



BAHRAIN DECLARATION CONGRATULATES KUWAIT AMIR ON ASSUMING POWER

Kuwait backs Palestine's full UN entry



Representing His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, delivers the State of Kuwait's speech at the 33rd Arab League summit in Manama.

- Reject all forms of interference in sovereignty of Arab countries
- Call for free and safe navigation in international waters in line with international law
- Push for 'immediate' Israeli withdrawal from Gaza

MANAMA, May 16, (KUNA): Arab leaders on Thursday congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on assuming power, wishing him success and the best of luck, and the State of Kuwait and its people further progress and prosperity.

This came in a final communique or Bahrain Declaration adopted by the Arab leaders following the 33rd Arab Summit in Manama.

In their statement, they also voiced heartfelt condolences over the passing of the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Prime Minister called on the UN Security Council to grant the State of Palestine full membership status, welcoming UN General Assembly's resolution, adopted on May 9, 2024, which supported Palestine membership.

Kuwait, he said, would always remain committed to supporting the Palestinian cause and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just cause.

Continued on Page 5

Interior ministry vows action against by-election disturbances

'No one is above the law in Kuwait'

KUWAIT CITY, May 16, (KUNA): Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousuf Al-Sabah said that law will be decisively applied to all to maintain the country's security, stability and territorial integrity.

"None is above the law whatever his or her position is," the ministry's department of public relations and security media quoted the minister in a statement as saying while leading a meeting that featured some senior leaders and Undersecretary Lt. Gen Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

"We will not allow anyone to undermine the country's security and stability either by words or actions, in implementing the directives of His Highness the Amir," the minister stressed.

The minister said he is proud of the ministry's personnel, adding that he looks forward to achieving further accomplishments and gains as well as developing e-services and carrying on digital transformation, according to the statement.

The aim of such services and steps is to offer facilitation to citizens and monitor all decisions and measures taken to maintain public funds, it pointed out.

Meanwhile, Undersecretary Minister of Interior, Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah affirmed on Thursday that ministry will firmly deal with any manifestations that disturb the by-elections for the



Sheikh Fahad Yousuf Al-Sabah, Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense and Interior, led a meeting attended by senior leaders, including Undersecretary Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Municipal Council in the sixth and ninth constituencies due on May 18.

The General Administration of Security Relations and Media stated in a press release that the Deputy Minister of Interior, during his chairing of a meeting with the Assistant Undersecretaries of the Ministry of Interior to review the readiness of mem-

bers of the police force for the municipal council's by-elections, stressed the necessity of providing all security and traffic services.

He said that the instructions of the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yousuf Al-Sabah, are to provide all fa-

cilities that enable the citizens to perform the electoral duty.

Lieutenant General Al-Nawaf also reviewed with the attendees the traffic and organizational security plans that will be implemented in polling day, measures that will be taken to maintain security and order and secure electoral headquarters.

Fiscal buffers strong

Moody's affirms Kuwait A1 rating; stable outlook

NEW YORK, May 16: Moody's Ratings (Moody's) has today affirmed the Government of Kuwait's long-term local and foreign currency issuer ratings at A1. The outlook remains stable.

The rating affirmation reflects Moody's assessment that Kuwait's balance sheet and fiscal buffers will remain extremely strong for the foreseeable future and preserve macroeconomic and external stability. Balanced against this key credit strength is the lack of progress in reforms that would reduce the vulnerability of the economy and government finances to oil market volatility and long-term carbon transition risks, which reveals underlying and persistent institutional constraints. While the government aims to address the institutional impediments, how effective it will be is highly uncertain at this stage.

The stable outlook reflects balanced risks to the ratings. Progress in economic and fiscal diversification away from hydrocarbons not currently factored into Moody's baseline assumptions may reduce Kuwait's exposure to oil price fluctuations and long-term carbon transition. The recent dissolution of parliament and temporary suspension of related constitutional articles aimed at overcoming institutional constraints has the potential to accelerate reforms. By contrast, increasing global momentum towards carbon transition that significantly lowers the demand for and price of oil would likely weigh on Kuwait's credit metrics and weaken the credit profile in the absence of fiscal and economic reforms. Moody's baseline scenario assumes that there is no significant escalation of the geopolitical conflict in the Middle East region into a full-scale multifront conflict that involves Iran, which could have significant negative implications for sovereigns in the region depending on transmission channels, exposures and buffers.

Kuwait's local and foreign currency country ceilings have been raised to Aa1 from Aa2. The three-notch gap between the local currency ceiling and the sovereign rating reflects the country's stable balance of payments through episodes of oil price volatility, against the economy's exposure to a key revenue source and a challenging domestic political environment that constrains reform and diversification prospects. The zero-notch gap between the foreign currency ceiling and local currency ceiling reflects very low transfer and convertibility risks, given the country's very large net external creditor position that includes ample foreign exchange reserves held by the central bank.

Ratings Rationale
Kuwait's sovereign balance sheet and fiscal buffers will remain extremely strong for the foreseeable future, anchoring the sovereign credit profile. However, lack of progress in reforms that is largely the result of underlying and persistent institutional constraints exposes the government to oil market volatility and long-term carbon transition risks. In the past week the sovereign took the extraordinary step to temporarily suspend parliament for up to four years in an attempt to address the institutional impediments to reform, but building a track record of credible and effective policies is likely to take time.

Continued on Page 5

MoH committed to expand and modernize healthcare

KUWAIT CITY, May 16, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi said his ministry was committed to pursuing the efforts to modernize the healthcare services for citizens and expanding the health facilities.

Dr. Al-Awadhi expressed gratitude to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah for renewing their confidence in him as Minister of Health.

The modernization of the health facilities includes expanding and operating the major health projects such as hospitals, specialized clinics and primary health centers, as well as the digitization and mechanization of the health services, he pointed out.



Al-Awadhi

The upgrading of the health services focuses strengthening the prevention of epidemics, improving the quality of healthy life for people from all walks of life in collaboration with local, regional and international medical corporations, Dr. Al-Awadhi went on.

He highlighted the importance of learning from the experience of global medical centers and prestigious colleges in rehabili-

tating the technical and administrative cadres of the health facilities.

OFW remittances decline in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: Remittances from Filipino workers in Kuwait experienced a slight decline of 2.10 percent in the first quarter of 2024, while remittances from Filipino workers also known as Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) across all Gulf countries saw a 3.63 percent increase during the same period compared to the previous year, reports Al-Rai daily.

Data from the Central Bank of the Philippines revealed that the total remittances from Gulf countries amounted to \$1.34 billion in Q1 2024, up from \$1.29 billion in Q1 2023.

Among the Gulf countries, Qatar led the growth with a 5.09 percent increase, while Kuwait experienced a 2.10 percent decline in remittances. Saudi Arabia remained the top recipient of remittances at \$485.47 million, while Bahrain received the lowest amount at \$61.52 million.

Remittances from Gulf countries accounted for 16.37 percent of the total remittances from Filipino workers worldwide in Q1 2024, totaling \$8.22 billion. This represents a significant portion compared to remittances from the Asian continent, which amounted to \$3.33 billion during the same period.

Continued on Page 5

News watch

KUWAIT CITY: Chief Executive Officer of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation **Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah** on Thursday pledged that the sector's strategy makers would press ahead with empowering working female personnel due to their dedication.

Sheikh Nawaf Al-Sabah was speaking during the inauguration of a forum organized by the KPC, themed "Kuwait has its own women," with the attendance of diplomats. The event marked Kuwaiti Women's Day, observed today. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: The Kuwaiti Women Associations Union has signed a memorandum of understanding with **Uzbekistan's** Family and Women Committee to coordinate efforts for protection of women's rights and bolster the cordial ties.

Sheikha Fadia Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, the society's chairperson, noted in a statement ahead of the virtual signing of the MoU with the Chairperson of the committee, **Parpiboeva Ozoda Abdukadirovna**, necessity for sustainable action programs to back regulations that call for serving women affairs. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: KUNA Center for Media Skills Development concluded on Thursday its training program on advanced English news writing.

The course, which started on May 12th, saw the participation of KUNA employees and counterparts from the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) and Qatar's News Agency (QNA). (KUNA)

Hot weather, scattered rain await Kuwait this weekend

KUWAIT CITY, May 16, (KUNA): Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi, Director of the Meteorology Department at the General Administration of Civil Aviation, forecasted hot weather over the weekend, with daytime temperatures soaring and nights cooling to a moderate level.

According to Al-Qarawi's statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Kuwait is experiencing the influence of an extended air depression combined with a relatively humid and hot air mass. This atmospheric condition may lead to scattered rainfall, possibly accompanied by thunderstorms, along with gusty winds stirring up dust. As the depression weakens gradually, a hot air high will advance, accompanied by light to moderate northwesterly winds, occasionally picking up speed.

Today's weather is expected to be hot during the day, with partial cloud cover and moderate humidity. Winds will vary from light to moderate, blowing from the northeast to the east, with occasional activity at speeds ranging from 12 to 50 kilometers per hour. There's a chance of scattered thunderstorms and dusty conditions. Maximum temperatures are forecasted to range between 34 to 36 degrees Celsius, with the sea condition categorized as light to moderate, with occasional waves reaching 2 to 6 feet in height.

At night, the weather will become moderate, with partial cloud cover and relative humidity. Winds will continue from the easterly to northeasterly direc-

tion, blowing at speeds of 12 to 45 kilometers per hour. Scattered thunderstorms are possible, with minimum temperatures expected to range from 27 to 29 degrees Celsius. Sea conditions remain light to moderate, with waves occasionally reaching heights of 2 to 6 feet.

On Friday, the weather will remain hot, with light to moderate winds shifting from the northeasterly to northwesterly direction, blowing at speeds ranging from 8 to 35 kilometers per hour.

'Kazma 8' military exercise concludes

KUWAIT CITY, May 16, (KUNA): The "Kazma 8" military drill of the logistic and supply authority concluded on Wednesday, in the presence and under patronage of Chief of Staff of Kuwait's Armed Forces Air Marshal Bandar Al-Muzain.

The drill aimed at improving the skills of military personnel to train them on facing crises and dealing with emergencies, Kuwait's General Staff of the Armed Forces said in a press statement.

This is done through coordinating efforts and communication channels, and developing capabilities to implement duties and tasks as well as solving different issues and taking appropriate decisions, it added.

The drill featured a number of the authority's units and senior military leaders, it noted.



KUNA photo

The 'Kazma 8' military drill conducted by the logistic and supply authority concluded on Wednesday, with the presence and patronage of Kuwait's Armed Forces Chief of Staff, Air Marshal Bandar Al-Muzain.

Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:25	Asr	15:20
Sunrise ..	04:56	Maghrib ..	18:33
Zohr	11:44	Isha	20:01

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Hot with light to moderate freshening at times variable wind to northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-40 km/h.

By Night: Mild with light to

Weather

moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 08-45 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec		
Kuwait City	36	28	Kuwait Airport	35
			Abdaly	36
			Jahra	36
			Salmiyah	31
			Nuwaisib	33
			Wafra	35

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

'2005 Assembly approved voting rights first time'

May 16 ... A turning point in Kuwaiti women's political journey

By Shaima Al-Ruwashed

KUWAIT CITY, May 16, (KUNA): May 16 each year marks a turning point in Kuwait's history for the Kuwaiti women, it marks the day they were granted political rights, enabling them to vote, run for office and assume leadership positions.

On May 16, 2005, the Kuwaiti National Assembly officially approved women's franchise, culminating an initiative launched by the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The initiative of the late Amir was out of his belief in the importance of the role of women and his appreciation of women contributions to Kuwait development.

In the 2006 National Assembly elections, Kuwaiti women participated for the first time as candidates and voters and in the 2008 elections, 27 women ran for office, achieving record numbers of votes and in some constituencies surpassing those bagged by male candidates.

In the 2009 National Assembly elections, Kuwaiti women achieved a historic milestone in the country's democratic life when four women won seats in the Assembly among 17 female candidates: Dr. Massouma Al-Mubarak, Dr. Asseel Al-Awadhi, Dr. Rola Dashti and Dr. Salwa Al-Jassar.

Kuwaiti women have demonstrated their pioneering role in the country's development across various fields, from the pre-oil era to the present. They have held many supervisory and leadership positions, proving their exceptional capabilities and high competence.

Celebrating Kuwait Women's Day reaffirms and showcases the positive and pioneering role and their continues contributions to building and developing the society. They have thrived within a supportive legislative and social environments, enjoying political and economic freedom, fostering creativity and excellence in various fields.

Despite the challenges and difficulties accompanying their journey to success, the Kuwaiti women have gained leadership and precedence in the Gulf region, holding multiple positions in various political, economic, cultural and social fields, becoming crucial contributors to the development process in the region.

Kuwait's history records numerous contributions by the Kuwaiti women across all fields, setting an example of struggle and perseverance. Maryam Abdul-Malik Al-

Saleh was the first to enter the teaching field in 1938, followed by Sharifa Al-Qatami, who was the first female citizen to work for Kuwait Oil Company in 1960.

In medicine and nursing, Najeeba Al-Mulla was the first female doctor to join the Kuwait Medical Association in 1967. In law, Suad Al-Qenaici and Sheikhha Al-Duajji were among the first female lawyers in 1973.

In theatre, Maryam Al-Saleh and Maryam Al-Ghadban participated in early theatrical works, while Salwa Essa became the first Kuwaiti flight attendant for Kuwait Airways in 1975.

The role of Kuwaiti women during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait that began in August 1990 cannot be overlooked. They stood alongside men in resisting the occupiers, with some being martyred and others imprisoned. Sana'a Al-Foudari was the first woman martyr, followed by Asrar Al-Qabandi and other martyrs.

Kuwaiti women's achievements continue. Recently, Kuwait celebrated another accomplishment with Dr. Reem Al-Shammari winning the 2024 Arab Women Cyber Security Leader Award, the first regional recognition of its kind at the GISEC Global Conference, honoring outstanding women across the Arab world whose achievements have had a wide-reaching impact.

Kuwaiti women had gained more prominence in leading positions as ministers and undersecretaries, reach 28 percent of the personnel across state bodies in addition to sectors such as the military, police, diplomatic corps, oil sector, and judiciary.

Kuwaiti women also gained recognition in the economic sector, taking around 41 percent of the leadership and administrative positions in the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) for instance. Some 26 percent of similar positions for women were recorded in the banking sector and 35 percent of the working force in Kuwaiti banks were secured by female employees.

On May 11, a new government was formed according to a decree by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, headed by His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, including 13 ministers, two of whom are women: Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, Minister of Public Works and Municipality Affairs, and Dr. Amthah Al-Huwailah, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor, Family and Children Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs.



Dr. Al-Jassar



Dr. Rola Dashti



Dr. Al-Awadhi



Dr. Al-Mubarak

Talks held with Russian envoy

Kuwait Amir's rep meets UAE VP

MANAMA, May 16, (KUNA): Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, received on Thursday the UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Dubai Ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Al-Nahyan on the sidelines of the 33rd Arab Summit.

He also hosted Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, the UAE Vice President, Deputy Prime Minister and Head of the Presidency Diwan.

The Kuwaiti and UAE sides explored the deep-rooted and historic relations between the two countries and peoples, means of boosting the close ties and issues on the regional and international arenas.

The meeting was attended by the delegation accompanying the Representative of His Highness the Amir.

Russia

Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, received on Thursday the Russian President Special Envoy to the Middle East, Mikhail Bogdanov.

The reception, held on margins of the 33rd Arab Summit, was attended by the delegation accompanying the Representative of His Highness the Amir.

Palestine

Representing His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Thursday Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

During the reception, held on the sidelines of the 33rd Arab Summit in Mana-



KUNA photo
Representative of His Highness the Amir meets with the Ruler of Dubai on the sidelines of the Arab Summit.



KUNA photo
Representative of His Highness the Amir receives the Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation to the Middle East on the sidelines of the Arab Summit.

ma, they discussed firm relations between both countries and their peoples and ways of promoting them, along with regional and international developments.

The meeting was attended by the delegation accompanying the Representative of His Highness the Amir.

Lebanon

Representing His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ah-

'Kuwaiti women partners in the country's development'

By Abdullah Al-Enezi

KUWAIT CITY, May 16, (KUNA): Minister of Public Works and Minister of Municipality Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan highlighted Thursday role of Kuwaiti women as a partner in the construction of modern Kuwait, development and paving the democratic path.

Minister Al-Mashaan made these remarks to KUNA on the occasion of the Kuwaiti Women Day, stating that they have proven their determination, ability and influence across a variety of fields.

The constitution has guaranteed the rights



Dr. Al-Mashaan

of women both politically and socially, without discriminating between male and female citizens, remarked the Minister.

Late Amir's Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's initiative of granting women political rights stemmed from his belief in role of women in development, and in appreciation for their heroic role during Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait.

Kuwaiti women overcame obstacles and hardships to accomplish impressive feats on regional and international levels, becoming pioneers in development, Al-Mashaan commented adding that this was not in a spur of a moment but predated the discovery of oil.

June 12, 2005 ushered in a new era for Kuwaiti women as Dr. Maasouma Al-Mubarak was appointed as the country's first female

minister.

Furthermore, women succeeded in many positions of leadership including: minister, undersecretary, university president, ambassador, democratically elected representative or even in the judicial authority.

Success stories also extended to the private sector with women chairing large corporations, and getting listed in international strong personalities lists.

The Minister affirmed political leadership's intent on empowering women, and providing support in various fields to ensure active participation.

Minister Al-Mashaan highlighted recent win by Dr. Reem Al-Shammari who won the Arab woman cybersecurity award, saying that this is but one of many examples, but sacrifices of Kuwaiti women during invasion remains at the helm.

Sacrifices during Iraqi invasion lauded

'Women's role key in society'

Minister grants four women judicial enforcement authority

By Abdullah Al-Enezi

KUWAIT CITY, May 16, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs, Labor, Family Affairs and Childhood and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Dr. Amthah Al-Huwailah said on Thursday that Kuwaiti women have an important role in society, making significant efforts in various fields.

The occasion of Kuwaiti Women's Day, which falls on May 16, represented a historic milestone for Kuwaiti women and embodied a sense of pride and honor for them whenever this cherished occasion would arrive, said Dr. Al-Huwailah in a statement to KUNA.

The Minister said that Kuwaiti women have played a key factor in society, as they won their political rights after being endorsed by the Kuwaiti National Assembly and preceded by the decision of the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to grant women their suffrage.

This was in recognition of the importance of Kuwaiti women's role in society, their significant efforts in development, and their limitless and heroic contributions during the 1990-1991 Iraqi occupation of the country.

Dr. Al-Huwailah noted that Kuwaiti women aim to build on their successful journey and enhance their scientific contributions to achieve sustainable development. Alongside these efforts, they manage sustainable household responsibilities as mothers and serve as educators.

She praised the success of Kuwaiti women in various leadership roles. "They are ministers, ambassadors, university directors, parliamentarians and judges," she said, and their achievements in these positions were a significant milestone in their social, political, and economic journey, showcasing creativity and excellence.

The minister stated that expanding opportunities for qualified Kuwaiti women would significantly contribute to the country's progress and prosperity. Elim-

inating gender discrimination would further enhance development and increase growth rates in Kuwait, she added.

She highlighted the heroic role of Kuwaiti women during the Iraqi occupation, where they sacrificed their lives for the country. Their exemplary acts of sacrifice and dedication have earned them a place of honor in history.

Dr. Amthah Al-Huwailah expressed her pride in the political leadership, led by the Amir His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, for entrusting women with full confidence, as she underscored their significant societal role and active participation, evident in holding numerous leadership and supervisory posts in various departments.

Meanwhile, Dr. Amthah Al-Huwailah granted four women in the supreme council for family affairs authority of judicial enforcement, on Thursday.

In commemoration with Kuwaiti Women's Day, a statement from the Ministry of Social Affairs was issued in which Dr. Al-Huwailah praised the capability and achievements of Kuwaiti women across all fields.

Al-Huwailah's decision comes in accordance with Article 16/2020 of the constitution which is set to protect women from domestic violence.

Reem Al-Azmi, Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, praised the decision of granting the authority to the four women, making the majority of members with authority to protect victims of domestic violence women.

In another development, the Deputy Foreign Minister said organizing the forum, in coordination between the foreign department and the KPC, mirrored the State of Kuwait's substantial concern for the female citizens namely their major role in the oil sector.

This concern is in line with national policies dating back to the times of establishing the State of Kuwait, out of the belief that the woman "is a prime section of the community and a key for progress and development," Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah said.

May 16 is an important day, celebrated annually to mark the Kuwaiti women accomplishments, he has affirmed.

The Kuwaiti woman has been playing a distinguished role at the social, political, intelligent and cultural levels, he said, noting that the state has taken many decisions intended to bolster the woman status at the local and external levels.

Gulf Arab states database eyed

'Info centers have role to play in forging education policies'

By Nasser Al-Ajmi

MUSCAT, May 16, (KUNA): Statistical and information centers around the region should contribute towards efforts to shape up educational plans and policies, a Kuwaiti official said on Wednesday, citing such facilities as the framework of an education system.

The effective and proper use of these research centers can go a long way in assembling the "core" of a sound education system, Gulf Arab States Educational Research Center (GASERC) chief Dr. Mohammad Al-Sherka told talks organized by the regional education body in the Omani capital.

Educational policymakers in the region often rely on these facilities in their decision making, the official underlined, which includes the "scientific and practical" assessment of growth indicators in the national education sector, he added.

He went on to say that the data churned out by these facilities is helpful in addressing any impediments to education growth, which include the lack of adequate research and information to push forward new plans and strategies, pointing out that such data is often assembled without the use of tech-savvy methods.

The talks are part of routine gatherings GASERC holds in a bid to allow information and statistical experts the chance to share their knowhow with one another, which subsequently provides them with the platform needed to hone their skills in the field, he said.

On new endeavors the talks could yield, the Kuwaiti official cited a plan to forge a comprehensive research and statistical database linking Gulf Arab states, which constitutes a step forward towards bolstering educational cooperation in the region.



Sheikh Jarrar Jaber Al-Sabah

'Save' campaign underway

Work begins on excellent job performance 'bonus'

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Minister of State for Housing Affairs recently established the 'Save' pavilion at the 360 Mall to raise awareness among mall patrons about the importance of rationalizing electricity and water consumption. Undersecretary Eng. Maha Al-Asousi and the assistant undersecretaries were present at the event.

Assistant Undersecretary for Monitoring and Control Centers and Head of the Rationalization Committee Eng. Fatima Gohar Hayat stated that the ministry's presence at the 360 Mall demonstrated its commitment to implement a policy on rationalizing electricity and water consumption and raising public awareness in this regard. She affirmed the ministry aims to change individuals' consumption habits in order to achieve optimal consumption and sustain the services provided to all consumers.

Head of the committee's media team Khadija Mishari explained that the idea is to have a miniature house where the ministry can explain to the public how to reduce consumption through daily procedures that benefit them. The campaign focuses on "rationalization and raising awareness," which benefits the State by reducing the costs of producing electricity and water, as well as reducing harmful emissions that contribute to environmental preservation.

She emphasized that the pavilion has a positive impact on the mall's visitors, with hundreds of customers visiting daily.

In addition the Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Dr. Mohammad Boushahri, received the first batch of excellent job performance bonus statements for eligible employees at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy.

The bonus is expected to be disbursed within the next few days.

The ministry is currently coordinating with the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to finalize procedures for employees who work according to the shift system. This is in preparation for disbursing the bonus to those entitled to it, in line with the State's directions to support and encourage distinguished national competencies.

Expat clicks on link, loses all his savings in account

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: An expatriate's bank account was emptied as soon as he clicked a link to pay KD 1, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to the victim, he did not share the OTP with the woman involved in this incident, yet his bank balance was reduced to zero within minutes. A case of bank document forgery was registered and classified as 'felony'.

A security source revealed that an expatriate, born in 1999, got a telephone call from a woman claiming to be a bank employee. She informed him that the bank would send him a link to pay KD1 in order to activate his account. Shortly after, he received a call from another phone, not the woman's mobile phone, via WhatsApp. He stated that he attempted to pay KD1 through the link, but received a message indicating that the transaction was not completed. However, he was shocked to discover that his entire balance of KD343 was lost. He confirmed that he received the OTP, but did not share it.

Furthermore, the security source pointed out that the expatriate's mobile phone might have been hacked, allowing the gang to use the OTP code. He urged the public to be cautious and not to respond to any suspicious requests.

The Central Bank of Kuwait has issued multiple warnings about gangs stealing people's accounts using various methods and requesting private banking information that no legitimate bank or employee would ask for.

'Do not falter ... Kuwait can ill afford complacency, excuses'

"SOME may think that the situation which led to the suspension of some articles of the Constitution is something that may have dire consequences. Those who have followed the actions of His Highness the Amir since assuming the role of Crown Prince and later ascending to the position of Amir reveals his profound belief in democratic principles and the importance of community involvement in decision-making processes."

Abdul Rahman Walid bin Salama wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"This conviction was evident in his landmark speech, where he introduced a novel practice: the government refraining from interference in the selection of the Speaker of the National Assembly and abstaining from involvement in committee formations.

"This gesture of goodwill was met initially with denial, followed by a descent into a culture of competition through threats and intimidation, ultimately fostering an atmosphere of disrespect.

"Despite numerous warnings issued by His Highness in preceding speeches, a pivotal decision became necessary, signaling a departure from an era marked by constitutional turmoil, tribalistic tendencies masquerading as democracy, and partisan divides cloaked in religious rhetoric.

"Since liberation, the nation has grappled with instability, division, excess, and coercion, all without substantial strategic gains and with scant regard for the rights of its people.

"In light of these developments, I urge every political activist and concerned individual, before assuming a stance that carries immense responsibility before both God and the law, to ponder the following questions:

"Have the outcomes of elections, regardless of the number of votes cast, yielded statesmen capable of steering the country towards prosperity and security?"

"Did the elected representatives possess the requisite knowledge and insight to enact legislation that aligns with local and global dynamics, ensuring the adoption of robust and high-quality laws adaptable to evolving circumstances?"

"Has the historical deficiency in legislative quality persisted unabated in previous parliamentary sessions, raising doubts about the capability of current representatives to undertake constitutional amendments and safeguard the future of our nation?"

"Over the past two decades, has the diverse composition of the Council effectively addressed critical issues such as stateless individuals, counterfeiters, and naturalized citizens, without compromising Kuwait's national interests, considering the sensitive nature of these matters and their implications for national security?"

"Let us refrain from being swayed by hollow slogans that exalt the sanctity of the constitution. Many representatives exploit chaos for personal gain, viewing it as fertile ground for advancing their self-interests.

"Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad's decision to suspend the constitution and the establishment of the National Council prompts contemplation: had this council continued to govern post-liberation until the present, would we have grappled with housing crises, suffered losses like Dow Chemical, or endured soaring warehouse rents?"

"Today presents an unparalleled opportunity to rectify the shortcomings of certain provisions within the 1962 Constitution. Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad embodies the spirit of renewal akin to Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem, a beacon eagerly anticipated by both ourselves and our fellow citizens.

