian state of **Chhattisgarh** last week. The Times of India newspaper reported.

Vishwas first asked local divers to jump into the reservoir to find the device, claiming it contained sensitive government data. But after the initial efforts to retrieve

his smartphone failed, he asked for the reservoir to be emptied using diesel pumps.

Over the next three days, more than 2 million liters of water were pumped out from the reservoir, which is enough to irrigate at least 1,500 acres of land during India's scorching summer, local media reported. (AP)

Features

ARABIC TIMES

WEDNESDAY, MAY 31, 2023

## People &amp; Places

## Television

## Disney+ new show

## From Xerox to TV box, Yang's dream play out

LOS ANGELES, May 30, (AP) — Gene Luen Yang remembers feeling pumped in 2007 when Hollywood came calling about his trailblazing graphic novel "American Born Chinese." But that excitement turned into exasperation when it became clear the interested party completely missed the point of the book.

"It came out that the reason why they were interested is because the Beijing Olympics were coming up in 2008. And they wanted some property that had the word China or Chinese in it," Yang said in a recent interview. "Every now and then there would be an inquiry. But I really think the world needed to change in order for there to be an appetite for a story about an Asian American protagonist."

Change has finally come. After 17 years, the cartoonist is seeing his American dream play out.

"American Born Chinese" debuted on Disney+ recently with a mostly Asian cast that now includes two new Oscar winners — Michelle Yeoh and Ke Huy Quan. The show, which also boasts Asian American showrunners, centers on high school soccer player Jin Wang (Ben Wang) growing up amid pressure to reconcile his American and Chinese sides. Mixing elements of teen drama, fantasy and fight sequences, the show, like the book, jumps between Jin's storyline and one involving the Monkey King, an iconic character in Chinese folklore. The story threads eventually intertwine.

"It feels like a very surreal moment to have this book that I did as Xerox copies that I would put together at my local Kinko's eventually become a show on Disney+," Yang said.

## Celebrate

The first two episodes have been screened around the country from San Francisco to New York City to the White House, partly to celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. The predominantly Asian American audiences have praised the show's heartfelt and at times humorous portrayal of an Asian American family.

"American Born Chinese, you can't do it in one long movie," said Yeoh, who's proud of how the series turned out. "There's so many different aspects of it that need to be shown, it needs that space and time on screen."

Yeoh, who made history as the first Asian to win her Oscar category for "Everything Everywhere All at Once," plays Guanyin, the goddess of mercy. She was invited to the project by her "Shang-Chi and the Legends of the Ten Rings" director, Destin Daniel Cretton, an executive producer.

In the show, Yeoh gets to don a sweeping gown and headdress as well as sweats and a baseball cap. Being a revered Chinese folklore figure, many people already have an image of Guanyin. The Malaysia-born Yeoh didn't dwell on the pressure of playing someone larger than life.

"What I do think about is how we have to be very respectful of this goddess of mercy because she represents so many things to so many followers all around the world," Yeoh said. "We gave her the gravitas she deserved and the respect to show you what we love about her."

Yeoh and Quan had already wrapped up "Everything Everywhere All at Once," when they started filming "American Born Chinese." Costmates Stephanie Hsu and James Hong also guest-star in an episode. The best picture winner premiered in the middle of production and then "we watched the whole world change," executive producer Kelvin Yu said.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, Wang is the star after doing mostly one-episode guest spots. He still isn't quite used to seeing himself on posters. Having grown up seeing little on-screen Asian representation, it's a novel concept that he could be an example for a teenage Asian American boy today.

"It's very surreal and strange," Wang said. "I still can't believe that it's me. I just feel like it's someone who looks like me, which is double weird. It's like seeing your doppelgänger."

The television adaptation comes in the wake of other teen shows with an Asian American lens. Disney+ also has "Ms. Marvel" featuring a Muslim American female superhero. Jenny Han's two book series, "To All the Boys I've Loved Before" and "The Summer I Turned Pretty," have been hits for Netflix and Amazon Prime, respectively. The fourth and final season of "Never Have I Ever," about an Indian American high schooler, drops in June.

## Literature

"We're standing on the shoulders of those kinds of things, going back to 'Joy Luck Club' ... all the way up to 'Fresh Off the Boat' and shows like 'Never Have I Ever,'" Yu said. "We'll take all that momentum. We'll take all that sort of education for an audience to get used to faces like ours and we'll embrace it and move forward."

The graphic novel was landmark literature for Asian American millennials. Reviews lauded it as a fresh take on adolescence, bi-cultural identity and racism. It won several accolades and was a National Book Awards finalist.

For many young Chinese American readers, it was the first time they had seen themselves and the Monkey King — a legend they likely heard about from their parents — in that genre. The character first appeared in the epic 16th century Chinese novel, "Journey to the West." The tome has been adapted several times including a memorable 1980s TV series created by China Central Television (CCTV). The super-powered simian is well-known across Asia like Batman or Spider-Man, according to Yu.

Daniel Wu, who grew up in California but began his acting career in Hong Kong, plays the Monkey King. This project brings him full circle from when he dealt with his own "American-born Chinese" issues.

"Even though I was warmly accepted by the audiences there, I always felt like slightly being an outsider because I was American," Wu said. "Because we knew we were trying to tell Gene's story of what it's like to be of both sides, there was this kind of special energy that was on set. We knew that we were trying to tell authentically what our story was."



Yeoh



This image released by Disney+ shows Sydney Taylor, (left), and Ben Wang in a scene from 'American Born Chinese.' (AP)



Tonikaku Akarui Yasumura poses at a dressing room of a Tokyo theater on May 23. The disarming sight gag by Yasumura is simple and rather silly. The recent appearance of Tony, as Yasumura is known these days, on "Britain's Got Talent" has drawn more than 10 million views on the audition show's YouTube account. (AP)



Redford



Maharis

## Variety

LOS ANGELES: George Maharis, a stage-trained actor with rough-hewn good looks who became an icon to American youth in the 1960s as he cruised the country in a Corvette convertible in the hit television series "Route 66," has died.

Maharis' friend and caretaker Marc Bahan said in a Facebook post that he died Wednesday. Bahan told the Hollywood Reporter, which first reported Maharis' death, that he died at his home in Beverly Hills, California, after contracting hepatitis. He was 94.

On "Route 66," Maharis played Buz Murdock, a hardened survivor of New York City's Hell's Kitchen. His co-star Martin Milner, who died in 2015, was Tod Stiles, a young man raised in wealth who upon his father's death was left with nothing but a shiny new Corvette.

The pair decided to travel the highway author John Steinbeck had dubbed "The Mother Road." Each week brought a new adventure in a new city, and audiences tuned in in droves.

"Route 66" was the rare series at the time that was filmed on location, moving to new towns and cities for each new episode. It featured as guest stars future stars including Robert Redford, James Caan, Robert Duvall and Alan Alda in some of their earliest roles.

The storied highway itself was as much a star of the show as Maharis and Milner. Since bypassed in favor of bigger, faster interstates, it stretched unbroken from Chicago to the Pacific Ocean and was venerated as a driving force behind the country's 20th century westward migration.

"Route 66" was said to have been inspired by Jack Kerouac's novel "On the Road," and it spawned its own hit song, an instrumental composed by Nelson Riddle. The more familiar tune, "Get Your Kicks On" Route 66," was not connected to the series.

## Television

## Japanese comic's show rooted in traditional storytelling

## Yasumura bares all about his 'comedy'

TOKYO, May 30, (AP) — The shtick that's gone viral features a soccer player, a Spice Girl, James Bond, you name it, appearing to be naked, except they're not really naked at all.

The disarming sight gag by Japanese comic Tonikaku Akarui Yasumura is simple and rather silly. But its bare-all message about the deceptiveness of what meets the eye has a lot of people laughing.

The recent appearance of Tony, as Yasumura is known these days, on "Britain's Got Talent" has drawn more than 10 million views on the audition show's YouTube account.

"Do it with a majestically dignified and utterly unflinching confidence," he told The Associated Press recently in Tokyo, of the secret to his comedy. "That gets over because what you're doing is such nonsense."

Yasumura has been doing his trademark act for nearly a decade on TV shows and comedy houses around Japan.

He stands before the audience wearing only a pink flower-patterned bathing suit and declares he will portray a certain person posing naked.

Then he raises a leg, sits with his hands folded, or crouches low, strategically and carefully positioning himself so his only attire is out of view.

"Don't worry," he says in a friendly, reassuring tone.

"I'm wearing," he adds, without saying more because in the Japanese language, the object of the sentence is often unspoken.

On the British show, the judges finished the sentence for him, shouting out, "Pants!"

Yasumura says he can depict anyone this way, including politicians, musical stars or nondescript people doing eve-

ryday things like drinking tea.

"It's just funny. There is absolutely no meaning," said Yasumura, 41, who has a jolly laugh but is obviously intensely serious about his craft.

You must always wear a smile. And never, ever flinch.

