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Amir celebrates academic excellence at PAAET graduation ceremony

– Details Page 2 –

Amiri Diwan photo

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah joins PAAET graduates of the 2022/2023 academic year for a group photo.

Amir condoles as helicopter crash claims Iran president

FM among 8 dead; Khamenei taps Mokhber

KUWAIT CITY, May 20, (Agencies): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Monday a cable of condolences to Acting President of Iran Mohammad Mokhber over the demise of President Ebrahim Raisi and his accompanying delegation in a helicopter crash.

His Highness the Amir also expressed similar sentiments to the families of the deceased, wishing them and the Iranian people patience and solace.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent on Monday a cable of condolences to the Iranian Acting President Mohammad Mokhber over the death of President Ebrahim Raisi and accompanying delegation in a helicopter crash.

In the cable, His Highness expressed his sincere condolences and deep sympathy to the families of the victims and the Iranian people.

In this photo provided by Moj News Agency, rescue team members carry the body of a victim after a helicopter carrying Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi crashed in Varzaghan in northwestern Iran, Monday, May 20, 2024.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, the country's foreign minister and several other officials were found dead on Monday, hours after their helicopter crashed in a foggy, mountainous region of the country's northwest, state media reported.

The crash comes as the Middle East remains unsettled by the Israel-Hamas war, during which Raisi, who was 63, under Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei launched an unprecedented drone-and-missile attack on Israel just last month.

Khamenei announced Monday that Iran's first vice president, Mohammad Mokhber, would serve as the country's acting president until elections are held.

Meanwhile, Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince and Prince Mohammad bin Salman, expressed their deepest condolences to Iranian Acting President, Mohammad Mokhber, and to the people of Iran over the deaths of President Ebrahim Raisi during an aircraft accident.

The Saudi Press Agency (SPA) indicated that they received the news of the death with deep sorrow, expressing wishes of solace and patience to the families of the decreased.

Among the dead was Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, 60. The helicopter

Continued on Page 5

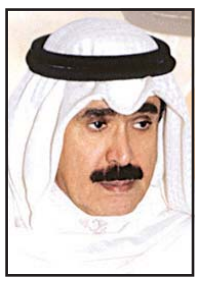
Opinion

Prime Minister, amend laws of envy and grudge

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

YOUR Highness the Prime Minister, let us talk frankly: For 60 years, the two authorities have been boasting about creating a national industry and ensuring food self-sufficiency. In every work program of the successive governments, there has been an item to motivate and support these two sectors.



Al-Jarallah

However, the opposite has been happening in reality. Instead of encouragement, thorns were put on the wheels and procedures have become increasingly arbitrary, until Kuwait became repellent for any individual initiative in all sectors.

Today, we are in a new era. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah announced his general plans on several occasions, the most recent of which was his speech on May 10 about restoring Kuwait's 'pioneership' and renaissance. In its first meeting, His Highness instructed the government to work on this restoration, and that he will hold any negligent person accountable.

From this standpoint, the Council of Ministers must live up to the expectations of His Highness, who translates the aspirations of the Kuwaiti people into reality. Restoring 'pioneership' is done by creating a national industry that has the ability to compete through incentives, not obstructing its work as it is happening currently -- whether through what is called 'judicial control' granted to inspectors who sometimes work according to their whims, closing factories just for a minor mistake based on the interests of competitors or issuing decisions that increase the burdens of the factory and its workers, as if everyone is a thief.

In countries where an industry has emerged, governments have placed all incentives for it. They supported it financially, in the media and in marketing. They secured all capabilities for the industry, because it is one of the pillars of prosperity and the best evidence of the strength of the State. We have the best examples in our neighboring countries in terms of renaissance in this field.

Other countries also support the agricultural industry, because they want to attain food self-sufficiency and protect national products. In this regard, the late Lebanese-American writer, Gibran Khalil Gibran, was right when he said: "Pity the nation that wears a cloth it does not weave, eats a bread it does not harvest…."

"The first basis for the collapse of states is dependence on the outside for everything, starting with food and not ending with importing factors of comfort and luxury. Ibn Khaldun warned about these 600 years ago.

Continued on Page 5

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Day by Day

TODAY, the citizen experiences a profound sense of gratitude towards their country's leadership. In the past, power and decision-making were dominated by opportunists who exploited loopholes in the Constitution to evade consequences for their actions.

Their unchecked influence created an illusion that they were the true rulers, shaping critical decisions according to their whims. During times of political turbulence, the law was twisted in countless ways to serve their interests.

Now, even the flow of traffic seems to reflect a newfound orderliness. God bless the visionary who issued directives, illuminating the path towards progress.

… Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Kuwait's inflation up by 3.17%: CAS

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: According to data released by the Kuwaiti Central Administration of Statistics, consumer price indexes, indicating inflation, rose by 3.17 percent locally during April compared to the same period last year, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The statistics further revealed a monthly increase of 0.30 percent in inflation for April compared to March. This surge in annual inflation was primarily driven by higher prices across key categories impacting index movement, notably clothing, food,

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait to test launch new broadcasting channel

KUWAIT CITY, May 20, (KUNA): The Ministry of Information announced on Monday that it would test launch a news broadcasting channel in July as part of its new strategy to follow up on local, regional and international developments.

After a meeting held by the Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, the Ministry's Spokesperson Dr. Bader Al-Enezi told KUNA that the news channel to be launched will include news bulletins, summaries, cultural programs and talk shows, around the clock.

"The channel's policy will be compatible with the foreign policy of Kuwait regarding foreign issues, and will work to highlight the most important local events and achievements and present them as a news interface for the country," he said.

"In light of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's latest speech, the channel will shed the light on the government's achievements and work with the directives of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah in cooperation with the media, institutes and ministries," he noted.

"The channel will use the latest technology in the field of television broadcasting, photography and directing, in studios operating at the highest levels and by benefiting from the expertise and technical crews of the Ministry of Information," he added.

Leave or amend status, says MoI

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The Ministry of Interior has launched an awareness campaign entitled, "You Can Leave the Country or Amend Your Legal Status," for all those who violated the Residency Law, reports Al-Seyassah daily. The ministry advised violators to visit the Residency Affairs Department in their respective areas to complete the necessary procedures to leave the country or legalize their status.

Last March, the ministry started implementing the amnesty to allow those who

Continued on Page 5

KUNA photo

Head of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Sheikh Humoud Al-Sabah with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Secretary General Juan Carlos.

DGCA, ICAO seek aviation ties boost

RIYADH, May 20, (KUNA): Head of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Sheikh Humoud Al-Sabah discussed on Monday with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Secretary General Juan Carlos bilateral cooperation.

In a statement to KUNA, Sheikh Humoud Al-Sabah said that the meeting took place in Riyadh on the sidelines of the third edition of the Future Aviation Forum 2024.

During the meeting, both sides agreed on more cooperation between ICAO and Kuwait

Continued on Page 5

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Interior Minister **Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah** and US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, discussed topics of common interest and latest regional and global events.

In a press release, the Ministry of Defense that during the meeting Sheikh Fahad lauded the distinguished friendly ties between Kuwait and the **US**.

The meeting was attended by US Ambassador to Kuwait **Karen Sasahara**. (KUNA)

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KUWAIT CITY: The Central Bank of Kuwait launched Monday the fourth cohort of the Cybersecurity Leaders Program, in light of its strategy to develop qualified national cadres in the banking sectors, said the CBK Governor **Basel Al-Haroon**.

In a press release, Al-Haroon noted that this high-level capacity-building program is addressed to Kuwaitis specialized in information and network information and aims to foster a generation of experts and technicians capable of developing the right programs to protect the information systems used in the Kuwaiti banking and financial sector. (KUNA)

Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:23	Asr	15:20
Sunrise	04:53	Maghrib	18:36
Zohr	11:44	Isha	20:04

Local

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Hot and relatively humid over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind, with speeds of 10-42 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

By Night: Mild and relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate southerly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-35 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	40	29
Kuwait Airport	41	24
Abdaly	41	24
Jahra	42	27
Salmiyah	38	29
Nuwaisib	42	24
Wafra	41	23

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

Education minister extends his deep thanks and appreciation to His Highness

Amir patronizes, attends honoring ceremony for top PAAET graduates

HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad receives flowers.

KUNA photos

HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber during his attendance at the ceremony.

KUWAIT CITY, May 20, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Monday patronized and attended the graduating ceremony for excelling Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) graduates, for the academic year 2022/2023.

Receiving His Highness the Amir were Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Adel Al-Adwani and General Director of PAAET Dr. Hassan Mohammed Al-Fajam, and authority's top officials.

Attending the ceremony was also His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Chief of Supreme Judicial Council and Court of Cassation Counselor Dr. Adel Bouresli, top state officials and families of graduates.

The minister of education extended his deep thanks and appreciation for His Highness the Amir for sponsoring and attending the ceremony.

In his speech addressing the audience during the ceremony on Monday, Minister Al-Adwani, spoke of His Highness the Amir's vision of creating an individual with the awareness and capabilities to face challenges of the future.

Knowledge

The minister highlighted His Highness the Amir's directives of investing in education and cultivating knowledge to ensure sustainable growth and comprehensive development for the country.

These visions and directives drove the authority with both its educational and training sectors to strive towards becoming a beacon of knowledge and aspire to boost productivity and competitiveness in job market, supplying it with capable graduates and trainees to meet demand and address shortages.

Al-Adwani congratulated the excelling graduates, expressing his pride in their achievements, and wishing them success saying that this is but the beginning.

Minister Al-Adwani called the youth a never-ending wealth for the country to achieve all its hopes and ambitions.

As for Dr. Al-Fajam, he warmly welcomed His Highness the Amir in his address at the ceremony.

Al-Fajam said, addressing His Highness the Amir, "We welcome Your Highness as we celebrate your presence with special pride. It is a celebration of the soul and real joy's comeback to the hearts of the authority and all its personnel."

PAAET, since 2020, when the distressing corona virus pandemic broke out, has been graduating excellent students without celebration, in absence of the "Kuwait's ruler and leader, thus your presence Your Highness ... is a bright moment for the graduates," he said, applauding His Highness' keenness on partaking in the celebration with the graduates' parents.

Responsibilities

The authority has been shouldering great responsibilities and undertaking grand tasks to attain goals of its establishment; securing and developing the national labor force and meeting the country's development needs.

With launch of Kuwait development strategy, new Kuwait vision 2035, PAEET has set participation in attaining it among its priorities, thus its 2023-2038 strategy had been worked out to rise to the level of Kuwait vision, in cooperation with the Arab Planning Institute and the Secretariat General of Planning and Development.

PAAET's strategy, he has continued, envisages overhauling the national cadres' potentials, encouraging innovation and creativity scientifically and professionally, said Al-Fajam, revealing that more than 20,000 citizens are enrolled in the authority per year.

The authority sets up high-quality programs, with continuous communications with the public and private sectors, "to open new horizons for the graduates," Al-Fajam said.

In addition to upgrading installations and building branches with international specifications, PAAET applies governance in the administration through digitization to ensure integrity, transparency and combating corruption for preserving public funds and achieving high-quality performance.

The plan encompasses boosting the community's participation, depending on studies and researches conducted by elite personnel, to find solutions to plentiful problems and challenges facing the state institutions.

Al-Fajam indicated that the hard work resulted in earning certificates of excellence from international organizations for PAEET's faculties.

Vision

"Your Highness, your vision, sagacious administration and pioneering plan aim at attaining full scale development of the Kuwaiti citizens, where they adopt strong loyalty and belonging to the homeland based on a system of religious and ethical values and genuine traditions ... an approach designed to maintain Kuwait as a minaret of civilization and sciences, present and effective at the Gulf, regional and international quarters.