"The government shoulders immense responsibility today, and the populace awaits decisive actions, characterized by efficacy and swiftness. Long-pending decrees must be ratified weekly, commencing with the implementation of a new traffic system and concluding with the privatization of numerous governmental sectors.

"Efforts to combat monopolies in warehouse and industrial land allocations are paramount, ensuring equitable distribution among committed investors. Additionally, dormant agricultural and livestock plots should be reclaimed and entrusted to diligent individuals to bolster food security and facilitate fundamental reforms.

"We implore the government not to falter, as excuses are no longer tenable, and the people will not tolerate negligence or complacency. Kuwait can ill afford further delay --- diligence, dedication, and hard work are imperative.

"May divine guidance steer us towards endeavors that benefit our nation and its citizens."

Also:

"The timely address by His Highness Amir Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad, may God safeguard him, arrives amidst a backdrop of discord and transgressions that have veiled our nation in darkness, stalling progress and development," columnist **Dr. Bassam Al-Shatti** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"Infused with His Highness's trademark wisdom and paternal insight, his words serve as a guiding beacon during

this critical juncture, offering a roadmap to diagnose our afflictions and prescribe remedies.

"His lofty discourse meticulously underscores the imperative of rescuing our affairs from the clutches of chaos and discord, emphasizing fidelity to our cherished values while shunning attempts at imposition or interference, reaffirming Kuwait's status as a bastion of institutions and the rule of law.

"We are implored to embrace the tenets of our faith, which enjoin upon us to heed His Highness's directives, collaborate in righteousness, safeguard national unity, and vehemently oppose any threat to our national cohesion, be it through chaos or incitement, thus ensuring a climate of stability, security, and tranquility for all.

"His Highness's speech resonates with a paternal sensitivity towards the concerns and grievances of his subjects, as he fervently endeavors to eradicate corruption, sectarian discord, and all forms of prejudice, thereby cultivating our unity as a beacon for the region and nurturing reverence for the sanctity of our regime.

"As we embark upon the next phase characterized by industrious endeavor and accomplishment, let us forge ahead with enhanced cooperation grounded in mutual respect, eschewing discord that jeopardizes our nation and its people, and embracing obedience to lawful directives while refraining from transgression.

"May God, under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir, grant our nation an oasis of security, serenity, and stability, guiding us towards prosperity and success."

□ □ □

"It's a common tendency among us to neglect our homes and cars until the buildup of dirt and neglect becomes too glaring to ignore. Only then do we rush to spruce up our surroundings, motivated by the imminent arrival of someone we care about or wish to impress, striving to present ourselves in the best light possible," columnist

Moaz Issa Al-Asfour wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"Similarly, some of us may exhibit abrasive behavior and harsh speech, alienating those around us to the point where even family members and colleagues avoid our company.

"Yet, in the presence of individuals we fear or admire, we hastily adopt a facade of gentleness and amiability, masking our true selves to appear more favorable.

"This pursuit of perfection and the need to impress often leads us to overlook the blessings we already possess in favor of fleeting validations from others.

"We might dedicate entire rooms in our homes to hypothetical guests, depriving our families of the comfort and utility of these spaces. Meanwhile, we exhaust our energy on superficial gestures of politeness outside, neglecting the genuine needs of our loved ones within.

"However, striving to impress others ultimately proves futile if it's not aligned with our true nature. Relationships built on pretense are bound to crumble under the weight of authenticity, revealing the inadequacies hidden beneath the surface over time.

"True idealism isn't about appearances but about embodying goodness and sincerity in our everyday interactions, prioritizing the care and nurturing of our immediate surroundings and relationships.

"Our environment serves as our steadfast support, even when others turn away. It's a reminder that genuine connections and familial bonds are the true treasures in life, as Clint Eastwood eloquently reflected upon reaching the age of wisdom, emphasizing the importance of family amidst the transient pursuit of fame.

"In the end, chasing external validation is like chasing after ashes scattered by the wind -- it may momentarily catch attention, but it fails to ignite a lasting fire. Instead, let us nurture the flames of familial love and companionship, for they alone provide enduring warmth and fulfillment."

□ □ □

"The recent speech by His Highness has stirred a rare wave of jubilation among the people of Kuwait, despite the unconventional decision to suspend certain democratic tenets in the country," columnist **Iqbal Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"However, underlying this elation is a mixture of joy and frustration, reflecting the complex sentiments prevailing in Kuwaiti society.

"The joy stems from the dissolution of the National Assembly and its suspension for up to four years, alleviating a burden that has weighed heavily on the nation's collective conscience. This relief is tinged with anger at the state of stagnation that Kuwait finds itself in, despite its considerable financial resources and human capital.

"Indeed, the happiness at bidding farewell to representatives who prioritized personal agendas over national interests is palpable. These members of the National Assembly had perpetuated a climate of tension and unease, diverting attention away from the nation's welfare and towards their own interests.

"However, this joy is coupled with a cautious optimism, as the people now turn their attention towards the government's performance in the coming years."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



A municipality inspector sticks a warning letter on one of the properties.

13 warnings for encroachments on state land issued in Khaitan

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: Fahd Al-Muwaizri, Head of the Violations Removal Department at the Farwaniya Governorate Municipality Branch, reported that recent field tours led by the branch director, Engineer Mubarak Al-Ajmi, resulted in 13 warnings being issued. These warnings targeted cafes that either exceeded the municipality's licensing limits or operated without a license in the Khaitan area, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The Public Relations Department of the Kuwait Municipality announced an intensification of inspection tours by regulatory agencies across all governorates. These efforts, directed by Engineer Saud Al-Dabbous, the Director General of the Kuwait Municipality, aim to address encroachments on state property in investment and commercial areas. The municipality urges violators to promptly address and remove any infractions to avoid legal penalties.

Alarm sounded over losses in cable theft

Track down buyers: MEW

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy has underscored the significant losses incurred due to the theft of electricity cables, which far exceed the initial cost of the cables themselves, reports **Al-Jarida** daily quoting reliable sources.

These losses manifest both directly, through the theft of cables, and indirectly, through service disruptions that necessitate the procurement of new cables and restoration of services, a process that is hindered by lengthy bureaucratic procedures.

This disruption affects various services provided by the Ministry, impacting the provision of electricity and water in a sustainable manner.

In a statement to the daily, the sources commended the continuous efforts of the Ministry of the Interior in combating these thefts, particularly the recent apprehension of three individuals charged with stealing and selling electrical cables.

However, they emphasized that as long as there is a demand for stolen cables, there will persist a market for their illicit trade. They urged for intensive cam-

paigns targeting sites involved in the sale and reconstruction of stolen items to obscure the identity of the stolen cables and track their itinerary post-theft, including identifying methods used to smuggle them out of the country.

The sources highlighted the existence of a black market for stolen goods, where stolen cables are often re-manufactured in workshops to conceal their identity before being exported in various forms, such as copper alloys, to countries that import them. Some individuals even attempt to legitimize these stolen goods through recycling, necessitating a re-evaluation of methods to combat theft and reduce its occurrence.

The resurgence of thefts, according to the sources, is partly attributed to the absence of security patrols, which were effective deterrents in the past. They called for the reinstatement of such patrols to deter criminal activities.

These thefts, predominantly carried out by organized gangs, directly impact the services provided by government ministries, depriving citizens of essential utilities while benefiting thieves who profit from the illegal trade and export of stolen goods. Efforts to combat these thefts require collaborative action among relevant ministries to eliminate the black market and ensure the uninterrupted provision of services to citizens.

'Mobile factory for laying asphalt on roads in use'

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: Director of the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) Khaled Al-Osaimi said the authority has started using a mobile factory for asphalt laying work in two locations where maintenance works are underway.

In a press statement, Al-Osaimi affirmed that the directives of Minister of Public Works and State Minister for Municipality Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan are clear regarding the necessity of improving paving work and providing everything necessary for such work.

He disclosed the 'mobile feeder' machine used recently mixes the asphalt completely to ensure the homogeneity of its components before transferring to the spreading machine, which achieves the highest quality in terms of spreading different layers.

He added the mobile factory is the first of its kind in the country, noting that its use ensures the highest international standards in asphalt laying work.

He affirmed that the authority will oblige all its contractors, whether in new implementation contracts or in maintenance contracts, to use this equipment in the future to achieve better quality of road works.

6,000 drug pills, one kilo hashish found with expat

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: The Criminal Security Sector has referred an unidentified expatriate to the Public Prosecution for possessing more than 6,000 Captagon pills and a kilo of hashish, in addition to an amount of shabu ready for sale.

According to Al-Seyassah daily the drug pusher was arrested during an ambush in Fahaaheel. During investigation, the suspect admitted that he worked for people outside the country and also admitted to storing a quantity of drugs in his house.

After obtaining permission from the Public Prosecution, the house was searched and more drugs were seized.

In other news, personnel from the Public Security Sector of the Al-Ahmadi Governorate have arrested an expatriate who was found in possession of narcotic substances, drug paraphernalia, and a sum of money.

21 days detention

Ex-MP Tabtabaie goes to trial May 20, says court

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: The Criminal Court set May 20 for the trial of former MP Walid Al-Tabtabaie on charges related to State security.

This came after Al-Tabtabaie posted statements on the social media platform 'X', as his posts were deemed interference and a challenge to the powers of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, following the Amiri speech and suspension of the Parliament.

The Public Prosecution had earlier decided to imprison Al-Tabtabaie for 21 days. He was transferred to the Central Prison after being arrested by State Security agents.

□ □ □

Stolen car recovered: Farwaniya traffic police recently recovered a stolen vehicle.

According to a security source, traffic officers were on their daily routine of checking abandoned vehicles that had been parked for a while when they noticed a vehicle parked in front of a supermarket. When the officers examined the vehicle, they found out it was reported stolen.

The vehicle was immediately impounded and referred to the competent authority to take the necessary action.

'Equip homes with smoke detectors, extinguishers'

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: The Public Relations and Media Department of the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) has emphasized on the critical importance of equipping every room and corridor in a house with smoke detectors, placing fire extinguishers near emergency exits, and ensuring that household members know how to operate extinguishers effectively, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

In a recent educational video, the DGFD highlighted that all fires start small and then turn into an inferno if not promptly addressed.

It underscored the necessity for household heads to ensure the presence of both smoke detectors and fire extinguishers, as well as to devise an evacuation plan for immediate action in the event of a fire on any floor.

This plan should include establishing a designated meeting point agreed upon by the family and maintaining communication with the DGFD. Furthermore, the DGFD reported successful containment of a basement fire in Salmiya area, demonstrating their efficient response capabilities in managing such incidents.

Body dumped on road

Kuwaiti goes to gallows in farm guard's murder

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: The Court of Cassation, headed by Judge Saleh Al-Muraishid, upheld the death sentence that a lower court imposed on a citizen who killed the guard in his father's livestock pen in Wafra.

The accused reported the death of the guard, but he ended up confessing to premeditated murder.

Case files indicate that the Interior Ministry's Operations Unit received a report from a young Kuwaiti man who stated that the body of an Indian working in his father's livestock pen was found in a pool of blood at dawn in Wafra.

Accordingly, the report was referred to Ahmadi police officers who suspected the whistleblower — the young citizen. After subjecting him for investigation, he confessed to committing the crime.

□ □ □

Body dumped on road: The Ministry of Interior received a report regarding the discovery of a body on Abdally Road, near the farms. A security source informed the daily that the security personnel dispatched to the location found traces of violence on the body, raising suspicion that he is a victim of a crime. The source affirmed that forensic evidence and investigations are being conducted to unravel the mystery behind the unidentified person's death.

□ □ □

Brothers hurt in fight: A heated argument between a number of young men in Saad Al-Abdullah escalated into a fistfight, which resulted in the injury of two brothers — one of whom is hospitalized.

According to a security source, the quarrel broke out due to disagreements between the two parties — two brothers on one side and three individuals on the other side. The two brothers were injured and one of them is now confined at Jahra Hospital.

Celebrate with Style

A place to make unforgettable memories

MUGHAL MAHAL FAHAAHEEL

AL-RAYAN FAMILY LOUNGE & FUNCTION HALL

Weddings | Seminars | Conferences | Celebrations

Sea view | Ample car parking

For more enquires Call: 23911174 | 23911175 | 97644421

Email: fahaheel@mughalmahal.com
info@mughalmahal.com

@mughalmahalkuwait

www.mughalmahal.com

KRCS announces orphan sponsorship project in Gaza

Kuwait charity lays cornerstone of village for displaced people in Yemen

ADEN, May 16, (KUNA): A cornerstone has been laid to set up a residential village funded by Kuwait's Namaa Charity to benefit 50 displaced families in Yemen's Hodiedah Governorate.

In a press statement while laying the cornerstone on Wednesday, Governor of Hodeidah al-Hassan Taher expressed appreciation to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, the government and people for their support to carry out desperately-needed projects in Yemen, mainly in his governorate.

The project will contribute to alleviating the sufferings of displaced families and improving their conditions as well as and benefiting the society, he noted.

Meanwhile, Jamal al-Faqeeh, head of Heteen institution, which carries out the project, said it aims to build 50 residential units, a mosque and a school, and dig a water well.

He appreciated Kuwait and Namaa Charity as well as all supporters for this vital scheme that will contribute to the stability of dozens of families and creating a dignified life for them

and their children.

In the meantime, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced on Wednesday the orphan sponsorship project in Gaza in coordination and cooperation with the (Wafaa) Capacity Building and Microfinance.

The Secretary-General of KRCS Maha Al-Barjas stated to KUNA after her meeting with a delegation from the (Wafa) Foundation at the society's headquarters that the project aims to provide social, educational and health care for orphaned

children who have lost their families by creating suitable environmental conditions for their upbringing.

Al-Barjas added that the society will market the project to donors interested in sponsoring orphans, indicating that the society seeks to sponsor 1,000 orphans from the Gaza Strip.

She explained that the society seeks to provide psychological and moral support to these children, in addition to providing food, drink, and clothing.

She mentioned that KRCS has

been keen on providing all relief and medical assistance to the Palestinians since the beginning of the Israeli occupation's attacks on Gaza Strip.

On his part, Muhaisen Atawneh, Wafa Director General and the relief project implementer, in a similar statement to KUNA, expressed his thanks and appreciation to KRCS for the orphan care project in Gaza, noting that the association did not hesitate to support Palestine in all ways and means.

Atawneh said that this project is an extension of Kuwait's humanitarian

and developmental contributions in supporting Palestinian orphans, praising Kuwait's leading role in caring for orphans worldwide.

He added that the Zionist aggression continues on Gaza, leaving thousands of orphans without families in a besieged sector devoid of the simplest life necessities, explaining that comprehensive services will be provided to orphans to enable them to live with dignity and become active individuals in their communities, building a better future for them.



KUNA photo
Kuwait Red Crescent Society announces orphan sponsorship project in Gaza.

Fossil fuel combustion tied to 'accelerated global warming'

'Alternative methods to curb air pollution need to be explored'

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: Global warming, the gradual increase in the Earth's overall temperature, has accelerated notably in the past century, primarily due to the increased combustion of fossil fuels, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Student Dalal Al-Hajri, College of Science at the Kuwait University said this burning, which includes coal, oil, and natural gas, releases greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, contributing to what is commonly known as the "global warming effect." As human populations have grown, so too has the consumption of these fossil fuels, intensifying this effect.

'Kuwait airlift provides essential aid to Sudan'

PORT SUDAN, May 16, (KUNA): Sudan's Minister of Interior Khalil Pasha Sairin said on Thursday that Kuwait's airlift provides essential medical and nutritional aid to Sudan.

Following a meeting with Kuwait's Ambassador to Sudan Fahad

Al-Thafeeri, Pasha praised Kuwait's consistent support, in a press statement, stating that 18 aid-filled aircraft have been sent by Kuwait until now.

On his part, Al-Thafeeri said that the two officials discussed during the meeting the efforts of

Kuwait's Ministry of Interior in facilitating and responding to the needs of Sudanese people residing in Kuwait.

He also extended his gratitude to Sudan's Ministry of Interior for its cooperation with the Kuwaiti diplomatic delegation in Port Sudan.

The accumulation of heat in the atmosphere has led to a rise in the average global temperature, a phenomenon termed global warming. This warming, in turn, has triggered broader changes known as climate change. While the terms "global warming" and "climate change" are sometimes used interchangeably, they encompass distinct but related phenomena.

Climate change encompasses alterations in weather patterns, shifts in growing seasons, and rising sea levels due to the expansion of warmer oceans and the melting of ice sheets and glaciers.

Global warming-induced climate change poses significant threats to life on Earth, manifesting in widespread flooding and extreme weather events.

To mitigate these risks, efforts to reduce the emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from machinery must be intensified, she said.

Additionally, alternative methods to curb air pollution should be explored. This collective action is crucial in safeguarding the planet and its inhabitants from the detrimental impacts of climate change.



Al-Jarida photo
One of the honorees.

Annual corporate awards ceremony held

AUM honors distinguished companies

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: In recognition of its strong alliance with a select group of local and international companies in Kuwait, the American University of the Middle East (AUM) hosted its annual event to present the 'Distinguished Companies Awards, AUM Corporate Award 2024', reports Al-Jarida daily.

This ceremony aimed to recognize the companies involved in the 10th Career Fair and commend them for their outstanding support of the university's graduates, offering them training, job opportunities, and backing Kuwaiti youth initiatives.

The event, held on the university campus, featured the Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Human Soft, Tariq Al-Othman, among the attendees.

In his address, Al-Othman expressed his pride in spotlighting these distinguished companies, emphasizing their shared goal of seeing students succeed in their professional journeys. He underscored the enduring relationship between

the university and its graduates, highlighting the mutual aspiration for their ongoing success.

Al-Othman extended gratitude to the companies for their confidence in AUM students and graduates, acknowledging their role in fostering entrepreneurship and future leadership.

The awards ceremony encompassed various categories, notably recognizing companies that hired a significant number of AUM graduates and those that garnered the most job applications during the career fair.

All participating companies, totaling approximately 50, received acknowledgment, including prominent entities like the National Bank of Kuwait, SLB, Weatherford International, and others. During the ceremony, company representatives praised the competence and dedication of AUM students and graduates, commending their pursuit of successful careers and celebrating their achievements.

'Regular Sleep' event to be held at the Avenues

Understanding sleep apnea: expert advice from Sleep Medicine Society

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: The Sleep Medicine Society of Kuwait will organize the 'Regular Sleep... Healthy Future' event at the Avenues Mall on Saturday, in cooperation with Dasman Diabetes Institute, in order to raise public awareness on the importance of sound sleep and identify the causes of sleep disturbances in adults and children.

Head of the society Dr. Iman Al-Anbai explained that obesity and weight gain are among the most important risk factors for developing suffocation and sleep apnea, along with advanced age, smoking, alcohol consumption, nasal airway obstruction, and a family history of the disorder.

In an exclusive statement to the daily, Al-Anbai enumerated various symptoms of sleep apnea; such as loud and chronic snoring, pauses in breathing during sleep, waking up suddenly with a feeling of suffocation or gasping, excessive daytime sleepiness, morning headaches, difficulty concentrating and paying attention, and changes in mood and behavior.

She also pointed out that there are three types of sleep apnea: obstructive apnea, which occurs when a partial or complete obstruction in the upper airway hinders sleep; central apnea, which often occurs when the brain fails to send appropriate signals to the muscles that control breathing; and mixed apnea, which combines the previous two types.

Disorder

She defined sleep apnea as a common disorder that occurs when breathing stops temporarily during sleep, which can lead to sleep disturbance and other health problems. She warned about the consequences of neglecting treatment of sleep apnea, as it leads to many complications such as high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and memory and concentration problems.

Meanwhile, Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery Consultant Dr. Abdul Mohsen Ibrahim Al-Turki revealed that 80 percent of patients do not know they suf-

fer from respiratory asphyxia during sleep; hence, the importance of educating doctors to direct patients and help them with diagnosis and treatment.

In a statement to the daily, Al-Turki stressed that the cure of sleep apnea begins with various treatments and then the use of the Continuous Positive Airway Pressure machine which is commonly referred as CPAP device. When medical treatment fails and the patient is unable to lose weight, doctors resort to surgery to improve the patient's condition, he added.

Diagnosis

He also emphasized importance of diagnosis to develop an appropriate treatment plan. For example, if the patient suffers from snoring, he may need to adjust his nasal septum only, but if he suffers from sleep apnea, he may need more than one adjustment to the nasal septum, such as removing the tonsils, raising the palate, and performing a floor of the tongue operation in one session, and perhaps more than that depending on the degree of sleep apnea, he elaborated.

He also said that sleep apnea exposes the sufferer to several changes that cause an imbalance in the blood sugar level, including frequent interruption of sleep, increased activity of the sympathetic nervous system, which usually decreases during sleep and increases during stress. This causes the secretion of stress hormones, such as adrenaline and cortisol, which raise blood sugar level, while frequent decrease in the level of oxygen during sleep contributes to a high blood sugar level, he warned.

He added that lack of sleep or sleep deprivation affects the hormones secreted by the body. The secretion of the hormone ghrelin increases appetite and weight, while the secretion of the hormone leptin reduces appetite and results in weight gain, poor handling of sugar by the body, and an increase in the possibility of high blood sugar levels. The body's resistance to the action of the hormone insulin increases when weight exceeds the normal rate, he clarified.

albander hotel & resort

May Room Promotion

Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 60.984 net	BHD 136.198 net
Weekends (Thursday & Friday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 76.230 net	BHD 170.247 net

Promo period from 2nd May to 31st May 2024 Terms & conditions apply*

Kuwait Arts Association and Bangladeshi Embassy co-organize art exhibition

Kuwait, Bangladesh mark golden jubilee of diplomatic relations

KUWAIT CITY, May 16, (KUNA): The Kuwait Arts Association and the Bangladesh Embassy in Kuwait co-organized an art exhibition to mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between both countries.

The opening ceremony of the three-day event on Wednesday gathered dozens of diplomats based in Kuwait, and chairman and members of the association.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of ceremony, Bangladesh Ambassador

Md Ashikuzzaman lauded as distinguished the relationship between his country and the State of Kuwait.

The friendly relations between both countries are based on mutual respect, he said, commending the role of Kuwait Arts Association in cementing the cultural relations.

The exhibition showcases nearly 100 paintings that reflect the heritage and culture of the Kuwaiti and Bangladeshi peoples.

Kuwait backs

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait, he added, was committed to UN resolutions, Arab peace initiative and establishment of the independent Palestinian state on June 4, 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, "which is a major condition to achieve peace and security in the region."

His Highness the Prime Minister said the Israeli occupation's killing, deliberate destruction and genocide were blatant and unprecedented violations of international laws and human values.

The region will never see peace, security and stability, and people would never feel justice while the Palestinian people unable to gain their legitimate rights, he said.

His Highness the Prime Minister called on Arab countries to coordinate and cooperate to confront serious challenges in order to honor aspirations of "our people for security and stability."

His Highness the PM, meanwhile, called for free and safe navigation in international waters in line with international law and law of the seas, securing energy supplies, rejected all forms of interference in sovereignty of Arab countries, and reaffirmed importance of dialogue, peaceful solutions and respect of sovereignty of nations and international agreements.

Arab leaders on Thursday reiterated calls for the "immediate" withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from the Gaza Strip, paving the way for the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid there.

This came in the final communique of a pan-Arab summit in the Bahraini capital.

This includes the release of Palestinian hostages and the complete halt of all Israeli military operations against the Palestinians, the statement underlined, citing the "Palestinian cause" would remain the core concern of the wider Arab region until Palestinian statehood aspirations come to fruition, based on 1967 border lines.

It ramped up pressure on the international community to commit to relevant United Nations conventions, which urge Israeli occupation forces to cease their "illegitimate practices" that constitute a "flagrant violation" of humanitarian laws and principles, it added.

The statement called on the international community to take "effective and concrete" measures aiming to put an end to Israeli occupation of Arab lands, which includes a complete halt to growing Israeli settlements on Palestinian territories, while stressing the two-state solution as the only way out of the conflict.

Furthermore, the final communique or Bahrain Declaration urged the deployment of UN forces in occupied Palestinian territories until the bi-state solution is put in place, underlining time-tabled negotiations for a Palestinian state.

The Bahrain Declaration stressed commitment to ensuring maritime shipping in the Red Sea, Bahr Al-Arab, Gulf of Oman and Arab Gulf.

Elsewhere in the region, the statement expressed growing Arab concerns over the worsening humanitarian conditions in Sudan, saying the situation there is detrimental to regional peace and security, calling on the African nation's warring parties to ramp up dialogue in a bid to end the unrest there.

The statement addressed a number of Arab nations mired in unrest, including Libya, Lebanon and Yemen, amongst others, once again calling for more dialogue to resolve the conflicts in these countries, saying the peace and security of these Arab nations is inextricably linked to the region's prosperity and development as a whole.

Backing counter-terrorism efforts through more cooperation with global bodies and organizations was also mentioned in the statement, in addition to measures aiming to ensure a nuclear-free Middle East, giving Bahrain due credit for hosting the annual Arab summit at such a critical juncture.

Earlier, Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa affirmed the importance of final and just peace as the only option for humanity to prevail in the battle for peace.

This came during his speech as chairman of the 33rd regular session of the Council of the League of Arab States at the summit level, held in Manama.

The Bahraini King welcomed all Arab leaders saying, "We renew with you determination and joint hope for a promising future for our Arab nation, in which we hope for goodness and prosperity for its peoples and the peoples all over the world."

"Our summit today is in the midst of complex regional and international circumstances of devastating wars, painful human tragedies, and threats that affect our nation's identity, security, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity," said the Bahraini King.

"As the risks surrounding our Arab national security continue, the amount of responsibility placed on us to protect our common Arab path is increasing, in order to open a new page of stability and development that brings us closer to our legitimate aspirations as a civilized force capable of understanding the requirements of the era and keeping pace with its progress," he said.

"In light of the denial of the Palestinian People's legitimate rights to security, freedom and self-determination, our need for a joint and urgent Arab and international position that adopts dialogue as its path and collective solidarity to stop the bleeding of wars, is increasing," he stressed.

"As we gather here today for the sake of Palestine, we affirm that the interest of its people is based on their unity as a desired goal. Without a doubt, the establishment of an independent Palestinian state will bring goodness to the entire Arab neighborhood in order to overcome its crises and to join hands for the sake of progressive development construction in support of our Palestinian brothers," he said.

"From this standpoint, the Kingdom of Bahrain is providing a number of initiatives to contribute to serving essential issues that are essential to the stability and development of the region. The first of which, is the call for an international conference for peace in the Middle East, in addition to supporting the full recognition of the State of Palestine and acceptance of its membership in the United Nations.

Also, to come up with a special proposal to provide educational and health services to those affected by conflicts in the region, and an initiative concerned with developing Arab cooperation in the field of financial technology and digital transformation. We look forward to achieving all of this through joint Arab action channels and international partnerships," he added.