He acknowledged he barely understood what the show's judges were saying, and inside felt unsure what to do. But he didn't skip a beat.

"Honestly, you are the funniest contestant we've had all year, seriously. Really, really funny, and original," gushed Simon Cowell, the show's producer and usually one of the harshest judges.

## Confidence

"He brought confidence, comedy and luckily his pants! Tonikaku had us crackin' up from start to finish with his brilliant audition," the show said in a statement.

The humor in Yasumura's performance is rooted in the Japanese version of vaudeville, which includes traditional storytelling, in which the narrator plays all the roles, as well as standup comedy.

"Hadaka gei," which literally translates as "naked acts," make up a genre of Japanese comedy.

It's different from putting on a performance, like a juggling act, playing an instrument or dancing, no matter how funny it might end up being, because what he does constitutes the Japanese art of comedy, or "neta," Yasumura says.

"Neta" is also used to describe the ingredients of gourmet cooking or the scoop of a news story, in other words, the key kernel of what's unfolding.

He chanced upon his idea when he saw a female pop idol on a book cover,

yes, posing naked, except she was sitting in a position that made you imagine she could be nude, when all you saw were her legs, face and arms.

"It was exactly the same as my neta. I saw that and knew: This is it," he said.

And he hasn't stopped since. His success on "Britain's Got Talent" has resonated at home. Many people left uplifting comments online, noting he had made them feel so proud, witnessing comedy crossing borders.

Soccer star Keisuke Honda posted a photo of himself kicking a ball on Twitter, next to a photo of Yasumura striking the naked soccer player pose. "I'm wearing," Honda tweeted.

Matsuko Deluxe, a reputed writer, noted on a recent TV show that Yasumura wasn't afraid to poke fun at himself, when much of modern-day humor tended to do just the opposite, and poke fun at others.

Although Yasumura exudes an innocence about him, in all his naked-baby cuteness, he also possesses a strength. It's obvious he's done his pants gimmick over and over, for years, even when no one laughed.

Even today, some online observers are already slamming Yasumura as inane, if not offensive.

Yasumura says he is lucky because he doesn't have to do anything special to maintain his chubby figure.

Still, sticking with a mode of self-expression requires dedication and courage. After all, it's clear he isn't afraid literally to stand practically naked before an audience.

He swears he'll be doing his routine till he dies.

If he makes the show's semi-finals, Yasumura isn't sure what exactly he will do, maybe Elton John or Freddie Mercury posing naked.

Maharis left the show after the third season — it would continue for one more without him — and never again achieved the same fame. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: A 17-year-old boy fell to his death this weekend while climbing a Los Angeles bridge in an apparent social media stunt, police said. Police were sent to the 6th Street

Viaduct around 2 am Saturday and found the boy, who was pronounced dead at a hospital. His name wasn't immediately released.

The teen slipped and fell "when climbing upon one of the arches, in order to post, apparently, a social media broadcast," Police Chief Michel Moore said during a meeting of the Los Angeles Police Commission.

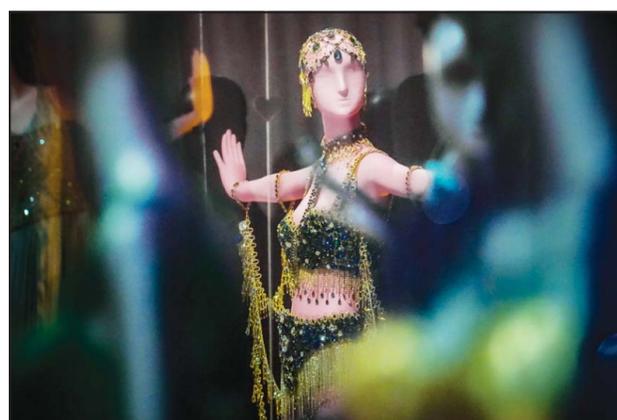
The bridge opened last July. The \$588-million span, which replaced an 84-year-old Art Deco span, runs 3,500 feet (1,066.80 meters) over the concrete-lined Los Angeles River and connects downtown to the historic Eastside.

The bridge, which has thousands of LED lights and views of LA's skyline, is the largest and most expensive span ever built in the city. It was designed to become a city landmark.

But police closed the bridge several times after it quickly became a hotspot for street racing, graffiti and illegal takeovers that drew hundreds of spectators to watch drivers perform dangerous stunts in their vehicles.

Social media stunts abounded as well — in one case, a man sat in a barber's chair for a haircut in the middle of the lanes.

A man was also fatally shot on the bridge in January during unauthorized filming of a music video. (AP)



A costume worn by singer Taylor Swift, part of the exhibition, "Taylor Swift: Storyteller," is displayed at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York on Tuesday, May 23. The exhibit runs through Sept. 4. (AP)

## Environment

## NYC faces another risk

## New York City sinking under its own weight

NEW YORK, May 30. (AP) — If rising oceans aren't worry enough, add this to the risks New York City faces: The metropolis is slowly sinking under the weight of its skyscrapers, homes, asphalt and humanity itself.

New research estimates the city's landmass is sinking at an average rate of 1 to 2 millimeters per year, something referred to as "subsidence."

That natural process happens everywhere as ground is compressed, but the study published this month in the journal *Earth's Future* sought to estimate how the massive weight of the city itself is hurrying things along.

More than 1 million buildings are spread across the city's five boroughs. The research team calculated that all those structures add up to about 1.7 trillion tons (1.5 trillion metric tons) of concrete, metal and glass - about the mass of 4,700 Empire State buildings - pressing down on the Earth.

The rate of compression varies throughout the city. Midtown Manhattan's skyscrapers are largely built on rock, which compresses very little, while some parts of Brooklyn, Queens and downtown Manhattan are on looser soil and sinking faster, the study revealed.

While the process is slow, lead researcher **Tom Parsons** of the US Geological Survey said parts of the city will eventually be under water.

"It's inevitable. The ground is going down, and the water's coming up. At some point, those two levels will meet," said Parsons, whose job is to forecast hazardous events from earthquakes and tsunamis to incremental shifts of the ground below us.

But no need to invest in life preservers just yet, Parsons assured.

The study merely notes buildings themselves are contributing, albeit incrementally, to the shifting landscape, he said. Parsons and his team of researchers reached their conclusions using satellite imaging, data modeling and a lot of mathematical assumptions.

## Concern

It will take hundreds of years - precisely when is unclear - before New York becomes America's version of Venice, which is famously sinking into the Adriatic Sea.

But parts of the city are more at risk. "There's a lot of weight there, a lot of people there," Parsons said, referring specifically to Manhattan. "The average elevation in the southern part of the island is only 1 or 2 meters (3.2 or 6.5 feet) above sea level - it is very close to the waterline, and so it is a deep concern."

Because the ocean is rising at a similar rate as the land is sinking, the Earth's changing climate could accelerate the timeline for parts of the city to disappear under water.

"It doesn't mean that we should stop building buildings. It doesn't mean that the buildings are themselves the sole cause of this. There are a lot of factors," Parsons said. "The purpose was to point this out in advance before it becomes a bigger problem."

Already, New York City is at risk of flooding because of massive storms that can cause the ocean to swell inland or inundate neighborhoods with torrential rain.

The resulting flooding could have destructive and deadly consequences, as demonstrated by Superstorm Sandy a decade ago and the still-potent remnants of Hurricane Ida two years ago.

"From a scientific perspective, this is an important study," said Andrew Kruczkiewicz, a senior researcher at Columbia University's Climate School, who was not involved in the research.

Its findings could help inform policy makers as they draft ongoing plans to combat, or at least forestall, the rising tides.

"We can't sit around and wait for a critical threshold of sea level rise to occur," he said, "because waiting could mean we would be missing out on taking anticipatory action and preparedness measures."

New Yorkers such as Tracy Miles can be incredulous at first. "I think it's a made-up story," Miles said. He thought again while looking at sailboats bobbing in the water edging downtown Manhattan. "We do have an excessive amount of skyscrapers, apartment buildings, corporate offices and retail spaces."

New York City isn't the only place sinking. San Francisco also is putting considerable pressure on the ground and the region's active earthquake faults. In Indonesia, the government is preparing for a possible retreat from Jakarta, which is sinking into the Java Sea, for a new capital being constructed on the higher ground of an entirely different island.

## Also:

**BILLINGS, Mont.:** The US government can keep using chemical retardant dropped from aircraft to fight wildfires, despite finding that the practice pollutes streams in western states in violation of federal law, a judge ruled Friday.

Halting the use of the red slurry material could have resulted in greater environmental damage from wildfires, said US District Judge **Dana Christensen** in Missoula, Montana.

The judge agreed with US Forest Service officials who said dropping retardant into areas with waterways was sometimes necessary to protect lives and property.

The ruling came after environmentalists sued following revelations that the Forest Service dropped retardant into waterways hundreds of times over the past decade.

Government officials say chemical fire retardant can be crucial to slowing the advance of dangerous blazes. Wildfires across **North America** have grown bigger and more destructive over the past two decades as climate change warms the planet.