Turning his address to the graduates, along with their families, Al-Fajam urged for maximum efforts for promoting and developing Kuwait. "Stick to the path of hard work, national unity, shun any causes of discords," Al-Fajam said, as he warmly re-welcomed His Highness the Amir and expressed deep appreciation for his presence at the graduation ceremony, held at PAAET's theater in the district of Shuwaikh.

For her part, Wansah Abduljaleel, a graduating student, delivered a speech on behalf of all peers, welcomed His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Prime Minister His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of Education and Higher Education and Scientific Research Adel Al-Adwani, Head of The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training Dr. Hassan Al-Fajam, and the graduates families.

Motivation

She thanked His Highness the Amir for his trust and continuous motivation to serve Kuwait under his wise leadership.

The youth is this country's future and its development, she added, "We learned that our ambitions and hopes should always be directed to serve Kuwait and contribute in its progress and maintain its security and stability."

On behalf of all graduates, Abduljaleel thanked the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training for their efforts in supporting Kuwait's progress.

She extended the graduates sincere appreciation to the teachers for teaching them and showing them valuable efforts, as well as the parents and families for supported them throughout this journey.

Abduljaleel concluded the speech by wishing His Highness the Amir good health and further progress and prosperity to Kuwait, and thanked everyone that attended the ceremony.

His Highness the Amir was then presented with a gift to commemorate the occasion.

Draft decree OK'd on Civil Service Council & citizenship probe panel

Cabinet holds weekly meeting at Seif Palace

KUWAIT CITY, May 20, (KUNA): The Kuwait Cabinet approved Sunday a draft decree forming the Civil Service Council and a decree to form a supreme committee for investigating Kuwaiti citizenship.

This came during its weekly meeting at Seif Palace, presided by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Prime Minister thanked the ministers for accepting the participation in the newly formed government, calling them to devote themselves to work and implement what was stated in the contents of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber's speech.

His Highness the Prime Minister called on the ministers to cooperate and continuously coordinate between all government agencies to unify efforts and harness energies to accelerate the implementation of strategic development projects in the country.

He also urged every ministry and government agency to submit reports to the Cabinet on the current executive position of each project.

The First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah, in response to the speech of His Highness the Amir, stressed that the ministers are aware of the extent of responsibility, honesty, and the national role on their shoulders towards the nation and its citizens.

Sheikh Fahad also stressed the importance of working hard to establish justice, fight corruption, preserve national identity, preserve unity, and defend and protect the nation's security.

He also stressed the importance of preserving the nation's wealth and developing it, accelerating the pace of implementation of projects, developing e-government services, and consolidating the principles of justice and transparency.

On the other hand, the Cabinet approved a draft decree forming the Civil Service Council, and a draft decree forming the Supreme Committee to investigate Kuwaiti citizenship, and submitted them to His Highness the Amir.

The Cabinet also approved the formation of ministerial committees.

Kuwait's Cabinet praised the national team player Faisal Al-Rajhi's achievement of winning the gold medal in a 5,000-meter race in a wheelchair race at the Japan World Para Athletics Championships 2024.

PM's Diwan photo

HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting.

Embassy workshop sheds light on admission procedures

4,000 Kuwaitis studying in Jordan universities

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Around 4,000 Kuwaitis are currently studying in universities in Jordan, reports Al-Rai daily quoting the Jordanian Embassy.

The embassy made this disclosure at an introductory workshop titled, "Unified admission mechanisms in Jordanian universities and admission policies," hosted by the Kuwait Teachers Society for high school students and their parents.

The embassy also confirmed that over the past 10 years 11,000 Kuwaiti students have graduated from Jordanian universities, most of whom specialized in the medical field.

Attracting

Muhannad Al-Khatib, Advisor to the Jordanian Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and Director of the Admissions Coordination Unit, emphasized that Jordanian universities are attracting students from Arab and foreign countries. He said there are currently more than 46,000 international students from 111 countries enrolled in various Jordanian educational institutions. He added the Jordanian universities follow the American credit hour system, enabling students to join the university during three semesters, including vacation periods. He also confirmed the employees in Jordanian universities are highly qualified as proven by the excellence of their graduates.

He went on to say that seven public and private Jordanian universities are part of international rankings, with the University of Jordan ranking 498 among the top 500 universities in the world according to the' QS' classification. He affirmed that university fees in Jordan are reasonable and competitive compared to other countries; indicating that students from sisterly Arab countries, particularly Kuwait, do not feel alienated as they live among their families and experience customs, traditions and social life similar to their own country.

Meanwhile, Awni Tbeishat, the cultural advisor at the Jordanian Embassy, advised those interested in studying at Jordanian universities to visit the Ministry of Higher Education's website for detailed information. "There are approximately 30 specializations available. Students must carefully select universities and specializations close to their desires. For unified admission, they should review the acceptance rates in previous years," Tbeishat added.

Treatment

Regarding Kuwaiti students in Jordan, Tbeishat stressed that they receive special treatment, along with students from other Gulf countries and expatriates in general. Kuwaiti students have access to a dedicated website to submit their applications directly, which operates 24 hours a day and eliminates the need for intermediaries. The website also provides support in responding to students' inquiries before or after enrollment in universities. Currently, around 4,000 Kuwaitis are studying in Jordan, primarily in the medical field. Over the past 10 years; more than 11,000 Kuwaiti students have completed their education in Jordanian universities, making them one of the largest Arab student populations, he revealed.

He stated that the 'Study in Jordan' website provides comprehensive information about Jordanian universities, specializations, fees, registration processes, tourism and living arrangements. He also confirmed the existence of a special directorate for international students, which offers necessary facilities and organizes extracurricular activities; such as a competition for the best reciter of the Holy Qur'an, a football league and honors for excellent students.

He then announced the launch of a unified admission system for international students before the start of the upcoming academic year. This system will allow students to obtain university admission while in their home countries, pay university fees, and obtain endorsements from their country's cultural attaché in Jordan, he added.

Al-Jarida photo

Photo taken during the unveiling of the logo.

Al-Budaiwi unveils new GJU logo

The Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Jassim Al-Budaiwi, officiated the unveiling of the new logo and website of the Gulf Journalists Union (GJU), amidst distinguished guests including Nabil Al-Hamar, the King of Bahrain's Advisor for Media Affairs, and Dr. Ramzan Al Nuaimi, Bahrain's Minister of Information. This ceremony coincided with the festivities in Manama, designated as the Arab Media Capital 2024, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Al-Budaiwi extended his congratulations to the Board of Directors of the Gulf Journalists Union on the launch of their website and revamped identity, commending their tireless efforts in fostering unity among Gulf journalists.

He underscored the GCC countries' unwavering commitment to supporting media initiatives that align with the evolving global media landscape, emphasizing the pivotal role of Gulf media institutions in achieving international recognition and credibility.

CSC promises open comm channels

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The Civil Service Commission reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining coordination with government agencies to address important inquiries, suggestions, and complaints, whether through social media platforms or other communication channels, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a blog post on its "X" platform account, the Civil Service Commission emphasized that the decision of the Civil Service Commission, which included the approval of the shift system along with the corresponding allowances and benefits, stemmed from a proposal submitted by the "Diwan" and subsequently approved and implemented.

It reiterated its dedication to fostering a conducive work environment that accommodates all shift workers.

Furthermore, the Civil Service Commission assured the ongoing disbursement of shift allowances and clarified that the method of displaying these allowances on salary certificates, without cancellation, was based on inquiries received from certain authorities seeking clarity on the correct display of salary items.

Additionally, it highlighted its continuous collaboration with government agencies regarding proposals they have submitted, which will be presented to the Civil Service Commission for further consideration.

Schools cleaned after Council poll

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The concerned teams at Kuwait Municipality's sanitation departments in different governorates recently cleaned the schools used as polling precincts for the recently concluded Municipal Council supplementary elections in the fifth and sixth constituencies, reports Al-Rai daily.

The cleanup process included sterilization of the schools as per the health and sanitation regulations. Around 590 workers were involved and they removed about 13 tons of waste.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Ban on books? ... Creativity and intellect are progress' hallmark

"KUWAIT is the Capital of Arab Culture for the year 2025, and this year, 'according to what was announced' by the Assistant Secretary-General for the Arts Sector at the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, Musaed Al-Zamil, we will witness distinguished events and activities worthy of Kuwait's leadership and its usual role at the cultural level," columnist **Iqbal Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"In today's landscape, individuals are urged to embrace progress in all facets – developmentally, politically, socially, and recreationally – supported directly by a government that commands attention across all arenas.

"This call comes as freedoms continue to dwindle in various spheres, with the state's mechanisms appearing lax for years, and representatives relinquishing control to the whims of external pressures and inquiries, which, unfortunately, do not always prioritize the nation's welfare.

Iqbal Al-Ahmad

"It's regrettable that this reflection coincides with a period witnessing a resurgence in freedom of expression, cultural expression, and artistic endeavors within the realm of publishing and display – a resurgence we had finally begun to experience.

"Two distinct scenes come to mind as I contemplate this piece. The first was the book cemetery that attendees of the 2018 book fair were greeted with, prompting citizens to stage a sit-in in front of the Ministry of Information in protest against the principle of book banning—a right fundamental to human dignity and intellect.

"In November 2018, the accomplished artist Muhammad Sharaf drew attention to media censorship of literature by symbolically erecting a graveyard featuring 45 tombstones representing banned books up until that year, with each tombstone available for purchase to fund educational initiatives.

"Although the Ministry of Information swiftly removed these symbolic graves, their attempts to stifle circulation were futile, as the images of this metaphorical cemetery circulated both domestically and internationally.

"It is widely acknowledged that any attempt to censor literature, visual arts, or auditory expression amounts to stifling the very essence of society -- a society's ability to discern right from wrong, good from bad.

"Simultaneously, protests against the Ministry of Information's censorship erupted in 2018, as citizens decried the banning of certain titles that had previously been deemed acceptable for years – a move viewed as a blatant overstep of boundaries. While previous bans were restricted to recent publications, an increase in arbitrary decisions saw even longstanding literary works facing prohibition.

"In today's era of technological advancement and unrestricted access to information, over 4,000 books have been banned in Kuwait, highlighting a concerning trend of censorship that threatens intellectual freedom.

"Questions abound: Why are ministers of information not held accountable for their decisions to ban books? Why does censorship fluctuate, expanding and contracting sporadically? Does it hinge on the individual occupying the ministerial post, or the quality of representation in the National Assembly?

"What was once deemed unacceptable during Sheikh Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah's tenure as Minister of Information in the 1960s became normalized, albeit without opposition at the time.

"Similarly, Sheikh Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah faced interrogation over minor infractions, a loss felt keenly by the nation.

"More recently, decisions regarding book censorship appear rife with contradictions, contradicting the constitutional guarantees of freedom. Is it reasonable for a Kuwaiti author's work, honored with Arab and international accolades, to be banned over a single word or phrase?

"It is imperative that decisions regarding censorship are grounded in sound reasoning rather than personal whims or external pressures. We must not succumb to mood swings or vindictiveness, lest we stifle the creativity and intellectualism that are the hallmark of any progressive society.

"Moving forward, let us strive for a future where the approval and dissemination of literature and art in Kuwait are guided by principles of openness and integrity."

Also:

"Is it better to die here than to live there? It's often challenging to discern an absolute truth, just as it's difficult for an individual to claim certainty while dismissing others as foolish or misguided," columnist **Khawla Matar** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"Those labeled as "devils" by some may, in fact, be regarded as the pinnacle of existence by others. Yet, many find themselves revisiting emotions experienced perhaps years prior, emotions that can linger for what feels like eternity, a time frame subject to each individual's perception, much like the concept of age or the essence of existence itself.