He expressed his proudest to receive chairmanship of the Summit after the Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, and expressed appreciation for his effort in the 32nd summit with the support of the Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah headed the Kuwaiti delegation participating in the summit.

OFW remittances

Continued from Page 1

Of the total remittances from the Middle East, which reached \$1.41 billion, 95.24 percent came from Filipino workers in the Gulf countries. Notably, remittances from the Gulf countries increased by 4.32 percent in 2023, reaching \$5.599 billion compared to \$5.367 billion in 2022.

Moody's affirms

Continued from Page 1

Moody's expects Kuwait's government financial assets (GFA) to remain very large over the coming years. Moody's estimates that the country's GFA, which mainly comprise assets in the Future Generations Fund (FGF), exceeded 400% of GDP at the end of 2023 – among the highest across rated sovereigns. Since there is no mechanism to transfer funds or income from FGF into the government's budget or the General Reserve Fund (GRF, the government's treasury account), Moody's expects the size of FGF will continue to grow in tandem with global asset prices.

At the same time, Kuwait's debt burden is extraordinarily low, in part due to the expiration of the previous public debt law in 2017 preventing debt issuance despite some years of sizeable deficits since then. Government debt was less than 3% of GDP as of the end of fiscal 2023 (ending March 2024), which is among the very lowest globally and also results in very strong debt affordability. Moody's assumes that a new law allowing the government to incur new debt will eventually be passed, which will mean a higher debt burden based on the rating agency's fiscal deficit forecasts of 4-7% of GDP over fiscal years 2024-27. That said, the debt burden will remain low and Kuwait's net asset position will remain very large in the coming years.

Kuwait's very large fiscal buffers preserve macroeconomic and external stability. Moody's estimates that Kuwait runs a very large net international investment position because of FGF. The very sizeable stock of foreign assets which also includes foreign exchange reserves at the Central Bank of Kuwait significantly lowers external vulnerability risk by supporting the credibility of Kuwait's currency basket peg and deterring speculation against the Kuwaiti dinar, even during periods of lower oil prices. In turn, the monetary policy regime – with the currency as the nominal anchor – has been effective in maintaining price stability and limiting inflation volatility.

Counterbalancing these credit strengths, Kuwait is one of the sovereigns most dependent on the hydrocarbon sector. Hydrocarbons account for more than 90% of the country's exports and government revenue, exposing it to fluctuations in oil prices and long-term carbon transition. There has been limited progress in economic and fiscal diversification away from hydrocarbons in large part due to an unproductive relationship between the government and parliament that has thus far impeded reforms.

Rationale for the stable outlook
The stable outlook reflects balanced risks to the rating.

On the upside, material progress in economic and fiscal reforms (not currently factored into Moody's baseline assumptions) can have a ripple effect through the economy, raising economic competitiveness from a low base and incentivising domestic and foreign private investment. Faster implementation of projects can also encourage economic diversification, particularly in industries where Kuwait has demonstrated some potential such as transport and logistics, downstream petrochemicals, data centres, and solar and wind energy. The temporary suspension of parliament provides a window for the government to push through credit-enhancing reforms given the institutional impediments Kuwait has faced, albeit with a risk of undermining the credibility of the country's institutional and governance framework if not used effectively.

On the downside, weakness in global demand or accelerating momentum in carbon transition weighing on oil prices and oil production in Kuwait would weaken the government's credit profile over time in the absence of fiscal and economic reforms, despite large fiscal buffers.

AU organizes forum on holistic learning; prioritizes edu quality

Dr Zaabalawi stresses importance of vision, student participation

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: The Australian University of Kuwait recently organized the Forum for Holistic Approaches to Learning and Educational Explorations under the theme 'Quality of Education... a High Priority for Development', reports Al-Jarida daily.

This forum aimed to discuss the development of a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning, integrating academic and social aspects to enhance human capital development and create an integrated educational system. Held at the university's headquarters in the Mishref area, the forum explored teaching methods contributing to economic productivity and sustainable goals for individual and societal well-being.

Rola Ismail, the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning at the Australian University, highlighted the crucial role of education in national development.

Despite Kuwait's substantial investment of \$10 billion in education, representing 3 percent of the national product, international statistics rank Kuwait 118th globally in terms of education quality.

Ismail emphasized the social responsibility of holding the conference annually to provide recommendations to the government for improving education quality in schools and universities, fostering cooperation between the education sector and the labor market, and contributing to Kuwait Vision 2035.

Quality

Dr. Issam Zaabalawi, the President of the Australian University of Kuwait, opened the forum and discussed various aspects related to education quality and its developmental approach, emphasizing the importance of vision, student participation, and connection to education quality.

Dr. Israa Al-Issa, a faculty member at Kuwait University's College of Engineering and Petroleum, shared insights from the "From Here We Sail to Education" initiative. She emphasized the broader goals of education beyond just enriching the labor market, focusing on instilling values, patriotism, identity, and humanity, particularly in the post-pandemic and crisis contexts.

Abdulaziz Al Roumi, the Executive Director of the Human Resources Group at Boubyan Bank, addressed the future and challenges faced by recent graduates of national cadres. He shared the bank's 13-year experience in preparing recent graduates for employment opportunities, aligning their skills with the work environment, and fostering career development even if they do not work directly at the bank.

The discussions at the forum underscored the multifaceted nature of education and its pivotal role in national development, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach to teaching and learning that integrates academic excellence with social and personal development.

Dhman signs MoU with Austria's OEKB

KUWAIT CITY, May 16, (KUNA): Arab Investment & Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (Dhman) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Austria's National Export Guarantee Agency (OEKB) to boost trade and investment insurance services between Arab countries and Austria.

The MoU was signed in the Norwegian capital, Oslo on the sidelines of the Berne Union meetings, by Hassan Hamdan, Director of Dhman's Operations, and on behalf of OeKB both Markus Hoskovec, OeKB's Director-General, and Gerhard Kinzelberger, OeKB's Senior Director.

On this occasion, DAHMAN Secretary-General Ahmad Abdullah Al-Sabeeh said in a press statement Thursday that the signing of the MoU with the Austrian group, which specializes in financial and information services and export finance with estimated operations of about 29 billion euros, would promote Arab-Austrian cooperation.

He added that this cooperation would also lead to creating major opportunities to improve investment and trade relations between the two sides thanks to their varied productive and trade structures.

Based in Kuwait, the Arab Investment & Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (Dhman) was established in 1974. It comprises members all Arab countries and four joint Arab financial institutions.



The regional office of the International Organization for Science and Technology (MELSET Asia) has announced the results of the 11th annual Kuwait School Competition in Electrical Wiring, held recently in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, reports Al-Jarida daily. Seven middle schools participated in the competition, represented by 21 students and 7 trainers. According to Dawoud Al-Ahmad, the regional director of the MLS Asia office, the team from Suhail bin Amr Al-Qurashi School,

consisting of Mahdi Al-Bathir, Abdulaziz Al-Bishr, and Omar Al-Azmi, secured first place. Second place was claimed by Hussein Al-Muwail, Ahmed Al-Salem, and Ali Al-Shehab from Saif Al-Dawla School. Badr Al-Hammadi, Khalifa Bugis, and Abdul Wahab Al-Ahmad from Ibn Al-Nafis School secured third place. Al-Ahmad highlighted that the competition comprised various stages, including competitive rounds, practical workshops, scientific lectures, and training programs.

Al-Abduljader proposes ground car parking for PACI visitors

Critical discussions await as MC gears up for 19th session

By Inass Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: The Municipal Council will hold its 19th regular session for the second round on Monday, under the chairmanship of Abdullah Al-Mahri.

The session will commence with the procedures for welcoming the elected members of the council who will win the supplementary election for the 13th legislative term in the sixth and ninth districts on Saturday. The two winning members will be sworn in, followed by the election of one of them to the Ahmadi, Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Farwaniya and Jahra governorate committees; and the other will be elected to the main municipal council committees, which include the technical, legal, financial and land liberation committees.

The council will also discuss the executive branch's responses to the members, including the response to the question submitted by Vice President of the council Khaled Al-Mutairi regarding the parking of heavy vehicles and trucks in residential areas.

In addition, council member Dr. Hassan Kamal submitted a question regarding studies and approvals for the implementation of entrances and exits in Sabah Al-Salem.

The council will also deliberate on the proposal of members Saud Al-Kandari and Fahid Al-Muwaizri to reconsider the names of certain cities and regions affiliated with the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW).

Other matters to be discussed include a citizen's request to amend the council's decision to operate a historic hotel or Kuwaiti restaurant in an old Kuwaiti house in Salmiya, as well as the Ministry of Social Affairs' request to allocate a bank site in Mishref.

Several proposals have been submitted by the council members. Abdullatif Al-Daei submitted two proposals: one regarding the study of rain torrents before allocating new cities, particularly residential ones, and another regarding the temporary allocation of a walkway in Kaifan.

The proposal of Abdullah Al-Enezi to open an entrance and exit to the Teachers Association branch in Mangaf along Fahaheel Expressway will also be considered.

Fahad MUSAED Al-Abd Al-Jader submitted two proposals: first is on amending the fees outlined in Temporary Exhibitions Regulations No. 930/2019; while the second concerns the parking lot across the Public Authority for Civil Information.

Meanwhile, Municipal Council member Fahd Al-Abduljader has proposed allocating the square opposite the Public Authority for Civil Information as surface parking to address the parking difficulties faced by visitors to PACI offices in South Surra, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In his proposal, Al-Abduljader highlighted the challenges visitors encounter due to the lack of asphalt paving in the dirt yards used for parking, especially during rainy days when the open areas become muddy and difficult to navigate. Additionally, these open spaces suffer from cracking and potholes.

Al-Abduljader emphasized that the current parking situation lacks spaces for people with special needs and is insufficient to accommodate the high volume of visitors, as the Authority serves citizens and residents from all governorates throughout the day. He noted that the building holds cultural significance for Kuwait, being a destination for everyone living in the country.

Al-Omar eyes smart gov't system dev for business environ

KUWAIT CITY, May 16, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Commerce and Industry, and Minister of State for Communication Affairs Omar Al-Omar said Wednesday that developing smart government system to improve business environment and attract investments is one of the ministry's priorities.

Speaking in a statement following taking constitutional oath earlier in the day, the minister said His Highness the Amir's confidence put him in a great responsibility in front of challenges facing communications, and industry and commerce sectors.

The ministry will pay much attention to enhancing business environment and communication, and developing the smart map of government services, he noted.

Al-Omar called for cooperation to make desired accomplishments in terms of implementing Kuwait's economic vision.

The minister finally thanked His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah for this confidence.



Al-Qabas photo
Sheikha Suhaila with her award.

UN envoy ...

Sheikha Suhaila honored

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: Sheikha Suhaila Fahad Al-Malik Al-Sabah has expressed her deep pride upon being bestowed with the prestigious title of "United Nations Ambassador for Community Partnership" by the Regional Network for Social Responsibility, reports Al-Qabas daily.

This recognition acknowledges her significant contributions to advancing partnership and community responsibility, both locally and within the Arab region.

In her remarks to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Wednesday, Sheikha Suhaila conveyed her heartfelt gratitude to the network for selecting her as an international ambassador for community partnership.

She emphasized the honor bestowed upon her and expressed her aspirations to leverage this esteemed position to foster positive practices that reinforce societal responsibility through collaboration with governmental, private, and non-governmental entities.

She highlighted the pivotal role of the United Nations Ambassador for Community Partnership in facilitating communication and cooperation among various stakeholders, including local communities, NGOs, the private sector, and government agencies.

Sheikha Suhaila emphasized the ambassador's responsibility in providing support for implementing projects and initiatives aimed at enhancing living standards in local communities, such as those focused on education, health, and the environment.

The official investiture ceremony for Sheikha Suhaila took place during the Eighth Partnership and Social Responsibility Conference and Award for Islamic Financial Institutions and Banks in 2024, held under the auspices of Dr. Abdullah Al-Maatoouq, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the International Islamic Charitable Organization, in Kuwait.

To address these issues, Al-Abduljader proposed that the municipality, in coordination with the Ministry of Public Works, undertake the task of asphalt paving, and dividing the square opposite the Authority's building to create a functional parking area for visitors. This initiative aims to enhance accessibility, alleviate parking congestion, and improve the overall experience for individuals accessing the Authority's services.

World News Roundup

Europe

'Lone wolf charged in Fico shooting': The Slovak interior minister said Thursday that a "lone wolf" has been charged in the shooting that seriously wounded Prime Minister **Robert Fico** and prompted soul-searching among leaders in the deeply divided society.

Fico was in serious but stable condition Thursday, a hospital official said, after the populist leader was hit multiple times in an attempt on his life that shook the small country and reverberated across the continent weeks before European elections.

The attempted assassination has shocked the small central European nation, with many blaming the attack in part on extreme political polarization that has divided the country.

Interior Minister Matus Sutaj Estok said Wednesday that an initial investigation found "a clear political motivation" behind the attack on Fico while he was attending a government meeting in a former coal mining town. However, he said Thursday that the suspect charged was a lone wolf who "did not belong to any political groups."



Fico

The minister did not specify what the motivation was. Fico has long been a divisive figure in Slovakia and beyond, and his return to power last year on a pro-Russian, anti-American message led to even greater worries among fellow European Union members that he would abandon his country's pro-Western course.

The attempt on Fico's life came at a time of high division in Slovakia, as thousands of demonstrators have repeatedly rallied in the capital and around the country to protest his policies.

It also comes just ahead of June elections for the European Parliament. (AP)



Labour unveils pledges to voters: Britain's still-undeclared election campaign stepped up a gear on Thursday when opposition Labour Party leader Keir Starmer announced the key pledges that he hopes will make him the UK's next prime minister later this year.

The center-left party is focusing on economic stability, security, health and education as it tries to win over disillusioned voters and regain power after 14 years in opposition.

Among Starmer's six promises are restoring economic stability after years of soaring inflation and high mortgage rates, establishing a publicly owned green-energy company and toughening border controls. Labour also says it will cut waiting times for treatment in the state-funded National Health Service, recruit more police officers to curb low-level crime that blights neighborhoods and hire thousands of new teachers.

Money for the pledges will come from modest revenue-raising measures including a windfall tax on oil and gas companies and an end to tax breaks for private schools. At a launch event in Essex, an electoral bellwether county east of London, Starmer said the promises were "our down-payment on change" that would take a decade to implement. (AP)



'Divisive media bill unacceptable': A controversial media bill passed this week by Georgia's parliament is "unacceptable" and will be vetoed, President Salome Zourabichvili said Thursday, reaffirming her opposition to a measure that critics say is a threat to free speech.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Zourabichvili harshly criticized the ruling Georgian Dream party for pushing the bill that also is widely seen as a threat to Georgia's aspirations to join the European Union.

The bill, passed Tuesday, requires media and nongovernmental organizations and other nonprofit groups to register as "pursuing the interests of a foreign power" if they receive more than 20% of their funding from abroad.

The government says the bill is needed to stem what it deems to be harmful foreign actors trying to destabilize politics in the South Caucasus nation of 3.7 million people.

She reaffirmed her intention to veto it because it "goes directly against the spirit or the letter of EU recommendations." (AP)



Wilders, leaders agree on deal: Geert Wilders and three other party leaders agreed on a coalition deal early Thursday that veers the Netherlands toward the hard right, capping a half year of tumultuous negotiations that still left it unclear who would become prime minister.

The "Hope, courage and pride" agreement introduces strict measures on asylum seekers, scraps family reunification for refugees and seeks to reduce the number of international students studying in the country.

"Deport people without a valid residence permit as much as possible, even forcibly," the 26-page document says.

"We are writing history today," Wilders proclaimed, saying he had made sure the three other coalition parties, including the one of outgoing Prime Minister Mark Rutte, had accepted the core of his program. (AP)



Violence rages in New Caledonia: Violence raged across New Caledonia for the third consecutive day on Thursday, hours after France imposed a state of emergency in the French Pacific territory, boosting security forces' powers to quell deadly unrest in the archipelago where some residents have long sought to break free from France.

French authorities in New Caledonia and the interior ministry in Paris reported that five people, including two police officers, have been killed in the violence after protests earlier this week over voting reforms pushed by President Emmanuel Macron's government turned deadly.

At least 60 members of the security forces were injured and 214 people were arrested in the Thursday's clashes with police, arson and looting, according to the territory's top French official, High Commissioner Louis Le Franc. (AP)



Germany's parliament lifts immunity: German lawmakers on Thursday lifted the immunity from prosecution of one of the far-right Alternative for Germany party's top candidates in the upcoming European Parliament election as he faces an investigation.

The German parliament's lower house, or Bundestag, voted to lift Petr Bystron's immunity to clear the way for searches in connection with the investigation. Lawmakers from Alternative for Germany, or AfD, abstained.

Prosecutors in Munich said they were investigating a member of the Bundestag on an "initial suspicion" of corruption and money laundering, without offering more details. They would not identify the lawmaker, but German news agency dpa and other media reported that it was Bystron.

Prosecutors said properties in Berlin, Bavaria and on the Spanish island of Mallorca were being searched Thursday and documents and other evidence seized. (AP)



Ukraine checks Russia's offensive: Ukrainian units locked in street battles with the Kremlin's forces in a key northeastern Ukraine town have halted the Russian advance, military officials in Kyiv claimed Thursday, though a senior Moscow official said the frontline push had enough resources to keep going.

Russian attempts to establish a foothold in the town of Vovchansk, which is among the largest towns in Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region with a prewar population of 17,000, "have been foiled," Ukraine's general staff said in a midday report.

It was not possible to independently verify the claim.

Vovchansk, located just 5 kilometers (3 miles) from the Russian border, has been a hotspot in the fighting in recent days. Russia launched an offensive in the Kharkiv area late last week, significantly adding to the pressure on Ukraine's outnumbered and outgunned forces which are waiting for delayed deliveries of crucial weapons and ammunition from Western partners. (AP)



Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister of Slovakia Robert Kalinak speaks during a joint press conference with Slovakia's Interior Minister Matus Sutaj Estok, (right), at the government headquarters in Bratislava, Slovakia on May 16. Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico was in serious but stable condition Thursday, a hospital official said, after the populist leader was shot multiple times in an assassination attempt that shook the small country and reverberated across the continent weeks before European elections. (AP)

Politics

Commission faces uncertain future

WH plans changes to asylum system

WASHINGTON, May 16, (AP) — The Biden administration is preparing more changes to the nation's asylum system meant to speed up processing and potential removal of migrants who continue to arrive at the southern border, an interim step as President Joe Biden continues to mull a broader executive order to crack down on border crossings that may come later this year.

The change under consideration would allow certain migrants who are arriving at the border now to be processed first through the asylum system rather than going to the back of the line, according to four people familiar with the proposal. The people were granted anonymity to speak about an administration policy before it is made final.

Process

The announcement, expected to come from the Department of Homeland Security and the Justice Department, could come as early as Thursday, although the people cautioned that it could be delayed. The broader goal of the administration with this change is to process recent arrivals swiftly, within six months, rather than the numerous years it would take under the current backlog in the nation's asylum system.

The new rules would apply to people who cross between ports of entry and turn themselves in to immigration authorities.

The Biden administration is taking increasingly restrictive measures to dissuade people from coming to the US-Mexico border. Right now, when a migrant arrives, particularly a family, they are almost always released into the country where they wait out their asylum court dates in a process that takes years. By quickly processing migrants who have just arrived, it could stop others from trying to make the trip.

A record 3 million cases right now are clogging the nation's immigration court. The average caseload for a judge is 5,000 and these changes won't help diminish their workload. There are roughly 600 judges.

The administration has tried for years to move more new arrivals to the front of the line for asylum decisions,

hoping to deport those whose claims are denied within months instead of years. Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump administrations also tried to accelerate the process, going back to 2014. In 2022, the Biden administration introduced a plan to have asylum officers, not immigration judges, decide a limited number of family claims in nine cities.

Michael Knowles, spokesman for the National Citizenship and Immigration Services Council, a union that represents asylum officers, said in a February interview that the 2022 plan was "a very important program that got very little support."

Last year, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement began an effort in 45 cities to speed up initial asylum screenings for families and deport those who fail within a month. ICE has not released data on how many families have gone through the expedited screenings and how many have been deported.

A bipartisan border agreement drafted by three senators and endorsed by Biden earlier this year offered funding for 100 new immigration judges and aides. But that legislation never advanced after Trump, the presumptive GOP presidential nominee, urged fellow Republicans to kill the deal.

Meanwhile, advocates for immigrants have generally expressed concern about changes that would expedite already-fraught proceedings for migrants, who arrive at the U.S. border after what is often a harrowing journey north.

Also:

PHOENIX: The nonpartisan Commission on Presidential Debates, which has planned presidential faceoffs in every election since 1988, has an uncertain future after President Joe Biden and former President **Donald Trump** struck an agreement to meet on their own.

The Biden and Trump campaigns announced a deal Wednesday to meet for debates in June on CNN and September on ABC. Just a day earlier, **Frankahrenkopf**, chair of the Com-

mission on Presidential Debates, had sounded optimistic that the candidates would eventually come around to accepting the commission's debates.

"There's no way you can force anyone to debate," Fahrenkopf said in a virtual meeting of supporters of No Labels, which has continued as an advocacy group after it abandoned plans for a third-party presidential ticket. But he noted candidates have repeatedly toyed with skipping debates or finding alternatives before eventually showing up, though one was canceled in 2020 when Trump refused to appear virtually after he contracted COVID-19.

In reaching an agreement on their own, **Pres Biden** and Trump sidlined a commission that aims to set neutral rules and provide a forum that's simultaneously broadcast on all major networks.

The commission suggested in a statement Wednesday that it would not immediately let go of its plans.

The commission was "established in 1987 specifically to ensure that such debates reliably take place and reach the widest television, radio and streaming audience," the statement said. "Our 2024 sites, all locations of higher learning, are prepared to host debates on dates chosen to accommodate early voters. We will continue to be ready to execute this plan."

Representatives for the commission did not respond to requests for further comment.

The Biden and Trump campaigns had both been critical of the commission's plans, including the dates it set in September and October, after voters in many states will have already started casting ballots by mail.

Fahrenkopf on Tuesday said he had not spoken to representatives for either Biden or Trump. All the while, the campaigns had closed in on their own agreements. But he defended the importance of television debates in general. "You learn a lot about the personality of the candidate," Fahrenkopf said. "Not only where they stand on the issues but how they conduct themselves and how you feel about how they conduct themselves."



US President Joe Biden (left), walks off of the stage with National Fraternal Order of Police President Patrick Yoes, during a memorial service to honor law enforcement officers who've lost their lives in the past year, during National Police Week ceremonies at the Capitol in Washington, on May 15. (AP)



Menendez



Elrod

North America

3 dead in plane crash: Three people are dead after a small plane crashed on Wednesday in Williamson County, local officials confirmed.

Williamson County Chief Deputy **Mark Elrod** told reporters that the plane had left Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and was headed to Louisville, Kentucky, but crashed in Tennessee near Leiper's Fork, about 30 miles (48.28 kilometers) south of Nashville, around noon local time.

"It does appear that the plane did break up in the air," Elrod said.

Elrod added that the debris field is more than a mile long, but no structures have been reported damaged. The names of the victims have not been released.

Jill Burgin, spokeswoman for the Williamson County Emergency Management Agency, said they received a 911 call at about 12:05 p.m.

"He just said a possible plane crash, but he didn't have a lot of details," Burgin told reporters during Wednesday's news conference. "He just heard a sound and saw debris so that's all the information he gave." (AP)



'Driver smoked pot oil': A man with a long record of dangerous driving told investigators he smoked marijuana oil and took prescription drugs hours before he side-swiped a bus, killing eight Mexican farmworkers and injuring dozens more, according to an arrest report unsealed Wednesday.

Bryan Maclean Howard, 41, pleaded not guilty to driving under the influence-manslaughter and remained jailed without bond for Tuesday's crash. The Florida Highway Patrol says he drove his 2001 Ford pickup into the center line on a two-lane road and struck the bus, causing it to veer off the road, strike a tree and flip over.

The Mexican consulate in Orlando was working to support the victims, meeting with some at a hotel in Gainesville. Many were taken to AdventHealth Ocala hospital. Juan Sabines, the Mexican consul in Orlando, told Spanish language news media that seven workers, three of whom were in critical condition, remained hospitalized as of Wednesday afternoon. (AP)



Senator's wife blamed: A lawyer for US Sen **Bob Menendez** blamed the politician's wife Wednesday for his legal problems, telling a jury at the start of a corruption trial that the Democrat wasn't aware his spouse

had taken gifts from a trio of businessmen and didn't know about cash and gold bars hidden in a closet at their New Jersey home.

"She kept him in the dark about what she was asking others to give her," defense lawyer Avi Weitzman said, portraying it as

a desperate search for funds from relatives and friends. "She wasn't going to let Bob know that she had financial problems."

Assistant US Attorney Lara Pomerantz told the jury the senator's wife, Nadine Menendez, did play a central role in her husband's corruption, but said he hid behind her while using her as a conduit to the businessmen who delivered bribes. Nadine Menendez is charged in the case as well, but her trial has been postponed until at least July because a recently discovered serious medical condition requires surgery. She has pleaded not guilty. The couple began dating in early 2018. They married two years later and moved into her Englewood Cliffs home. (AP)



Wildfire threat eases: The threat from a wildfire near Canada's oil sands hub of Fort McMurray, Alberta, appeared to be easing on Wednesday, a day after it forced thousands of residents to evacuate and stirred memories of a damaging blaze nearly a decade earlier.

Favorable winds were expected to push the fire away from the city of about 68,000 in northwest Canada, where many residents earn a paycheck from the nearby oil industry. The Fort McMurray fire comes as Canada is just entering a new fire season after last year's record number of wildfires sent choking smoke across parts of the US and forced more than 235,000 Canadians to evacuate their communities. (AP)



Britain's Queen Camilla meets members of the audience as she makes a surprise appearance at the opening session of the Charleston Festival in Charleston, England, on May 16. The Queen joins this year's opening event called the 'Power of Reading', aiming to celebrate the power of books and reading for children and young people. (AP)

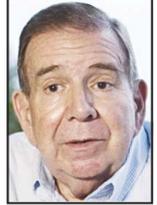
Lat/Am

'Release journalist'

Venezuela's oppn figure campaigns for González

SABANA DE MENDOZA, Venezuela, May 16, (Agencies): At an intersection packed in four directions, rallygoers scream and light up cellphones in the evening as Venezuelan opposition figure María Corina Machado climbs onto a flatbed truck like a presidential candidate.

She has been barred from the July 28 election. Still, she crisscrosses the country, shaking hands, taking selfies, blowing kisses and promising the defeat of President Nicolás Maduro - all as a surrogate for a quiet former diplomat who has not yet begun to campaign.



González

"María Corina! María Corina!" the people yell, sometimes in unison, in the small Andean foothill town of Sabana de Mendoza. Their cheers are deafening.