More than 200 loads of retardant got into waterways over the past decade. Federal officials say those situations usually occurred by mistake and in less than 1% of the thousands of loads annually.

A coalition that includes **Paradise, California** - where a 2018 blaze killed 85 people and destroyed the town - had said a court ruling that stopped the use of retardant would have put lives, homes and forests at risk.

"This case was very personal for us," Paradise Mayor **Greg Bolin** said. "Our brave firefighters need every tool in the toolbox to protect human lives and property against wildfires, and today's ruling ensures we have a fighting chance this fire season."

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.:** Florida may study whether a radioactive waste byproduct of fertilizer production can be used to help build roads under a bill passed by the Legislature.

The proposal, which awaits a signature from Republican Gov. **Ron DeSantis**, would task the state with conducting a study about the use of phosphogypsum in road construction aggregate materials.

The US Environmental Protection Agency requires that phosphogypsum be placed in "stacks" that resemble enormous ponds. Florida has 24 such stacks, totaling about 1 billion tons of phosphogypsum, with 30 million new tons generated every year through the phosphate fertilizer mining industry.

The EPA in 2020 approved the use of phosphogypsum in government road construction projects but reversed its decision after Democratic President **Joe Biden** took office.

Environmental groups have warned about phosphogypsum spilling into waterways and elsewhere during storms. A leak in March 2021 at a stack called Piney Point resulted in the release of an estimated 215 million gallons (814 million liters) of polluted water into Tampa Bay and caused massive fish kills.

The EPA regulates phosphogypsum because the material contains radium-226, a naturally occurring radioactive substance that produces radon gas, which is a hazardous air pollutant.



A man checks his footing as he wades through the Morris Canal Outlet in Jersey City, N.J., as the sun sets on the Lower Manhattan skyline of New York City, May 31, 2022. If rising oceans aren't worry enough, add this to the risks New York City faces: The metropolis is sinking under the weight of its skyscrapers, apartment buildings, asphalt and humanity itself - and will eventually become flooded by the Hudson River and Atlantic Ocean. (AP)



A Long March rocket carrying a crew of Chinese astronauts in a Shenzhou-16 spaceship lifts off at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwestern China, May 30. (AP)



Latti

Rita

## Discovery

**China launches spaceship to ISS:** China on Tuesday launched the Shenzhou-16 manned spaceship, sending three astronauts to its space station combination for a five-month mission, state-run Xinhua News Agency reported.

The spaceship, atop a Long March-2F carrier rocket, blasted off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwestern China at 9:31 a.m. (0131 GMT), the China Manned Space Agency said. About 10 minutes after the launch, Shenzhou-16 separated from the rocket and entered its designated orbit.

After entering orbit, the spaceship will make a fast, automated rendezvous and docking with the space station combination.

The Shenzhou-16 crew will rotate with the Shenzhou-15 crew in orbit, the report said, adding that the three male astronauts will conduct large-scale in-orbit tests and experiments in various fields as planned.

They are expected to make high-level scientific achievements in the study of novel quantum phenomena, high-precision space time-frequency systems, the verification of general relativity, and the origin of life. (KUNA)

**Nepal honors Sherpa climbers:** Nepal's government honored record-holding climbers Monday during celebrations of the first ascent of Mount Everest 70 years ago.

The celebrations come amid a growing concern about temperatures rising, glaciers and snow melting, and weather being harsh and unpredictable on the world's tallest mountain.

Hundreds of people from the mountaineering community, Sherpa guides and officials attended a rally in Kathmandu to mark the anniversary. Participants waved celebratory banners and walked in the center of Kathmandu to tunes played by military bands.

Among those honored were Sherpa guides **Kami Rita**, who climbed Everest twice this season for a record 28 times overall, and Sanu Sherpa, who has climbed all of the world's 14 highest peaks twice.

Hari Budha Magar, who became the first double above-the-knee amputee to climb Everest, was also honored by the country's Tourism Minister Sushila Sirpali Thakuri.

"May 29 is a day when we all always remember and be proud of when Edmund Hillary and Tenzing (Norgay) Sherpa reached the top of Everest and it is the day the Sherpas became known," Sanu Sherpa said. (AP)

**Green liquid in Grand Canal:** Police

## The Conversation

## Procedure can lead to lasting psychological trauma

## Anesthesia can cause 'hallucinations'

By **Melody White** and **C. Michael White**  
University of Connecticut

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

Some patients can have vivid and detailed sexual hallucinations during anesthesia with sedative-hypnotic drugs like propofol, midazolam, diazepam and nitrous oxide. Some make suggestive or sexual comments or act out, such as grabbing or kissing medical professionals or touching themselves in a sexual way. Others awaken erroneously believing they were sexually assaulted. Why does this happen?

Doctors have long known that sedative-hypnotic drugs, which slow down brain activity to induce calm or sleep, can affect a patient's perception of reality. A 1984 review of the drugs midazolam, ketamine and thiopental found that 18% of patients receiving anesthesia for a dental or medical procedure had a hard time distinguishing reality from fantasy during and shortly after administration. Similarly, a 1980 study found that around 14% of patients report some sexual dreaming or arousal while under anesthesia. It's no surprise that together these two features of anesthesia could sometimes manifest in sexual hallucinations.

There have been rare cases in which medical professionals used a patient's unconscious state to commit sexual assault. For instance, in 1991, a health professional sexually assaulted a university student under anesthesia. Although the case was initially dismissed on the grounds that the patient could have had a drug-induced sexual hallucination, genetic evidence the health professional left behind later led to his conviction. It cannot be assumed that all cases of reported sexual assault under anesthesia are due to a sexual hallucination.

We are pharmacology researchers who recently reviewed the medical literature on sexual assault or sexual fantasy during anesthesia from the earliest documented case to February 2023, finding 87 reported cases from 17 published papers. Better understanding what triggers unpleasant or sexual dreams under anesthesia could help researchers figure out how to reduce the risk of hallucinations to keep both patients and providers safe.

Sixteen of the individual cases we

found in our review involved patients reporting sexually amorous behavior or perceived sexual assault. In these cases, observers like health professionals or family members were also present during the procedure, reducing the chance that the sexual behavior actually occurred versus being hallucinated.

We also found a striking match between the anatomic location of the procedure and where the patient perceived inappropriate sexual contact. Procedures involving the mouth were perceived as oral sex, squeezing a ball to make a vein more accessible as squeezing a penis, chest procedures as breast fondling and groin procedures as vaginal penetration.

This may explain why one assessment of 200 patients found no cases of sexual hallucination for those undergoing gallbladder or appendix procedures involving the abdomen, but around 12% of those undergoing vaginal procedures noted amorous or sexually disinhibited behavior.

## Distress

These anesthesia effects can have major real-world impacts on patients and providers that last long after the surgery.

The emotional turmoil a patient undergoes is likely the same whether actually experiencing sexual assault under anesthesia or having vivid hallucinations of the event. And practitioners too can experience distress: Some medical professionals accused of real or perceived sexual assault have been brought before regulatory boards or the courts and lose their license to practice.

It is possible that if patients knew a hallucination of sexual assault is a rare but possible adverse effect of anesthesia before they receive it, and were aware of the steps medical providers are taking to reduce that risk, they would be less likely to believe their sexual hallucinations were real. But this would not lessen the trauma of the hallucination. In one case, an anesthesiology student volunteered in a study where she experienced sexual hallucination after taking sedative-hypnotics. Although she knew her vivid memories of the sexual assault weren't real, the distress she felt over them led her to withdraw from the study.

In our review of the literature, we

found 71 individual cases in which the medical professional was alone with the patient at the time of the alleged sexual assault or sexual behavior. For the safety and well-being of both patients and medical professionals, having witnesses in the room or recording devices during dental or medical procedures could help prevent an opportunity for sexual assault and reassure patients that the hallucinations they may experience are not real.

However, the health care system needs to go further to protect patients. Patients struggling with the trauma of hallucinated sexual assault, even if there is evidence that it did not occur in reality, should be referred to counseling and supported just like someone who was physically harmed during a medical or dental procedure.

What makes some people more likely to recall their dreams while under anesthesia is unclear. A 2009 study of 97 patients receiving propofol reported that those who frequently remember their dreams after anesthesia received higher doses of anesthetics, were younger than 50 years old and took longer to recover from anesthesia. A 2013 study of 200 patients receiving propofol found that men were more likely to remember dreams after anesthesia but women were more likely to remember unpleasant dreams. While dreaming and hallucinations are related experiences, people experiencing hallucinations believe they could plausibly be real.

While we reviewed all published cases of sexual hallucinations in the medical literature, the actual incidence of anesthesia-induced sexual hallucinations remains unknown. Given the decades that have passed since the first reported cases, more work needs to be done. Data from a very large sample size of patients will be required to understand the prevalence of sexual hallucinations under anesthesia. However, drug companies are reluctant to spend money on research that may show that their drugs cause adverse side effects.