"Questions arise, or perhaps they persist, manifesting as a form of sophistical philosophy. Seated comfortably in one's chair or within the confines of a modest apartment, one may wonder why individuals opt to leave rather than confront the perceived other -- those ruling regimes, authorities, or even tyrannical establishments such as religious institutions.

"Regardless of their titles, they collectively assume the role of the other, convinced of their capacity and knowledge to dictate what's best for individuals, wherever they may be.

"They advocate for resilience, promising the downfall of injustice in its myriad forms and hues through one's endurance. Yet, the sun rises each day without the burden of seeking sustenance to feed hungry mouths, while pleas for healthcare rights echo in the void.

"Countless interpretations and scenarios tirelessly strive to convince individuals that remaining, even in a ravaged city, is preferable to departure. They argue that leaving implies either contributing to demographic shifts or denying the country's claim over its inhabitants, urging them to endure and sacrifice for its sake.

"In these deliberations, the question lingers: Is it nobler to remain in one's homeland, succumbing to hunger, bombings, or the suffocating darkness that shrouds one's town or city? Or is departure the path to preserving the dream of a better place? The flame of ambition burns within, resilient against the pressures of media, seminars, slogans, and patriotic anthems, reminiscent of Goebbels' manipulative tactics mastered by his disciples.

"'Why remain in a country', they query, 'when all lands are supposedly God's vast domain'? Yet, knowledge seekers venture even to the distant corners of China, once perceived as the distant beacon of enlightenment.

"Others urge them to remain in desolate towns, where only the echoes of past laughter and tales linger, asserting that death there is more honorable than forsaking one's roots.

"Their departure, not physical but ideological, signifies a detachment from inherited values. Academic accolades from prestigious institutions transform into status symbols, bearing witness to the ruthlessness hidden behind the veneer of success. Certificates from Harvard, Yale, Boston, Oxford, and others become emblems of prestige, overlooking the suffering and deprivation inflicted by the elite.

"The question persists: Is it preferable to endure in the shadows of one's darkened city or to seek illumination in distant lands like so many others? After all, are not these rights – human rights – applicable to every individual, regardless of their location?"

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"The tooth of a Yemeni must be loosened.' This is an excerpt from Zuhairiyah Kuwaiti by the late poet Hamoud Al-Nasser Al-Badr. Due to its deep meaning, it has become a famous proverb. It is a wise proverb that summarizes the way to get rid of an illness that has no hope of being cured, threatens stability, undermines cohesion, gnaws at the roots and makes survival dangerous," columnist **Talal Abdul Kareem Al-Arab** wrote for **Al Jarida** daily.

"In the past, there was no dentist to treat toothache and clean tooth decay. Therefore, there is no treatment for a rotten tooth if the pain worsens other than uprooting it. The above is a suggestive proverb, as the areas of nuisance, danger or disease will not be eliminated unless uprooted from its foundation.

"Another proverb says: 'I have a defective molar. Remove it with an iron.' The molar is the last tooth of the jaw and your defect is your pain. What is meant by the iron here is the tool for extracting the tooth. In Palestine, they say: 'Remove the tooth and remove the pain.' In Algeria: 'The ailing tooth, the heavy tooth and the weak wife, may they rest. 'In Morocco: 'Whoever burned the tooth should be searched by the tool.' This means the affected person must find the appropriate means of treatment in order to get rid of the source of the pain. If a human being develops a cancerous tumor, it must be removed, otherwise it will cause his death.

"Likewise, if the corruption, forgery and bribery epidemic spreads in a country, this is the beginning of its end. If the rule of law is absent from a nation, if chaos prevails, if the tone of extremist rhetoric rises, if ignorance and scientific backwardness dominate it and pandemonium prevails, the values and principles disappear and the identity is lost. Nationalism is dominated by tribal, sectarian and party affiliations. If those who solve the issue are unable to untie the knots, then the defects must be painfully uprooted from the sources.

"Proverbs in countries all over world that agree that the last cure is cauterization, and that uprooting the illness is the last solution to get rid of it. It is a painful treatment, no doubt, but it is successful and guaranteed. The proverb comes with a pun and connotation intended to indicate crucial matters that must be decided.

"Uprooting rampant corruption is painful and difficult, like removing a rotten tooth, but it is possible if the efforts, determination and will of everyone are combined with honest intentions, free and pure of all ambitions for power and money. Then no one, regardless of his status or position, will be able to stop it."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

Kuwait takes action against fake social media accounts

Authorities intensify security measures

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Security authorities -- under direct instructions from First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah -- have intensified the monitoring of fake accounts on social media, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

These accounts deliberately spread lies about the political, economic and social conditions in the country or insult officials, personalities, social figures and even hurt foreign relations of the country.

This comes within the context of reviews being conducted with the aim of correcting the course and combating fake social media accounts that break the law, especially since some of them deliberately spread rumors and lies that affect the security and stability of the country or harm Kuwait's foreign relations.

Sources confirmed that the owners of these accounts will be confronted firmly and strictly, and that directives have been issued to conduct investigations and collect information about the suspicious account owners, arrest them and prosecute them in accordance with the Penal Code and Law No. 63/2015 regarding information technology crimes and others.

They pointed out that whoever is arrested will be subject to investigation to determine the sources of funding and the parties that support or direct him.

They also indicated that the matter is being investigated, information is being collected, and indictments are being prepared by the competent authorities, before taking the necessary legal measures.

Sources explained that the ministry, through the Criminal Security Sector, arrested a number of people running fake social media accounts over the past year, and spreading false news and baseless rumors.

They stressed that the ministry is intensifying its investigations to arrest the owners of these accounts and take the necessary measures against them, especially since some of them had previously been convicted with final sentences of imprisonment in similar cases.

Sources affirmed this step was taken after the spread of fake accounts that have become a real threat to national unity and to the country's security and stability, particularly in light of the recent regional and international developments. They warned the pioneers of social media platforms against interacting with these accounts through retweets because it is considered a crime punishable by law.

In addition, security sources confirmed that the Department of Oversight and Inspection in the Ministry of Interior is monitoring some of the ministry employees who photograph the security tasks assigned to them and publish them on TikTok, Snapchat and other platforms. They said the security personnel are prohibited from photographing their security missions, placing flashers or photographing inside patrols and publishing them.

In a press interview a few days ago, the minister asserted that the "weak souls" that want to create strife in Kuwait will be deterred by the force of the law, stressing that they cannot be left alone to spread rumors and fake news. He said no Kuwaiti loyal to his country accepts the rumors which are being spread, indicating that "we are trying to curb the fake accounts being managed from outside Kuwait and find out who is feeding these accounts."

Al-Jarida photo

One of the facilities being shut.

DGFD shuts 6 violating facilities

The Public Relations and Media Department of the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) said six facilities in various governorates have been administrative closed for violating safety and fire prevention requirements, reports Al-Jarida daily. The DGFD explained that these facilities had been warned earlier to rectify the situations that pose a threat to lives, property, and community security.

Citizen found dead inside car

Royal, accomplices remanded to 'police custody for 21 days'

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
and **Agencies**

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The body of a 72-year-old citizen was found in his vehicle on Mutlaa Road recently.

A security source revealed that the Ministry of Interior's Operations Unit received a report that an individual was found motionless inside a car in running mode on Mutlaa Road.

Security personnel and ambulances rushed to the location, where they discovered that the individual was already dead. They identified the body as that of a 72-year-old citizen. The body was transferred to the Forensic Medicine Department to determine the cause of death.A case was registered and investigations are ongoing.

❑ ❑ ❑

21 days remand: The Public Prosecution has remanded a Kuwaiti citizen, a member of the ruling family, along with his Asian accomplices, to police custody for 21 days pending investigation in a case involving the cultivation of marijuana and possession of other narcotic substances, reports Al-Jarida daily.

They have been referred to the central prison following their arrest by the General Administration for Combating Narcotics last week. During the operation, large quantities of marijuana seedlings, pots, and seeds were seized from two homes owned by the accused. The investigation into this matter will continue under the jurisdiction of the Public Prosecution.

❑ ❑ ❑

6 held for theft: The Directorate-General of Security Media at the Ministry of Interior has reported that, as part of the Criminal Security Sector's ongoing efforts to arrest wanted criminals and outlaws, the Jahra Governorate Investigation Department has arrested six persons involved in the theft and subsequent sale of sheep in local markets, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The arrests were made in two separate operations. The suspects are now being referred to the appropriate authorities to face the necessary legal actions.

❑ ❑ ❑

8 residency law violators held: Securitymen from the Residency Affairs Investigation General Department in the Interior Ministry recently conducted an intensive inspection campaign in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, resulting in the arrest of eight expatriates who violated the Residency Law, reports Al-Anba daily.

All those arrested were referred to the Deportation Cell in preparation for their deportation to their respective countries and to ban them from entering Kuwait again.

❑ ❑ ❑

Ex-army man arrested: Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate detectives arrested a former military personnel in the Ministry of Interior in Al-Qurain Markets area, as he avoided serving the three-year prison sentence imposed on him for an undisclosed crime, reports Al-Anba daily.

In addition, Jahra security patrols referred three people to the Drug Control General Department after arresting them in Jahra for the possession of narcotic substances and drug paraphernalia.

❑ ❑ ❑

Bedoun attempts murder: A Bedoun, born in 1999, was arrested for trying to kill his neighbor who is also a Bedoun born in 1993, reports Al-Anba daily.

It has been reported that the neighbors had a heated argument in Sulaibiya until the accused stabbed the victim who was rushed to Sulaibiya Clinic and then to Farwaniya Hospital, because he got three penetrating stab wounds on the left side of his chest. He is now confined at the intensive care unit (ICU).

The deputy public prosecutor ordered the registration of attempted murder case no. 65/2024.

Crime Briefs

TRAFFIC: The General Traffic Department continued its traffic campaigns in all governorates over the past week; resulting in the issuance of 24,138 violation citations, impounding of 57 vehicles and 20 motorcycles, referral of 30 people to the traffic police, and arrest of 36 juveniles who were referred to the Juvenile Prosecution.

The weekly statistics showed that 39 wanted vehicles were impounded and 15 wanted persons were arrested on various charges.

The department also dealt with 1,328 minor accidents and 238 serious accidents.

❑ ❑ ❑

FRAUD: An Egyptian registered a forgery case against an unknown person who stole KD500 from his account.

A security source revealed that the Egyptian went to a police station in Jahra Governorate and informed the security personnel there that an unknown person withdrew KD500 after seizing his bank card.

A case was registered and investigations are ongoing.

❑ ❑ ❑

FIGHT: Iranian sailors engaged in a fistfight inside the Iranian ship docked at Shuwaikh Port, reports Al-Rai daily.

A security source told the daily that the ship was docked at the port to unload goods, but the sailors involved in the fight had to obtain entry visas to undergo treatment at the hospital and then refer them to the police station for interrogation.

A case was registered and investigations are ongoing to establish the circumstances leading to the fight.

❑ ❑ ❑

VIDEO: The Public Relations and Security Media Department of the Ministry of Interior said the video clip circulating on some social media sites, showing women rioting inside a prison facility is old and dated back to 2016, and all necessary measures were taken at the time, reports Al-Anba daily.

The MOI has called on everyone to be accurate in reporting and take information from official sources only.