Machado's challenge is whether she can translate her fame and charisma into votes for Edmundo González Urrutia, who was chosen by the chief opposition coalition after Machado was unable to overcome a ruling blocking her candidacy.

"I don't remember what his name is," seamstress Danis Cegarra, 48, said of González while she waited with her two children for Machado. "Although we don't know much about him, we are going to support him. Well, I am going to support him, because I want a change above all because I have children."

González is the third candidate that the Unity Platform opposition coalition has promoted as its own this year.

Machado, a former lawmaker, entered 2024 as the group's candidate after easily winning an October presidential primary, but a top court loyal to Venezuela's ruling party affirmed an administrative decision to ban her from office. She appointed a substitute in March, former academic Corina Yoris, who also was barred. Four days later, the coalition picked González.

Free-market

Machado, a free-market proponent who has been campaigning for more than a year, is now introduced as "opposition leader" instead of candidate at her rallies. González, 74, has yet to step onto a stage with her, or alone.

González began his career as an aide to Venezuela's ambassador in the US in the late 1970s. He had postings in Belgium and El Salvador and served as Caracas' ambassador to Algeria.

In Sabana de Mendoza, about two and half hours after Machado was scheduled to appear on a recent weekday, she delivered a fiery 20-minute, yes-we-can speech from the truck's roof. She spent one of those minutes talking about González.

Oppn leader son-in-law pleads guilty: The son-in-law of a prominent Venezuelan opposition leader has pleaded guilty to money laundering charges for his role in a vast bribery conspiracy to siphon \$1.2 billion from the state-owned oil company.

As part of his plea agreement announced Tuesday in federal court in Miami, Fernando Vuteff admitted to earning at least \$4.1 million from a Spanish real estate company and financial institutions in Europe and Malta used to launder money on behalf of several Venezuelan government insiders.

Brian H. Bieber, an attorney for Vuteff, told The Associated Press that his client "accepted full responsibility for his conduct and the role he played in this case" but declined to comment further.

Cuba removed from 'list': Secretary of State Antony Blinken removed Cuba Wednesday from the State Department's short list of countries that it deems less than fully cooperative against violent groups.

In a statement, the State Department said Blinken had found that Cuban and U.S. law enforcement were again working together on counterterrorism and other efforts.

The State Department had cited Cuba as a "not fully cooperating country" in 2022, saying that Cuba had refused to engage with Colombia in the extradition of members of the National Liberation Army group.

Guatemala orders release of journo: A Guatemalan court ordered the release Wednesday of journalist José Rubén Zamora, jailed for nearly two years on money laundering charges.

Zamora, the 67-year-old founder of El Periodico newspaper, was sentenced to six years in prison last June for alleged money laundering. But that conviction and sentence were overturned by another court and a new trial ordered.

For nearly two years, he has been kept in jail. But on Wednesday, a judge ruled that there was no longer justification to keep him in jail, noting that he was not considered a flight risk or a threat to the investigation. Zamora will spend the rest of his time before a new trial on a conditional release.

He was ordered to post a bond of nearly \$4,800.

'Child migration up 40%': Child migration through Panama's dangerous Darien Gap is up 40% so far this year, according to a report released Wednesday by the U.N. children's agency.

UNICEF said an estimated 30,000 children under age 18 have crossed the jungle-clad trail between Colombia and Panama, and some have died making the trip. The report says a total of 139,000 migrants of all ages have made the crossing in the same period.

"Many children have died on this dangerous and arduous trip," said Ted Chaiban, deputy executive director of UNICEF. "Given that children make up one-fifth of those making this journey, UNICEF's presence and help is more important than ever."

Xi sends condolences to Lula: Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday extended his condolences to Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva over the deadly heavy rains in Brazil's Rio Grande do Sul state.

In his message, Xi said he was shocked to learn that severe rainstorms hit Brazil's Rio Grande do Sul state, causing heavy casualties and property losses.

On behalf of the Chinese government and people, Xi mourned for the victims and expressed his sincere condolences to the bereaved families and people in the affected areas. He also wished the injured a speedy recovery.

Xi said he believes that the disaster-stricken areas and people in Brazil will be able to overcome difficulties and rebuild their homes at an early date.



Chinese President Xi Jinping, (left), and Russian President Vladimir Putin review the honor guard during an official welcome ceremony in Beijing, China on May 16. (AP)

Asia

Japan, US to develop hypersonic missile interceptor

China and Russia reaffirm partnership

BEIJING, May 16, (AP) - Russian President Vladimir Putin thanked Chinese leader Xi Jinping for his effort to resolve the Ukraine conflict at a Beijing summit Thursday, where the two leaders reaffirmed a "no-limits" partnership that has grown deeper as both countries face deepening tensions with the west.

Putin's two-day state visit to one of his strongest allies comes as his country's forces are pressing an offensive in northeastern Ukraine's Kharkiv region in the most significant border incursion since the full-scale invasion began.

The largely symbolic visit stressed partnership between two countries who both face challenges in their relationship with the U.S. and Europe.

"Both sides want to show that despite what is happening globally, despite the pressure that both sides are facing from the U.S., both sides are not about to turn their backs on each other anytime soon," said Hoo Tiang Boon, a professor who studies Chinese foreign policy at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University.

Influence

While both leaders said they were seeking an end to the war in Ukraine, they offered no new specifics in their public remarks Thursday afternoon. China has significant influence as a key supporter of Russia's invasion.

The country claims to take a neutral position in the conflict, but it has backed Moscow's contentions that Russia was provoked into attacking Ukraine by the West, and continues to supply Russia with key components that Moscow needs for its productions of weapons.

China proposed a broadly worded peace plan in 2023, but it was rejected by both Ukraine and the West for failing to call for Russia to leave occupied parts of Ukraine.

"China hopes for the early return of Europe to peace and stability and will continue to play a constructive role toward this," Xi said, speaking alongside Putin.

His words were an echo of what China said last year when it first offered a broad plan for peace outlining general principles for ending the war in Ukraine.

Putin said he will inform the Chinese leader in detail about "the situation in Ukraine," and said "we appreciate the initiative of our Chinese colleagues and friends to regulate the situation." He added that the two

planned to engage in further foreign policy discussions at an informal meeting later Thursday.

After Russia's newest offensive in Ukraine last week, the 2-year-old war has entered a critical stage, as Ukraine's depleted military waits for new supplies of anti-aircraft missiles and artillery shells from the United States after months of delay.

Before their remarks, the two leaders signed a joint statement on deepening the comprehensive strategic partnership between their two nations on their 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties, after their initial meeting. Xi said China and Russia will continue to uphold a position of non-alliance and non-confrontation.

China, Cambodia begin drills:

Cambodia and China began 15-day military exercises on Thursday as questions grow about Beijing's increasing influence in the Southeast Asian nation.

About 1,315 Cambodian military personnel and 760 Chinese are participating in the regular "Golden Dragon" ground and sea maneuvers, including three Chinese and 11 Cambodian ships.

As the first stage of the exercises got underway at a Cambodian military base with a forested and mountainous training area about 90 kilometers (55 miles) northwest of Phnom Penh, Cambodian army commander in chief Gen. Vong Pisen thanked China for providing new equipment and helping to upgrade military facilities, including the Ream Naval Base.

The United States and others have worried that China's involvement in building a new pier at the Ream base could lead to it becoming a new outpost for the Chinese navy at a strategically important location on the Gulf of Thailand. As the Golden Dragon exercises began, two Chinese warships had been docked at the pier for more than five months, stoking those concerns.

Activists decide not to sail: About 100 Filipino activists on wooden boats have decided not to sail closer to a fiercely disputed shoal in the South China Sea on Thursday to avoid a confrontation with dozens of Chinese coast guard and suspected militia ships guarding the area.

Accompanied by journalists on four boats, the activists will distribute food packs and fuel to Filipino fishermen

about 58 nautical miles (107 kilometers) southeast of Scarborough Shoal and then sail back home, Emman Hizon and other organizers said.

Chinese and Philippine coast guard and accompanying ships have had a series of increasingly hostile territorial faceoffs at Scarborough, which is surrounded by the Chinese coast guard, and at Philippine-occupied Second Thomas Shoal since last year.

Japan, US sign agreement: Japan and the United States on Wednesday signed an arrangement to jointly develop a new type of missile defense system as the allies seek to defend against the growing threat of hypersonic weapons, which are possessed by China and Russia and being tested by North Korea.

The project was initially agreed between Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and U.S. President Joe Biden at their summit last August and reaffirmed between the leaders during Kishida's April visit to Washington. The Glide Sphere Interceptor is planned for deployment by the mid-2030s.

Wednesday's agreement determines the allocation of responsibility and decision-making process, a first major step in the project, Japanese defense ministry officials said. They hope to decide on Japanese contractors and start the development process by March 2025.

WH to send 'delegation': The White House will send an unofficial delegation to Taiwan this weekend for the inauguration of the island's democratically elected president, the Biden administration announced Wednesday, in a move that is certain to upset China but unlikely to draw excessive responses from Beijing as the two countries try to stabilize relations.

A senior White House official said the move is in line with longstanding U.S. practice to send the delegation - which includes two former senior officials and a scholar - to the inauguration ceremony Monday. Lai Ching-te of the Democratic Progressive Party will take office, succeeding Tsai Ing-wen of the same party.

Beijing, which sees Taiwan as part of Chinese territory and vows to seize the island by force if necessary to achieve unification, sees Lai as a supporter of Taiwan's independence and has long opposed any official contact between Washington and Taipei.



A base jumper leaps off the Colombo Lotus Tower in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on May 14. Over 10,000 Sri Lankan and international spectators viewed 188 base jumps carried out at the Colombo Lotus Tower between May 12 and 14, said the Lotus Tower Management Company on Wednesday. It was Sri Lanka's highest international base jump event, where people leapt from a height of 350 meters, according to the company. (Xinhua)



Saïed



Burhan

Africa

2 jurnos in Tunisia detention: Two journalists were kept under detention in Tunisia on Wednesday, following a raft of arrests targeting government critics including lawyers and the press that has drawn concern from the country's international allies.

Authorities in the north African country this week unleashed a new campaign of repression against perceived opponents of President Kais Saïed's government. Migration activist Saadia Moshab, France 24 cameraman Hamdi Thili and lawyer Sonia Dahmani were among those detained or arrested in recent days.

Thili was subsequently released without being charged, according to the North Africa Foreign Correspondents' Club.

On Wednesday, radio journalist Borhen Bsaies and opinion columnist Mourad Zeghidi were kept under pre-trial detention four days after they were apprehended. They were accused of violating a cyber-crime law barring fake news and undermining state security.

Bsaies's attorney Nizar Ayed told The Associated Press that his client was questioned for five hours about his Facebook posts and political views but did not offer clear evidence that he had violated the law or made remarks targeting the president. (AP)

'Sudanese trapped in violence': The Sudanese people "are trapped in an inferno of brutal violence" with famine, disease and fighting closing in and no end in sight, the top UN humanitarian official in the war-ravaged country said Wednesday.

Clementine Nkweta-Salami told a UN press conference that "horrific atrocities are being committed with reckless abandon, reports of rape, torture and ethnically motivated violence are streaming in," communities and families have been torn apart, and almost 9 million people have been forced to flee their homes in what is now the world's largest displacement crisis.

Earlier this month, the UN food agency warned Sudan's warring parties that there is a serious risk of widespread starvation and death in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan if they don't allow humanitarian aid into the vast western region - a view echoed Wednesday by Nkweta-Salami.

Sudan plunged into conflict in mid-April 2023, when long-simmering tensions between its military led by Gen Abdel Fattah Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces commanded by Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, broke out into street battles in the capital, Khartoum. (AP)

Nigeria mosque attack kills 8: At least eight worshippers were killed and 16 others

injured early Wednesday morning after a man attacked a mosque with a locally made explosive in northern Nigeria's Kano state, resulting in a fire outbreak, the police said. The suspect, a 38-year-old local resident,

confessed that he attacked the mosque in Kano's remote Gadan village "purely in hostility following (a) prolonged family disagreement," police spokesman Abdullahi Haruna said in a statement on Wednesday.



Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado addresses supporters gathered in Sabana de Mendoza, Venezuela on May 8. Edmundo González Urrutia became the opposition Unity Platform's candidate for president after Machado, who won the opposition's presidential primary in 2023, and her hand-picked alternative were banned from registering for the July 28 election. (AP)

Eight of those injured died later in a hospital, Haruna later told local Channels Television on Thursday. Four children were among the injured worshippers, although it was not clear if any of the children died. (AP)

'Child soldiers used in attacks': An Islamist group operating in Mozambique's northern Cabo Delgado province used boys as young as 13 in attacks on a town last week and residents who were forced to flee the fighting recognized some of the child soldiers as their missing relatives, advocacy group Human Rights Watch said Wednesday.

Al-Shabab, which is affiliated to the Islamic State group, has previously been accused by UN agencies of kidnapping children and using them as soldiers in its insurgency in the region, which began in 2017. A surge of attacks by insurgents in March left at least 70 children missing, according to local authorities and a group of aid agencies.

Witnesses told the rights group that dozens of child soldiers were used in the attacks and were seen carrying AK-style assault rifles and ammunition belts. Two people from the same family said they recognized their 13-year-old nephew among the children.

"I saw him with my own eyes," Abu Rachide, a resident of the town, told Human Rights Watch. He said the boy waved at him but marched on. Rachide's sister said the boy, who went missing earlier in the year, appeared to be taking instructions from older fighters. (AP)

		Change	Closing pts			Change	Closing pts
SAUDI	- TASI	+95.24	12,198.44	DUBAI	- DFMGI	-7.47	4,085.78
JAPAN	- Nikkei 225	+534.53	38,920.26				
PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	+69.57	6,628.20				
EGYPT	- EGX 30	+826.76	26,142.84				
PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	+236.59	74,931.06				

Business



Gulf Insurance Group's financial result of Q1 2024.

GIG reports net profit of KD 10.9 mln for Q1 2024

CEO praises GIG's continued growth & stakeholder support

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: Gulf Insurance Group (GIG) announced a net profit of KD 10.9 million (US\$ 35.6 million), or 38.58 fils per share, for the first quarter period ended March 31, 2024 compared to KD 11.5 million (US\$ 37.2 million), or 40.37 fils per share for the same period last year.

Notwithstanding that the comparative figures for the first quarter of the year 2023 was restated as a result of consolidating the financial information of the subsidiary (GIG Saudi), as it was not consolidated for the same period then ended due to the unavailability of the financial information.

Shareholder equity reached KD 236.2 million (US\$ 767.6 million) as at March 31, 2024, while book value per share reached fils 832.

Insurance revenue reached KD 212.7 million (US\$ 691.3 million) compared to KD 189.2 million (US\$ 614.9 million) recorded for the same period last year.



GIG CEO - Khalid Al Hasan

Net investment income reached KD 19.6 million (US\$ 63.7 million) for the financial period ended March 31, 2024, representing an increase of 63% compared to KD 12 million (US\$ 39.1 million) recorded for the same period last year.

Total assets came to KD 1.198 billion (US\$ 3.89 billion) as at March 31, 2024, compared to KD 1.175 billion (US\$ 3.82 billion) as at December 31, 2023.

Mr. Khaled Saoud Al Hasan, GIG's CEO, said "Our results for the first quarter of 2024 reflect the strength of GIG as a Group, its continuous growth, soundness taking risks thanks to diversified revenue sources and ability to preserve stakeholders' benefits and protect their rights. We endeavor to provide the best insurance services to our valued customers in all markets we operate in (Egypt, Algeria, Turkey, Jordan and GCC) by adopting the necessary strategies which today prioritize digital transformation in our operations, digital distribution of products, digital claims services and other supporting functions that all together strengthen the GIG brand and enable us to focus on shaping a valuable insurance ecosystem for the MENA region."

He added, "We thank our valued customers for these achievements, as well as the unlimited support from our shareholders, namely FAIRFAX, and all honorable board members of the Group. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to our dedicated employees for their sincere efforts and all the concerned authorities in the State of Kuwait for their continuous cooperation to develop the Kuwaiti insurance sector."

CPA organizes 'Identifying the Concerned Market' workshop

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: Kuwait's Competition Protection Agency (CPA) collaborated with other competition agencies to organize a training workshop titled 'Identifying the Concerned Market', reports Al-Jarida daily.

The sessions were conducted by the Public Authority for Competition in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, featuring speakers including Muhammad Al-Mazyad, Director of the Market Studies Unit, Rob Van der Laan, Competition Expert, Reem Al-Suwailam, Senior Specialist in Partnerships and International Relations, and Rahaf Al-Qahtani, Economic Specialist.

The primary objective of this workshop is to promote a culture of competition, enhance collaborative relations among competition agencies, and underscore the significance of bilateral cooperation in implementing competition laws and policies.

By fostering greater understanding and application of regulations, the workshop aims to establish effective cooperation channels, enabling



Photo taken during the workshop.

agencies to stay abreast of rapid developments in the local and global economy.

The CPA plays a vital role in fostering a competitive economic environment grounded in efficiency. By enforcing Competition Protection Laws comprehensively, it strives to ensure equal opportunities across

various sectors and economic entities.

This fosters economic growth and benefits consumers by offering a diverse range of high-quality products at competitive prices. Ultimately, such initiatives contribute to the overall prosperity of the economy and enhance consumer welfare.

Al-Mulhim warns against student housing investments

Kuwaiti investors explore bold real estate ventures in Britain

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: The CEO of Blueprint described the Kuwaiti investor eyeing real estate in Britain as "very bold and adventurous," particularly for venturing into unconventional areas like Aberdeen in northern Scotland, among other British neighborhoods increasingly populated by Kuwaitis. This diversification in geographical spread demonstrates the investor's willingness to explore beyond traditional investment hubs, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Mishal Al-Mulhim, an expert in international investment affairs, emphasized British real estate's appeal as a solid investment asset, often serving as a cornerstone in investors' portfolios due to its global allure and high liquidity.

He noted the robust demand for British real estate, driven by economic stability, job opportunities, and low unemployment, which helps maintain price cohesion.

While investors from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE typically favor traditional areas like Mayfair and Maylebone, Al-Mulhim highlighted Kuwaiti investors' boldness and adventurous spirit, citing their willingness to explore regions like Aberdeen in Scotland.

Entire neighborhoods in Manchester, Cardiff, Milton Keynes, and Brighton are densely populated by Kuwaitis, showcasing Kuwaiti investors' atypical approach and courage in their investment decisions throughout Britain.

Al-Mulhim discussed the diverse range of prices and property sizes available in Britain, catering to various

preferences. He cautioned against investing in student housing properties, citing past negative experiences and the potential for exploitation by developers.

Despite tempting offers, he advised investors to steer clear of such investments due to hidden risks and lack of legal safeguards.

In terms of incentives, Al-Mulhim noted that the British government does not provide specific advantages to real estate investors, unlike some other countries. He emphasized the need for caution and thorough due diligence when considering investment opportunities in the real estate market, particularly in niche sectors like student housing.

Al-Mulhim reviewed several tips for safe real estate investment in Britain, the most prominent of which are:

- Evaluating the property to be purchased before proceeding with it
- Knowing the tax obligations resulting from the property
- Familiarity with the cost of property management and the expenses incurred annually
- Clarifying exit methods
- Paying attention to the inheritance tax and try to avoid it by legal means
- Paying attention to the age of the property stipulated in the contract, to avoid losing its value
- Appointing a lawyer to read and save contracts

GDP growth forecasted to reach 3.5% in FY24/25

Egypt's economy improving with resumed capital inflows and currency devaluation

By National Bank of Kuwait

The economy looks to have turned a corner in recent months following the resumption of capital inflows, the devaluation of the currency and the introduction of measures linked to the IMF program. Inflation also looks to be trending down. GDP growth should accelerate to 3.5% in FY24/25 from an expected 2.5% in the current year, while in the external sector, we see a manageable net financing gap of close to \$10 billion in the next 3 years, benefiting from the Ras El Hekma and other financing deals. Risks to the outlook include regional geopolitical conflict and "higher for longer" interest rates on the downside, while greater than expected reform benefits and lower than expected inflation and interest rates are upside risks.

Positive early signs from reform initiatives

The Egyptian government has embarked on the long-awaited economic reform process, having secured a wave of new investment and loan commitments from the UAE government, the IMF and other international bodies that provide a much stronger financial platform. As part of the upgraded deal with the IMF, the authorities shifted in March to a more free-floating regime for the pound, which has subsequently dropped by 34%.

Stricter fiscal consolidation is on the agenda, with energy subsidies cut and non-tax revenues increasing on the back of a privatization program that appears to be accelerating. Financial transparency has also improved, with the first ever General Government budget produced and more frequent financial reporting on the performance of state-owned enterprises. While it is still too early to judge the success of these initiatives, there are already some promising signs, and the outlook for Egypt's economy is much improved versus six months ago.

Table 1: Key economic indicators

		FY22/23	FY23/24	FY24/25
Nominal GDP	EGP bn	10,377	13,810	16,656
Real GDP	%y/y	3.8	2.5	3.5
Fiscal balance (FY)	% of GDP	-6.0	-4.0*	-8.5
Inflation	%y/y	24.1	36.0	25.0
Current Account	% of GDP	-1.6	-6.26	-2.9

Growth to bottom out and bounce back in FY24/25

Economic growth slowed to 2.5% in 1H FY23/24 from 4.2% in 1H FY22/23, a rate that we see maintained for the full year. This is well down on FY22/23's reading of 3.8% and comes amid tighter monetary policy (an 8% hike in interest rates in March), gradually unwinding import restrictions, high - though moderating - inflation (down to 33% in April) and the weaker pound. Recent policy reforms will help growth bounce back in FY24/25 to the 3.5-4.0% range as inflation cools further, interest rates begin easing (potentially in Q3 2024) and foreign currency liquidity becomes more readily available, helping sectors such as the energy, manufacturing, wholesale & retail trade and the consumer sector, recover. Moreover, the government has said that it is committed to reducing its footprint in key sectors of the economy to enable the private sector to play a greater role in the market.

Investment policies key to finance consumption

Given the importance of imports in Egypt's current account and of consumption for the economy (accounting for more than 90% of GDP), which will take time to shift under a new economic model, it is key that investment inflows (and technological know-how) are maintained to help finance a current account deficit that we expect at around 2-4% of

GDP in the medium term. This will require a business environment more conducive to stimulating foreign investment (both direct and portfolio) across a range of sectors. A favorable regulatory environment built on a solid institutional framework should be a central plank of government FDI and business policy, as well as sound macroeconomic management. A high level of vocational education attainment will also be critical in providing the skilled labor force to realize business ends and compete with other emerging markets.

Regional geopolitics and reform benefits are key risks

Egypt has been sensitive to spillover from a succession of geopolitical confrontations in recent years, from the Russia-Ukraine crisis (impact on tourism) to the conflict in Gaza (refugees) and disruptions to Red Sea shipping (Suez Canal receipts). A global monetary environment of 'higher for longer' interest rates would also adversely affect Egypt, raising external borrowing costs. On the upside, the government's recent commitment to reform and the tenets of the IMF program looks serious and is unlikely to waver over the forecast period. Reforms could yield economic benefits more quickly or more strongly than we expect, boosting economic growth. There is also potential for inflation to fall more rapidly than forecast, allowing interest rates to be cut and growth to accelerate more sharply.

European oil demand expected to improve

Crude oil prices hit nine-week low amid rising US inventories

By KAMCO Invest

Crude oil prices reached the lowest level since mid-March after indicators showed higher inventories in the US and declining war risk premium for supplies from the Middle East region. Moreover, the most recent data for the US labor market reflected the impact of higher-for-longer interest rates after unemployment claims increased. Nevertheless, lower-than-forecast rate cuts during the year is expected to impact oil demand, especially in the US, while the ECB and Bank of England may implement earlier rate cuts. Further pressure on crude oil prices came from a strong USD that hovered around six-month highs against a basket of currencies. On the other hand, the decline in price was partially offset by wildfires in Canada that impacted supplies from the region as it approached the Alberta region.

In the product market, demand for diesel showed signs of weakness, resulting in lower prices. This affected refinery margins that prompted refiners to lower run rates and focus on gasoline and jet fuel production. The decline in diesel prices reflected higher supplies in the last few months anticipating winter demand. But a warmer-than-expected winter in the Northern Hemisphere resulted in higher diesel inventories. In the transport segment, diesel demand in China was affected by growing use of LNG powered trucks, threatening a long-term structural shift for the product. Meanwhile, jet fuel demand also remained uninspiring due to fall in demand from China and the MENA region, partially offset by growth in Eastern and Western Europe, according to data from Bloomberg.

Demand for gasoline is expected to pick up in the US vs. last month on the back of the upcoming holiday travel season with road trips expected to be the highest since 2000. However, this demand is expected to be at its weakest seasonal level since the 2020 pandemic, according to the EIA, indicating economic challenges as well as a rising share of renewable fuels and electric cars that are denting demand for fossil fuels. Meanwhile, oil inventories in the US remained elevated at around the highest level since June-2023 after registering increase in eleven out of the previous fifteen weeks. The higher inventories could also indicate stocking before the driving season.

On the supply side, oil production in the US remained stagnant at 13.1 mb/d for the eighth consecutive week. However, the country saw an increase in drilled-but-uncompleted projects, especially in the shale regions. Fracklog, as the wells are termed, increased for the second consecutive month during April-2024, according to the US EIA. An elevated count shows readiness to increase output in a short time depending on the price of crude oil. On the other hand, speculations on whether OPEC+ would extend the ongoing production cuts beyond June-2024 provided support to oil prices. Oil output from OPEC producers witnessed a marginal decline during April-2024 to reach 26.8 mb/d, according to Bloomberg data.

Oil Prices

Crude oil prices remained subdued and traded around the USD 80/b level after data showed easing oil demand coupled with elevated supplies. Crude oil futures prices declined to reach the lowest level in nine weeks earlier this week also reflecting lower forecast for interest rate cuts this year. Bloomberg data showed WTI-Brent spread falling to the lowest since early April-2024 as gains in nearby WTI spreads outpaced the gain in Brent. Crude oil futures prices witnessed the biggest weekly decline in thirteen weeks during the week ended 3-May-2024 and continued to decline last week, albeit marginally, after a mid week recovery faltered on the last trading day. Meanwhile, the wildfires in Canada spread near the heart of the oil sands producing region in Alberta threatening supplies from the region. Prices also reflected mixed regional trend with demand expected to see a slow growth in the US while the European region is expected to see

better-than-expected demand, although the warmer-than-expected winter in the northern hemisphere capped gain in crude oil prices. On the other hand, the hotter summers could also result in greater cooling demand for the rest of the year.

In terms of monthly price trend, prices of almost all crude grades reported gains for the fourth consecutive month during April-2024. Average spot Brent crude oil price was up by 5.2% to reach USD 89.9/b during April-2024 as compared to USD 85.4/b during March-2024. The gain in average OPEC reference basket price was slightly stronger at 5.8% to reach USD 89.1/b while Kuwait export grade crude witnessed an even bigger gain of 6.3% to average at USD 89.8/b during April-2024. Meanwhile, the consensus estimate for Brent crude underwent positive changes from last month's forecast for the remaining three quarters this year. Prices are expected to average at USD 85.0/b in Q2-2024 and remain elevated at this level till the end of the year.