Finally, though we limited our review to reports of sexual hallucinations during anesthesia, millions of Americans use their prescription sedative-hypnotic drugs. Benzodiazepines like alprazolam (Xanax) and temazepam (Restoril) are used to treat anxiety and induce sleep. (AP)

in Venice are investigating the source of a phosphorescent green liquid patch that appeared Sunday in the city's famed Grand Canal.

The governor of the Veneto region,

Luca Zaia, posted a photo of the green liquid that spread through the water near the arched Rialto Bridge. The patch was reported by residents.

Images on social media show a bright



Boats lie along a road as villagers brace for the possible effects of Typhoon Mawar at Ivana, Batanes province, northern Philippines on Tuesday May 30. Typhoon Mawar lashed Taiwan's eastern coast with wind, rains and large waves Tuesday but largely skirted the island after giving a glancing blow to the northern Philippines. The storm was moving slowly toward southern Japan. (AP)

patch of green in the canal along an embankment lined with restaurants.

Zaia said that officials had requested that the police investigate to determine who was responsible. Environmental authorities were also testing the water. (AP)

**Raccoon euthanized:** A raccoon in Maine was euthanized and tested for rabies after a woman brought it into a pet store for a nail trim and some customers kissed it, state wildlife authorities said.

The raccoon tested negative for the disease, and there is no rabies risk to the public. Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife spokesperson **Mark Latti** said Sunday. However, raccoons are one of the most common carriers of rabies in the state, and bringing the wild animal into a pet store constituted an unnecessary risk to public health, Latti said.

The woman, who has not been identified by authorities, brought the raccoon into an Auburn pet store on Tuesday, the wildlife department said. She was seeking to get the animal's nails trimmed, which is a service the store does not provide to raccoons, the department said.

Several different people handled the animal and some kissed it, the wildlife department said. The store's manager then asked the woman to leave and contacted the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the department said. (AP)

## Rough night for Johnson and his new Legacy Motor Club team

## Blaney wins Coca-Cola 600 at Charlotte to end winless drought



Ryan Blaney (12) competes during a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Charlotte Motor Speedway in Concord, N.C. (AP)

CONCORD, N.C., May 30, (AP): Jumping into the crowd to celebrate a big race victory appears to have become a Team Penske thing.

Ryan Blaney held off William Byron to win the rescheduled Coca-Cola 600 on Monday at Charlotte Speedway, giving team owner Roger Penske a sweep of the Memorial Day weekend's top races in the United States.

Josef Newgarden won a record-extending 19th Indianapolis 500 on Sunday for Team Penske. Like Newgarden, Blaney jumped out of his car and climbed into the crowd to celebrate the win with fans.

Blaney compared it to jumping into a mosh pit at a metal concert.

A few moments later, he tried to hold back tears with the weight of 59-race winless streak lifted from his shoulders.

"You start to get to feel like you can't win anymore," Blaney said. "We hadn't won in awhile and that

can get hard. I want to thank the 12 (team) for believing in me."

Blaney took the lead from Byron on a restart and led the final 26 laps to win his first Cup Series race since the Coke Zero Sugar 400 at Daytona in August of 2021.

Byron finished second, followed by Martin Truex Jr., Bubba Wallace and Tyler Reddick.

Truex said Blaney's emotions are understandable.

It is the first time Team Penske has swept the Indianapolis-Charlotte doubleheader.

"The pressure was on us to try to sweep the weekend," said Blaney, who said he texted Newgarden after the Indy 500 win. "So that was the goal. Fortunately we executed well enough to get it done."

Blaney's win came just days before Penske hosts a weekend of racing on the downtown streets of Detroit. The return of racing in downtown Detroit is Penske's gift

to the city he calls home. Then, the 86-year-old heads to the 24 Hours of Le Mans, one of the very few events he's yet to win.

The 5 1/2-hour race included five wrecks in the final 50 laps, including one with 26 to go when last week's All-Star race winner Kyle Larson spun and took out defending Cup champion Joey Logano, Kyle Busch

having turned a lap in the NextGen cars at the 1.5-mile oval for the first time in Coca-Cola 600 history.

More rain caused the race to be red-flagged for nearly an hour after 158 laps, making the longest Cup race of the year even longer.

Defending race champion Denny Hamlin was left fuming after his day ended with a wreck on lap 186, prompting him to call for NASCAR to suspend its most popular driver Chase Elliott.

Hamlin claimed the Hendrick Motorsports driver intentionally wrecked him by hooking his right rear bumper following a dust-up earlier in the race.

"It's a tantrum and he shouldn't be racing next week," Hamlin said of Elliott. "Right rear hooks are absolutely unacceptable. I don't care."

Elliott denied intentionally wrecking Hamlin in retaliation.

Hamlin wasn't the only one fired up.

## CAR RACING

and Christopher Bell.

Blaney had passed Byron on the previous restart, and then got the jump on him again on the final restart and ran away with the checkered flag.

It was a rain-soaked weekend at Charlotte, which washed out practice and qualifying and postponed the race to Monday. That meant drivers began the race without ever

## Spalletti confirms he's leaving Serie A champs Napoli

## Juve agree to fine but won't appeal in plea bargain over salaries probe

ROME, May 30, (AP): Juventus will be fined 718,000 euros (\$770,000) but will agree not to make any appeals as part of a plea bargain with the Italian soccer federation on Tuesday after the club and seven former team directors were charged with alleged fraud for the way they handled player salary cuts during the coronavirus pandemic.

The only former team director who did not agree to the plea bargain was ex-Juventus president Andrea Agnelli, who will be judged on June 15.

Juventus and the former team directors denied any wrongdoing.

At the start of the pandemic, Juventus said 23 players agreed to reduce their salary for four months to help the club through the crisis. But prosecutors claim the players gave up only one month's salary.

Juventus, which has already been docked 10 points for false accounting in a separate legal case, had risked a further points deduction.

The decision leaves Juventus in seventh place and with a chance of qualifying for Europe entering its final game of the Serie A season on Sunday at Udinese. Juventus is one point behind sixth-place Roma and two points behind fifth-place Atalanta.

However, it remains to be seen if UEFA will ban Juventus from European competition next season for its various legal troubles.

Prosecutors in Turin have also charged Juventus, Agnelli and 11 others with false communications by a company listed publicly on the Milan stock exchange, obstructing watchdog agencies, false billing and market manipulation.

Juventus was eliminated from the Europa League semifinals by Sevilla this month, leaving the club without any trophies this season.

Luciano Spalletti has confirmed he is leaving Serie A champion Napoli and will not coach next season.

"I need to take a year off. I'm a bit tired

and I want to be with my daughter Matilde," Spalletti said on the sidelines of a transfer market symposium on Monday.

Napoli president Aurelio De Laurentiis revealed on RAI state TV on Sunday that Spalletti requested a sabbatical year.

"He's a free man. After 50 years in the film business, when someone comes to you and says, 'I've given my all, a part of my life is ending, I still have a contract with you but I would prefer to take a sabbatical year,' what do you do? Do you stand in his way?" De Laurentiis posed. "You've got to be generous in life. ... He's given a lot and I thank him for that. Now it's only fair that he does what he wants to do."

In his second season at Napoli, the 64-year-old Spalletti coached the team to its first Serie A title in 33 years. They won with five rounds to spare.

## SOCCER

Spalletti still has one more match with Napoli against Sampdoria on Sunday, after which the team will be presented with the Serie A trophy - its third in club history after Diego Maradona led the team to the 1987 and 1990 titles.

Spalletti becomes the second coach in three years to leave a team that has just won the league - after Antonio Conte parted ways with Inter Milan after the 2021 title.

Napoli sporting director Cristiano Giuntoli - the man who overhauled the squad by signing Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and Kim Min-jae - is also reportedly leaving and could join rival Juventus.

The Serie A title was the one big trophy missing in Spalletti's career after previously managing Roma and Inter Milan and winning the Russian league with Zenit St. Petersburg.

"Sometimes you leave someone you love," Spalletti said. "A city like Naples deserves much more than the norm. ... You've got to ask yourself if we're still up to the task or not. And since I don't think that will be the case, I'm taking a step back."

Former Barcelona and Spain coach Luis Enrique is reportedly being considered to replace Spalletti, as is former Napoli coach Rafael Benitez.

## Stroman's one-hitter &amp; Tauchman's sac fly lift Cubs over MLB-best Rays



New York Yankees' Willie Calhoun hits a two-run double against the Seattle Mariners during the fifth inning of a baseball game in Seattle. (AP)

## Royals shut out Cardinals

## CHICAGO, May 30, (AP): Marcus Stroman pitched a one-hitter, and the Chicago Cubs beat the major league-leading Tampa Bay Rays 1-0 on Monday.

Stroman (5-4) dazzled in his fourth complete game and second shutout in nine major league seasons. His only other shutout was against the Cubs during his 2014 rookie season with Toronto. He set a season high with 105 pitches and matched his high with eight strikeouts. The right-hander walked one in winning his third straight start.