❑ ❑ ❑

BARRIERS: The Coast Guard General Department in the Ministry of Interior, in cooperation with the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) and under the field supervision of Director of the Department Brigadier General Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah installed concrete barriers along Al-Khuwaisat coastal area in the northern part of the country, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Power outage in Ministries Complex 'resolved' – MEW

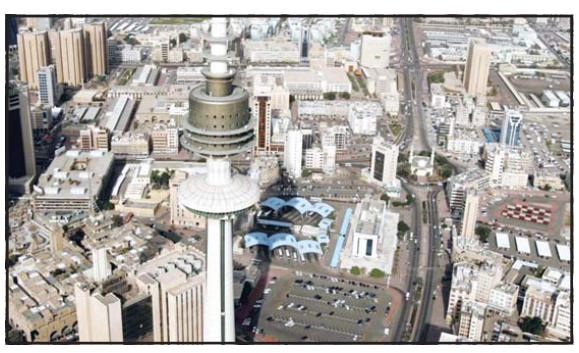
KUWAIT CITY, May 20: A low-voltage network malfunction caused a power outage in the Ministries Complex in Kuwait City on Monday morning, according to sources from the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy. The issue affected the Al-Mirqab, Al-Hilali, and Naif Gate stations, taking them out of service, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The outage, which occurred at 6:40 a.m., resulted in approximately 32 megawatts of power being lost. Emergency teams were dispatched to the affected stations to carry out necessary repairs. Power was successfully restored by 9:11 a.m. to all impacted areas, including the Mirqab and Qibla districts.

The Kuwait Municipality's main building experienced a power cut, disrupting its services. The Ministry of Justice advised its visitors in the Ministerial Complex to seek assistance at court complexes, branches, and service centers during the outage.

In response, Abdulaziz Sari, the Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs, instructed the Assistant Undersecretary for Financial and Administrative Affairs, Faisal Al-Kandari, to inform employees to leave the complex if the outage persisted past 9 a.m. This directive was followed, and employees who had been at the complex since 7 a.m. were allowed to leave.

Sources from the Ministry of Social Affairs reported that the Administrative Affairs Department will communicate with the Civil Service Commission to ensure no administrative actions are taken against these employees. This includes not recording absences or incomplete working hours due to the emergency circumstances, which included non-functional elevators and escalators, preventing many employees from accessing their upper-floor offices.



Al-Jarida photo

Electricity returns to the Mirqab and Qibla areas.

Kuwait Air Cargo City project gets legal green light for development

Bid process open to global players

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The Fatwa and Legislation Department has given approval to the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation to proceed with the bid for the new Kuwait Air Cargo City project, reports Al-Qabas daily.

This project aims to design, construct, manage, operate, maintain, renovate, and develop facilities for cargo handling, storage, and distribution services at Kuwait International Airport.

The legal opinion provided affirmed that the General Administration of Civil Aviation has the discretion to offer the Cargo City project in line with Ministry of Finance Circular No. 1 of 2023 regarding government auctions.

It was emphasized that the Administration's request fulfilled all necessary legal procedures, hence the Ministry of Finance is urged to proceed with bidding procedures accordingly.

The project, located west of Kuwait International Airport, includes various components such as designing shipping, storage, distribution, and logistics buildings, as well as parking lots and offices.

The project also involves financing the construction and equipment, managing operations, comprehensive maintenance, and development to compete globally in terms of strategy and service.

Moreover, it aims to train and qualify Kuwaiti nationals to manage and operate the Cargo City.

The bidding process is expected to be limited to specialized international companies, considering the project's strategic importance.

The bidding period is set at 20 years, during which the selected global operator will explore investment opportunities at the airport to maximize financial returns for the General Administration of Civil Aviation.

Several investment projects are envisaged within the new air cargo city, including maintenance and repair areas, shipping buildings, immediate shipping buildings, government facilities, customer offices, parking lots, railway, support service buildings, and multi-storey parking buildings.

These projects aim to enhance air cargo traffic, establish value-added logistical services, and attract global logistics branches of multinational companies, thereby elevating Kuwait International Airport's position as a major logistics center in the Middle East and North Africa region.

Dr Yassin nominated for prestigious award

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Dr. Hamad Yassin, an Associate Professor of Genomic Medicine at Kuwait University and the Dasman Diabetes Institute, has been nominated for the prestigious International Science and Sustainability Award 2024 by the British Council, reports Al-Qabas daily.

This accolade celebrates the remarkable achievements of international graduates from British universities, and Dr. Yassin was chosen from a pool of 1,400 applicants comprising specialists and scientists who graduated from British universities.

Dr. Yassin

Dr. Yassin earned his master's and doctoral degrees from the Institute of Genomic Medicine at Newcastle University in the United Kingdom. His nomination recognizes his outstanding contributions to polycystic kidney disease (ADPKD) research.

His research has played a pivotal role in advancing genetic testing for this disease, enhancing diagnostic accuracy, and identifying the genetic mutations underlying it.

KUNA photo

Head of GACA Abdulaziz Al-Duailej meets with Head of DGCA Sheikh Humoud Al-Sabah.

Kuwait DGCA Chief tackles aviation cooperation with Saudi counterpart

RIYADH, May 20, (KUNA): Head of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Sheikh Humoud Al-Sabah discussed on Monday with Head of the Saudi General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) Abdulaziz Al-Duailej, ways to develop the aviation cooperation.

In a statement to KUNA, Sheikh Humoud said that both sides agreed during a meeting held in Riyadh, on providing all facilities to airlines working in both countries, as well as arrange a better flying experience for passengers.

Kuwait Civil Aviation is participating in the third edition of the Future Aviation Forum that kicks off today in Saudi Arabia.

Warm wishes for health and prosperity

Kuwait's Amir and Prime Minister extend congratulations to Cameroon on Nat'l Day

KUWAIT CITY, May 20, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Monday a cable to the President of Cameroon Paul Biya congratulating him on his country's national day.

In the cable, His Highness wished him everlasting health and wellness, and further progress and prosperity to his country and people.

Additionally, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Monday a cable to the President of Cameroon Paul Biya congratulating him on his country's national day.

Fingerprints to monitor attendance

Ministry of Information implements new work mechanism for employees

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The Ministry of Information has determined the official work mechanism for administrative, technical and program employees and those working in shifts.

The daily obtained a copy of the circular that the ministry issued recently, stating the technical and program employees were allowed to have their fingerprints to prove attendance and leave for work in accordance with official working hours between 6:00 am and 6:00 pm. During this period, the employee must fulfill the official working period of seven hours. In the event that he proves attendance and departure with his fingerprint outside the period referred to, he will be considered absent and the rules governing that will be applied to him, the circular stated.

The circular added that working under the shift systems for employees assigned to departments that operate these systems must adhere to a specific work time for attendance and departure as per the letters approved by the relevant sector, in which the working hours are specified for each of the approved shift systems.

For departments with a special nature of work and without prejudice to the provisions and regulations of the shift in force, the circular said the assistant undersecretaries and department directors must determine the work hours for those who occupy jobs with special conditions or nature of work as per the need imposed by the nature of the work and the requirements for its proper conduct and organization. The Administrative Affairs Department must be provided with the work schedule of employees who perform these tasks, the circular added.

Regarding the rest of the employees, the circular confirmed that the official working hours are flexible working hours of seven hours from Sunday to Thursday. The employee is allowed to start working from 7:00 am to 9:00 am, provided that he leaves after completing seven working hours without prejudice to the legally prescribed grace periods.

The ministry stated that this circular is considered an experimental regulation of the work mechanism and proof of attendance and departure in its sectors.

Abdally ready for 200MW photovoltaic installation

Kuwait's solar drive gains ground

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: All the necessary infrastructure works for the supply, installation and maintenance of photovoltaic panels in Abdally have been completed, reports Al-Seyassah daily quoting sources from the Ministry of Electricity and Water.

Sources disclosed the project is aimed at producing 180 to 200 megawatts of photovoltaic electricity, indicating the project area spans 2.28 square kilometers and that the ministry has asked the Municipality Council to allocate land for this purpose.

According to the sources, the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) conducted a study on this project. Sources said the ministry relied on this institute's expertise in the field, as it carried out research to gain a better understanding of the performance of various types of photovoltaic solar energy units in Kuwait's environmental conditions.

Sources affirmed this project has been included in the ministry's budget for the current fiscal year; in preparation for its referral to the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) to invite specialized companies in the field of photovoltaic energy to participate in the bidding.

Sources said this project is considered one of the renewable energy projects that will contribute approximately 200 megawatts to the total energy production. Currently, the total renewable energy production stands at 71 megawatts; with 70 megawatts coming from the Al-Shaqaya project, which was opened in February 2019, sources added.

Solar panels

Contract to purchase 500 MW signed

Kuwait bolsters summer energy reserves with Gulf Network deal

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy has signed a contract to purchase 500 megawatts of electrical energy through the Gulf electrical interconnection network extending from the Sultanate of Oman to the State of Kuwait.

This step aims to cover the shortage of electrical energy during the summer months.

The ministry starts the process of importing purchased energy at the beginning of June until Aug 31.

The contract was signed in the presence of Acting Undersecretary Eng. Haitham Al-Ali and CEO of the Gulf Interconnection Authority Eng. Ahmed Al-Ibrahim.

Al-Ali, explained that "this purchase has technical and economic benefits to Kuwait, especially with the convergence of the offers submitted for energy purchase prices with the cost of production."

He stated that Kuwait owns 26.7 percent of the founding shares of the Gulf Cooperation Council Electricity Interconnection Authority.

It is a joint stock company registered by the member states of the council for the purpose of connecting the electricity networks of the members, securing energy supply to the networks of the members, investment, and achieving economic benefits in the areas of energy exchange and diversification of its sources.

He pointed out that contracting directly with the authority contributes to supporting electrical networks in emergency situations, indicating that purchasing energy is not a new matter for member states during emergency situations.

On the other hand, Al-Ibrahim said the Gulf electrical market for trading electrical energy is one of the effective markets in the region, and allows for the conclusion of bilateral deals through the electronic platform for energy trading.

He stated that the platform schedules traded energy and financial settlements between traders; affirming an agreement was reached between the ministry and the authority on the offers that were submitted to supply electrical energy to Kuwait in June. It is subject to renewal during the months of July and August based on circumstances and needs of the interconnected networks of member states, he clariried.

He pointed out that trading in electrical energy between the GCC countries aims to sustain development, raise the level and reliability of electricity supply, and achieve savings in electricity production costs by providing sustainable electrical energy at competitive prices.

It is worth noting that the value of the electrical exchange in the Gulf network amounted to $136.64 million in 2021 and reached $83.75 million in 2022.

KUNA photo

Graduating Syrian orphans who have memorized the Holy Quran in Gaziantep, Turkiye.

KRCS graduates 1K Syrian orphan Quran memorizers

Kuwait Red Crescent Society announced on Sunday that it had graduated 1000 students of Syrian orphans Quran memorizers with the cooperation with Al-Sham Association for Orphan Care in Gaziantep, Turkiye.

In that context, KRCS Chairman Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer told KUNA that the graduates are male and female students in the kindergarten and elementary levels.

He said that this humanitarian project comes as part of the programs sponsored by KRCS to support orphan families and the education of their children, especially the weaker ones.

Al-Sayer expressed his appreciation to all the donors who were the main supporter in the implementation of these projects, saying, "the support that we see today embodies the Kuwaiti role and its slogan (Kuwait is by your side) based on the directives of the political leadership and the love of humanitarian acts that the Kuwaiti people are passionate about."

Kuwait Red Crescent Society have launched the project of housing and empowering Syrian orphan families in 2018, in cooperation with Al-Sham Association for Orphan Care in Gaziantep, Turkiye. (KUNA)

KUNA photo

Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jasem Al-Budaiwi during his visit to the GCC Joint Program Production Institution's headquarters in Kuwait.

GCC JPPI's pivotal media role commended

Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jasem Al-Budaiwi has hailed the GCC Joint Program Production Institution's for its role in developing media production of the Arabian Gulf States.

In statements during his visit to the Institution's headquarters in Kuwait Sunday, Al-Budaiwi also admired the institution's role in boosting the GCC media cooperation as well as its distinguished initiatives and programs to strengthen the common cultural identity of the Arabian Gulf states.

He spoke highly about the institution's professional and innovative production that promotes the values and traditions of the Gulf societies and raise GCC peoples' awareness.