On the other hand, price forecasts from the US EIA was lowered in the latest report after seeing upgrades during the previous two months. The agency expects Brent to reach USD 88.0/b in 2024 vs. USD 89.0/b in the previous forecast whereas next year price is expected to come in at USD 85.0/b as compared to the previous forecast of 87.0/b.

World Oil Demand

World oil demand growth forecast for 2024 was kept broadly unchanged by the OPEC in its latest monthly report at a 2.2 mb/d with demand expected to reach 104.5 mb/d. However, adjustments were made at the country level that offset the overall change. Demand from China witnessed an upward revision during Q1-2024 after better-than-expected demand during the quarter. This increase was offset by downward revision to demand data for the OECD Americas region during Q1-2024 and for the Middle East region for Q2-2024 and Q3-2024. Demand data for Europe was also adjusted lower for 1H-2024 that was fully offset by upward adjustment to data for 2H-2024. For 2025, world oil demand growth forecast was also kept unchanged at 1.85 mb/d with demand expected to average at 106.3 mb/d during the year. At the quarterly level, however, demand was raised for Q1-2025 and Q4-2025 that was offset by downward adjustment to data for Q2-2025. Meanwhile, the US EIA lowered its forecast for global oil demand for 2024 to 102.84 mb/d, registering a y-o-y growth of 0.92 mb/d during the year as compared to the agency's previous forecast that showed a demand growth of 0.95 mb/d this year.

World Oil Supply

The OPEC reported oil supply data for non-DoC (Declaration of Cooperation or non OPEC+ global producers) in its latest monthly report. According to OPEC, oil supply growth from the non-DoC countries is expected to remain unchanged at 1.2 mb/d in 2024 to average at 53.0 mb/d during the year. Supply growth during the year is expected to come mainly from the US, Canada, Brazil and Norway. For 2025, the OPEC once again kept its forecast for supply growth unchanged at 1.1 mb/d with total non-DoC supply expected to average at 54.1 mb/d led by higher production in US, Brazil, Canada and Norway, partially offset by an expected decline in production in Angola.

In the Americas, the start of the driving season affected crude oil inventory levels during the week ended 3-May-2024 resulting in a decline of 1.4 million barrels with total inventory reaching 459.5 million barrels. The fall came after consistent inventory growth over the last three months that pushed total inventory to the highest level in eleven months at 460.9 million barrels of crude oil. The data for last week also indicates a fall in inventory levels. According to API weekly report, US crude inventories declined by 3.1 million barrels last week. Gasoline inventories declined by around 1.3 million barrels, as per the report.

BUSINESS

Agility reports Q1 2024 net profit of KD 18.7 million

Kuwait revenue expected to reach KWD 18.7 bln

First quarter EBITDA grew 17.2%

Oil production cut deepens GCC fiscal deficit and hinders growth

By KAMCO Invest

GCC countries announced their budgeted spending for the year 2024 with elevated spending despite challenges on the revenue front. The aggregate budgeted expenditure in the GCC during the current fiscal year is estimated to be lower than last year levels at USD 529.5 Bn. Aggregate budgeted revenues are estimated at USD 487.6 Bn vs. USD 509.6 Bn in 2023, down by 4.3%. The decline reflects output cuts implemented by GCC OPEC producers as well as range-bound crude oil prices. In 2024, the budgeted oil price by most countries is above USD 60 per barrel. The UAE and Saudi Arabia did not disclose the oil price on which it has based its federal budget. The aggregate fiscal deficit for the GCC countries is expected to reach USD 41.9 Bn in 2024 as compared to a deficit of USD 35.1 Bn last year, based on the budgeted figures.

The governments in the region announced expansionary budgets for sectors such as health care, education and infrastructure and have also planned large scale infrastructure and construction spending. At the same time, main focus has been given to re-alignment of non-oil sectors in the economy and its contribution going forward.

At the country level, Saudi Arabia is expected to account for around 64.9% of the aggregate budgeted revenues during the year in the GCC. Kuwait and Qatar are expected to follow at 12.5% and 11.2%, respectively. In terms of spending, Saudi Arabia is expected to account for 63.8% of the aggregate expenditure in the GCC this year. Meanwhile, the overall GCC project market index for upcoming contracts as of April-2024 reached USD 1.4 Trillion, according to MEED projects. Saudi Arabia comprised the lion's share of upcoming GCC projects (50.2% or USD 709 Bn) followed by the UAE which has USD 316.1 Bn and Oman with estimated upcoming projects at USD 172.1 Bn.

Oil prices have remained elevated since the start of this year and have traded above the USD 80/b mark since early February-2024. Brent crude spot averaged at USD 84.7 per barrel since the start of the year and is expected to average at USD 84.0 per barrel this year, according to Bloomberg consensus estimates. The volatility in oil prices came from several factors including escalating geopolitical situation in the Middle East region with a potential impact on oil supplies and resilient global inflation levels. In addition, the OPEC+ decision to maintain the current output policy with voluntary cuts further indicated tighter markets in the near term as supplies would remain constrained. In terms of budget balance, UAE and Qatar are budgeted to breakeven, while the rest of the GCC countries are expected to report deficits this year. It is expected that the actual deficit in 2024 may be significantly lower than the budgeted deficit due to the conservative estimate of budgeted oil prices.

Kuwait
Kuwait's Ministry of Finance unveiled the draft budget for 2024/2025 with a 13.5% decline in forecasted deficits at KWD 5.8 Bn (USD 19.3 Bn) as compared to an estimated deficit of KWD 6.8 Bn (USD 22.0 Bn) for the fiscal year 2023/2024. The budget snapshot came in line with the bulk of the GCC economies that are also expected to report deficit.

According to the budget document, revenue is expected to reach KWD 18.7 Bn (USD 61.0 Bn) during the fiscal year 2024/2025 as compared to KWD

GCC Budget - 2024 (USD Bn)								
	Kuwait	Saudi Arabia	Qatar	Oman	UAE - Federal	Bahrain	GCC	YoY
Revenue	61.0	316.4	54.5	28.6	17.7	9.2	487.6	(4.3%)
Oil & Gas Revenue	53.1	NA	42.9	15.4	NA	5.7	NA	NA
Non - Oil Revenue	7.9	NA	11.6	1.4	NA	3.5	NA	NA
Expenditure	80.3	337.8	54.2	30.3	17.3	9.6	529.5	(2.8%)
Surplus/Deficit	(19.3)	(21.3)	0.3	(1.7)	0.5	(0.4)	(41.9)	(1.5%)
Budgeted Oil Price	70.0	NA	60	60	NA	60		
Oil Revenue / Total Revenue	87.0%	NA	78.7%	53.7%	NA	61.9%		
Non Oil Revenue / Total Revenue	13.0%	NA	21.3%	4.7%	NA	38.1%		
Revenue / Total GCC Revenue	12.5%	64.9%	11.2%	5.9%	3.6%	1.9%		
Expenditure/ Total GCC Expenditure	15.2%	63.8%	10.2%	5.7%	3.3%	1.8%		
Nominal GDP (USD Bn) - IMF	167.0	1,109.5	246.4	112.4	536.8	47.1		
Budget Surplus/Deficit % of Nominal GDP	(11.5%)	(1.9%)	0.1%	(1.5%)	0.08%	(0.9%)		

19.5 Bn estimated for the fiscal year 2023/2024, down by 4.1%. The revenues are calculated with a budgeted crude oil price of USD 70/b. This could mean that the actual revenues could be significantly higher as oil prices continue to remain elevated this year. Brent crude averaged at USD 89.2 per barrel since the start of the current fiscal year (2024/2025), while Kuwait crude oil and OPEC crude basket averaged at USD 88.6 per barrel and USD 87.8 per barrel, respectively, according to EIA and Bloomberg. The budget assumes no transfers to the Future Generation Fund (FGF) according to a law which says that there would be no transfers to the FGF in years of deficits.

In terms of revenues, crude oil will continue to account for the bulk of the budgeted revenues in the fiscal year 2024/2025. However, the share of oil revenues to total revenues is expected to decline marginally from 88.2% estimated for fiscal year 2023/2024 to 87.0% budgeted for the fiscal year 2024/2025, according to data from Kuwait's Ministry of Finance. This would imply non-oil revenue share of 13.0% for the fiscal year 2024/2025 as compared to 11.8% estimated for the previous fiscal year. Oil revenues for the current fiscal year is likely to be impacted by the ongoing production cuts as per the OPEC+ agreement. Crude oil production in Kuwait stood at 2.4 mb/d during April-2024 and averaged at a higher 2.53 mb/d during the last fiscal year. There are ongoing talks of unwinding of some cuts during the second half of the year, however, it depends on the prices prevailing at that time. Based on the expected revenues and expenditure, the state would require a breakeven oil price of USD 90.7/b to balance the budget, according to Ministry of Finance.

Non-Oil Revenue is expected to be at 11-year high in 2024/2025

Total budgeted revenues for 2024/2025 is expected to reach KWD 18.7 Bn mainly led by record non-oil revenues partially offset by a drop in oil revenues. Oil Revenues is expected to reach KWD 16.2 Bn for 2024/2025 as compared to a revenue of KWD 17.2 Bn estimated for the 2023/2024, resulting in a expected decline of 5.4%.

On the other hand, Kuwait's non-oil revenues are budgeted to reach the highest level in eleven years and highest since fiscal 2013/2014. In terms of y-o-y performance, non-oil revenues are expected to increase by 5.7% during the fiscal year 2024/2025 to reach KWD 2.4 Bn.

Budgeted expenditure expected to decline

On the expenditure side, planned spending is expected to decline in the fiscal year 2024/2025. Total expenses in

2024/2025 is budgeted to reach KWD 24.6 Bn led by a decrease in budgeted expenditure in all the three groups i.e. salaries and subsidies, Capex and other entities. The share of salaries and subsidies in total expenditure is expected to decrease from 79.5% of total expenditure in the fiscal year 2023/2024 to 79.4% of total expenditure in the fiscal year 2024/2025. In terms of y-o-y change, the component is expected to drop by 6.6%. Capital expenditure is also budgeted to decline in the fiscal year 2024/2025 with planned spending of KWD 2.3 Bn as compared to KWD 2.5 Bn in 2023/2024, a y-o-y decline of 7.7%.

Main drivers for the decrease in Expenditure in 2024/2025 were 1. Ministry of Electricity and Water (KWD -1.2 Bn) related to types of fuel used to operate stations. 2. Ministry of Health (KWD -192.2 Mn) related to reducing costs medicines and drugs based on the actual spending and need. 3. Ministry of Oil (KWD -100 Mn) relating to reduction in Subsidies. 4. Ministry of Commerce and Industry (KWD -59.3 Mn) relating to reduction in Subsidies. 5. Other Ministries totalled to (KWD -231.7 Mn). The declines were partially offset by higher allocation to 1. Ministry of Interior (KWD +159.5 Mn) related to fixed salaries and allowances. 2. Ministry of Health (KWD +102.2 Mn) related to the allocation for comprehensive health insurance for retirees and housewives.

Projects in Kuwait

According to MEED Projects, total projects awarded in Kuwait reached USD 327 Mn during Q1-2024 as compared to USD 1.8 Bn in Q1-2023. Despite the lackluster performance during the first three months of the year, contractors are currently preparing to bid for big-ticket projects, especially in the oil sector. According to MEED.com, seven companies have bought tender documents for the planned fuel depot project in Al Mutlaa region of Kuwait. The project which is being awarded by the state-owned downstream operator Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) is valued at USD 850 Mn.

One of the notable contracts that were awarded during Q1-2024 is the USD 100 Mn design contract to upgrade the Mina Al Ahmadi Refinery. The contract entails a project to overhaul an acid gas removal plant in the Mina Al Ahmadi Refinery and its scope includes consultancy work. Currently, MEED Projects estimates the value of upcoming projects for Kuwait to be around USD 105.5 Bn of which 58.1% are in the study stage while 11.2% are in the design stage. In terms of sector proportion of upcoming projects, the Power Sector is expected to receive 27.2% or USD 28.7 Bn topping the list as the largest sector in terms of upcoming

contracts in the country followed by the Transport Sector with USD 27.6 Bn worth of upcoming contracts in the pipeline.

Saudi Arabia
Saudi Arabia's budgeted revenue for fiscal year 2024 is estimated at SAR 1.17 Trillion (USD 316.4 Bn), compared to SAR 1.21 Trillion (USD 333.3 Bn) estimated for the previous fiscal year, down by 3.3%. The 2024 budget forecasts a fiscal deficit of SAR 79 Bn (USD 21.3 Bn). Oil Revenue was not disclosed in the latest Budget.

The positive outlook for the Saudi economy in 2024 is attributed to favorable developments in the 1H-2023. The Kingdom's GDP growth is predicted to reach 4.4% in 2024, up from the previous forecast of 0.3% in 2023. Positive indicators include sustained GDP growth, improved non-oil sector performance, a growing labor force, modest inflation rates, and a declining unemployment rate. Revenue from taxes is estimated to be 30% of total non-oil income in 2024 at SAR 361 Bn, which is 2.6% higher than 2023 estimates.

In terms of sector-specific expenditures, the military sector received the largest allocation at SAR 269 Bn, an 8.5% increase from the 2023 estimates. The health and social development sector contributed 17% to the total budget, amounting to SAR 214 Bn, a 14.4% decrease from the 2023 estimates. Similarly, SAR 195 Bn is allocated for the education sector, totaling 16% of the overall budget. The projected revenues for 2025 and 2026 are estimated at SAR 1.23 Trillion and SAR 1.26 Trillion, respectively. Expenditures are projected to reach SAR 1.3 Trillion in 2025 and SAR 1.37 Trillion in 2026.

According to the Kingdom's Finance minister, the 2024 budget is positioned to maintain the successful trajectory, aligning with national policies closely related to the goals outlined in Saudi Vision 2030 and national priorities, and strengthening the commitment to long-term sustainable development. Additionally, he said that the Kingdom's economy produced over a million employment in 2023 and that non-oil revenue had significantly reduced the impact of fluctuations in oil prices on the budget than they had in the past.

In the Q1-2024, Saudi Arabia reported a deficit of SAR 12.4 Bn (USD 3.31 Bn), because of higher spending and lowered oil revenues. The Kingdom reported total revenues of SAR 293.43 bn in the Q1-2024 up by 4% as compared to Q1-2023, while public spending came in at SAR 305.82 Bn. Oil-revenue increased by 1.9% to SAR 179 Bn in the Q1-2024. Non-oil revenues increased by 9% to reach SAR 111.5 Bn (USD 29.7 Bn).

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: Agility, a supply chain services, infrastructure and innovation company, today reported Q1 2024 earnings of KD 18.7 million, or 7.32 fils per share, a 22% increase from same period a year earlier. First quarter EBITDA grew 17.2% to KD 70.8 million and revenue increased 4.9% to KD 336.3 million. This growth is driven by performance of Agility's main entities, each pursuing its own road map to achieve further growth.

On May 2, 2024, Agility announced the listing of its subsidiary, Agility Global PLC, on the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX) under the ticker symbol . Agility owns 51% of Agility Global and will consolidate the company's accounts.

"The listing of Agility Global on the ADX crystallizes the value of Agility's international assets and enables the company to access additional capital markets to drive further growth," said Tarek Sultan, Agility Vice Chairman and CEO. "Each of Agility's subsidiaries will be pursuing different road maps to invest and grow further". Agility KSCP is the majority shareholder of Agility Global PLC and its financials will be consolidated with the group's financials.

	Q1 2024 (Million KD)	Q1 2023 (Million KD)	Variance (%)
Revenue	336.3	320.5	+4.9%
Net Revenue	222.4	187.1	+18.9%
EBITDA	70.8	60.4	+17.2%
Net Profit	18.7	15.3	+22.0%
EPS (fils)	7.32	6.00	+22.0%

Numbers above are rounded.

Berkshire Hathaway reveals new \$7b stake in Swiss insurer Chubb

OMAHA, Nebraska, May 16, (AP): Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway has revealed a new \$7 billion stake in fellow insurer Chubb.

Berkshire disclosed the investment it has been building over the past nine months in a quarterly filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Buffett's conglomerate had received permission to keep the Chubb investment confidential while it was still buying.

Berkshire said it held nearly 26 million Chubb shares at the end of March, giving it a 6.4% stake in the company. Chubb shares jumped more than 7% in after-hours trading to sell for \$271.82 after Berkshire's investment was revealed.

Many investors follow Berkshire's portfolio closely because of Buffett's remarkably successful track record over the decades, and some will certainly speculate that Berkshire could one day buy all of Chubb.

Berkshire owns many other companies - including BNSF railroad, a number of utilities and an assortment of manufacturing and retail companies - but insurers, like Geico and General Reinsurance, have always been at the core of the Omaha, Nebraska-based conglomerate. So it makes sense that another insurer like Zurich-based Chubb might appeal to Buffett.

CFRA Research analyst Cathy Seifert said in a note to investors that Chubb is now one of the 10 biggest holdings in Berkshire's portfolio. "We can't speculate whether Berkshire would pursue an outright acquisition of CB, but we note their business mixes are highly complementary," Seifert wrote.

The quarterly filing doesn't say



Tarek Sultan, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Agility.

Financial Reporting

The in-kind dividends distribution was effective on May 2nd 2024, the Listing Day of Agility Global PLC and accordingly the financial impact was not reflected in the first quarter results and will be reflected in the company's financials starting Q2 2024.

Recap of Agility KSCP Q1 2024 Financial Performance

Agility's net profit was KD 18.7 million, an increase of 22%, and EPS was 7.32 fils.

Agility's EBITDA increased 17.2% to KD 70.8 million.

Agility's revenue increased 4.9% to KD 336.3 million and net revenue increased 18.9%.

Agility enjoys a healthy balance sheet with KD 3.9 billion in assets.

Agility reported an operating cash flow of KD 25.9 million for the first quarter of 2024.

EU economy gradually expanding amid increased geopolitical risks

BRUSSELS, May 16, (Xinhua): The European Union (EU) economy is rebounding in the first quarter of 2024, as inflation decreases and private consumption rises, announced Paolo Gentiloni, European Commissioner for Economy, here on Wednesday.

"The EU economy perked up markedly in the first quarter, indicating that we have turned a corner after a very challenging 2023," said Gentiloni while presenting the European Commission's Spring Economic Forecast.

"We expect a gradual acceleration in growth over the course of this year and next, as private consumption is supported by declining inflation, recovering purchasing power and continued employment growth," he added.

According to the Spring Economic Forecast, gross domestic product (GDP) growth should amount to 1 percent in the EU, and 0.8 percent in the eurozone in 2024. In 2025, the EU economy should grow by 1.6 percent, while the eurozone's economy should grow by 1.4 percent.

The first quarter of 2024, with its 0.3 percent economic growth in both the EU and the eurozone, marks the end of a prolonged period of economic stagnation that started in the last quarter of 2022, according to the European Commission.

The main driver of economic growth in the next two years will be private consumption, boosted by growing real wages, which in turn will increase households'

real disposable incomes.

However, investment growth is slowed down by a negative trend in residential construction, as well as lower rate of interest rate cuts than previously expected. Exports should pick up but are set to be counter-balanced by imports to match growing domestic demand.

Meanwhile, inflation is projected to continue its downward trend. In the EU, it should fall from 6.4 percent in 2023 to 2.7 percent this year, to reach 2.2 percent in 2025.

In the eurozone, inflation is projected to reach 2.5 percent this year, and 2.1 percent next year.

Inflation peaked at 10.6 percent in October 2022 in the eurozone. In April this year, it reached a two-year low of 2.4 percent.

Disinflation in the eurozone is to be driven by non-energy goods and food. Energy inflation should rise a bit, while the decline in services inflation will happen only gradually, alongside moderation in wage pressures. Inflation in the EU should follow the same trend as in the eurozone, according to the Commission.

Risks to this forecast include the current conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, and persistent inflation in the United States, said the Commission.

Africans urged to improve air connectivity to boost tourism

JOHANNESBURG, May 16, (Xinhua): African countries should work together to improve air connectivity, which would boost tourism and economic growth, South African Minister of Tourism Patricia de Lille said.

De Lille made the remarks on Monday evening during the African Tourism Ministers Dialogue in South Africa's port city of Durban. She said Airports Company South Africa (ACSA) will spend 21.7 billion rand (about 1.18 billion U.S. dollars) to develop airport infrastructure in South Africa.

"The rest of the world is poised to make travel more accessible, and essential source markets like China and

India are set to increase; we must partner to make it easier to travel to and in Africa," said de Lille. "Now is the time to rethink development strategies in the tourism sector and strengthen regional integration and cooperation. We have to encourage strategic public-private partnerships, promote investment in the tourism sector regionally, and re-focus efforts to implement impactful projects." She urged African tourism ministers to find concrete solutions to create opportunities to increase air connectivity in Africa.

Africa should share best practices and improve connectivity to encourage more tourists to visit Africa by making travel easy and comfortable, de Lille said.

Japan's economy shrinks on weak consumer spending, auto woes

TOKYO, May 16, (AP): The Japanese economy shrank at an annual rate of 2% in the first quarter of this year, as consumption and exports declined, the government said Thursday.

Although unemployment has stayed relatively low in the world's fourth largest economy at about 2.6%, wage growth has been slow and prices have risen partly due to weakness of the yen

against the U.S. dollar.

Quarter-to-quarter, the preliminary seasonally adjusted gross domestic product, or GDP, a measure of the value of a nation's products and services, slipped 0.5% in the January-March period, according to the Cabinet Office.

The annual rate measures what would have happened if the quarterly rate lasted a year.

The Japanese yen has been trading at three-decade lows recently, with the U.S. dollar costing about 155 yen. That has helped tourism but hurts spending power, especially for a nation that imports almost all its energy.

The latest results were generally worse than what analysts had forecast. Sluggish consumer spending is a big problem since private consumption ac-

counts for half of Japanese economic activity.

Also denting growth were the problems at automaker Toyota Motor Corp.'s subsidiary, although production is now back up. Earlier this year, the Japanese government ordered Daihatsu Motor Co. to halt production of its entire lineup because of faked safety test results.

Robert Carnell, analyst at ING, noted the disruptions of car production and sales due to the safety scandal brought down overall growth, but that means they likely will bounce back later in the year.

"Monthly activity data already shows a gradual normalization since March," he said.

The latest data provides a challenge

for Japan's central bank on when to further raise interest rates, an action that's expected to come sooner or later, possibly in July.

Policy makers are likely to proceed with more caution in a weak economy. The Bank of Japan raised interest rates earlier this year for the first time since 2007, but only to a range of zero to 0.1% from minus 0.1%.

What's On



Zain showcased its innovative solutions to serve businesses.



Zain's team at the event.

Company sponsored IDC Kuwait CIO Summit 2024

Zain demonstrated AI-powered solutions to empower businesses

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: Zain has sponsored the IDC Kuwait CIO Summit 2024, titled The Future of IT: Rethinking Digitalization for an AI Everywhere World. The event, held at Arraya Ballroom, offered a platform for exchanging ideas and expertise on how artificial intelligence will reshape the business landscape and develop the digital economy.

The Summit was attended by Acting Director General of the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) Dr. Ammar Al Husaini, ZainTECH CEO Andrew Hanna, along with leadership from the public and private sectors, experts and academics, and executives from local, regional, and international technology firms. The event featured many insightful keynotes and panel discussions aimed at IT leaders and decision makers.

During the event, Zain took the stage to demonstrate some of the best AI-powered solutions provided by ZainTECH, the integrated digital solutions provider of Zain Group, to empower businesses to embrace true digitization. These services, including cloud, cybersecurity, robotics & drones, data analytics, and more leverage on the capabilities of AI to increase efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance performance for companies from across industries.

Zain's session also discussed the practices that set some companies apart when it comes to in-

vesting in artificial intelligence to create value and achieve true ROI of AI investments. The session proposed a framework designed to help companies from across the most vibrant sectors to accelerate time to value from their AI initiatives.

The IDC Kuwait CIO Summit 2024 was organized in collaboration with the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT), the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, and the National Cybersecurity Center. The event also came in partnership with many global technology firms.

The event provided an essential platform for empowering IT leaders and helping them better understand and adapt to today's AI-infused business landscape. The Summit delivered expert guidance on achieving success while crafting innovative solutions for current and emerging challenges to achieve sustainable growth in today's digital economy.

As a leading digital service provider, Zain believes in the importance of harnessing the potential of AI to lead the digital transformation journey. Recently, the company teamed up with global partner Huawei to establish an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Center of Excellence. The step aims to push both partners' plans for AI-enabled innovative services and 5.5G network automation in the region.

Central Bank urges caution

KFH fosters secure savings and investment awareness

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: In support of the Diraya campaign, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) actively promotes financial literacy awareness across various community segments. Through its social media channels and website, KFH emphasizes the benefits of secure investment and saving. Additionally, it provides information about banking services offered, ensuring they are easily accessible, convenient for customers, and maintain high standards of quality and safety.

KFH is dedicated to sharing thoughtful media content that fosters financial literacy and educates customers on the key difference between saving and investment. The bank explained that saving involves setting aside a portion of funds for future use, while investment entails allocating funds towards a product or service with the aim of generating profit.

Kuwaiti banks provide a range of secure investment services and products, designed to assist customers in managing their investments and maximizing their returns. These services include different investment deposit options, where customers deposit money into an account at the bank to be invested in and generate returns over a set period of time. Customers are able to withdraw the deposited amount after the elapse of the specified contract period.

Investment funds are regarded as one of the services offered by banks. They serve as a combined investment tool that enables participants to invest their funds to realize profits. These funds are managed by a specialized manager against certain fees. The investment options within these funds may include stocks, bonds, merchandise, money markets, and other assets. It is important to note that investment funds offered by banks are regulated and licensed by the Capital Markets Authority.

The investment savings account is a type of account in which customers can deposit funds they wish to save. The bank will then invest these funds and deposit any returns realized into the same account on a periodical basis. This

type of account differs from a traditional deposit account as it allows for withdrawals and additional deposits to be made at any time.

KFH affirmed the significance of customers' investment plans, which serve as means of preparing for future necessities like children's education expenses, starting a personal project, retirement, etc. These plans assist in regularly saving money in a bank account and generating returns. The realized returns together with the customer's deposited amounts are available at the end of the saving plan period.

Different investments carry varying risk levels. High-risk investments often lack regulatory oversight that ensures investor protection. For instance, virtual currencies are considered as one of the high-risk investments as they don't fall under the supervision of the Central Bank of Kuwait or any other local or international institutions. These digital assets are decentralized and difficult to control, therefore transactions made can't be monitored or tracked.

On this basis, the Central Bank of Kuwait urges investors to be cautious, highlighting the significance of being well-informed and avoiding unknown parties to prevent falling victims of financial scams.