The only hit Stroman allowed was a clean single to left leading off the seventh by Wander Franco. The only other Rays runner to reach base was Luke Raley, who was hit by a pitch leading off the third.

The Cubs got their run in the fourth when Seiya Suzuki led off with a single, took second on a wild throw by third baseman Taylor Walls and scored on Mike Tauchman's sacrifice fly.

## Royals 7, Cardinals 0

In St. Louis, Josh Staumont and Mike Mayers came within six outs of the first combined perfect game in major league history before Nolan Arenado lined a leadoff single in the eighth inning of Kansas City's win over St. Louis.

Staumont, a 29-year-old right-hander, served as the opener in a planned bullpen game for the Royals. He made his first major league start in his 167th appearance and struck out two in a 1-2-3 inning, throwing 14 pitches.

Mayers, a 31-year-old left-hander, made his third appearance for the Royals this season after eight starts at Triple-A Omaha. He retired 18 consecutive batters before Arenado lined a 1-0 slider to left on his 72nd pitch.

## Athletics 7, Braves 2

In Oakland, Ryan Noda hit a three-run homer that spoiled Michael Soroka's long-awaited return to the majors from two separate tears of his right Achilles tendon, and Oakland beat Atlanta to snap an 11-game losing streak with its 11th win of the season.

A's right-hander Paul Blackburn came off the injured list to make his season debut, striking out six with a pair of walks over four innings. He allowed four hits and one run as the Athletics (11-45) won for only the

second time in 16 games. Lucas Erceg (1-0) pitched three shutout innings of hitless relief with four strikeouts for his first major league win.

Braves slugger Matt Olson hit his 17th homer in the eighth. Oakland responded in the bottom half by getting RBI singles from Ramon Laureano, Shea Langeliers and Jace Peterson.

## Angels 6, White Sox 4

In Chicago, Brandon Drury and Matt Thaiss homered and Los Angeles spoiled Liam Hendriks' return for Chicago.

Drury hit a three-run shot and Thaiss followed with another drive during a four-run first inning against a shaky Michael Kopech. Griffin Canning (4-2) struck out nine in six innings, and Mike Trout finished with two hits.

Hendriks pitched the eighth in his first big league appearance since he was diagnosed with stage 4 non-Hodgkin lymphoma. The Angels scored two runs on Zach Neto's

## BASEBALL

sacrifice fly and Trout's RBI single.

## Guardians 5, Orioles 0

In Baltimore, Logan Allen allowed three hits in seven strong innings, and Cleveland broke through for four runs in the seventh on the way to a victory over Baltimore.

Will Brennan had three hits for the Guardians, who have won three of four. Allen (2-2) struck out a career-high 10 in his seventh big league start. The rookie left-hander also set career marks for innings



Los Angeles Dodgers starting pitcher Bobby Miller throws a pitch during the first inning of a baseball game against the Washington Nationals in Los Angeles. (AP)

pitched and fewest hits allowed - and this was his first scoreless outing.

Enyel De Los Santos and Trevor Stephan finished a five-hitter, Cleveland's fifth shutout this season.

## Yankees 10, Mariners 4

In Seattle, Aaron Judge hit two homers and robbed Teoscar Hernandez of one in the field with a leaping catch at the wall, leading New York past Seattle.

Domingo German pitched into the seventh inning to win his first start following a 10-game suspension for using a foreign substance on the mound. German (3-3) scattered seven hits and permitted four runs over 6 1/3 innings while striking out four.

Jake Bauers also went deep and the Yankees finished with a season-high 18 hits. For Seattle, Julio Rodriguez hit his 10th homer and had a two-run single. Bryce Miller (3-2) allowed 11 hits and eight earned runs in 4 2/3 innings.

## Dodgers 6, Nationals 1

In Los Angeles, J.D. Martinez hit a three-run homer and Freddie Freeman had a two-run double during a six-run fifth inning as Los Angeles defeated Washington.

Bobby Miller (2-0) yielded four hits and a run over six innings in his second consecutive victory to begin his career with the NL West-leading Dodgers. He struck out four and retired 12 of his final 14 batters after Washington scored its only run in the second inning.

Nats starter Trevor Williams (2-3) was sharp until the fifth, when he allowed six unearned runs. He gave up four hits, two walks and James Outman's RBI flyout in the inning while the Dodgers batted around in a rally made possible by shortstop CJ Abrams' early error.

## Rangers 5, Tigers 0

In Detroit, Nathan Eovaldi won his sixth straight decision, Corey Seager hit a three-run homer with four RBIs and Texas defeated Detroit.

Eovaldi (7-2) allowed four hits and a season-high three walks in five innings with four strikeouts. Brock Burke, Jonathan Hernandez and José Leclerc finished a five-hitter, the Rangers' fifth shutout this year.

Matthew Boyd (3-4) gave up five runs on five hits and four walks in six-plus innings.

Detroit (25-27) had won four of its previous five games and had been trying to reach .500 for the first time since a 4-4 start in 2022. The Tigers

have been shut out five times.

## Diamondbacks 7, Rockies 5

In Phoenix, Pavin Smith hit a go-ahead, three-run homer, Drey Jameson threw 3 2/3 innings of impressive relief in his return to the big leagues and Arizona rallied from a four-run deficit to beat Colorado.

The Diamondbacks erased a 4-0 deficit with five runs in the second inning, punctuated by Smith's three-run homer. Jake McCarthy had a two-run single earlier in the rally. Arizona starter Ryne Nelson (2-2) gave up five runs on eight hits and three walks over five innings, striking out one.

Colorado's Ryan McMahon homered in his fourth consecutive game. He had four hits and finished a double short of the cycle. Ezequiel Tovar added a two-run double. Rockies starter Karl Kauffmann (0-3) gave up seven runs on nine hits and two walks over four innings, striking out one.

## Twins 7, Astros 5, 10 innings

In Houston, Rookie Royce Lewis homered and drove in four runs in his season debut and Ryan Jeffers hit a two-run shot in the 10th inning as Minnesota beat Houston.

Max Kepler started the 10th as the automatic runner on second before Jeffers homered off Bryan Abreu (2-1) into the seats in left for his third hit and a 7-5 lead.

Lewis had a three-run homer in the third for the Twins. The Astros went ahead 5-4 when Jose Altuve hit a grand slam in the seventh. Lewis came through again late, tying it with an RBI single off Ryan Pressly with two outs in the ninth. It was closer's first blown save in 11 chances.

Joan Duran (1-1) pitched a scoreless ninth and returned for the 10th, sitting down Altuve, Jeremy Peña and Yordan Alvarez to end it.

## Giants 14, Pirates 4

In San Francisco, Rookie Patrick Bailey had four RBIs on his 24th birthday as San Francisco routed Pittsburgh, which slipped under .500 for the first time since the opening weekend of the season.

Bailey, playing his ninth big league game, hit a go-ahead, two-run double against Rich Hill (4-5) in a five-run second inning. He added a two-run homer in an eight-run seventh.

Austin Slater hit a two-run homer in the second and a two-run double in the seventh as the Giants won for the 11th time in 14 games - and for the 14th time in 19 home games.

Bailey and Casey Schmitt each had three of the Giants' 18 hits, as did Slater, Brandon Crawford and Mitch Haniger.

## MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, May 30, (AP): Results and standings from the MLB games on Monday.

Seattle	6	Pittsburgh 10 inn	3	Oakland	7	Atlanta	2		
Cleveland	5	Baltimore	0	LA Angels	6	Chicago W. Sox	4		
Texas	5	Detroit	0	NY Yankees	10	Seattle	4		
Chicago Cubs	1	Tampa Bay	0	Arizona	7	Colorado	5		
Kansas City	7	St. Louis	0	San Francisco	14	Pittsburgh	4		
Minnesota	7	Houston 10 inn	5	LA Dodgers	6	Washington	1		
American League									
East Division				West Division					
	W	L	Pct	GB		W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	38	17	.696	-	Atlanta	32	22	.593	-
Baltimore	34	20	.630	4	Miami	28	26	.519	4
New York	33	23	.589	6	New York	27	27	.500	5
Boston	28	25	.528	9-1/2	Philadelphia	25	28	.472	6-1/2
Toronto	28	26	.519	10	Washington	23	31	.426	9
Central Division				West Division					
	W	L	Pct	GB		W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	28	26	.519	-	Milwaukee	28	25	.528	2
Detroit	25	27	.481	2	Pittsburgh	26	27	.491	2
Cleveland	24	29	.453	3-1/2	Cincinnati	24	29	.453	4
Chicago	22	34	.393	7	Chicago	23	30	.434	5
Kansas City	17	38	.309	11-1/2	St. Louis	24	32	.429	5-1/2
West Division				East Division					
	W	L	Pct	GB		W	L	Pct	GB
Texas	34	19	.642	-	Los Angeles	33	22	.600	-
Houston	31	22	.585	3	Arizona	31	23	.574	1-1/2
Los Angeles	29	26	.527	6	San Francisco	28	26	.519	4-1/2
Seattle	28	26	.519	6-1/2	San Diego	24	29	.453	8
Oakland	11	45	.196	24-1/2	Colorado	24	31	.436	9

## Edwin steps down as Ajax director general

AMSTERDAM, May 30, (AP): Edwin van der Sar is stepping down as director general of Ajax after the team finished a disappointing third in the Dutch league, missing out on a Champions League berth for next season.