Al-Budaiwi underlined the need for continuing cooperation for further success in the media domain to help materialize the GCC goal of achieving integration and unity among the Gulf countries. (KUNA)

Development advancements celebrated

NCCAL lauds Saudi cultural movement

RIYADH, May 20, (KUNA): The Secretary General for the arts sector of Kuwait's National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), Musaed Al-Zamel praised on Monday the development of the cultural movement in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Zamel revealed that he along with a delegation from the NCCAL visited Diriyah Biennale at the invitation of Saudi's Minister of Culture, Prince Badr bin Farhan Al-Saud.

The delegation accompanying him included NCCAL's Director of the Communications and Media Department and the Acting Director of the Music and Heritage Department, Yousef Al-Jamaan, and the Communication Officer for the Arts Sector from the Fine Arts Department, Sarah Al-Khalaf.

Al-Zamel appreciated Saudi's development in the culture, arts and literature sectors, highlighting that Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are two sides of the same coin in serving the Gulf Cooperation Council and contributing to the success of every event.

He noted what he and the delegation saw from Diriyah Biennale to other cultural, historical and artistic buildings, to the warm welcome.

As well as the topics discussed during their meeting with Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture for International Cultural Relations, Fahd bin Abdulrahman Al-Kanaan, where ideas about developing cultural relations between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were discussed.

The Kuwaiti delegation visited the Saudi Museum of Contemporary Art, and attended a tour of the historic Turaif neighborhood, which is famous for being an important historical and architectural district, which was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2010.

They visited the historic Salwa Palace located in the northeastern part of Turaif neighborhood, which was the headquarters of the princes and imams of the Al-Saud family, and the Royal Institute of Traditional Arts located in the Al-Murabba neighborhood.

Government agencies during the continuation of field tours.

Power cut off to 7 bachelor homes

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Engineer Hammoud Al-Mutairi, the director of the Hawalli Governorate Municipality branch, announced that electricity has been cut off to seven properties inhabited by singles in the Jabriya and Salwa regions—five properties in the former and two in the latter, reports Al-Seyassah daily .

The Public Relations Department of Kuwait Municipality confirmed the continuation of field tours conducted by supervisory teams from the Engineering Audit and Follow-up Department in Hawalli Governorate. These tours, directly supervised by Engineer Hammoud Al-Mutairi, follow a planned schedule in cooperation with relevant government agencies, including the Ministry of Electricity, the Ministry of Interior, and the Public Authority for Civil Information.

The administration urged citizens and residents to collaborate with the relevant departments by reporting singles living in residential areas. Such cooperation will help enforce the laws that prohibit singles from residing in these areas. Reports can be made through various channels: the hotline at 139, WhatsApp at 24727732, or by submitting a written complaint to the director of the governorate municipality branch.

Union of Coop Societies' debt relief plan approved

Cooperative boards to aid payment

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The Ministry of Social Affairs has given nod to the Union of Cooperative Societies for the cooperative boards of directors to contribute towards settling the remaining debt owed by the Union, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This debt is 750 thousand dinars, of which 300 thousand has already been paid. The debt is owed to a company supplying goods and products, against which an enforceable court ruling has been issued for payment.

The approved payment process will utilize the "expenses" allocation of each cooperative to settle the outstanding debt. There is a strong desire from the Union's Board of Directors to clear all debts at once to close this long-standing issue.

The union has formally approached the Ministry to seek approval for involving the cooperative boards of directors in paying off the remaining debt according to the capacity of each individual cooperative.

While the participation of the boards of directors in paying the debt is not mandatory, there has been a positive response from many associations, indicating a genuine desire to contribute towards strengthening the Union's financial position, which serves as the legitimate and legal umbrella for safeguarding its financial interests and gains.

Following the resolution of this debt, the Union aims to enhance its revenue streams through various methods, including expanding its product offerings bearing the Union's name and brand in cooperative markets. These products will prioritize quality and competitive pricing to effectively compete with similar offerings in the market.

Innovating for better oral health

85% of dentists working in public sector are Kuwaitis

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Assistant Undersecretary for Dentistry Services at the Ministry of Health Dr. Ahmed Assad said a number of projects will be launched in the near future, repors by Al-Rai daily.

In an interview with the daily, Assad stated that approximately 85 percent of the dentists working in public sector hospitals and clinics are nationals. He confirmed this percentage is increasing, as 77 dentists have been sent abroad on scholarship to pursue higher studies in prestigious universities in America, United Kingdom, Canada, Ireland Hong Kong and other countries.

He also revealed that a new hospital was opened in Jahra to cater to dental patients suffering from chronic diseases, in addition to a dental clinic for children that operates 24/7.

He stressed that the ministry is committed to protecting the health of students. "As October 2023, dental services for students have become 100 percent subsidized by the ministry. A clinic has been established in Fahaheel Medical Center to provide dental services to bedridden patients, while a dental service has been introduced in Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City.

He went on to say that in order to meet the demands of the citizens, the working hours of Al Qasr Dental Clinic in Jahra have been extended to operate 24/7.

Prime Minister,

Continued from Page 1

Consequently, it is important for Kuwait to have its own industry and agriculture, rather than depending on others for everything -- even cleaning tools, livestock and tomatoes.

Other countries that took many of our ideas now export everything to us, because they relied on local industry. They even concluded agreements with major factories in the world to manufacture weapons and parts of some heavy equipment.

HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Sabah, you are an economist. You have long experience in what can help strengthen financial mobility in the country, and what self-reliance in food and industry means. We have money and vast areas of wasted land. The real value of such land lies in the facilities therein. Thus, allocating industrial and agricultural plots is not enough if this is not accompanied by practical incentives.

About 30 years ago, Kuwait signed the offset system with several countries. It is an obligation imposed on foreign entities that sign contracts with the government to implement projects that achieve the objectives of the program. Was this implemented? What joint actions (JOINT VENTURE) were taken?

Your Highness the Prime Minister, the Public Authority for Industry and the Agriculture Authority are under your jurisdiction. You currently have the authority to legislate and implement. Therefore, you have the capabilities to embark on the revival of the industrial and agricultural sectors, so that Kuwait enters the era of self-sufficiency like the rest of the Gulf countries.

Is this difficult to achieve?

Amir condoles

Continued from Page 1

also carried the governor of Iran's East Azerbaijan province, a senior cleric from Tabriz, three crew members and a Revolutionary Guard official, the state-run IRNA news agency reported. IRNA said the crash killed eight people in all, including three crew members, aboard the Bell helicopter, which Iran purchased in the early 2000s.

Aircraft in Iran face a shortage of parts, often flying without safety checks against the backdrop of Western sanctions. Because of that, former Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif sought to blame the United States for the crash in an interview Monday.

"One of the main culprits of yesterday's tragedy is the United States, which ... embargoed the sale of aircraft and aviation parts to Iran and does not allow the people of Iran to enjoy good aviation facilities," Zarif said. "These will be recorded in the list of US crimes against the Iranian people."

State TV gave no immediate cause for the crash that occurred in Iran's East Azerbaijan province.

The U.S. has yet to comment publicly on Raisi's death. Ali Bagheri Kani, a nuclear negotiator for Iran, will serve as the country's acting foreign minister, state TV said.

Early Monday morning, Turkish authorities released what they described as drone footage showing what appeared to be a fire in the wilderness that they "suspected to be wreckage of helicopter." The coordinates listed in the footage put the fire some 20 kilometers (12 miles) south of the Azerbaijan-Iranian border on the side of a steep mountain.

Footage released by IRNA early Monday showed what the agency described as the crash site, across a steep valley in a green mountain range. Soldiers speaking in the local Azeri language said: "There it is, we found it."

Condolences started pouring in from neighbors and allies after Iran confirmed there were no survivors from the crash. Pakistan announced a day of mourning and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a post on X that his country "stands with Iran in this time of sorrow." Leaders of Egypt and Jordan also offered condolences, as did Syrian President Bashar Assad. Lebanon and Syria both declared three days of mourning.

Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev said he and his government were "deeply shocked" - Raisi was returning on Sunday after traveling to Iran's border with Azerbaijan to inaugurate a dam with Aliyev when the crash happened.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and China's Xi Jinping conveyed their condolences. Russian President Vladimir Putin, in a statement released by the Kremlin, described Raisi "as a true friend of Russia."

Khamenei, who had himself urged the public to pray Sunday night, stressed the business of Iran's government would continue no matter what.

Under the Iranian constitution, Iran's vice first president takes over if the president dies, with Khamenei's assent, and a new presidential election would be called within 50 days. Khamenei's condolence message Monday over Raisi's death, declared five days of public mourning and acknowledged Mokhber had taken the role of acting president.

Mokhber had already begun receiving calls from officials and foreign governments in Raisi's absence, state media reported.

An emergency meeting of Iran's Cabinet was held as state media made the announcement Monday morning. The Cabinet issued a statement afterward pledging it would follow Raisi's path and that "with the help of God and the people, there will be no problem with management of the country."

A hard-liner who formerly led the country's judiciary, Raisi was viewed as a protégé of Khamenei and some analysts had suggested he could replace the 85-year-old leader after Khamenei's death or resignation.

With Raisi's death, the only other person so far suggested has been Mojtaba Khameini, the 55-year-old son to the supreme leader. However, some have raised concerns over the position being taken only for the third time since 1979 to a family member, particularly after the Islamic Revolution overthrew the hereditary Pahlavi monarchy of the shah.

Raisi won Iran's 2021 presidential election, a vote that saw the lowest turnout in the Islamic Republic's history. Raisi is sanctioned by the U.S. in part over his involvement in the mass execution of thousands of political prisoners in 1988 at the end of the bloody Iran-Iraq war.

Under Raisi, Iran now enriches uranium at nearly weapons-grade levels and hampers international inspections. Iran has armed Russia in its war on Ukraine, as well as launched a massive drone-and-missile attack on Israel amid its war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip. It also has continued arming proxy groups in the Mideast, like Yemen's Houthi rebels and Lebanon's Hezbollah.

Meanwhile, mass protests in the country have raged for years. The most recent involved the 2022 death of Mahsa Amini, a woman who had been earlier detained over allegedly not wearing a hijab, or headscarf, to the liking of authorities. The monthslong security crackdown that followed the demonstrations killed more than 500 people and saw over 22,000 detained.

In March, a United Nations investigative panel found that Iran was responsible for the "physical violence" that led to Amini's death.

Raisi is the second Iranian president to die in office. In 1981, a bomb blast killed President Mohammad Ali Rajai in the chaotic days after the country's Islamic Revolution.

Kuwait's inflation

Continued from Page 1

education, and housing.

The food and beverages category saw a significant increase in price index, rising by 5.79 percent in April compared to the same month in 2023. Similarly, the price index for cigarettes and tobacco witnessed a slight uptick of 0.22 percent annually.

Clothing prices surged by 5.95 percent, while housing services and home furnishings saw increases of 1.14 percent and 3.74 percent, respectively.

Health-related expenses also contributed to inflation, with the health group's price index rising by 3.58 percent; transportation costs increased by 1.06 percent year-on-year and communication services experienced a 2.54 percent increase in prices, while entertainment and culture expenses rose by 2.69 percent. Education expenses saw a modest increase of 0.80 percent.

Furthermore, prices in the restaurants and hotels category climbed by 2.37 percent compared to April of the previous year. Miscellaneous goods and services witnessed a notable increase, with prices rising by 4.66 percent annually.

Leave or amend

Continued from Page 1

violated the abovementioned laws to leave the country without paying fines or legalize their status upon payment of fines.

It has been reported that the number of violators was estimated at 120,000 before the implementation of the amnesty and a large number of these violators have benefited from the humanitarian gesture since March.

DGCA, ICAO

Continued from Page 1

in the field of safety, security, navigation and strategic aerial transportation, he said.