As part of its CSR program, KFH persistently engages in shedding light on the rights of customers and providing education regarding their obligations when they interact with banks. These efforts align with Diraya campaign launched in 2021 by the Central Bank of Kuwait in cooperation with the Kuwait Banking Association.



Diraya logo

Bank promotes financial awareness through 'Let's Be Aware' campaign

NBK warns against transferring money to unknown parties

Blood bank commends NBK's community support

NBK staff volunteer to donate blood

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: As part of its social responsibility endeavors, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) organized a blood donation campaign for its staff, on the occasion of the World Blood Donor Day.

NBK staff voluntarily went to the Blood Bank and offered their participation for blood donation. The mobile blood unit of the Blood Bank was available at NBK Headquarters to receive the donations.

On this occasion, Talal Al Turki, NBK Public Relations Executive Manager, said: "NBK always goes far in serving the community. The blood donation campaign demonstrates NBK's lasting commitment to the community and to its Corporate Social Responsibilities Program."

"NBK's initiative is a commitment towards all patients who are in dire need of blood and is held to support the blood bank in Kuwait," he added.

The Blood Bank team commended NBK's initiative and its continuous cooperation in serving the community in the philanthropic field.

NBK strongly supports health care awareness. Throughout the years, NBK also organized several annual social awareness programs including dental checkups, blood pressure tests, weight checkups, mental health and breast cancer awareness.



Photo from the event.

Alfouz account expands prize offerings

ABK unveils Mohammad Yaqoub Boshehri as winner of Alfouz KD 10,000 weekly draw prize

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced Mohammad Yaqoub Boshehri, as the KD10,000 Alfouz weekly draw winner on Monday, 13 May 2024, whereby the draw was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Since its launch, the Alfouz account continues to offer an impressive weekly draw of KD10,000. The Bank has recently expanded its offering by adding a new alluring monthly draw of KD20,000, and an exceptional quarterly draw of KD100,000.

The account also retains its hallmark mega annual draw of a KD5,000 monthly salary for ten years. Furthermore, the Bank now offers customers an increased opportunity to win for every KD10 as opposed to KD100 previously.

ABK encourages everyone to open an Alfouz draw account and/or increase their balances to have more chances in winning in the upcoming weekly draw winner announcement, which will take place on Monday, 20 May 2024. The higher the deposits, the higher the chances to win.

For more information about ABK, please follow the



Alfouz winner

Bank's Instagram account @abk_kuwait, visit eahli.com, contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit one of the Bank's branches across Kuwait.

AUK CCE hosts Education Empowerment Series

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: The American University of Kuwait (AUK) Center for Continuing Education (CCE) recently organized two impactful workshops: the Education Empowerment Series and the Cultivate and Elevate Leadership Workshop. These sessions provided participating teachers with valuable knowledge and skills to enhance their expertise for future educational endeavors.

The Education Empowerment Series emphasized the essential role of assessment in optimizing the teaching and learning process, while also equipping teachers with essential skills to foster a positive classroom environment conducive to effective learning. Additionally, it highlighted the importance of cultivating empathetic and motivating teach-

er-student relationships.

On the other hand, the Cultivate and Elevate Leadership Workshop explored various aspects of organizational leadership, including analyzing leadership approaches tailored to educational settings, fostering positive school cultures, and refining team management skills for enhanced collaboration and motivation. It also offered insights into conflict resolution, problem-solving, and effective writing instruction techniques.

These workshops collectively underscored the significance of assessment, empathy, and effective leadership in promoting holistic student development and maintaining harmonious educational environments.



Group photo of participants.

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: As part of its endeavors to increase financial awareness and inclusion among the different segments of society, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues to promote the "Let's Be Aware" campaign introduced by the Central Bank of Kuwait, in cooperation with Kuwait Banking Association (KBA).

During this month, the bank intensified awareness material on all its social media platforms with the aim of increasing public awareness of various misleading fraud schemes to steal customers' banking information.

In this regard, NBK highlights the various evolving fraud techniques, especially where scammers clone the voices and images of a relative or a friend using AI to make scam calls or send voice messages asking for an urgent money transfer for emergency. This way, payment links will seem as if they were sent from a family member or a close friend leading to transfer money directly without hesitation. Therefore, NBK stresses the necessity to verify the identity of any person or entity before making transfers.

Scammers steal people's information, whether photos or video clips which contain their voices through social media platforms or even random phone calls, such as numbers calling from different countries around the world, which aim to steal their voices to use it in scams. So, NBK always warns against transferring money to unknown people, stressing the necessity to verify people's identity before any transfers.

NBK warns against sharing any important personal information, such as social security number, bank account numbers, or password-protected information on social media, as this may expose such sensitive information to theft by unknown persons. The bank also stresses the need to verify information, websites and pages visited through social media to ensure they are the authentic official websites.

NBK always employs innovative methods to promote financial literacy among the public and familiarize them with their rights and the precautions that should be taken to protect their banking information and accounts. This is done by sharing educational messages, photos and video clips on its social media platforms, as well as reposting CBK's related communications.

NBK also seeks to spread financial awareness among the largest segments to maximize the exposure of the campaign's messages. It also harnesses its strong customer communication capabilities including all its digital channels, which are the most popular among all Kuwaiti banks.

NBK's efforts to raise customer awareness are instrumental in its strategy, as the bank always uses all communication channels to advise them to keep their passwords/PINs and financial/personal account information strictly confidential, and not to share them with anyone impersonating a bank employee.

It is worth mentioning that NBK is a key supporter and partner in all CBK's campaigns and initiatives to increase financial and banking awareness among different segments of society. As a leading financial institution in Kuwait, NBK frequently organizes various activities to raise awareness on all topics related to the banking sector, as well as various training courses for its employees to enhance their experience in the areas of combating fraud and financial crime.

As a leading financial institution in Kuwait and across the region, NBK firmly observes its responsibilities towards the communities it serves. It is always taking the initiative to provide all necessary support to important and strategic campaigns, like the "Let's Be Aware" campaign, which serve the interests of the national economy and society at large.

What's On



Photos from the event.

Photos by Leah Qurtal

Al-Qadiri Gallery hosts exhibition

Kuwaiti artists express their visions and ideas

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: The Al-Qadiri Gallery Hall in Mishrif recently hosted an Art Exhibition titled "Art Creatives of Group of Kuwaiti Artist (Women)", which saw the attendance of ambassadors, diplomats, intellectuals, and other distinguished guests.

Mr. Mohammed Al-Qadiri, the General Manager of Al-Qadiri Gallery, expressed his enthusiasm about the exhibition, which showcases a collection of artworks by both current and past artists. These beautiful paintings represent various schools of thought and perspectives, crafted by skilled and imaginative artists. Al-Qadiri emphasized that the exhibition provides an opportunity for art enthusiasts to explore the diversity and depth of artistic expression, with the display scheduled to run for two months.

The exhibition features a group of talented women artists who have presented their unique ideas and visions, blending elements of fiction and reality. The artworks cover a wide range of styles and themes, delving into the human experience and expressing the individual voices of the artists. Portraits capturing the creative essence of human

faces are among the highlights, evoking a strong sense of artistic engagement.

The art pieces on display exhibit a rich blend of artistic elements, seamlessly weaving together facts and events within the framework of artistic interpretation. The artists aim to explore multiple layers of meaning within their works, inviting viewers to engage with the art on a deeper level.

The artists gathered at the Al-Qadiri Gallery to connect with life and observe its intricacies and beauty through various artistic lenses. Despite their diverse perspectives, they share a common spirit rooted in the universal language of art, which transcends verbal communication and speaks directly through colors, techniques, and conceptualizations depicted on canvas.

Among the participating artists are Suhailah Al-Ateyah, Farida Al-Baqami, Dr. Jameelah Johar, Thuraya Al-Baqami, Dr. Mona Eyadah, Dr. Farida Abedeen, Jameelah Hussain, Dr. Fatemah Alazmi, and Fatemah Yousef. Their captivating visions and ideas are elegantly conveyed through their artwork, leaving a lasting impression on viewers.



A photo from the China International Import Expo CIIE.



Kuwait media delegation meeting with Director General of Foreign Affairs Office of Shenzhen.

Insights from Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Shanghai

From trade to innovation: Kuwaiti delegation explores vibrant China

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: A delegation from Kuwait, consisting of journalists, media figures and social media influencers; recently traveled to Guangzhou -- a city located in eastern China.

The delegation also visited the cities of Shenzhen and Shanghai.

Upon arrival, the delegation was immediately struck by the impressive level of development; which is evident in the wide roads, well-organized streets, tall buildings, luxurious shopping malls and modern infrastructure. It is more amazing that in the midst of this advanced development, the natural beauty of the area remains awe-inspiring. Large parks and lush green hills provided a picturesque backdrop, reaching up to touch the clouds and co-existing harmoniously with the towering skyscrapers.

Remarkably, the level of pollution in China, a country known for its mass production and industrial activities, is low. Clear blue skies, fresh air and vibrant foliage demonstrated the Chinese government's commitment to environmental sustainability, while embracing advanced technology.

Products

Citizens and expatriates from Kuwait frequent Guangzhou, China mostly for trade purposes; as Chinese goods have successfully entered the country's markets, since Chinese companies and factories offer a variety of products at different prices based on quality while ensuring merchants a good profit margin.

The delegation's first stop was the China Import and Export Fair, also known as the Canton Fair -- a crucial platform for China's foreign trade and serves as a window to its opening up strategy. It plays a significant role in promoting China's foreign trade and facilitating economic and trade exchanges between China and the rest of the world. The Canton Fair provides an excellent opportunity for Chinese and foreign businesspersons to engage in commercial deals.

At the fair, merchants can find a wide range of products, including food, cars, clothing, toys, technology, and furniture, all under one roof. The exhibition takes place in large, extended halls that may require more than a day to fully explore.

For 67 years since its establishment in 1957, Canton Fair is being held in Guangzhou every spring and autumn. It is the oldest and largest fair of its kind, attracting buyers from all over the world.

The current session of the fair -- the 134th edition -- has welcomed visitors

from 229 countries and regions. The exhibition has seen a total of 197,869 in-person attendees and 453,857 online participants.

Meanwhile, the delegation had an opportunity to meet with Deputy Director of China International Import Expo (CIIE) Li Guoqing, who praised the strong and longstanding relations between Kuwait and China, pointing out that diplomatic ties between the two countries were established 53 years ago.

He highlighted the fact that Kuwait was the first country to sign the Belt and Road Document, which demonstrates China's keen interest in strengthening economic and trade cooperation with Kuwait.

Cooperation

In addition, Gao Feng, who accompanied the Kuwaiti media delegation during their meeting with Guoqing, disclosed that China seeks to enhance international cooperation and economic openness through the CIIE. He said the aim of the expo is to open Chinese markets to producers, companies and businesspersons from all countries for the benefit of all parties involved.

He revealed that the exhibition includes six zones covering various activities and commodities; such as food and agricultural products, automobiles, smart industry, information technology, consumer goods, medical equipment, health care products and services trade. He added the exhibition features an area for emerging companies and those in the process of growth and establishment.

The total area of the exhibition is approximately 367,000 square meters, reflecting China's commitment to creating opportunities for companies worldwide and contributing to global economic development.

It is worth mentioning that the exhibition started in 2018, following Chinese President Xi Jinping's announcement during his speech at the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in 2017.

In its previous session in 2023, the Expo hosted a total of 3,486 exhibitors from 128 countries and regions; including 289 exhibitors from the world's top 500 industrial enterprises.

The exhibition also offers the option of remote participation through its official website <http://www.ciie.org> until May 30, 2024.

The seventh session of the CIIE will be held from Nov 5-10, 2024; under the patronage of the Ministry of Commerce and it will be organized by the CIIE Office. The event will be held in Shanghai, spanning a total space of 1.5 million square meters.

Several international organizations, such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, and International Trade Center, will be involved in the event.

The exhibition will provide a platform for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to promote their contributions. Moreover, the delegation also visited Shenzhen; during which they could hardly believe that the super modern city was once just a small fishing village less than 40 years ago.

With its impressive 600-meter high Ping An tower, stunning buildings and massive shopping malls; Shenzhen, located in the southern part of China, serves as the bridge between China and Hong Kong.

The delegation had dinner with Cao Saixian, Director General of the Foreign Affairs Office of the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government.

During the dinner, Cao described Shenzhen as the global hub of markets and the starting point for China's reform and open-up strategy. She emphasized Shenzhen's dedication to fostering innovation, not only within China but also globally.

As evidence, she mentioned that BYD, a company specializing in electric vehicles, holds an impressive 20,000 patents, with 12,000 of them being domestic and 8,000 international. Saixian also shared that Shenzhen invested 188.05 billion Chinese yuan (roughly 261 US dollars) in innovation in 2023, making it the top Chinese city in this regard. In addition, Shenzhen has been the leading Chinese city in

terms of total import and export for 31 consecutive years, with a total amount of 3.87 trillion yuan. This has strengthened ties with 93 cities and provinces across 58 countries.

Saixian engaged in a discussion with the media delegation during the dinner, where suggestions were made to enhance relations with Kuwait, particularly through the exchange of educational scholarships and cooperation in crucial fields such as healthcare and green energy.

The Shenzhen trip has unveiled another important aspect of the city's commitment to leveraging technological advances; not only to support its business ventures, but also to protect the environment and public health.

Factory

The delegation had the chance to visit Nanshan Eco-Energy Park, where they observed how Shenzhen is committed to efficiently exploiting its resources by converting waste into energy. Precise operations are carried out in various sections of the factory; in which hundreds of workers deal with up to 2,300 tons of household waste daily, generating approximately one million kilowatts to serve the electricity needs of Nanshan, which is home to 1.81 million people.

This confirms Shenzhen's quest to become a 'zero-waste city' -- a goal that has now reached world-class standards.

Furthermore, Zhengzhou Environmental Energy Plant focuses on converting solid waste into clean energy and recycling. It aims to make the most of products through reuse and recycling.

The delegation was briefed on some ideas about recycling paper, plastic, metals and even dust extracted from collected waste to provide raw materials and contribute to reducing pollution rates.

Visitors to the Republic of China generally notice low rates of pollution that the average person can feel; such as smoke and harmful emissions. This reflects China's commitment to maintain a clean environment.

In conclusion, one visit to China is not enough to fully experience its diverse cities and provinces. Through this trip, it became clear for the delegation that the notion of a 'comfort zone' is not part of the Chinese mindset. The country's rapid and continuous modernization, along with its constant drive for progress, exemplify this concept.

The key factor in China's development is its hardworking and talented people who also happen to be cheerful, friendly and always willing to lend a helping hand.

While most ordinary Chinese people do not speak English, translation applications on their smartphones proved to be incredibly useful.



Maestro Shahu with his band members.

Musical wows Konkani lovers

Goans in Kuwait dance to maestro Shahu's beat

By Gasper Crasto

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: Goan dramas and musicals have captured the hearts of Konkani speaking audiences in Kuwait since 1970's, the entertainment continues till date.

The much-awaited Konkani musical show Devan Dil'lea Denneam Pasot by Maestro Shahu Almeida was staged to much delight of the audience in Kuwait on 10th May 2024 at ICSK School Hall, Salmiya.

The beauty of the show was the collective effort of the Maestro, artistes, and like-minded Goans who supported to put up yet another show against all odds.

Every song, every comedy was applauded, and everyone was immersed in the entertainment. It was a pleasure to see friendly, encouraging people in the audience.

Once again, Maestro Shahu lived up to his reputation as an entertainer of top quality.

Ever since his arrival in Kuwait back in 1999, the humble musician has been in the limelight for his electrifying music. Without a doubt, he remains Goa's flag bearer in the world of Konkani showbiz in Kuwait; he has maintained his peak for the last many years.

Synonymous to his past musicals, the show began with the blessing of St. Francis Xavier in a 'live' scenic portrayal, followed by the depiction of man's God-given talents symbolizing the title of the show -- Devan Dil'lea Denneam Pasot (For the sake of God-given talents).

A regular feature of Shahu's shows is the singing of 'St. Francis Xavier 'orasanv' at the beginning where the whole audience revels in singing to the patron saint of Goa.

Music for the show was arranged and directed by Shahu Almeida accompanied by Lennon D'Silva (Lead Guitar), legend Dennis Gonsalves, and famous drummer Tony Fernandes.

Shahu's teenage son Aerosmith Almeida dazzled too at the start with the 'Tokkad' warm-up music.

The stage came alive with the captivating performance of London stars at a recent event, showcasing a mesmerizing display of talent and showmanship. Led by Agnelo Lobo, Nicky Carvalho, Romaldo Estroicio, and others, the stars from Goa, UK delivered an unforgettable evening of music and entertainment.

The audience was treated to a diverse repertoire of 22 songs, ranging from soulful solos to lively duets and trios, covering various themes and beats. Each singer poured their heart and soul into their performance, earning thunderous applause from the crowd.

Contribution

Adding to the charm of the evening were four comedy skits, expertly led by comedian Ben Evangelisto and his talented team. Special moments included Jose Mascarenhas's heartfelt solos and Babit de Zuari's moving testimonial, highlighting the resilience and spirit of the performers.

Local talents also took the stage by storm, impressing the audience with their skills and enthusiasm. From Clemmie Pereira to Gasper Crasto, each artist showcased their unique flair, contributing to the vibrant atmosphere of the event.

As the show reached its climax, a medley of old songs brought the audience to their feet, celebrating the rich musical heritage in traditional attire.

Mr. Roy Estibeiro, a prominent figure in the Goan community, graced the event as the chief guest, lauding Maestro Shahu and his team for their remarkable contribution to Kuwait's cultural landscape.

Special thanks were extended to all involved in making the event a success, with mementos presented to the artists, technicians, and organizers for their invaluable contributions.

Gasper Crasto skillfully guided the audience through the evening as the host, while Cindy Fernandes ensured seamless stage management, creating an unforgettable experience for all attendees.



The Shanghai Institute of Studies.

Film

Winehouse story flattened in frustrating biopic 'Back to Black'

By Lindsey Bahr

'Back to Black' as a movie is a tame and mediocre affair. A conventionally told biopic about a talented artist who became famous, struggled with drugs, depression and bulimia, and died early. There are nice performances from gifted actors like Marisa Abela, Jack O'Connell, Eddie Marsan and Lesley Manville, and a soundtrack of hits that helps fill the space.

But as a portrait of Amy Winehouse? It is simply dreadful. The main problem with any movie about Winehouse is that a defining film already exists - Asif Kapadia's Oscar-winning documentary "Amy," released four years after her death from alcohol poisoning at age 27. Told through archival material, home videos and observations from those around her, it felt as intimate and unfiltered as a diary.

"Amy" was a sobering portrait of addiction, fame and complicity that also let you get to know and love the person behind the songs, the eyeliner, the beehive, the bloodied ballet slippers and the invasive paparazzi photos. It was no one's idea of sensationalistic and she's doing most of the talking.

"Amy" was also a movie that didn't sit well with her grieving family. Her father, Mitch Winehouse, said it was misleading and contained "basic untruths." After it won the Oscar, he doubled down saying that it had no bearing on her life and was manipulative. Kapadia, he said, was more exploitative of his daughter than anyone.

Following her death, Mitch started a foundation in her name to help young people and wrote a book about her and being the father of an addict. Her mother Janis narrated a documentary, "Reclaiming Amy,"

released in 2011. And after years of declining to participate in a narrative biopic, the estate decided to allow one with full use of the songs. Like many musical biopics made alongside an estate, it's hard not to look at "Back to Black" skeptically, wondering whose interests the film is serving.

Sam Taylor-Johnson, who directed, has said that she wanted to take the idea of "blame" out of the equation, that the family had zero input on her cut and would not benefit financially. And yet it also seems like a direct response to Kapadia's film, depicting more than a few key moments wildly differently. They're not just shown in a different light - some are telling a completely different story.

Empathetic

The screenplay by Matthew Greenhalgh is empathetic to the ex-husband Blake Fielder-Civil (O'Connell) and her father Mitch (Marsan), both of whom have been villainized over the years. In the film, most are just caught up in a whirl of inevitability and the retrospective blur of grief.

There seems to be an excessive amount of rationalizing in the way everyone involved talks about "Back to Black," over justifying its existence and its choices. But just because everyone keeps telling us that it's a celebration doesn't mean that we have to get on board. I'm not sure what is celebratory about dramatizing this tragedy, or helpful, or artful, or particularly revelatory about it either. The media, for example, is reduced mainly to the paparazzi camped outside her place as though that's where the problem stopped.

Taylor-Johnson has said she didn't want to glamorize depression, addiction or bulimia either, but the latter, which she struggled with before she was famous, is barely even acknowledged. Depiction of eat-

ing disorders is inherently fraught, but there had to have been a way to address such a large part of her life and self-image more directly.

Though linear, the story is also oddly confusing, assuming that the audience knows many details of her life (like, say, the bulimia) and the people in it. The film rushes through major career moments in montage, seeming to slow down only for a few things: A performance, Amy's face in various forms of drunken distress and agony or scenes with her and Blake. Was it attempting a freewheeling jazz form, or is it just messy?

In some ways, this portrait of Amy Winehouse makes her immense talent the sideshow and her obsession/romance/heartache over Blake the defining story of her adult life. This is at least somewhat redeemed by the chemistry between Abela and O'Connell, who look far too glowing and healthy to be believable as heroin addicts.

But the greatest failing is how shockingly cliché the ending is. For all of "Back to Black's" tiptoeing around delicate subjects, its romantically photographed sendoff to Amy is perhaps the most dangerously glamorized shot in the film. It doesn't even fade to black after a title card announces her death. Before anyone can feel anything, they've cut to Amy telling the audience that all she wants is for her songs to make people forget about their troubles for a bit.

By this point, it reads more like a closing statement for a film that never wanted to challenge, offend or move anyone. Mission accomplished.

"Back to Black," a Focus Features release in theaters Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for "drug use, language throughout, sexual content and nudity." Running time: 122 minutes. One and a half stars out of four. (AP)

Variety



Anya Taylor-Joy poses for photographers upon departure from the premiere of the film 'Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga' at the 77th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Wednesday, May 15. (AP)

Film

'Furiosa' debut gives Taylor-Joy megawatt star moment

All eyes are on Coppola in Cannes

CANNES, France, May 16, (AP) - Francis Ford Coppola on Thursday was to premiere at the Cannes Film Festival a film on which he has risked everything, one that's arriving clouded by rumors of production turmoil. Sound familiar?

On Thursday, Coppola's self-financed opus "Megalopolis" was to make its much-awaited premiere. Other films are debuting in Cannes with more fanfare and hype, but none has quite the curiosity of "Megalopolis," the first film by the 85-year-old filmmaker in 13 years. Coppola put \$120 million of his own money into it.

Forty-five years ago, something very similar played out when Coppola was toiling over the edit for "Apocalypse Now." The movie's infamous Philippines production, which would be documented by Coppola's late wife, Eleanor, was already legend. The originally planned release in December 1977 had come and gone. Coppola had, himself, poured some \$16 million into the \$31 million budget for his Vietnam-set telling of Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness."

"I was terrified. For one thing, I was on the hook for the whole budget personally - that's why I came to own it," Coppola said in 2019. "In addition, in those days interest was over 25, 27%. So it looked as though, especially given the controversy and all the bogus articles being written about a movie that no one knew anything about but were predicting it was 'the heralded mess' of that year, it looked as though I was never going to get out of the jeopardy I was in. I had kids, I was young. I had no family fortune behind me. I was scared stiff."

Gilles Jacob, delegate general of Cannes, traveled to visit Coppola, hoping he could coax him into returning to the festival where the director's "The Conversation" had won the Palme d'Or in 1974. In his book, "Citizen Cannes: The Man Behind the Cannes Film Festival," Jacob recounted finding Coppola in the editing suite "beset by financial woes and struggling with 20 miles of film."

By springtime 1979, Coppola had assembled an edit he screened in Los Angeles - much as he recently did "Megalopolis." When Jacob got wind of the screening, he threw himself into securing it for that

year's Cannes.

"Already considered an event even before it had been shown, 'Apocalypse Now' would be the festival's crowning glory," Jacob wrote. He added: "Ultimately I knew it was Cannes' setting - more than a match for his own megalomania - that would convince him to come."

But Coppola wasn't so sure. The film was unfinished, didn't have credits yet and he still was unsure about the ending. But after some back-and-forth and debate about whether "Apocalypse Now" would screen in or out of competition, it was decided: It would screen as a "work in progress" - in competition.

At the premiere in Cannes, Coppola carried his daughter, Sofia, then 8, on his shoulders. The response to the film wasn't immediately overwhelming.

Response

"'Apocalypse Now,' one of the most ballyhooed movies of the decade, got only a polite response at the Cannes Film Festival on Saturday," wrote the Herald Tribune.

At the press conference, Coppola was defensive about the bad press the film received and the attention given to its budget.

"Why is it that I, the first one to make a film about Vietnam, a film about morality, am so criticized when you can spend that much about a gorilla or a little jerk who flies around in the sky?" asked Coppola.

But "Apocalypse Now" would ultimately go down as one of Cannes' most mythologized premieres. The president of the jury that year, French author Francois Sagan, preferred another entry about war: "The Tin Drum," Volker Schlöndorff's adaptation of the Günter Grass novel. The jury, split between the two, gave the Palme d'Or to both.

"Megalopolis," too, will be premiering in competition on Thursday.

The day after the 1978 Cannes closing ceremony, Jacob recalled running into Coppola at the Carlton Hotel, just as he was leaving.

"A big, black limousine was about to drive off. The

back door opened and Francis got out," Jacob wrote. "He came up to me, held out his hand and, as he removed a big cigar from between his teeth, said, 'I only received half a Palme d'Or.'"

Meanwhile, "Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga" rolled into the Cannes Film Festival on Wednesday, returning George Miller's dystopia-on-wheels to the French Riviera festival and landing Anya Taylor-Joy a fairy tale moment on the Cannes red carpet.

Taylor-Joy, with her first film in Cannes, brought classical movie-star glamour to one of the most anticipated premieres of the festival. Wearing a cream-colored custom Dior gown, Taylor-Joy playfully posed for photographers while walking into the Palais des Festivals and offering mock salutes to her director.

The latest "Mad Max" film, starring Chris Hemsworth and Taylor-Joy as a young Furiosa, premiered in Cannes almost exactly nine years after "Mad Max: Fury Road" debuted at the French festival. Miller, who has served on the Cannes jury several times, also premiered his "Three Thousand Years of Longing" in 2022 here.

"To show it in that cinema with about 2,000 people with impeccable sound and screening is a big thing. It's kind of optimal cinema, really," Miller said in advance of the premiere. "The moment that they said, 'OK, we're happy to show this film here,' I jumped at it."

For the 28-year-old Taylor-Joy, "Furiosa" in Cannes was a full circle moment. The first time she came to the festival was to receive a Chopard trophy as an emerging actor in 2017. It was presented by the original Furiosa, Charlize Theron, the star of "Fury Road."