Van der Sar, a former goalkeeper for teams including Ajax and Manchester United, as well as the Dutch national team, had been a member of the board of the Amsterdam club since late 2012 and director general since 2016. His contract ran until mid-2025.

"After nearly 11 years on the board, I'm exhausted," Van der Sar said in a statement Tuesday. "It doesn't feel good to have to make imminent decisions about the future of this beautiful club. Hence my decision to stop now."

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# Golden Knights reach 2nd Stanley Cup Final

Vegas dominates Stars in Game 6

**DALLAS, May 30, (AP):** William Karlsson, William Carrier and Jonathan Marchessault are finally getting another chance in the Stanley Cup Final, after the first one that came so quick for the Vegas Golden Knights.

They are going back after making sure they didn't need another game against the Dallas Stars in the Western Conference Final.

Karlsson scored two goals and had an assist while Carrier and Marchessault also scored for the Knights in a 6-0 rout Monday night over the Stars, who had extended the West final to six games after losing the first three.

"We've worked hard as a group. That was the goal since year one, to come back here," Marchessault said. "Our best game is yet to come." That's the mentality we need to have.

Reilly Smith, Brayden McNabb and Shea Theodore were also part of that inaugural 2017-18 Knights season that ended in a Cup Final, when they won Game 1 against the Washington Capitals before losing four in a row.

## ICE HOCKEY

"That first year was a whirlwind and we maybe took it for granted," said Karlsson, who like Marchessault and Smith has played in all 83 playoff games for the franchise.

Keegan Kolesar and Michael Amadio each had a goal and an assist for Vegas, which hosts Game 1 of the Stanley Cup Final against Florida on Saturday night.

The Knights led the Western Conference in the regular season with 51 wins and 111 points. The Panthers completed a four-game sweep of Carolina in the East final last Wednesday, but their 40 wins and 92 points in the regular season were the fewest among the 16 teams that began these NHL playoffs.

Adin Hill stopped 23 shots for his second career playoff shutout - both against the Stars. The other was 4-0 in Game 3 last Tuesday, when the Knights were already within one win of clinching the series before Dallas overcame 1-0 and 2-1 deficits in both Games 4 and 5.

"We kept them to the outside almost all night," Hill said. "It was probably my easiest game of the playoffs so far tonight."

Instead of having to face a do-or-die Game 7 at home against the Stars, coach Bruce Cassidy and the Knights got off to another fast start and never left any doubt about the outcome of this series that included three overtime games. They already had 16 of their 29 shots and a 3-0 lead after the first period.

"It was definitely our best game of the playoffs and it came at the right time," Cassidy said. "You don't want to let a team off the mat. After getting a 3-0 lead, there was some chatter about that."

It was the most lopsided playoff loss for the Stars since the franchise moved south from Minnesota before the 1993-94 season.

"You just expect more from yourself in a game like this," said Stars forward Joe Pavelski, the 38-year-old veteran still without a Stanley Cup after 17 seasons.

The Stars got captain Jamie Benn back after his two-game suspension for a cross-check to the neck area of Vegas captain Mark Stone early in Game 3. But Benn got only one shot on net in his 12 1/2 minutes and was on the ice for two of Vegas' first three goals.

The Knights led for good when Carrier scored 3:41 into the game after a puck poked from behind the net in the vicinity of three Dallas players. Carrier skated across the front of the crease and put a backhand in the net, the ninth time this postseason the Knights scored in the first five minutes of a game.

Karlsson's power-play goal came midway through the first period made it 2-0, and after a penalty that likely had prevented him from scoring.

Nicolas Roy took a shot that deflected off Jake Oettinger's glove and popped up in the air behind the goalie. Karlsson was charging into the crease when Stars defenseman Esa Lindell raised his stick and swatted the puck out of play, drawing a delay of game penalty.



Winners of the 2nd Open Karting Championship for boys and girls display their trophies.

## 2nd Open Karting Championship for boys and girls witnesses strong competition

The 2nd Open Karting Championship for boys and girls, which was organized by the Kuwait Karting Club at Al-Kout Circuit, witnessed strong competition in the last rounds.

Faisal Al-Shuwa'i won the title in the boys' category, followed by Abdul Majeed Shaaban in the runner-

up position, and Hazza Al-Aiban in the third place.

In the girls' category, Iman Shams Al-Din won the title, followed by Misk Anas Al-Saleh in second place, and Asma Gyash in third place.

During the closing ceremony, a member of the Board of Directors

of the Kuwait Karting Club Yusef Al-Kandari, and the club's Public Relations Director Hanadi Al-Shaar crowned the first winners in each category.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Karting Club Dr. Hamid Boushahri praised the distinguished level

presented by the competitors in the youth categories, in light of the strength of competition in the championship, which witnessed the participation of 150 male and female competitors above the age of 14 years.

He said, "The tournament witnessed strong competition and ex-

citement until the last rounds".

Dr. Boushahri congratulated the winners, wishing them and the rest of the contestants success in the upcoming tournaments.

He thanked the club's working committees for their keenness in organizing the tournament in a deserving manner.



Germany's Alexander Zverev plays a shot against South Africa's Lloyd Harris during their first round match of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris. (AP)

## Notre Dame clinches historic title

**PHILADELPHIA, May 30, (AP):** Liam Entenmann made a season-high 18 saves and Brian Tevlin scored a go-ahead goal with 27 seconds left in the third quarter to help Notre Dame claim its first men's lacrosse national title with a 13-9 victory over Duke on Monday.

Third-seeded Notre Dame (14-2) had lost in its previous two championship game appearances in 2010 and 2014 - both to Duke.

The top-seeded Blue Devils (16-3) were playing in their seventh national championship game in program history.

Entenmann made eight saves on nine shots on goal in the first half as Notre Dame cruised to a 6-1 lead after scoring six unanswered goals - from six different players. After scoring 35 seconds into the game, Duke was held scoreless for the final 29:25 of the first half.

Duke was 1-for-24 shooting in the first half, but opened the second going 4 for 6 to get within 6-5. Charles Balsamo knotted it at 7-all with 1:01 left in the third - for the first tie since it was 1-1.

But Notre Dame scored two goals in the final 30 seconds of the third for a 9-7 lead. Tevlin, who helped Yale win the 2018 NCAA title over Duke, and Chris Kavanagh both notched their second goals of the game.

Quinn McCahon capped a 6-1 scoring run for a 13-8 lead with 3:24 left to become the sixth Notre Dame player with two goals.

"I'm not sure I want to watch the film of this one, other than maybe the defense from the first half," Notre Dame coach Kevin Corrigan said. "You wait your whole career to see this right now."

Notre Dame held Duke to its lowest-scoring game of the season. Leading scorers Brennan O'Neill and Dyson Williams had one goal apiece.

Williams became the fifth Duke player with 60-plus goals in a season.

Tevlin and Garrett Leadmon, of Duke, each scored game-winning goals in the semifinals before scoring the opening goals for their teams in the title game in front of an announced crowd of 30,462 at Lincoln Financial Field.

## Ruud, Gauff and Russian teenager advance

# Seybolt Wild stuns 2nd-seeded Medvedev as Jabeur 'bounces' back at French Open

**PARIS, May 30, (AP):** Daniil Medvedev was seeded No. 2 at the French Open. Coming off a clay-court title a little more than a week ago, too. Plus, he already owns one Grand Slam trophy and was a finalist three other times.

And his opponent Tuesday in the first round at Roland Garros? Well, Thiago Seybolt Wild, a 23-year-old from Brazil, is ranked just 172nd and was playing only his second match in the main draw of any major tournament. He needed to win three matches in qualifying rounds last week just to make it into the men's bracket - something he'd failed to do on eight previous attempts at Slams.

Sometimes, the numbers just don't matter. Nor does past experience. The winner of a tennis match tends to be whoever was better that day, no matter how surprising that might be.

Seybolt Wild looked very much like he belonged on Court Philippe Chatrier, hitting big forehands and keeping his nerve down the stretch to oust Medvedev 7-6 (5), 6-7 (8), 2-6, 6-3, 6-4.

"I mean, I've watched Daniil play for like my entire junior career until today. I've always dreamed about playing on this court against these kinds of players. ... It's a dream come true," Seybolt Wild said.

So what was his game plan going in?

## TENNIS

"Walking on the court, I really just wanted to get the angles, try to get to the net as much as possible, try to use my forehand against his," Seybolt Wild explained. "It worked pretty well."