He added that both sides also agreed on cooperation in the field of training and qualifying national competencies to help develop Kuwait Directorate General of Civil Aviation in the future.

The Council President of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Salvatore Sciacchitano emphasized on Monday the significant role of the aviation sector in supporting economic growth and sustainable development.

In a speech during the Future Aviation Forum 2024 in Riyadh, Sciacchitano stated that by hosting this forum, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia sends a clear message to the international aviation community that it is genuinely focused on the future and enhancing the level of global connectivity.

He noted that the forum will focus on implementing aviation policies to foster cooperation and partnerships, developing skills and capabilities, as well as committing to sustainability and technology.

He emphasized the importance of this conference in enhancing global connectivity and supporting the economic and social development of countries worldwide, expressing his gratitude to Saudi Arabia for its efforts.

Kuwait mourns loss of 'visionary leader'

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: As Kuwait bids farewell to Ahmed Abdel-Wahab Al-Naqeeb, the nation mourns the loss of a visionary leader and extends heartfelt condolences to his family. May his soul rest in peace, and may his memory continue to inspire and uplift Kuwaitis for generations to come.

Al-Naqeeb

Ahmed Abdel-Wahab Al-Naqeeb's passing marks the end of a remarkable journey dedicated to serving Kuwait and advancing its position on the global stage, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Born in Kuwait in 1930, Al-Naqeeb's academic pursuits led him to study social and economic sciences in the United States, where he graduated in 1957 and later undertook a study mission at Oxford University.

His career in diplomacy began in 1962 when he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, serving in various capacities in London, New York, and Kenya before being appointed Ambassador to Pakistan in 1967, followed by a term as Ambassador to London from 1971 to 1975.

During his diplomatic tenure, Al-Naqeeb played a significant role in representing Kuwait's interests on the international stage, earning recognition such as the prestigious "Quaid-e-Azam" Medal, the highest civilian honor in Pakistan. After retiring from diplomatic service in 1975, he transitioned to the world of business and investment, where he continued to excel.

World News Roundup

Europe

'Assange can appeal'

Slovakia PM Fico's condition improves

BRATISLAVA, Slovakia, May 20, (AP): Slovak populist Prime Minister **Robert Fico**'s condition is improving following an assassination attempt last week that shocked the European Union nation deeply polarized over his policies.

"After today's consultation, the patient's condition is stabilized," the hospital treating the Slovak leader in the central city of Banská Bystrica said on Monday.

A statement released by the clinic said Fico is "clinically improving, communicating, inflammatory parameters are slowly decreasing."

It said Fico remains hospitalized in the clinic for the time being.

On Sunday, the clinic said that Fico, 59, was no longer in life threating condition after he was shot in the abdomen as he greeted supporters on Wednesday outside a cultural center in the town of Handlova, nearly 140 kilometers (85 miles) northeast of the capital, Bratislava.

Fico

Video showed the Slovak premier approach people gathered at barricades and reach out to shake hands as a man stepped forward, extended his arm and fired five rounds before being tackled and arrested.

Fico immediately underwent a five-hour surgery to treat multiple wounds he suffered in the shooting followed by another two-hour surgery Friday to remove dead tissue from his gunshot wounds.

The country's Specialized Criminal Court in the town of Pezinok on Saturday ordered the suspected assailant, who is charged with attempted murder, to remain behind bars. The suspect can appeal the order.

Little information about the would-be assassin has been disclosed after prosecutors told police not to publicly identify him or release details about the case.

The government officials originally said they believed it was a politically motivated attack committed by a "lone wolf," but announced on Sunday that a "third party" might have been involved in "acting for the benefit of the perpetrator."

Fico's government has made efforts to overhaul public broadcasting - a move critics said would give the government full control of public television and radio. That, along with his plans to amend the penal code to eliminate a special anti-graft prosecutor, have led opponents to worry that Fico will lead Slovakia down a more autocratic path.

The government's smallest coalition partner, the ultranationalist Slovak National Party, was expecting a government meeting early this week to discuss the new media law, which the Parliament started to debate last week.

Also:

TBILISI, Georgia: Georgia's parliament speaker on Monday vowed to override the presidential veto on divisive legislation that sparked weeks of mass protests by critics who see it as a threat to democratic freedoms and the country's aspirations to join the European Union.

The legislation, passed by the parliament earlier this month, requires media and nongovernmental organizations and other nonprofits to register as "pursuing the interests of a foreign power" if they receive more than 20% of their funding from abroad.

The opposition has denounced the bill as "the Russian law," because Moscow uses similar legislation to crack down on independent news media, nonprofits and activists critical of the Kremlin. The government argues it is necessary to stem what it deems as harmful foreign influence over the country's politics and to prevent unspecified foreign actors from trying to destabilize it.

Georgian President **Salome Zourabichvili**, who is increasingly at odds with the governing party, Georgian Dream, vetoed the legislation on Saturday, but the ruling party has a majority sufficient to override a presidential veto.

Shalva Papuashvili, parliament speaker and Georgian Dream member, told reporters on Monday that "of course, the parliament will override this veto." He said the parliament will hold a session to do so next week.

The bill that sparked protests this year is nearly identical to one that Georgian Dream was pressured to withdraw last year after street protests. Renewed demonstrations have rocked Georgia for weeks, with demonstrators scuffling with police, who used tear gas and water cannons to disperse the crowds.

The bill also drew criticism from European Union officials. In a joint statement Sunday, French President **Emmanuel Macron** and German Chancellor **Olaf Scholz** expressed "deep regret" over "the decision of the Georgian government and ruling party to deviate from this path by acting against our common European values and the aspirations of the Georgian people, such as through the adoption of the so-called law 'on transparency of foreign influence.'"

❑ ❑ ❑

LONDON: WikiLeaks founder **Julian Assange** can appeal against extradition to the **United States** on espionage charges, a London court ruled on Monday - a decision that is likely to further drag out what has already been a long legal saga.

High Court judges **Victoria Sharp** and **Jeremy Johnson** said Assange has grounds to challenge the United Kingdom's government's extradition order.

Assange, 52, has been indicted on 17 espionage charges and one charge of computer misuse over his website's publication of a trove of classified **US** documents almost 15 years ago.

His supporters cheered and applauded outside court as news of the ruling reached them from inside the Royal Courts of Justice.

The Australian computer expert has spent the last five years in a British high-security prison after taking refuge in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London for seven years. The WikiLeaks founder was not in court to hear his fate being debated. He did not attend for health reasons, his lawyer said.

Lawyers for Assange argued Monday that the US provided "blatantly inadequate" assurances the WikiLeaks founder would have free press protections if extradited to the US.

Lawyer **Edward Fitzgerald** said prosecutors had failed to guarantee that Assange, who is an Australian citizen and claims protections as a journalist for publishing US classified information, could rely on press protections of the First Amendment of the US Constitution.

"The real issue is whether an adequate assurance has been provided to remove the real risk identified by the court," Fitzgerald said. "It is submitted that no adequate assurance has been made."

US President Joe Biden appears at the NAACP Detroit branch Fight for Freedom Fund dinner in Detroit on May 19. (AP)

Crews work to move the cargo ship Dali in Baltimore on May 20. The container ship that caused the deadly collapse of Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge was refloated Monday and has begun moving back to port. The Dali has remained at the collapse site since it lost power and crashed into one of the bridge's supporting columns on March 26, killing six construction workers and snarling traffic into Baltimore Harbor. (AP)

Gunther

Johnson

North America

Canada boat crash kills 3: Three people were killed and five others injured Saturday night following a boat crash in Canada, local media reported Sunday.

It happened after 9:30 pm local time (0130 GMT) in the Buck Bay area of Bobs Lake, about 140 km south of Canada's capital, Ottawa. "One boat was described as an open bow fishing style boat and the other as a speed boat," local police said in an update.

The police said that three people were pronounced dead at the scene and five others were taken to hospital, CTV News reported. (Xinhua)

❑ ❑ ❑

11 hurt in mass shooting: An argument between two women led to a gunfight that left 11 people hurt in a busy tourist area of Savannah, Georgia, late Saturday, one of five weekend shootings in the city, two of which were fatal, authorities said.

Two people were injured in separate shootings Friday. Two more shootings Saturday resulted in two deaths. Then came the gunfire just before midnight Saturday near Savannah's Ellis Square.

The shooting broke out as two women argued in an area business, according to Police Chief **Lenny Gunther**, who didn't name the establishment.

"One shot rang out. That triggered other individuals to shoot," he said. "We had multiple individuals discharge their weapons to shoot at each other, which resulted in multiple people getting shot."

Ten of the 11 injured were hit by gunfire. Authorities did not say what caused the 11th injury. Victims were treated at the scene and "several" were taken to a hospital, police said. None of the injuries appeared life threatening.

Mayor **Van Johnson** said a proliferation of guns was a factor in the shootings and that reasonable gun control laws are needed. He also stressed the need for gun owners to keep their weapons from being stolen and for people carrying guns to know how and when to use them. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

3 dead in train-truck collision: A child was among the three victims killed when a passenger train hit a pickup truck, officials said.

The northbound Amtrak train hit a Dodge truck Friday evening in North Tonawanda, New York, a small town along the Niagara River between Niagara Falls and Buffalo, police said.

The victims included a 6-year-old boy, a 66-year-old woman, and a 69-year-old man, North Tonawanda Police Department Captain Daryl Truty said in a statement posted on Saturday. The names of the victims had not been released as of Sunday morning. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Ex-deputy faces fed charges: A former San Diego sheriff's deputy who already pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter for the 2020 fatal shooting of an unarmed suspect has been indicted on two federal charges that could bring a life sentence, federal prosecutors said.

A federal grand jury returned a two-count indictment Friday charging Aaron Russell with depriving Nicholas Bils of his right to be free from officers using excessive force and with discharging a firearm in a violent crime, the US Department of Justice said in a statement.

Bils, 36, was arrested in May 2020 at Old Town State Park in San Diego where he had been pitching balls to his off-leash dog. He brandished a golf club at a ranger before running away and was arrested on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon and resisting arrest.

Bils was in a State Parks patrol car heading to the downtown jail when he managed to slip out of his handcuffs, reached out a window to open the car door, then jumped out and ran. (AP)

People participate in a kite festival in Revere, Massachusetts, the United States on May 19. (Xinhua)

Politics

Many remember solid economy under Trump

Haley faces murky path forward

COLUMBIA, SC, May 20, (AP): Nikki Haley is perhaps the highest-profile Republican in the nation who has refused to fall in line and endorse Donald Trump's presidential bid.

It's unclear how long that might last.

Some allies believe she may be forced to endorse him before the November election to avoid permanently alienating the Republican Party base. Some even suspect that Haley will re-emerge on Trump's short list of vice presidential contenders in the coming months, despite Trump's recent statement to the contrary.

Coalition

But if Haley submits to Trump, as so many of his GOP critics have done, she also risks destroying her own coalition of independents, moderates and anti-Trump Republicans, who are still showing up to support her in low-profile primary contests from deep-red Indiana to deep-blue Maryland.

Her decision in the coming months will be closely watched not just by her supporters, but by allies of Trump and President Joe Biden. What she decides to do - and whether her coalition follows - could have a profound impact on this year's general election and her future as a top-tier Republican whose brand appeals to many people outside her party.

"Nikki Haley could be the person that unites us," said Thalia Floras, a 62-year-old retail manager from Nashua, New Hampshire, who was a lifelong Democrat before casting a ballot for Haley in her state's January primary.

But Floras also has a warning: "Nikki Haley has a good place with me now. But if she goes with Trump, I'm done."

Those close to Haley, a 52-year-old former governor and UN ambassador, say it's unclear what she'll do.

Haley and Trump haven't spoken in months. That includes the period after she bowed out of the GOP primary campaign in early March, according to a person with direct knowledge of Haley's private conversations who was not authorized to speak about them publicly.