While this year's Cannes boasts many prominent upcoming premieres, including Francis Ford Coppola's "Megalopolis" and Yorgos Lanthimos' "Kinds of Kindness," with Emma Stone, the "Furiosa" debut was easily the biggest megawatt Hollywood event of the festival. Among the attendees were jury head Greta Gerwig, Eva Green, Naomi Campbell and Baz Luhrmann.

"Furiosa" opens in North American theaters on May 24.

LOS ANGELES: Reba McEntire is hosting Thursday's Academy of Country Music Awards, promising a night of memorable performances, including a tribute to Toby Keith.

When McEntire takes the stage at the Ford Center at The Star in Frisco, Texas, just north of Dallas, it will be a record 17th time she's emceed the show.

This year's nominees range from veteran acts to new talent, including the much-beloved Jelly Roll. This year marks his first-time receiving ACM nominations; he's up for entertainer of the year, male artist of the year, single of the year (for "Need a Favor," which won big at the CMT Music Awards last month), and music event of the year, for "Save Me" featuring Lainey Wilson. The last time a musician was up for entertainer of the year in his first round of ACM awards nominations was Billy Ray Cyrus in 1992.

The ACM festivities actually began ahead of Thursday's event, when the new artist of the year awards were handed out at Tuesday's ACM Country Kickoff fan festival at The Star: Megan Moroney took home new female artist of the year, Nate Smith won in the male category and Tigirlily Gold took home to prize for new duo or group.

Here's what you need to know before the main ACMs attraction begins.

The 2024 ACM Awards will stream on Prime Video and the Amazon Music channel on Twitch Live at 8 p.m. Eastern. A red carpet feed will become available on Prime Video, the Amazon Music Channel on Twitch and Amazon Live at 7 p.m. Eastern. (AP)

LONDON: A new exhibition of photographs owned by Elton John is everything one might expect from a star who has a fascination with image, a love of excess and a very large budget. Understated, it isn't. The show, opening this week at London's Victoria and Albert Museum, includes more than 300 pieces by 140 photographers selected from the vast collection of John and his husband David Furnish.

Covering the period from 1950 to the present day, they include iconic fashion shots by Irving

Penn, Richard Avedon and Herb Ritts, portraits of stars including The Beatles, Frank Sinatra Marilyn Monroe and Chet Baker, and photojournalism capturing moments in history, from the Black civil rights movement of the 1960s to 1980s AIDS activism and the Sept. 11 attacks.

Newell Harbin, director of the



John

McEntire

couple's collection, agreed that the sheer scale of the show is "a lot." "It's a little bit overwhelming sometimes, but it's just wonderful," she said at a preview on Wednesday.

The exhibition is entitled "Fragile Beauty," a name chosen by John that reflects his ethos, said curator Duncan Forbes, the museum's head

of photography. (AP)

NEW YORK: Savannah Gankiewicz of Hawaii was crowned Miss USA 2023 on Wednesday, more than a week after the previous titleholder resigned citing her mental health.

Gankiewicz, a model who leads

a female empowerment nonprofit, will hold the title until August - the remainder of the pageant's term, the Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported.

"I am ready to make a positive impact with this organization that I hold dear to my heart," said Gankiewicz, of Maui, during a ceremony at the Alohilani Resort Waikiki Beach. (AP)

Kuwait makes strides in managing hereditary heart conditions

Symposium unveils breakthroughs in myocardial hypertrophy research

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: The Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences recently hosted a symposium to unveil the outcomes of the project titled 'Determining the clinical, genetic, and radiological fate of patients with myocardial hypertrophy in Kuwait,' reports Al-Jarida daily.

Spearheaded by cardiology consultant Dr. Farida Al-Habib, the project aimed to devise strategies to prevent sudden death resulting from this hereditary condition, alleviate patient suffering, and enhance early intervention for improved health outcomes.

In a statement, the Foundation underscored its commitment to honoring researchers' achievements and facilitating the dissemination of impactful research findings.



Al-Habib speaking during the symposium.

The symposium served as a platform to foster collaboration among Kuwait's research and medical sectors, fostering effective social interaction and knowl-

edge exchange. Special recognition was given to Dr. Al-Habib for her exemplary contributions, alongside the commendable efforts of researchers across Kuwait.

Dr. Farida Al-Habib, recognized as a trailblazer in her field, highlighted the project's international acclaim, receiving top evaluations from global experts and publication in prestigious journals. She emphasized the project's alignment with the Foundation's goals of promoting scientific research and addressing national challenges, particularly in healthcare.

The research lays the groundwork for future initiatives focused on early detection and comprehensive care for patients with dilated cardiomyopathy, unraveling the disease's genetic underpinnings, clinical manifestations, and diagnostic ap-

proaches. The project's outcomes include insights into disease mechanisms, provision of solutions, and expansion of patient care services in Kuwait to effectively manage this life-threatening condition.

The symposium drew participation from a diverse audience, including researchers, academics, and specialists from various institutions such as the Ministry of Health, Kuwait University, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, Dasman Diabetes Institute, and Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialties. Representatives from government and private hospitals and medical centers also attended, fostering a collaborative environment for knowledge sharing and innovation.

In a separate initiative, the College of Administrative Sciences at Kuwait University hosted a work-

shop aimed at enhancing global communication with international universities. Dr. Yousef Abdel Salam, Acting Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, welcomed a delegation from the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences and the London University of Economics and Political Science.

Representatives from the London University of Economics and Political Science presented a comprehensive workshop on the Kuwait program at the University of London, providing detailed information on available programs, opportunities, application procedures, and admission requirements. The workshop aimed to encourage interested individuals to capitalize on these valuable opportunities for academic and professional advancement.

Can't sit still?

Expert offers tip to find your 'meditating style'

NEW YORK, May 16, (AP): The first time Marcelle Hutchins sat down to meditate, she put on a guided session, relaxed her shoulders and tried to close her eyes. She lasted two minutes.

"I had a deadline, and I thought, 'I don't know if I can sit still this long,'" said Hutchins, who was working as a radio journalist.

At the urging of her father, a long-time practitioner, she tried again and managed to finish a 10-minute video on her third attempt. "I remember feeling this sense of joy and relaxation," she said. "I used to be that person who said, 'I can't meditate.'"

Hutchins has since become a certified meditation teacher - and serves as an example that busy, restless people who try once should try again. Research shows a daily meditation practice can reduce anxiety, improve overall health and increase social connections, among other benefits.

The trick is to get over that initial barrier. Experts say it's more achievable when you throw common misconceptions out the window. For instance, many people try meditation only once because they feel they're doing it wrong or that they can't turn off their brain.

That's not the point, says Tara Brach, who holds a doctorate in psychology and has trained more than 7,000 people to be meditation teachers.

Thoughts

"It's not about stopping thoughts. The mind generates thoughts the way body creates enzymes," she said. "It's about being able to get larger than the thoughts and witness them."

There is no right way to meditate, Brach stressed.

The key is to relax and focus on something in the present moment. Feel your breath pass through your nostrils, listen to a guided recording, mentally scan your body from head to toe, repeat a loving phrase to yourself or try countless other techniques.

You can sit on the floor, in a chair or on a cushion. If you can't get comfortable, lie down. You don't even need to close your eyes, though it's recommended to try.

There is no standard amount of time to begin with, but set an achievable goal. "You can customize it to who you are," said Brach, author of several books, including "Radical Acceptance: Embracing Your Life With the Heart of a Buddha."

"Start with the most you can com-

fortably do without having to feel like you want to quit," she said.

That could mean starting with as little as a few minutes, said John Mitchell, an associate professor in psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Duke University who uses meditation to treat patients with ADHD. The goal should be working meditation into a routine and focusing on the quality of the practice, not the quantity.

Restlessness

"Then the question is, what do we do to create success so we can have momentum and start off without feeling like you're failing right way?" he said.

When you inevitably get distracted - everyone does - notice the thought or urge to move, acknowledge it and bring your attention back to where you are.

Instead of judging yourself, get curious for a minute about the nature of restlessness, Brach said. Ask yourself, "What does it really feel like if I want to jump out of my skin?"

Then take a long, deep breath, and sit for one more minute. If you still want to move, then move. But Brach recommended doing so mindfully. Stand up, do a light stretch, take a deep breath and sit again. You will be surprised at how that sense of restlessness will change over time, she said. "It will evolve."

If the restlessness builds to a point where you are uncomfortable, consider taking a slow, meditative walk, Mitchell said. Stay alert but calm, focusing on the sounds, sights and smells around you, or maybe on the sensation of the wind and sun on your face.

"You're not restricted," he said. "You don't have to sit there in silence and be still all the time."

Dubai hosts 5G-A Leaders' forum

5G-A to herald a new era in digital innovation and intelligence in ME

DUBAI, UAE, May 16: Global ICT leaders gathered at the 5G-Advanced (5G-A) Leaders' Forum in Dubai, UAE, to jointly delve into the multifaceted progression from 5G to 5G-Advanced, examining both the technological advancements and the practical implications of this transition. Held at the SAMENA Leaders' Summit, the 5G-A Leaders' Forum charted the course for the evolution of 5G technology to the 5G-A era, which will catalyze digital innovation and intelligence across the Middle East.

Solutions

The event was attended by high-profile speakers and guests, including regulatory authorities from the Middle East represented by UAE's Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA), industry groups represented by GSMA and WBBA, ICT solution providers, enterprises, analysts, ecosystem partners, and media members. Eng. Saif Bin Ghelaita, Executive Director, Technology Development Affairs, TDRA, delivered the opening speech at the 5G-A Leaders' Forum. Other notable speakers at the forum included Jawad J. Abbassi, Head of MENA, GSMA; Martin Creaner, DG, WBBA; Khalid Murshed, CTIO, e&UAE; Karim Benkirane, CCO, du; Cao Ming, President of Wireless Solution, Huawei; Liu Zhiyong, Deputy Chief Engineer of China Telecom; and Dr. Philip Song, CMO, Huawei Carrier Business.

Eng. Saif Bin Ghelaita, Executive Director, Technology Development Affairs, TDRA, said: "The commercialization of 5G-Advanced is imminent due to the readiness of both standards



Participants at the 5G-A Leaders' Forum.

and the ecosystem. The TDRA intends to develop a national plan for the 5G-Advanced network and is committed to promoting the planning and allocation of abundant spectrum to further advance mobile network development. In the symphony of 5G-Advanced, collaboration harmonizes progress. Let our collective efforts resonate across borders. We are not merely architects of networks; we are stewards of progress."

During the summit, the UAE launched 5G-A country and announced plans for the UAE to set sail for 5G-A nationwide. The announcement was made in the presence of senior representatives from TDRA, e&UAE, SAMENA Council, GSMA, WBBA, MEIG, and SHOWMAC.

In line with its economic vision, the UAE places great importance on ICT infrastructure construction and technology development. The country was an early adopter of 5G technology, and its deployment has already reaped numerous benefits. The UAE has plans underway for the successful deployment of 5G-Advanced.

In addition, several industry representatives announced the "Middle East Glasses-free 3D Industry Initiative" to promote the large-scale commercial use of glasses-free 3D business. After years of development, the core technology of glasses-free 3D has matured, and users can easily and freely enjoy a natural and comfortable 3D experience through various terminal devices. The high speed and low latency of 5G and

5G-A networks, the powerful processing capability of the computing network, and the power of AI capabilities will further bolster the real immersion and interaction convenience of glasses-free 3D, bringing users a new visual experience upgrade.

With over 300 commercial 5G networks already deployed globally and advancements continuing, the transition from 5G to 5G-Advanced is poised to revolutionize network capabilities and user experiences. While 5G laid the groundwork for faster speeds and more reliable connections, 5G-Advanced is set to push these boundaries further, offering significant enhancements in terms of network efficiency, coverage, and performance.

This next phase in mobile network evolution is not just an incremental upgrade; it embodies a leap forward in integrating artificial intelligence, improving network flexibility, and enabling more complex and varied use cases. From smart cities to advanced industrial applications, 5G-Advanced is expected to be a catalyst for innovative digital solutions across sectors, sparking a revolution in the way we connect and communicate.

The 5G-A Leaders' Forum spotlighted scenarios for a sustainable, technology-driven future encompassing 5G-A, and F5G-A deployment. In addition, dedicated sessions on 5G-A during the Summit explored advancements in standards, network planning and deployment, application scenarios, and showcasing successful case implementations and studies.

GPT-4o mimics human cadences, detects moods

OpenAI launches GPT-4o, improving ChatGPT's capabilities

SAN FRANCISCO, May 16, (AP): OpenAI's latest update to its artificial intelligence model can mimic human cadences in its verbal responses and can even try to detect people's moods.

The effect conjures up images of the 2013 Spike Jonze movie "Her," where the (human) main character falls in love with an artificially intelligent operating system, leading to some complications.

While few will find the new model seductive, OpenAI says it does work faster than previous versions and can reason across text, audio and video in real time.

GPT-4o, short for "omni," will power OpenAI's popular ChatGPT chatbot, and will be available to users, including those who use the free version, in the coming weeks, the company announced during a short live-streamed

update. CEO Sam Altman, who was not one of the presenters at the event, simply posted the word "her" on the social media site X.

During a demonstration with Chief Technology Officer Mira Murati and other executives, the AI bot chatted in real time, adding emotion - specifically "more drama" - to its voice as requested. It also helped walk through the steps needed to solve a simple

math equation without first spitting out the answer, and assisted with a more complex software coding problem on a computer screen.

It also took a stab at extrapolating a person's emotional state by looking at a selfie video of their face (deciding he was happy since he was smiling) and translated English and Italian to show how it could help people who speak different languages have a conversation.

MEDICAL CLASSIFIEDS

Take care of your health

To advertise in this page please call: (+965) 24813566 Ext.: 513 or E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

For your ads on this page

Call: 24813805 E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

www.arabtimesonline.com

مرکز شفاء الجزيرة الطبي SHIFA AL JAZEERA MEDICAL CENTRE FARWANIYA الفروانية

DENTAL & COSMETIC DEPARTMENT

- SCALING & GUM TREATMENT
- COSMETIC SMILE RECONSTRUCTION
- GUM & ORAL SURGERY
- BAD BREATH TREATMENT
- SURGICAL TREATMENT
- ROOT CANAL TREATMENT
- COSMETIC FILLING
- FIXED & REMOVABLE DENTURES
- CROWN TREATMENT
- SIMPLE & SURGICAL EXTRACTION

Dr. Shajahan V.M BDS, MDS Dental Surgeon

Dr. Ayham Askar BDS Dental Surgeon

Dr. Raina Fernandes BDS Dental Surgeon

Working Time: From 9am to 1pm & 5pm to 9pm

Ph: 24 734 000

Behind Maghateer Commercial Complex & Opp. Police station - Farwaniya

www.shifaaljazeera.com.kw

The T20 WC will be the 1st major int'l cricket competition in the U.S.

WC coming to NYC suburbs, where cricket thrives among immigrants

EAST MEADOW, May 16, (AP): A towering stadium boasting 34,000 seats and a precisely trimmed field of soft Kentucky bluegrass is rising in a suburban New York park that will host one of the world's top cricket tournaments next month.

But on a recent Saturday morning, on the other side of Long Island's Eisenhower Park, budding young cricketers were already busy batting, bowling and fielding on a makeshift pitch.

The T20 World Cup will be the first major international cricket competition in the U.S., but the centuries-old English game has been flourishing in the far-flung corners of metro New York for years, fueled by steady waves of

CRICKET

South Asian and Caribbean immigration. Each spring, parks from the Bronx and Queens to Long Island and New Jersey come alive with recreational leagues hosting weekend competitions.

American cricket organizers hope the June competition will take the sport's popularity to the next level, providing the kind of lasting boost across generations and cultures that soccer enjoyed when the U.S. hosted its first FIFA World Cup in 1994. On Wednesday, retired Olympic sprinter Usain Bolt, an honorary ambassador of the T20 World Cup, visited the nearly complete Eisenhower stadium, along with members of the U.S. cricket squad and former New York football and basketball greats.

Parmanand Sarju, founder of the

Long Island Youth Cricket Academy that hosted Saturday's practice, said he's "beyond joyful" to see the new stadium rising atop the ball field where his youth academy began, a sign of how far things have come.

"When we started more than a decade ago, there was no understanding of cricket, at least at the youth level," said the Merrick resident, who started the academy to teach his two American-born children the sport he grew up playing in Guyana in South America. "Now they're building a stadium here."

The sport originally took root in the outer boroughs of New York City but has gradually spread as immigrant families, like generations before, moved to the suburbs, transforming communities, said Ahmad Chohan, a Pakistan native who is the president of the New York Police Department's cricket club, which also plays in Eisenhower as part of a statewide league with roughly 70 teams.

The World Cup, he said, is a "historic moment."

Cricket is the second most-viewed sport in the world after soccer - India star Virat Kohli has 268 million Instagram followers - but it is only played by more than 200,000 Americans nationwide across more than 400 local leagues, according to USA Cricket, which oversees the men's national cricket team.

Major League Cricket launched last year in the U.S. with six professional T20 teams, including a New York franchise that, for now, plays some games at a Dallas-area stadium also hosting World Cup matches.

Venu Pisike, the chairman of USA

Cricket, believes the T20 World Cup - the first time the U.S. has competed in the tournament - will mark a turning point.

The sport is among those slated for the 2028 summer Olympics in Los Angeles - its first appearance at the games in more than a century, he noted. The International Cricket Council, the sport's governing body, has also committed to growing the U.S. market.

"Cricket is predominantly viewed as an expat sport, but things will look very different in the next 10, 20 years," said Pisike. "Americans will definitely change their mindset and approach in terms of developing cricket."

Both the Los Angeles games and the upcoming World Cup, which the U.S. is co-hosting with the West Indies, will feature a modern variant of the game known as "Twenty20" that lasts around three hours and is highlighted by aggressive batters swinging away for homerun-like "sixes." It's considered more approachable to casual fans than traditional formats, which can last one to five days when batters typically take a more cautious approach. Twenty20 is the format used in the hugely popular Indian Premier League.

Eisenhower Park will host the games played in the U.S., including a headlining clash of cricket titans Pakistan and India on June 9.

Other matches in the 55-game, 20-nation tournament that kicks off June 1 will be played on existing cricket fields in Texas and Florida. Later rounds take place in Antigua, Trinidad and other Caribbean nations, with the final in Barbados on June 29.

Punjab hands Rajasthan fourth straight loss

MUMBAI, May 16, (AP): Sam Curran's all-round show powered Punjab Kings to a five-wicket win over Rajasthan Royals in the Indian Premier League.

Rajasthan, which has already qualified for the playoffs, has lost four straight matches as it tries to hold on to second place.

The Royals got strangled at 144-9 on a slowish wicket and clearly missed their premier opening batter Jos Buttler, who returned to England for next week's Twenty20 series Pakistan ahead of the T20 World Cup.

Curran, who grabbed 2-24, made an unbeaten 63 off 41 - his second half-century of the season - and led Punjab to 145-5 in 18.5 overs. Punjab is out of contention for the play-

offs has 10 points with one game in hand.

Curran made an early impact with his left-arm swing bowling when he had Yashasvi Jaiswal (4) dragging the ball back onto the stumps in the first

CRICKET

over. Skipper Sanju Samson (18) completed 500 runs for the first time in his IPL career but struggled to give the innings momentum before he was caught at point in the eighth over.

Tom Kohler-Cadmore (18) had a below-par IPL debut as the Englishman couldn't fill in the big shoes of Buttler as he holed out to long on after struggling for 23 balls.

Top-scorer Riyan Parag (48) and Ravichandran Ashwin (28) combined in a half-century stand but leg-spinner Rahul Chahar (2-26) and Harshal Patel (2-28) kept picking up wickets to restrict Rajasthan.

Rajasthan had a sniff when fast bowler Avesh Khan (2-28) struck twice in one over during the power play and Jonny Bairstow (14) left the team in tatters at 48-4 when he holed out in the deep in the eighth over.

But Curran and Jitesh Sharma put the chase back on track with 63-run stand as Curran raised his half-century off 38 balls before sealing the game with seven balls to spare when he smacked sixes against Sandeep Sharma and Khan.

Cricket has a long history in the U.S. and New York, in particular.

The sport was played by American troops during the Revolutionary War, and the first international match was held in Manhattan between the city's St. George's Cricket Club and Canada in 1844, according to Stephen Holroyd, a Philadelphia-area cricket historian.

As late as 1855, New York newspapers were still devoting more coverage to cricket than baseball, but the sport remained stubbornly insular, with British-only cricket clubs hindering its growth just as baseball was taking off, he said. By the end of World War I, cricket

had largely disappeared - until immigrants from India and other former British colonies helped revive it roughly half a century later.

Anubhav Chopra, a co-founder of the Long Island Premier League, a nearly 15-year-old men's league that plays in another local park, is among the more than 700,000 Indian Americans in the New York City area - by far the largest community of its kind in the country.

The Babylon resident has never been to a professional cricket match but has tried to share his love for the game he played growing up in New Delhi with his three American chil-

dren, including his 9-year-old son who takes cricket lessons.

Chopra bought tickets to all nine games taking place at Eisenhower and is taking his wife, kids and grandparents to the June 3 match between Sri Lanka and South Africa. "For me, cricket is life," he said. "This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

The dense latticework of metal rods and wood sheets that make up Eisenhower's modular stadium will come down soon after the cup games end, but the cricket field will remain, minus the rectangular surface in the middle known as the pitch.

Miami's 5-game winning streak ends after a 0-0 tie with Orlando



Orlando City midfielder Nicolas Lodeiro (14) passes the ball past Inter Miami defender Marcelo Weigandt during the second half of an MLS soccer match in Orlando, Fla. (AP)

Cincinnati edge Atlanta United 1-0

ORLANDO, May 16, (AP): Drake Callender made three saves for his second clean sheet of the season and Inter Miami played Orlando to a scoreless draw on Wednesday night.

Miami (8-2-4), which has never defeated the Lions in MLS play in Orlando, had its five-game winning streak come to an end. Miami was looking to become the third team since 2019 to win six straight regular-season matches in the same

season.

Orlando (3-5-4) is just 1-3-3 at home this season.

Lionel Messi did not play for Miami due to a left leg injury. Messi played the entire game on Saturday despite a first-half injury scare. He briefly left that game late in the first half after some sort of issue with his left knee after being fouled by defender George Campbell.

Luis Suarez, who scored a brace against Orlando earlier this season, had a good scoring opportunity in the opening three minutes but it was saved by Pedro Gallese.

Callender made a diving stop of Martin Ojeda's shot in the 32nd minute to keep it scoreless.

Teenager Kevin Kelsy found the net for the second straight time in his third career match and FC Cincinnati edged Atlanta United 1-0.

Kelsy, a 19-year-old forward who was making his first start, took a pass from reigning MVP Luciano Acosta in the 7th minute and scored on a header to give Cincinnati (8-2-3) the lead. Kelsy also scored last week in a 2-1 road win over the defending champion Columbus Crew.

Goalkeeper Roman Celantano needed to make just one save on the way to his league-leading fifth clean sheet in nine starts this season for Cincinnati, which has won five in a row. The club improves to 6-1-1 on the road this season.

Brad Guzan saved four shots for Atlanta United (3-6-3), which is winless in its last seven matches. Atlanta United falls 0-3-2 on the road this season. The club has also lost a league-high three home matches.

Atlanta United still leads the all-time series 5-4-5, but Cincinnati improves to 3-0-3 with Pat Noonan as

manager.

Cincinnati improves to 11-2-5 in midweek matches under Noonan across all competitions. The defending Supporters' Shield winners beat Atlanta United 2-1 on the road earlier this season.

Atlanta United stays on the road to play Nashville SC on Saturday. Cincinnati will host St. Louis City on Saturday.

Diego Rossi and rookie Marino Hinestroza scored

SOCCER

second-half goals to propel the Columbus Crew to a 3-1 victory over CF Montreal.

The defending-champion Crew (4-2-6) began the night in eighth place in the Eastern Conference and had not earned a victory since beating the New York Red Bulls on March 16. They went 0-2-5 until righting the ship against Montreal (3-6-3).

Columbus took a 1-0 lead in the 19th minute on Max Arsten's second goal of the season and second in as many weeks. Arsten took a pass from Christian Ramirez and sent a right-footed shot from the right side of the box to the high center of the net.

Montreal pulled even at halftime when Mathieu Choiniere scored his first goal this season on a penalty kick in the second minute of stoppage time. Choiniere was awarded the PK after a yellow card on Crew goalkeeper Patrick Schulte.

Columbus retook the lead in the 59th minute on Rossi's first goal this season - with another assist from Ramirez.

Hinestroza, who subbed in for Christian Ramirez in the 84th minute, used assists from Steven Moreira and Aidan Morris to find the net in the 89th for some insurance. The 21-year-old Hine-

stroza has two goals in three starts and eight appearances this season.

Jonathan Sirois totaled one save for Montreal. Schulte stopped four shots for Columbus.

Montreal, which took a 2-0 lead over first-place Inter Miami before losing 3-2 last week, has not won since beat FC Cincinnati on April 13.

The two clubs played to a scoreless draw in Columbus on April 27.

The Crew lead the all-time series 14-9-6 and improve to 4-6-3 in Montreal. It was the 900th match in Montreal's history. The club is 415-333-152 all time.

Montreal travels to play Toronto FC on Saturday. Columbus stays on the road to play the Chicago Fire on Saturday.

Cameron Harper and Lewis Morgan scored five minutes apart early in the second half and the New York Red Bulls beat D.C. United 4-1 on Wednesday night.

New York (6-2-5) became the ninth team in MLS history to score at least nine goals in consecutive road matches against a single club.

Elias Manoel opened the scoring for New York in first-half stoppage time. Frankie Amaya lofted a long pass and Manoel ran past the defense and launched a long shot over goalkeeper Alex Bono, who was off his line.

Harper cut back his defender in the box and sent in a shot inside the far post to make it 2-0 in the 52nd minute. Harper nearly scored a second goal on a breakaway, but Alex Bono made a kick save and Morgan tapped the rebound into an empty net.

It was Harper's second goal in two games - to match his goal total from 2022 and '23. Morgan added his ninth goal of the season.

Howard, Charles lead Dream to victory

Arike owns fourth quarter, Wings pull away from Sky

ARLINGTON, Texas, May 16, (AP): Arike Ogunbowale scored 14 of her 25 points in the fourth quarter. Teaira McCowan and Natasha Howard had double-doubles and the Dallas Wings pulled away down the stretch for an 87-79 win over the Chicago Sky in a season opener on Wednesday night.

Trailing 75-73 with 3:16 to go, the Wings scored the next 14 points, capped by a deep 3-pointer by Ogunbowale for an 87-75 lead with 31 seconds left. Ogunbowale had nine points in the run with Howard, who finished with 15 points and 13 rebounds, adding two and Maddy Siegrist hitting a 3-pointer to give her 13 off the bench.