Employing a high-risk, high-reward style, Seybolt Wild compiled a 69-45 edge in total winners, including 47-15 on the forehand side.

Medvedev has been ranked No. 1 and won the U.S. Open two years ago, defeating Novak Djokovic to end a bid for the first calendar-year Grand Slam in men's tennis in more than a quarter-century.

Good as he's always been on hard courts, Medvedev never was known for his prowess on red clay - he began his French Open career with a 0-4 record. But he's been showing signs of improvement, reaching the quarterfinals in Paris in 2021 and the fourth round last year, and claiming a title on the surface in Rome this month.

He just could never quite get the upper hand against Seybolt Wild during a match that lasted 4 hours, 15 minutes.

Medvedev, who was treated by a trainer for a nosebleed in the third set, didn't help himself by double-faulting a career-high 15 times.

This already had been a breakthrough trip to Paris for Seybolt Wild: He had won a total of just one match during his eight past participations in qualifying at majors, the only way for someone ranked as low as he is to try to get into the field.

Seybolt Wild hadn't even played a tour-level main-draw match at all in 2023, instead competing on the lower-level ATP Challenger Tour.

Now he'll get the luxury of something afforded by a Grand Slam schedule but a rarity at other events: a day



Tunisia's Ons Jabeur plays a shot against Italy's Lucia Bronzetti during their first round match of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris. (AP)

between matches. He'll play in the second round on Thursday.

Maybe he can take some time off? Rest? Celebrate the biggest victory of his career?

Not really.

Seybolt Wild said he's sure his coach will make him get out on a court for practice and preparation.

"That's the way tennis works," he said. "You stay on the court, you work hard and you get your reward."

Ons Jabeur got a do-over on Court Philippe Chatrier at the French Open and won this time.

A year after her first-round exit, the No. 7 seed beat Lucia Bronzetti 6-4, 6-1 to help erase some bad memories for the Tunisian and answer questions about a recent calf injury.

On his return to Roland Garros after badly damaging an ankle in the semifinals against Rafael Nadal last year, Alexander Zverev also advanced in straight sets.

Jabeur, a crowd favorite in Paris, expressed relief in not repeating last year's result, where she lost to Magda Linette of Poland.

"I was pretty stressed, I've got to say," Jabeur said. "The most important thing for me was to feel healthy and to move well on the court."

Now she can focus on trying to win her first major. She was runner-up at Wimbledon and the U.S. Open last year.

Jabeur has been battling injuries. She had knee surgery after the Australian Open, and was then sidelined by a calf injury. She retired injured against top-ranked Iga Swiatek in Stuttgart in late April and pulled out of the Madrid Open.

"It was a very difficult period for me after Stuttgart," Jabeur said on court, adding she's beginning to find her rhythm.

Jabeur struck 27 winners to Bronzetti's seven, though with 24 unforced errors she has room to improve.

"I feel 100% fit. I need to have more matches under my belt to gain confidence," she said.

Zverev, the No. 22 seed in Paris, defeated Lloyd Harris 7-6 (6), 7-6 (0), 6-1 and improved his unbeaten record against the South African to 4-0. Zverev has been struggling to get back to his best since he retired in pain against Nadal and later underwent surgery, but he has shown progress recently.

Also Tuesday, 2021 champion

Borba Krejckikova lost her opening match at the French Open for the second straight year. The 13th-seeded Czech exited the tournament after losing to Lesia Tsurenko of Ukraine 6-2, 6-4.

At 16 years old, qualifier Mirra Andreeva of Russia had a memorable Grand Slam debut by dominating Alison Riske-Amritraj 6-2, 6-1.

No. 6 seed Coco Gauff stumbled early but got past Rebekka Masarova 3-6, 6-1, 6-2 in the first round.

Later, Swiatek was to get her title defense started against Cristina Bucsa, who was ranked 70th.

Two other women's seeds lost: No. 25 Anhelina Kalinina of Ukraine lost to wild card Diane Parry of France 6-2, 6-3; and No. 31 Marie Bouzkova fell to Chinese player Xinyu Wang 6-4, 7-6 (5).

On the men's side, No. 4 seed Casper Ruud beat qualifier Elias Ymer 6-4, 6-3, 6-2, to remind the higher-profile tournament favorites that he was runner-up to Nadal last year at Roland Garros.

You might assume that the opponents for Carlos Alcaraz and Novak Djokovic in the French Open's first round would come away from their straight-set losses Monday feeling too overwhelmed by the play of the two tournament favorites.

You would be wrong.

Forget the scores and the point-by-point particulars on a windy day at Roland Garros for a moment. Of course it turned out that No. 1-seeded Alcaraz, the reigning U.S. Open champion, beat 159th-ranked qualifier Flavio Cobolli, a 21-year-old from Florence, Italy. And of course it turned out that No. 3 Djokovic, a 22-time major winner, got past 114th-ranked Aleksandar Kovacevic, a 24-year-old who grew up in New York City and is now based in Florida.

And naturally, both Cobolli and Kovacevic acknowledged feeling a bit jittery at the outset of what were their Grand Slam debuts in huge arenas against a couple of elite players.

"I started in a bit of a daze," Cobolli said after his 6-0, 6-2, 7-5 loss, "because of the emotions."

"A couple of times there, I did look up and take it all in. I made sure of that, because this is the kind of experience I'll definitely hold onto forever," Kovacevic said after his 6-3, 6-2, 7-6 (1) loss. "It's not the best thing in the world to get lost in the crowd. You start to really look at everyone that's there - and that's when the nerves hit."

But what both of them wanted to make clear afterward was that, yes, Alcaraz and Djokovic are exceptionally talented, but, no, it did not seem to be impossible to find openings to exploit.

"It's definitely intimidating. Watching him on TV growing up, it's hard not to look past that and knowing what he's accomplished. But from a tennis standpoint, it's not otherworldly," said Kovacevic, who was 7 when he first met Djokovic and later practiced with him during the 2021 U.S. Open after playing college tennis at the University of Illinois. "The things he does well, he does unbelievably well, but the ball that he hits - it's not blowing me completely off the court, which was honestly somewhat surprising."



Bill Daly, third from (front left), deputy commissioner of the NHL, presents the trophy to the Vegas Golden Knights following the team's win over the Dallas Stars in Game 6 of the NHL hockey Stanley Cup Western Conference finals in Dallas. (AP)



Roma's Edoardo Bove (left), and Roma's Nemanja Matic vie for the ball during a training session ahead of the Europa League soccer final, at the Trigoria training centre, in Rome. (AP)

# Sports

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Chennai Super Kings players celebrate with the winners trophy after their win in the Indian Premier League final cricket match against Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad, India. (AP)

Jadeja plunders a six and a four from the last two deliveries

## Chennai wins Indian Premier League in stunning finish against Gujarat

# Heat advance to NBA Finals

No unprecedented Celtics comeback

**BOSTON, May 30, (AP):** No unprecedented comeback, no last-tick miracle, no cavalcade of higher seeds is going to prevent these Miami Heat from playing for the NBA title.

Eastern Conference finals Most Valuable Player Jimmy Butler scored 28 points, and Caleb Martin had 26 points and 10 rebounds to help the eighth-seeded Heat beat Boston 103-84 in Game 7 on Monday night and advance to the NBA Finals for the second time in four seasons.

A year after losing a seventh game to the Celtics, Miami recovered from blowing a 3-0 lead in the series and advanced to face the Western Conference champion Nuggets. Game 1 is Thursday night in Denver, where the top-seeded Nuggets have been waiting since sweeping the Los Angeles Lakers on May 22.

"We stayed together as a group. As a team, we talked about going and getting a tough one on the road. We did just that," Butler said. "But we're not satisfied. We're excited. We're happy. But we've got one more to get."

Bam Adebayo scored 12 points with 10 rebounds for Miami, which is the first No. 8 seed to reach the NBA Finals since the 1999 New York Knicks.

To get there, the Heat had to recover after losing the play-in opener against Atlanta and beat Chicago in a second-chance play-in. They eliminated the top-seeded Milwaukee Bucks in five games, then the fifth-seeded Knicks in six.

They put Boston in a 3-0 hole — a deficit no NBA team has ever come back from. Three losses later, Miami was on the brink of the wrong kind of history.

"Sometimes you have to suffer for the



Miami Heat center Bam Adebayo (left), reaches for a rebound along with Boston Celtics center Robert Williams III during the first half in Game 7 of the NBA basketball Eastern Conference finals in Boston. (AP)

things that you really want," coach Erik Spoelstra said. "This group has shown fortitude, when there are inevitable letdowns and failures, to have that perseverance to pick yourself up, to have that collective spirit to keep on forging ahead until you get to accomplish what you want to."

Game 6 hero Derrick White scored 18 for Boston, which was hoping to become the first NBA team in 151 tries to advance after falling behind 0-3 in a best-of-seven series. Jaylen Brown scored 19 with eight rebounds but went 1 for 9 from 3-point range and committed eight turnovers.