And while some Republicans who supported Haley will certainly drift back to Trump organically, the Biden campaign is working to win over her supporters, whom they view as true swing voters.

Biden's team is quietly organizing a Republicans for Biden group, which will eventually include dedicated staff and focus on the hundreds of thousands of Haley voters in each battleground state, according to people familiar with the plans but not authorized to discuss them publicly.

The Democratic president hasn't kept his intentions a secret.

Biden issued a statement thanking Haley for her courage to challenge Trump just minutes after she bowed out of the primary race in March.

"Donald Trump made it clear he doesn't want Nikki Haley's supporters. I want to be clear: There is a place for them in my campaign," Biden said at the time.

Also:

WASHINGTON: It was a time of fear and chaos four years ago.

The death count was mounting as COVID-19 spread. Financial markets were panicked. Oil prices briefly went negative. The Federal Reserve slashed its benchmark interest rates to combat the sudden recession. And the **US** government went on a historic borrowing spree - adding trillions to the national debt - to keep families and businesses afloat.

But as **Donald Trump** recalled that moment at a recent rally, the former president exuded pride.

"We had the greatest economy in history," the Republican told his **Wisconsin** audience. "The 30-year mortgage rate was at a record low, the lowest ever recorded ... 2.65%, that's what your mortgage rates were."

The question of who can best steer the US economy could be a deciding factor in who wins November's presidential election. While an April Gallup poll found that Americans were most likely to say that immigration is the country's top problem, the economy in general and inflation were also high on the list.

Trump may have an edge over President **Joe Biden** on key economic concerns, according to an April poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs. The survey found that Americans were more likely to say that as president, Trump helped the country with job creation and cost of living.

Biden tells graduates of Morehouse that he hears their voices of protest

ATLANTA, May 20, (AP): US President Joe Biden on Sunday offered his most direct recognition of US students' anguish over the Israel-Hamas war, telling graduates of historically Black Morehouse College that he heard their voices of protest and that scenes from the conflict in Gaza break his heart, too.

"I support peaceful nonviolent protest," he told students at the all-male college. "Your voices should be heard, and I promise you I hear them."

Biden said there's a humanitarian crisis in Gaza, "that's why I've called for an immediate cease-fire to stop the fighting". The president's comments came near the end of a commencement address in which he also reflected on American democracy and his role in safeguarding it.

"It's one of the hardest, most complicated problems in the world," Biden said. "There's nothing easy about it. I know it angers and frustrates many of you, including my family. But most of all I know it breaks your heart. It breaks mine as well."

To date, Biden had limited his public comments around the protests on US college campuses to upholding the right to peaceful protest.

The speech - and a separate one he gave later Sunday in Detroit - are part of a burst of outreach to Black constituents by the Democratic president, whose support among these voters has softened since their strong backing helped put him in the Oval Office.

Biden spent much of the approximately 30-minute speech focused on the problems at home. He condemned Donald Trump's rhetoric on immigrants and noted that the class of 2024 entered college during the COVID-19 pandemic and following the murder of George Floyd, a Black man killed by a Minneapolis police officer. Biden said it was natural for them, and others, to wonder whether the democracy "you hear about actually works for you."

Lat/Am

Mexico violence kills 14

Dominican Republic president re-elected

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic, May 20, (AP): Dominican Republic President **Luis Abinader** is headed to a second term following Sunday's general elections, declaring victory after his top competitors conceded early in the night as he held a strong leader in early vote tallies.

The outcome reinforced both Abinader's anti-corruption agenda, the government's crackdown along its shared border with Haiti and the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of migrants fleeing the Dominican Republic's violence-stricken neighbor. Such policies are only likely to continue in his next term.

Abinader, one of the most popular leaders in the Americas, and the early results showed him with nearly 60% of the votes. His competitors, former President Leonel Fernández and Mayor Abel Martínez, conceded early in the night.

Abinader

Abinader supporters in his campaign headquarters started celebrating early on, blowing horns and cheering. In his victory speech, Abinader delivered a nationalistic message promising change and anti-corruption measures. He notably spoke little about of the government's harsh measures on Haitian migrants and the crisis in its island neighbor.

"The message from the results is clear, the changes that we've made are going to be irreversible," Abinader said. "In the Dominican Republic, the best is yet to come."

Decision

While opposition parties reported a number of small irregularities, voting largely ran smoothly. Many of the 8 million eligible voters are still traumatized by an electoral authority decision to suspend the 2020 municipal elections due to a technical glitch, prompting what appears to be high voter turnout.

The president's Modern Revolutionary Movement was also expected to win a majority in the Dominican Republic's congress, which would allow him to push through changes to the constitution. It also would allow him to further his anti-corruption and economic agendas, which have earned him the approval of many in the Caribbean nation.

Willy Soto, a 21-year old economics student, was among those in the crowd. He said Abinader's anti-corruption measures and economic and educational reforms gave him hope for the future of the country long plagued by political corruption.

"We young people, we see a different kind of government," Soto said.

Much of the president's popularity, however, has been fueled by the crackdown on Haitian migrants.

Policies

The Dominican Republic has long taken a hard line with Haitian migrants, but such policies have ramped up since Haiti entered a free fall following the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse. As gangs have terrorized Haitians, the Dominican government has built a Trump-like border wall along the 250-mile (400-kilometer) border. He has also repeatedly urged the United Nations to send an international force to Haiti, saying such action "cannot wait any longer."

Soto also voiced approval for the migrant crackdown. While saying he knows "the policies against (Haitians) are very strict" and many migrants worried Abinader would win, he said the steps the president has taken are important in guaranteeing the security of Dominicans like him.

"This isn't a problem that gets resolved one day to the next," Soto said. "The policies he's implemented, how he's cracked down, closed the border and built a wall, I feel like it's a good initiative to control the problem of Haitian migration."

While the policy is popular among Dominicans, it has drawn sharp criticisms from human rights groups that call it racist and a violation of international law. The government has rejected calls to build refugee camps for those fleeing Haiti's violence, and it conducted mass deportations of 175,000 Haitians last year, according to government figures.

Also:

MEXICO CITY: Less than two weeks from national elections, opposition presidential candidate **Xóchitl Gálvez** hit away on security, one of Mexico's most stubborn challenges, in her final debate Sunday night with governing party candidate **Claudia Sheinbaum**.

Sheinbaum, the frontrunner in the race, defended the security record of her mentor, outgoing President **Andrés Manuel López Obrador**, while Gálvez accused the administration of playing nice with the country's powerful drug cartels.

"What has been this administration's strategy? Give the country to organized crime," said Gálvez, a former senator and tech entrepreneur.

But Sheinbaum, a former Mexico City mayor and climate scientist, maintained the conservative strategy that she employed in two previous debates, not taking the bait when Gálvez attacked.

Gálvez promised to keep and strengthen the National Guard that López Obrador created, but also strengthen state and local police forces.

Earlier Sunday, tens of thousands of mostly opposition supporters protested against the president in the capital's vast colonial-era main plaza.

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TAPACHULA, Mexico: Attacks on political candidates in Mexico's violence-torn southern state of Chiapas have left at least 14 people dead in recent days, local authorities and candidates said Sunday.

The latest attack early Sunday targeted the car driving **Nicolás Noriega**, who is running to lead the municipal government of the town of **Mapastepec**. Noriega confirmed the attack to The Associated Press and said he was wounded and at least five people from his campaign were fatally shot.

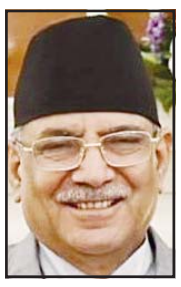
Running under the country's ruling party, Morena didn't add more details and was noticeably shaken after the attack. The Chiapas Prosecutor's Office also confirmed that five attack. Photos shared by local media showed a red truck dotted by bullet holes, and bloodied bodies laying in the trunk and on the ground.

"I deeply mourn the deaths of my friends, whose lives were taken in a cowardly manner. Evil is never going to reign in our hearts, because there are more of us who love life, who think of doing good," Noriega posted on Facebook Sunday. "I'm asking all of society to unite to honor life."

New Taiwan's President Lai Ching-te, (center), Vice President Hsiao Bi-khim, (right), and former president Tsai Ing-wen wave during Lai's inauguration ceremonies in Taipei, Taiwan on May 20. (AP)

A Ladakhi woman displays indelible ink mark on her finger after casting vote, during the fifth round of multi-phase national elections outside a polling station in Leh, India, on May 20. The seven phase staggered election will run until June 1 before votes are counted on June 4. Almost 970 million voters will cast their ballots in this election, more than 10% of the world's population. (AP)

Modi



Dahal

Subcontinent

India holds 5th stage of poll: When Indian Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** opened a Hindu temple on the site of a razed mosque in the city of Ayodhya in early 2024, he was making a bet on mixing Hindu nationalism and politics ahead of a national election in which he's seeking a rare third term.

On Monday, that bet faced a test as the northern city swarmed with voters, many of them Hindu devotees, lining up in scorching heat as India began the fifth phase of its six-week-long staggered national election.

Modi's Hindu nationalist politics have resonated with many supporters, and most polls show his Bharatiya Janata Party in the lead. But it's not clear whether that fervor can carry him to victory as Indians face rising unemployment and inflation.

"Issues like unemployment, inflation, lack of security and the government's attempts to muzzle dissent are glaring problems that the BJP has no answers to," said Amarnath Agarwal, a political analyst.

The staggered election will run until June 1 and nearly 970 million eligible voters, more than 10% of the world's population, will elect 543 members to the lower house of Parliament for five years. The votes are scheduled to be counted on June 4.

Monday's polling, in constituencies across six states and two union territories, is crucial for the BJP, as it includes some of strongholds in states like Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Nepal PM wins vote: Nepal's prime minister will continue leading his shaky governing coalition after winning his fourth vote of confidence in two years on Monday.

Prime Minister **Pushpa Kamal Dahal** called the vote in Nepal's lower house of parliament after a minor party in his coalition broke apart and its members withdrew support from the government. Dahal won the vote with 157 votes, a majority of the 272-member house.

Dahal has struggled to keep his coalition together since becoming prime minister in December 2022 following an inconclusive election. Dahal's Nepal Communist Party Maoist Center came in third in that election, but was the first party to piece together majority support.

That left him in a precarious position. He has had to switch coalition partners to keep his majority.

The latest challenge is allegations that his Home Minister was involved in financial irregularities involving cooperatives.

Opposition lawmakers are demanding the minister resign and have been protesting for days inside the House of Representatives, the lower house of parliament, shouting slogans and trying to block the vote of confidence on Monday.

Security officers had to block the protesters to make the vote possible.

Dahal briefly told the protesting members it was unfair for them to protest during an important vote while he was doing all he can to work with them. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

IS claims attack: The Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for an attack on foreigners in central Afghanistan last week in which three Spanish citizens and three Afghans were killed.

Seven people were wounded in the attack on Friday in on Bamiyan province, a major tourist area, according to Abdul Mateen Qani, a spokesman for the interior minister. He said seven suspects were arrested at the scene.

The Islamic State group issued statements on its Aamaq news agency late Sunday that said IS fighters attacked a bus carrying tourists and their guides. "The attack was in response to the IS leaders' directions to target citizens of the European Union wherever they are found," it said.

Spain's Foreign Ministry said three Spaniards died and at least one more had been wounded. A Taliban official in Bamiyan, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media, said the four wounded foreigners were from Spain, Norway, Australia and Latvia.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez wrote on social media platform X that he was "overwhelmed" by the news.

Qani said that all those who were wounded have been transferred to capital of Kabul for treatment and they are stable condition.

The Islamic State group's affiliate in Afghanistan is a major Taliban rival and its militants have attacked schools, hospitals, mosques and minority Shiite areas throughout the country.