BASKETBALL

McCowan had 18 points and 13 rebounds. Marina Mabrey had 19 points and nine rebounds for the Sky, who had all five starters in double figures. Diamond DeShields, back for her second stint in Chicago, had 14 points, first-round draft pick Angel Reese and Elizabeth Williams, who played for Washington last season, both had 12 and Dana Evans had 10.

Mabrey hit a 3-pointer to give Chicago a 43-40 halftime lead. Mabrey, who had 13 points at the break, and Michaela Onyenwere hit consecutive 3s for a 24-14 advantage in the first quarter.

Down 25-16 after one quarter, Dallas came back and took a 36-35 lead on an offensive rebound and putback by Stephanie Soares. It was the first professional points for the 2023 first-round pick out of Iowa State, who didn't play last year because of an ACL tear her senior season. McCowan had 16 points and 10 rebounds at halftime for the Wings.

Williams' basket tied the game at 62 entering the fourth quarter.

Jaelyn Brown, who played four years overseas after going undrafted in 2020, started for Dallas but was scoreless. Jacy Sheldon, the Wings' first-round pick, had two points in nine minutes.

Rhyné Howard scored 25 points, Tina Charles had 21 with 14 rebounds and the Atlanta Dream turned back the Los Angeles



Chicago Sky guard Diamond DeShields (0) is defended by Dallas Wings forward Natasha Howard (6) during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Arlington, Texas. (AP)

Sparks 92-81 on Wednesday night in their season opener.

Howard had five points as the Dream opened the fourth quarter with an 11-0 run for a 77-66 lead. The Sparks got within 87-81 on a 3-pointer by Cameron Brink, the overall No. 2 pick, with 1:34 left but they missed their last four shots and had a critical turnover while Atlanta went 5 of 6 from the foul line.

Haley Jones had 14 points and Allisha Gray had 12 for the Dream and Charles, the overall No. 1 pick in 2010 who sat out last season, had 14 rebounds as the Dream shot 51%.

Kia Nurse had five 3-pointers and 23 points for Los Angeles. Dearica Hamby had 20 points and 14 rebounds and 11-year veteran Layshia Clarendon had 11 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists for her first career triple-double. Brink also had 11 points.

No surprises

Germany coach watches as others announce his squad

BERLIN, May 16, (AP): Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann watched as his initial European Championship squad was announced for him by a variety of people reflecting the mix in German society on Thursday.

Stuttgart goalkeeper Alexander Nübel was the only new name among the 27 called out in a video message featuring students, TV presenters, singers, döner kebab chefs, radio presenters and others.

"Super troop. Could be from me. But it's our squad," Nagelsmann said at the end of the video shown at a glitzy press conference in sponsor Volkswagen's showroom on Berlin's Unter den Linden boulevard.

Nagelsmann is keeping faith with the shakeup he initiated in March before the friendly matches against France and the Netherlands. Both games yielded wins, boosting confidence before Germany hosts the tournament next month. Nagelsmann clearly saw no need to change a winning team too much.

There was no return for Borussia Dortmund defender Mats Hummels or Bayern Munich midfielder Leon Goretzka despite their strong finishes to the season, but Hummels' club teammate Nico Schlotterbeck is back for the first time since last September. Hummels and Schlotterbeck helped Dortmund reach the Champions League final against Real Madrid on June 1.

Schlotterbeck and Dortmund teammate Niclas Füllkrug will join Germany late because of their involvement in the final,

as will Madrid's Toni Kroos and Antonio Rüdiger, who were also nominated for the tournament.

Most of the squad had been "leaked" by the federation through various outlets in the days before, though the unusual confirmations also led to some confusion. Thomas Müller, for example, suggested on Instagram that he was included before it was confirmed by the federation.

Germany:
Goalkeepers: Manuel Neuer (Bayern Munich), Alexander Nübel (Stuttgart), Marc-André ter Stegen (Barcelona), Oliver Baumann (Hoffenheim)

Defenders: Waldemar Anton (Stuttgart), Benjamin Henrichs (Leipzig), Joshua Kimmich (Bayern Munich), Robin Koch (Eintracht Frankfurt), Maximilian Mittelstädt (Stuttgart), David Raum (Leipzig), Antonio Rüdiger (Real Madrid), Nico Schlotterbeck (Borussia Dortmund), Jonathan Tah (Bayer Leverkusen)

Midfielders: Robert Andrich (Bayer Leverkusen), Chris Führich (Stuttgart), Pascal Groß (Brighton), İlkay Gündoğan (Barcelona), Toni Kroos (Real Madrid), Jamal Musiala (Bayern Munich), Aleksandar Pavlović (Bayern Munich), Leroy Sané (Bayern Munich), Florian Wirtz (Bayer Leverkusen)

Forwards: Maximilian Beier (Hoffenheim), Niclas Füllkrug (Borussia Dortmund), Kai Havertz (Arsenal), Thomas Müller (Bayern Munich), Deniz Undav (Stuttgart)


Embassy of India
Kuwait

TENDER No. - KUW / ADM / 872 / 02 / 2023 DATED - MAY 17, 2024
TENDER NOTICE FOR REPLACEMENT OF FLOOR MARBLE AND POLISH WORK

Embassy of India, Kuwait invites bids from interested companies for replacement of marble and polishing work in its premises.

Prospective / Interested companies are advised to inspect the area and present their offers in a sealed cover marked "Offer for replacement of Marble and polishing work in the Embassy- to be opened by addressee only" and addressed to the "Head of Chancery, Embassy of India, Diplomatic Enclave, Arabian Gulf Street, Safat 13015, Kuwait." The bid must be submitted at the Embassy on or before 13th June 2024 [Thursday]. A pre bid meeting will be held at 1430 hrs on 26th May 2024 [Sunday] in the Embassy of India, Kuwait.

The detailed Tender Document along with its Annexure may be downloaded from Central Procurement Portal <https://eprocure.gov.in/cpppl/> and also the official website of the Embassy of India, from <https://indembkuw1.gov.in/whats-new.php> (please scan QR)

For any other clarification please contact Mr. S. James Jacob, Head of Chancery on any working day (Sunday - Thursday) between 0800 hrs 1630 hrs on +965 - 22513498 / 50382250 or email to: admkuwait@mea.gov.in.

WAREHOUSE SPACE AVAILABLE IN SHUAIBA INDUSTRIAL AREA

• 3PL STORAGE • 2PL STORAGE

Contact : 97782214

SPORTS

Juve clinch 15th Coppa Italia title

Allegri makes history

ROME, May 16, (AP): An early goal from Dusan Vlahovic was all Juventus needed to beat Atalanta 1-0 in the Italian Cup final to cap what had been a disappointing season with a trophy.

Vlahovic scored four minutes in by finishing off a counterattack then had another possible goal waved off for off-side in the 72nd.



Atalanta's goalkeeper Marco Carnesecchi saves a ball during the Italian Cup final soccer match between Atalanta and Juventus at Rome's Olympic Stadium. (AP)

It's Juve's record-extending 15th Italian Cup title.

Juventus has fallen to fourth place in Serie A and there has been speculation that Massimiliano Allegri won't return as coach.

Allegri lost his cool in stoppage time when he grew angry at a decision, prompting him to rip off his jacket and be shown a red card for sarcastically applauding the referee.

Still, Allegri became the first coach to win the Italian Cup five times, breaking a tie with Sven-Goran Eriksson and Roberto Mancini.

The Bianconeri were banned from European competition this season due to a false accounting case.

SOCCER

"We qualified for the Champions League next season and we've won the Italian Cup, so we've achieved our goals for this season," Vlahovic said.

Atalanta will face unbeaten Bayer Leverkusen in the Europa League final next week.

Juventus also beat Atalanta in the 2021 Cup final and the Bergamo squad's only senior-level trophy remains the 1963 Italian Cup.

There were reports of clashes between Juventus and Atalanta fans at a rest stop on the highway leading down to Rome earlier in the day.



Juventus' players celebrate with the trophy at the end of the Italian Cup final soccer match between Atalanta and Juventus at Rome's Olympic Stadium. (AP)

Premier League heads toward dramatic finale

Man City bid to make history, Klopp bids farewell

LONDON, May 16, (AP): Manchester City is bidding to make history. Jurgen Klopp is bidding farewell.

The English Premier League is heading toward a dramatic and emotional finale on Sunday, with the title race between Man City - seeking an unprecedented fourth straight top-flight championship - and Arsenal going to the wire and taking center stage on an afternoon when goals and tears usually flow.

Many of those tears will likely come at Anfield where Klopp, the eccentric German who has bestrode the league for nearly nine years with his heavy-metal football and big grin, takes charge of his last game at Liverpool.

Klopp is definitely leaving. For other managers, the future is more uncertain.

Take those leading the three teams - Chelsea, Newcastle, Manchester United - who are looking to secure qualification for one of the European competitions. Mauricio Pochettino, Eddie Howe and Erik ten Hag, respectively, cannot be sure they'll be in the same job next season.

SOCCER

What's all but mathematically sure is that Luton is heading back to the second-tier Championship as the third relegated team. It will require a bizarre set of results to keep it up and send fourth-from-last Nottingham Forest down, meaning all three promoted clubs - Sheffield United, Burnley, Luton - will have lasted just one season in the league.

Most eyes, however, will be on the title race that has been tight but maybe not as absorbing as it could have been. That's because City - a trophy-hoarding machine led by Pep Guardiola - has long made a habit of finishing seasons on long winning runs, taking the tension out of what otherwise would be nerve-racking run-ins.

Beating Tottenham 2-0 on Tuesday left City with a two-point lead over Arsenal and knowing a win over West Ham will seal a fourth successive title, a feat which hasn't been achieved in England's top division since league play began in the sport's motherland in 1888.

City's future is also somewhat up in the air, given a date has been set - reportedly near the end of 2024 - for proceedings to be heard in a sports tribunal regarding the charges

Mbappé farewells the French league when PSG visit Metz

PARIS, May 16, (AP): Nine years after his debut, Kylian Mbappé bids farewell to the French league when Paris Saint-Germain visits struggling Metz on Sunday.

He has a last chance to add to his club-record tally of 256 goals, including 191 in the league.

"A page is turning, a chapter of my life is closing," the 25-year-old Mbappé said after being voted by his peers as the French league's best player for the fifth time. "I leave with my head held high, having done all that I could." The French Cup final on May 25 against Lyon will be his last game in a PSG jersey, then Mbappé makes a widely expected move to join Spanish giant Real Madrid.

Mbappé and Madrid have yet to announce the deal.

MBAPPE'S RISE "I will miss it," Mbappé said of playing in France. "It's the only league I've known." Mbappé was approaching his 17th birthday when he went on as a substitute for Monaco at Stade Louis II in December 2015. A few months later he scored his first goal, breaking France great Thierry Henry's record as the club's youngest scorer.

He hadn't even signed his first professional contract yet but the secret was out that there was a star in the making; a talent not seen in Ligue 1 since Karim Benzema broke into the Lyon side at 17.

The following season, Mbappé's goals helped

Monaco win Ligue 1 and reach the Champions League semifinals.

This has been his second straight season with 40 or more goals and third overall. With two games left to play, he has a career-high 44.

Mbappé played alongside stars like Neymar, Ángel Di María, Edinson Cavani and Lionel Messi, and won six league titles with PSG. He will also finish as the league top scorer for the sixth time, and fifth outright after sharing the 2020 award with Monaco's Wissam Ben Yedder.

Mbappé confirmed last Friday he is leaving at season's end, having already told PSG in February.

He felt emotional when highlights of his career in French soccer were shown on a big screen during Monday night's awards ceremony.

"When I looked at the footage it felt like a part of my life (was) being extinguished," he said. "There's the excitement about discovering something new but also emotion; the sentiment of leaving my country behind and carrying on my path." The path hasn't always been smooth.

He failed to score in the knockout stages of the pandemic-shortened Champions League in 2020 - missing good chances in the final when PSG lost to Bayern Munich 1-0 - and did not find the net in both legs of the recent semifinal defeats to Borussia Dortmund. Both games ended 1-0.



Hussein Al-Musallam, the President of the International Swimming Federation with swimmers after the inauguration.

Al-Musallam inaugurates Aquatic Sports Center in Bhutan

THIMPHU, May 16: Hussein Al-Musallam, the President of the International Swimming Federation, inaugurated the Aquatic Sports Center in the Kingdom of Bhutan, marking a significant stride in the federation's initiative to boost swimming across Asia.

Situated amidst the Himalayas at an elevation of 8,400 feet above sea level, the Water Sports Center stands as the world's

SWIMMING

first swimming facility in such high-altitude terrain. This landmark establishment is especially crucial for Bhutan, a country abundant in rivers and lakes, where drowning incidents are unfortunately common. The Bhutan Aquatics Center not only hosts

swimming literacy programs but also serves as a vital resource for saving children's lives.

Furthermore, this aquatic facility promises to promote public health awareness within the Bhutanese community. It will also attract elite swimmers from around the globe, including champions from America, Australia, and Europe, who seek high-altitude training opportunities. Moreover, it is anticipated to bolster sports tourism in Bhutan.

Al-Musallam commended the state-of-the-art infrastructure of the Aquatic Sports Center, hailing it as a beacon of modernity. He emphasized its pivotal role in combating swimming illiteracy in Bhutan, thus potentially preventing numerous children drowning in the country's water bodies. Additionally, he underscored its significance in advancing the sport of swimming within Bhutan.



A file photo of a Tunisian athlete celebrating.

WADA lifts sanctions on Tunisia

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has rescinded the sanctions imposed on Tunisia two weeks ago, bringing relief to the country after a period of unrest.

WADA, headquartered in Montreal, Canada, announced that it had received confirmation of a necessary government decree coming into effect. This development signifies that the Tunisian Anti-Doping Agency has fulfilled its commitments to regain compliance by aligning its national regulations with the World Anti-Doping Code.

Following a vote by the WADA Executive Committee, the Tunisian agency

has been promptly removed from the international agency's non-compliance list.

The sanctions were initially imposed on the Tunisian counterpart due to its failure to fully implement the 2021 version of the World Anti-Doping Code within its legal framework.

As a consequence of the sanctions, Tunisia had been barred from hosting regional, continental, or world championships, and its flag was prohibited from being displayed at the Olympic and Paralympic Games until the country returned to WADA's jurisdiction.

Best of the Rest

Flamengo eye KO stage: Flamengo edged closer to a place in the Copa Libertadores knockout stage on Wednesday with a 4-0 home victory over previously unbeaten Bolivar.

Gerson struck in the first minute at the Maracana stadium while Ayrton Medeiros and Everton Soares also scored before halftime.

Former Fiorentina striker Pedro added a fourth goal after the interval as the Brazilian side moved to second in Group E with seven points from five outings. (Xinhua)

Boca held by Fortaleza: Edinson

Cavani continued his prolific scoring run as Boca Juniors drew 1-1 at home to Fortaleza in their Copa Sudamericana Group D clash on Wednesday.

Cavani put the hosts ahead just after halftime at La Bombonera in Buenos Aires with a close-range effort following Lautaro Blanco's cross. The 37-year-old Uruguayan striker has now scored 11 times in 16 matches for Boca this year.

Fortaleza began attacking with more intent and Kevin Andrade put the Brazilian side on level terms in the 90th minute by calmly slotting a shot past former Manchester United goalkeeper Sergio Romero on a counterattack. (Xinhua)

FIFA urges soccer bodies to mandate racism as an offense

GENEVA, May 16, (AP): FIFA wants all 211 national federations to mandate racist abuse in soccer as a disciplinary offense, and designate a crossed hands gesture by victims to signal the abuse they get.

Soccer's world body detailed the tougher and more unified approach it wants to tackle racism on Thursday after months of consulting with victimized players including Real Madrid star Vinicius Junior.

The crossed hands gesture was made on a medal podium at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 by United States athlete Raven Saunders who won silver in women's shot put.

"It's the intersection of where all people who are oppressed meet," Saunders said in Tokyo.

FIFA is encouraging players to copy the gesture that

led to Saunders facing a disciplinary investigation by the International Olympic Committee, which has rules prohibiting political statements at medal ceremonies.

Teams whose fans or players racially abuse opponents could soon face disciplinary punishments such as forfeiting games, typically as a 3-0 loss, as part of a five-pillar pledge

SOCCER

on tackling discrimination. They will be put to FIFA member federations on Friday at their annual meeting in Bangkok.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino promised months ago to make a worldwide proposal and has consulted with Brazil star Vinicius Junior, who is Black and has been repeatedly abused

by opposing fans in Spanish stadiums.

He broke down in tears at a news conference in March before Spain hosted Brazil in a friendly organized in fallout of the persistent abuse he has faced in his adopted home.

"The time has come for football to unite to unequiv-



Rodrygo

Liverpool's supporters are sure to give a fitting sendoff to a manager who hasn't just led the club to eight trophies and helped regain its luster on the European stage. He has forged a connection with the port



Manchester City's Erling Haaland celebrates scoring his side's first goal during the English Premier League soccer match between Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester City at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London. (AP)

city and earned an iconic status, to boot.

Piling up the goals against Wolverhampton would be one way for Liverpool's players to thank their manager, who is sure to give The Kop one last flurry of fist pumps after the game.

While the four Champions League qualifiers - City, Arsenal, Liverpool and Aston Villa - have been confirmed, there are still some loose ends to tie up regarding who goes into the minor European competitions.

Tottenham needs a point at last-placed Sheffield United to guarantee fifth place and a berth in the Europa League.

Sixth-placed Chelsea (60), seventh-placed Newcastle (57) and eighth-placed Man United (57) are separated by three points ahead of games against Bournemouth, Brentford and Brighton, respectively. The sixth-place finisher will likely get into the Europa League and seventh place a Europa Conference League spot.

Man United will have a second opportunity for European qualification when it plays the FA Cup final against Man City on May 25.

Players to flag abuse with crossed hands

Black players who claimed they were racially abused by opponents or fans and tried to leave the field have themselves been shown a yellow card for their actions.

FIFA wants the crossed hands gesture to be the recognized signal for referees to start a long-standing three-step process at a game where racial and discriminatory abuse is heard: To pause the play and broadcast warnings in the stadium, to take teams off the field, then abandon games.

That three-step process should be mandatory across all 211 federations, FIFA said on Thursday.

Saunders initially was in trouble with the IOC for making the gesture which also was a broader statement celebrating diversity. The IOC investigation was paused days later after Saunders' mother died.

Soccer leaders in countries such as Italy and Spain have consistently denied the sport has a racism problem. In some cases, investigations were dropped by soccer authorities including UEFA because there was no evidence beyond a claim by the player alleging abuse.



Dallas Mavericks center Daniel Gaford (21) and Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander (2) compete for a rebound during the first half of Game 5 of an NBA basketball second-round playoff series in Oklahoma City. (AP)

Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

Kuwait Club's basketball dynasty continues



Kuwait Club players celebrate their league Shield victory on the podium.

Basketball team wins 6th consecutive title

By Khaled El Anzi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, May 16: The Kuwait Club secured their sixth consecutive Basketball Premier League Shield title and the 15th in its history with a resounding 107-88 victory over Al-Qadisiya at the Federation Hall, Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex.

The league's culmination saw the presence of Dhari Burgess, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Basketball Federation, along with other board members. Burgess honored the winners.

Among those attending the basketball league final were Kuwait Club President Khaled Al-Ghanim, club directors, and Sheikh Fahd Talal Al-Fahad, Vice Chairman of Al-Qadisiya Club's Board of Directors.

Since its inception in the 1961-1962 season, six clubs have claimed championship titles, with Al-Qadisiya leading with 23 titles, followed by Kuwait Club with 15, Kazma with 9, and Al-Arabi with 8. Al-Jahra secured the title 5 times, and Al-Sahel once, while the tournament results were annulled in the 2000-2001 sports season.

Khaitan play relegated Al-Jahra

Al-Shabab control fate as the survival race heats up

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 16: Tonight marks the conclusion of the relegation group matches in the Zain Premier League, featuring two pivotal fixtures in the sixth round. At 7:10

SOCCER

pm, Kazma will face off against Al-Shabab, while simultaneously Al-Jahra will take on Khaitan at the Friendship and Peace Stadium.

Kazma's position in the Premier



Khaitan player wins the aerial battle during a league game.

Dhari Burgess, Chairman of the Federation's Board of Directors, extended congratulations to Kuwait Club's leadership, players, and staff on their victory, highlighting Kuwait Club's consistent performance throughout the season. He also commended Al-Qadisiya's efforts, noting its return to the finals as a significant addition to the league's competitiveness.

Kuwait Club President Khaled Al-Ghanim expressed pride in the team's accomplishments, praising its consistent success across various competitions. He emphasized the team's status as a powerhouse in Kuwaiti basketball and its readiness to compete in upcoming Central and West Asian Championships.

Bader Al-Osaimi, Vice Chairman of the Kuwait Club's Board of Directors and Head of the Basketball Authority, lauded the players' resilience across multiple fronts, acknowledging the challenges posed by local, regional, and Asian competitions. He highlighted the team's readiness to represent Kuwait admirably in the upcoming Asian League for West and Central Asia, known as "the Super League," alongside Kazma.

In other news, two Federation Cup quarter-final matches are scheduled for today, with Al-Qadisiya facing Yarmouk at 5:00 pm, followed by Kuwait Club match against Al-Nasr at 7:30 pm.

League for the upcoming season is secured, leading the standings with 32 points. The battle for the remaining qualification spot is between Al-Shabab (20 points) and Khaitan (18 points), with Al-Jahra already relegated to the first-tier clubs with 14 points, securing the fourth and final spot.

Al-Shabab aims to secure qualification by either defeating or drawing with Kazma, relying on their advantage in direct confrontations with Khaitan. Meanwhile, Khaitan must secure a win, relying on the determination of its players.

In their previous encounters this season, Al-Shabab has demonstrated dominance over Kazma with two victories (2-1 and 2-0) and one defeat (0-2).

Al-Shabab understands that their fate in the Premier League rests in their hands, emphasizing the need for success in the final leg of the tournament.

On the other hand, Kazma seeks to conclude the season on a positive note, with young players eager to showcase their talents and earn the trust of the coaching staff.

In the second match, Khaitan is determined to secure a victory to bolster its chances of survival in the league. However, it also relies on Al-Shabab's defeat to strengthen its position.

Khaitan has struggled against Al-Jahra in their previous encounters this season, with "Sons of the Red Palace" securing two victories (2-1 and 4-2) and a draw.

Mavericks top Thunder to take 3-2 series lead

Celtics advance to East finals

Chelsea stay on track

Man United edge Newcastle, keep alive European qualification hopes

MANCHESTER, England, May 16, (AP): Manchester United kept alive its hopes of European qualification through its placing in the Premier League by beating Newcastle.

A strike by substitute Rasmus Hojlund in the 84th minute proved to be the difference between the teams at

Old Trafford as under-pressure Man United manager Erik ten Hag gained a much-needed victory in his team's last home game of the season.

The hosts joined seventh-place Newcastle on 57 points but has an inferior goal difference. Both clubs are three points behind sixth-place Chelsea, which won 2-1 at Brighton.

The teams finishing in sixth and seventh place should qualify for the Europa League and Europa Conference League, respectively. Man United could also get in the Europa League by winning the FA Cup final against Manchester City on May 25.

Kobbie Mainoo put Man United ahead in the 31st after a pass was slipped through the Newcastle defense by Amad Diallo, who regained the lead for the home side with a fierce left-footed shot through a crowd of players after a 57th-minute corner wasn't fully cleared.

Anthony Gordon had equalized in the 49th and Lewis Hall ensured a nervy finish to the game for Man United by making it 3-2 in stoppage time.

Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag had just seen his team win its last match at Old Trafford this season when he strode onto the field and took the microphone to address the club's fans.

SOCCER



Newcastle's Alexander Isak, (right), makes an attempt to score during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and Newcastle United, in Manchester, England. (AP)

career-high 19 points and P.J. Washington Jr. added 10 points and 10 rebounds for Dallas, which shot 52.6% from the floor. The No. 5-seeded Mavericks can advance to the Western Conference finals with a win Saturday at home.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 30 points for the top-seeded Thunder, but no other Oklahoma City player scored more than 13 points. The Mavericks won Game 5 on the road, just like they did in the first round against the Los Angeles Clippers. Dallas held Oklahoma City to 42.5% shooting.

Oklahoma City tried to jump-start its struggling offense by replacing Josh Giddey with Isaiah Joe in the starting

lineup. Giddey did not start for the first time in 229 combined regular season and postseason games.

Dallas led by 15 in the second quarter and took a 54-44 edge into halftime. Jones scored 15 points before the break.

Gilgeous-Alexander scored 14 points in the third quarter, but Dallas still led 79-67.

Dallas pushed its lead out to 18 points early in the fourth quarter before the Thunder surged. A 3-pointer by Gilgeous-Alexander cut the deficit to 89-79 with just under seven minutes remaining and forced Dallas to call a timeout. The Thunder never got closer than seven points the rest of the way.



Boston Celtics guard Payton Pritchard, (left), drives against Cleveland Cavaliers guard Darius Garland during the first half of Game 5 of an NBA basketball second-round playoff series in Boston. (AP)

BASKETBALL

career-high 33 points and had seven rebounds. Marcus Morris Sr. had five 3-pointers and finished with 25 points.

Cleveland now enters a summer of uncertainty with the futures of Mitchell and coach J.B. Bickerstaff squarely in the spotlight.

Mitchell has been everything for the Cavs in his second postseason for Cleveland. He earned his fifth All-Star appearance in the regular season. He averaged 29.6 points in these playoffs but didn't play in either of the final two games.

The end of Mitchell's tenure in Cleveland could potentially come in the same TD Garden arena where LeBron James played his last game with the Cavs before leaving for Miami in 2010.

Mitchell is eligible to sign a contract extension but has not given any indication he's eager to stay or leave Cleveland.

Bickerstaff is completing his fourth full season as Cleveland's coach. Including the 11 games he coached after taking over for John Beilein during the 2019-20 season, Bickerstaff is 170-159 with two playoff appearances.

Much like they did in Game 4 without Mitchell, the Cavs used the 3-point line to keep pace with the Celtics, making 8 of 19 in the opening 24 minutes.

Cleveland started the second quarter by connecting on 4 of 5 attempts from beyond the arc to nudge ahead 46-40. The Cavs also got solid minutes off the bench from Marcus Morris Sr., who scored 14 points in his first 12 minutes of action.

But Boston rallied and closed with an 18-6 run to take a 58-52 lead into halftime.

Luka Doncic scored 31 points in a triple-double, and the Dallas Mavericks beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 104-92 to take a 3-2 lead in the Western Conference semifinal series.

Doncic, the league's leading scorer in the regular season, had struggled some in the series against Oklahoma City. Playing through a sprained right knee and a sore left ankle, he had averaged just 22 points on 39% shooting through the first four games. He made 12 of 22 field goals in Game 5 and had 11 assists and 10 rebounds for his sixth career playoff triple-double. Derrick Jones Jr. scored a playoff