Jayson Tatum, who scored a Game 7 record 51 points against Philadelphia in the conference semis, had 14 points with 11 rebounds after turning his ankle on the first play of the game and limping through 42 minutes.

"When we were down 3-0, the thing was: How do we want to be defined?" said Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla, who took over the team on the eve of training camp when Ime Udoka was suspended for inappropriate workplace behavior. "I thought they showed a lot of character by even getting to this point."

The Celtics led by five points early before conceding a 14-4 run to end the first quarter and then giving up 16 of the first 22 points in the second. Miami led 76-66 lead at the end

### BASKETBALL

of three, then Tatum missed a layup to open the fourth quarter, and Brown followed with back-to-back turnovers; at the other end, Martin hit a 3-pointer and Butler hit a pair of baskets to give Miami an 83-66 lead.

Boston never got with 15 after that, with the sold-out TD Garden crowd alternating between stunned silence, angry boos and, finally, polite applause before they began filing out early.

"We failed. I failed and we let the whole city down," Brown said. "In spite of whatever circumstance we had this year we rose to the occasion. We got to this point and we came up short."

The Heat took the first three games — two of them in Boston — and needed just one more win to reach to the NBA Finals. None of the 150 teams that have opened a 3-0 lead in an NBA playoff series has ever failed to advance.

But the Celtics hyped themselves up by watching a documentary on the Boston Red Sox comeback from a 3-0 deficit against the New York Yankees on their way to the 2004 World Series. When the Celtics took the floor for Game 4 in Miami, ex-Yankees Alex Rodriguez and Derek Jeter were sitting courtside.

Boston won Games 4 and 5 by double digits and had a cushy lead in Game 6 before Miami rallied back to take a one-point lead with 3 seconds left. The Heat appeared to clinch it when Marcus Smart's desperation 3-pointer rimmed out, but White scored on a putback in the final 10th of a second to force a decisive seventh game.

Back at home, the Celtics greeted their fans with a pregame video intercutting highlights from the Red Sox comeback with their own.

**AHMEDABAD, India, May 30, (AP):** The Chennai Super Kings have won the Indian Premier League for a record-equaling fifth time with a last-ball, five-wicket victory over the defending champion Gujarat Titans.

Ravindra Jadeja plundered a six and a four from the last two deliveries against Mohit Sharma to help the Super Kings chase down a revised target of 171 runs in 15 overs.

The IPL needed three days to complete the final. It was washed out

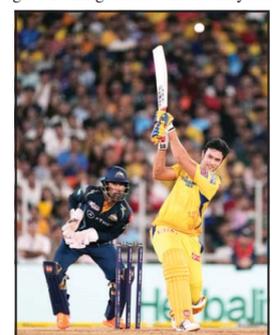
### CRICKET

on Sunday, started late Monday and finished after 1:30 a.m. local time on Tuesday. But it was worth it.

Chennai was squeezed by medium-pacer Sharma in the last over and the equation got to 10 runs required off two balls. Sharma got his length wrong and Jadeja hit a straight six. Sharma then got his line wrong and Jadeja hit a four to fine leg to complete a stunning win.

"I was just thinking I need to swing hard, as much as I can,"

Jadeja said. "Where the ball will go, I was not thinking about that. I was backing myself and looking to hit straight, because I know Mohit can bowl those slower balls." Chennai's record-equaling fifth title also gave retiring batter Ambati Rayudu



Chennai Super Kings' Shivam Dube (right), plays a shot during the Indian Premier League final cricket match between Chennai Super Kings and Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad, India. (AP)

a sixth IPL title, tying him with Rohit Sharma as the league's most successful players.

Rain halted Chennai's chase in the first over for nearly 2 1/2 hours, and reduced the target and length of the innings. Chennai needed every single ball to make a thrilling 171-5.

A fantastic launch was shared by openers Devon Conway, 47 off 25 balls, and Ruturaj Gaikwad, 26 off 16. They raised a half-century stand within the four-over powerplay, including 17 runs in legspinner Rashid Khan's first over.

Spinner Noor Ahmad removed both openers in the same over but Chennai kept coming hard. Ajinkya Rahane added 27 off 13, and Rayudu struck Mohit Sharma for 6-4-6 in the 13th over before the bowler responded with consecutive wickets.

He took a return catch to dismiss Rayudu and had Chennai skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni caught at extra-cover for a first-ball duck. That left Shivam Dube, who scored an unbeaten 32 off 21, with Jadeja.

Dhoni, who has led the Chennai franchise since the start of the IPL, said he'd be prepared to continue after guiding the team to 10 finals.

"The easy thing for me to say is, 'Thank you,' and retire," the 41-year-old former India captain said. "But the hard thing to do is to work hard for nine months and try to play one more IPL season. ... The amount of love I have received from CSK fans, it would be a gift for them to play one more season." Mohammed Shami bowled a brilliant penultimate over, leaving Chennai needing 13 runs off six balls. Mohit Sharma, who ended up with 3-36, conceded just three runs off the first four deliveries until Jadeja's last-gasp heroics.

Earlier, Chennai's early lapses in the field gave Gujarat momentum. Deepak Chahar missed catching chances against Shubman Gill and Wriddhiman Saha. Gill, who top-scored in the tournament with 890 runs, made 39 off 20 before he was stumped by Dhoni. Saha made 54.

Sudharsan shared two half-century stands; 64 with Saha and 81 off 33 with Titans captain Hardik Pandya.

Sudharsan smashed eight boundaries and six sixes and dominated the late overs. He was in sight of a de-servicing century in the last over until pacer Matheesha Pathirana pinned him with a superb yorker.

## Allgaier wins delayed race

**CONCORD, N.C., May 30, (AP):** Justin Allgaier held on to win the Xfinity Series race at Charlotte Motor Speedway late Monday night giving JR Motorsports its first victory of the season in a race that took more than 12 hours to complete.

Allgaier's team worried he would run out of gas, but he was able to conserve fuel down the stretch. John Hunter Nemechek finished second, followed by Cole Custer, Austin Hill and Ty Gibbs.

Like Allgaier, Nemechek had to conserve fuel at the end. Nemechek entered the race leading Hill by one point in the standings and turned in another solid finish.

"If consistency is key to winning the championship, they are doing pretty good," Nemechek said.

### AUTO RACING



Members of the Miami Heat pose for pictures after the Heat defeated the Boston Celtics 103-84 in Game 7 of the NBA basketball Eastern Conference finals in Boston. (AP)

## Sevilla, Roma's Mou put perfect records on line

**BUDAPEST, Hungary, May 30, (AP):** A remarkable perfect record in European soccer must fall Wednesday when Sevilla faces José Mourinho's Roma in the Europa League final.

Sevilla has played six and won six finals of the Europa League, or the UEFA Cup as it was called when winning the first of those titles in 2006.

Mourinho has a 5-0 career mark in finals of the three major European club competitions, dating back to the UEFA Cup triumph in 2003 with Porto.

Mourinho actually has more European title wins than Sevilla coach José Luis Mendilibar has total games managed in those same competitions. The 62-year-old Mendilibar's career is peaking since joining then-struggling Sevilla just two months ago.

Only one record can survive their meeting at the Puskás Aréna in Budapest where the Europa League trophy is just the start of the rewards for the winning club.

Neither Roma nor Sevilla can finish in the top four of their domestic leagues that would have ensured qualifying for the Champions League.

Their only path to the Champions League next season — and the potential tens of millions of euros (dollars) in extra prize money from UEFA — is taking the group-stage place protected for the Europa League winner.

The high value of this Europa League to both clubs is in stark contrast to a Mourinho comment from 10 years ago that became infamous.

Mourinho and Benítez are among four coaches who led two different teams to win the 52-year-old competition.

The Roma coach can make more history by becoming the first coach to win the Europa League with three different clubs, joining his Porto and Manchester United (2017) teams. And this just one year after the latest team in his storied career won the inaugural Europa Conference League to make Mourinho the first coach with titles in each of the three club competitions.

Mendilibar has a more modest background yet has arguably outcoached Mourinho in his brief spell at Sevilla.

Replacing former Argentina coach Jorge Sampaoli in March, Mendilibar became Sevilla's third coach this season with the team just two points clear of the La Liga relegation zone.

### SOCCER

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The race began Monday morning but was red-flagged for a second time due to rain after just 48 laps, prompting NASCAR to postpone the remainder of the race until after the conclusion of the Coca-Cola 600.

The Xfinity race was originally scheduled for Saturday, but was postponed to Monday due to wet weather.

"I can't tell you how long of a day it has been, how long of a week it has been," Allgaier said of the race which finished just before midnight Eastern Time.

Gibbs completed 900 laps on Monday, as he also raced in the Coca-Cola 600.

Kyle Busch had been scheduled to run the Xfinity Series race, but dropped out so he could focus on running the Coca-Cola 600. Justin Haley replaced Busch in the No. 10 Chevrolet.