The Taliban seized power in Afghanistan in August 2021 as US and NATO forces were in the final weeks of their withdrawal from the country after 20 years of war. (AP)

A child paints a stuffed panda toy during a cultural salon in Mexico City, Mexico, on May 19. (Xinhua)

Asia

Philippines blames China for loss of giant clams

Lai inaugurated as Taiwan leader

TAIPEI, Taiwan, May 20, (Agencies): Taiwan's new president, Lai Ching-te, said in his inauguration speech Monday that he wants peace with China and urged it to stop its military threats and intimidation of the self-governed island that Beijing claims as its own territory.

"I hope that China will face the reality of (Taiwan)'s existence, respect the choices of the people of Taiwan, and in good faith, choose dialogue over confrontation," Lai said after being sworn into office.

Lai pledged to "neither yield nor provoke" Beijing and said he sought peace in relations with China. But he emphasized the island democracy is determined to defend itself "in the face of the many threats and attempts at infiltration from China."

Lai's party, the Democratic Progressive Party, doesn't seek independence from China but maintains that Taiwan is already a sovereign nation.

The Chinese office in charge of Taiwan affairs criticized Lai's inauguration speech as promoting "the fallacy of separatism," inciting confrontation and relying on foreign forces to seek independence.

"We will never tolerate or condone any form of 'Taiwan independence' separatist activities," said Chen Binhua, spokesperson of the Taiwan Affairs Office of China's State Council.

"No matter how the situation on the island changes, no matter who is in power, it cannot change the fact that both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to one China ... and cannot stop the historical trend of the motherland's eventual reunification," Chen said.

The Chinese Ministry of Commerce on Monday also announced sanctions against Boeing and two other defense companies for arms sales to Taiwan.

Development

Lai, 64, takes over from Tsai Ing-wen, who led Taiwan through eight years of economic and social development despite the COVID-19 pandemic and China's escalating military threats. Beijing views Taiwan as a renegade province and has been upping its threats to annex it by force if necessary.

Lai is seen as inheriting Tsai's progressive policies, including universal health care, backing for higher education and support for minority groups, including making Taiwan the first place in Asia to recognize same-sex marriages.

In his inauguration speech, Lai pledged to bolster Taiwan's social safety net and help the island advance in fields such as artificial intelligence and green energy.

Lai, who was vice president during Tsai's second term, came across as more of a firebrand earlier in his career. In 2017, he described himself as a "pragmatic worker for Taiwan's independence," drawing Beijing's rebuke. He has since softened his stance and now supports maintaining the status quo across the Taiwan Strait and the possibility of talks with Beijing.

Thousands of people gathered in front of the Presidential Office Building in Taipei for the inauguration ceremony. Donning white celebratory hats, they watched the swearing-in on large screens, followed by a military march and colorful performances featuring folk dancers, opera performers and rappers. Military helicopters flew in formation, carrying Taiwan's flag.

Lai accepted congratulations from fellow politicians and delegations from the 12 nations that maintain official diplomatic relations with Taiwan, as well as politicians from the US, Japan and various European states.

Security

Lai, also known by his English name William, has vowed to continue his predecessor's push to maintain stability with China while beefing up Taiwan's security through imports of military equipment from close partner the US, the expansion of the defense industry with the manufacture of submarines and aircraft, and the reinforcing of regional partnerships with unofficial allies such as the U.S., Japan, South Korea and the Philippines.

US Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken congratulated Lai on his inauguration. "We look forward to working with President Lai and across Taiwan's political spectrum to advance our shared interests and values, deepen our longstanding unofficial relationship, and maintain peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait," Blinken said in a statement from his office.

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Thai candidates register: Thailand on Monday officially began the selection of new senators, a process that has become part of an ongoing war between progressive forces hoping for democratic political reforms and conservatives seeking to keep the status quo.

Hopeful candidates headed to district offices across the country on the first day of registration to compete for one of the 200 seats in Parliament's upper house.

The power of the Senate - although limited compared to the House of Representatives, which is tasked with lawmaking responsibilities - was demonstrated dramatically when it blocked the progressive party that won the most seats in last year's election from forming a new government.

The senators were able to do so because of the 2017 Constitution, passed under a military government, which requires the prime minister to be approved by a joint vote of the elected House and the Senate, which was appointed by the military regime.

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Chinese fishermen blamed: The Philippines blamed Chinese fishermen on Monday for a massive loss of giant clams in a disputed shoal controlled by China's coast guard in the South China Sea and urged an international inquiry into the amount of environmental damage in the area.

The Philippine coast guard presented surveillance photographs of Chinese fishermen harvesting large numbers of giant clams for a number of years in a lagoon at Scarborough Shoal, but said signs of such activities stopped in March 2019.

Parts of the surrounding coral appeared to be badly scarred, in what the coast guard said was apparently a futile search by the Chinese for more clams. The lagoon is a prominent fishing area which Filipinos call Bajo de Masinloc and the Chinese calll Huangyan Dao off the northwestern Philippines.

"Those were the last remaining giant clams that we saw in Bajo de Masinloc," Philippine coast guard spokesperson Commodore **Jay Tarriela** said at a news conference.

"We are alarmed and worried about the situation that's happening there," National Security Council Assistant Director General Jonathan Malaya said. He said China should allow an independent inquiry by experts from the United Nations and environmental groups.

The Chinese Embassy in Manila did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Beijing has repeatedly asserted its sovereignty over much of the busy South China Sea. The territorial disputes involve China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.

bonds

The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the most recent issues of CBK Bonds and related Tawarruq at a total value of KWD (240) million for (3) months with Rate of Return (4.375%).

Gulf bonds, sukuks surge by 33% in Q1/24

The report by the Kuwait Financial Center "Markaz" highlights a significant increase in the total initial issuances of Gulf bonds and sukuks during the first quarter of 2024 compared to the same period in 2023.

The total value reached $37.7 billion, marking a 33% increase, with a total of 77 issues compared to 68 in the first quarter of 2023, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Saudi Arabia led in the total value of initial issuances, accounting for 62% with $23.2 billion, followed by the UAE with 16% ($6.2 billion), Qatar with 11% ($4.2 billion), Bahrain with 5% ($2 billion), and Oman with 3% ($1.3 billion). Kuwait recorded one issuance totaling $1 billion.

Sovereign issuances represented 48% of the total value, amounting to $18.1 billion, a 57.2% increase from the first quarter of 2023.

Meanwhile, Gulf companies' issuances reached $19.6 billion, a 16.3% increase.

banking sector dominates foreign ownership

According to the Al-Shall weekly report, foreign ownership in companies listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange's Premier Market is notably concentrated in certain sectors, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The banking sector, for instance, holds the lion's share, accounting for approximately 74.5% of foreign ownership, with seven other companies in various sectors collectively holding about 20%. Notably, the GFH Group, a Bahraini company listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange, is considered an exception as Bahrainis are not classified as foreigners in this context.

The total value of foreign ownership in the first market stands at about 5.14 billion dinars, representing approximately 14.7% of the market's total value. Excluding the GFH Group, foreign ownership decreases to around 4.87 billion dinars. Beyond the banking sector, notable foreign ownerships are concentrated in six other primary market companies.

Zain stands out with a significant absolute contribution from foreign ownership, amounting to approximately 308.7 million dinars, representing 14.6% of its shares. Human Soft leads in relative ownership with about 38.8% of its shares, while ranking second in absolute value with ownership of approximately 151.5 million dinars.

Market Movements 20-05-2024

			Change	Closing pts
JAPAN	-	Nikkei 225	+282.30	39,069.68
PHILIPPINES	-	PSEi	+64.09	6,682.78

			Change	Closing pts
SAUDI	-	TASI	-73.02	12,125.36
DUBAI	-	DFMGI	-1.03	4,067.20
EGYPT	-	EGX 30	-86.98	27,228.85
PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	-258.56	75,067.31

Business

Academy reflects NBK's vision of fostering sustainable human capital as key strategic objective

National Bank of Kuwait Academy welcomes 29th wave of trainees

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: In line with its strategy to attract high-caliber national talent from Kuwaiti fresh university graduates and offer them suitable job opportunities, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) welcomed the 29th wave of newly hired employees to its annual NBK Academy program especially designed for developing Kuwaiti fresh graduates.

The Opening ceremony was attended by Mr. Mohamed Al-Othman, CEO - Consumer and Digital Banking Group at National Bank of Kuwait, Mr. Mohammad Al-Kharafi, COO - Head of Group Operations and Information Technology, Mr. Ahmed Bourisly, GM – Corporate Banking Group, along with a number of executive managers and officials from Talent Management Department.

The program will run for7 months,from May to November 2024, during which the trainees will receive intensive training on technological, behavioral and other skills that allow them to build a thriving career at NBK.

It also covers various aspects of the banking business including key banking principles, risk management, financial accounting, marketing, negotiation, as well as training on creativity, innovation and design thinking, increasing productivity. Following that, the trainees will receive intensified training on branch work mechanism for 5 weeks before having on-site training at NBK branches for 1 month.

Najla Al Sager

Najla Al-Sager: NBK Academy aims to prepare highly qualified leaders across all banking disciplines

At the final part of the program, the trainees will be familiarized with all NBK groups and departments through on-site visits to gain better understanding of the banking sector.

The participants will also present new ideas to the heads of different departments through the "Innovation Challenge" program, which aims to stimulate trainees' creativity and introducing innovative solutions for the various training aspects covered in the Academy.

NBK Academy

NBK Academy boasts a long record of success for 16 years. The program was specially designed for Kuwaiti fresh university graduates who successfully meet the admission criteria. It also hosts internationally accredited trainers to enable employees acquire specialized banking skills.

Commenting on this, Najla Al-Sager, Head of Talent Management, Group Human Resources at National Bank of Kuwait, said, "At NBK, we always seek to offer suitable job opportunities for Kuwaiti fresh graduates by attracting, developing and upskilling them to become and paving their way to start a thriving career based on solid foundations, thus creating added value to the banking sector in the future."

"The Academy reflects NBK's vision of fostering sustainable human capital as a key strategic objective and joint responsibility between the government's different entities and the private sector," she added.

"NBK Academy's objective is to prepare highly skilled young Kuwait banking leaders in all the banking disciplines. This resonates with our ambitious plans to build a sustainable future, continuous elevation of service levels, and achieving steady business growth and expansion both locally and regionally," she noted.

NBK Academy is an award-winning program which has received 3 awards from prestigious organizations over the past 3 years.The Academy was launched in 2008 with the aim of paving the way for Kuwaiti fresh university graduates to join the banking sector. It provides the trainees with the best-in-class training programs developed in cooperation with leading international institutions and universities to meet the demands of the labor market.

GCC sovereign wealth funds reach record $4.1 tln in 2023

Dubai sees 80% surge in millionaires over decade

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The Gulf region stands as the epicenter of the world's largest pool of sovereign wealth fund capital, boasting assets held by the 19 sovereign wealth funds of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) that soared to a historic peak of $4.1 trillion by the conclusion of 2023, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Projections suggest this figure could escalate to a staggering $7.6 trillion by 2030, according to certain expectations.

A recent report from Al-Monitor underscores the concerted efforts of the global finance industry to bolster its presence in the Gulf region, drawn by the proximity to trillions of dollars in sovereign wealth. Concurrently, the Dubai International Financial Center anticipates 2024 to be its busiest year yet, actively enticing more companies to relocate segments of their operations to the region.

To augment their appeal as emerging centers of wealth, Gulf countries can leverage the depth of their local capital. Recent reports on the wealthiest cities in 2024 revealed a notable 80% surge in millionaires in Dubai from 2013 to 2023, solidifying its position atop the list while designating several other Gulf cities as "rising wealth magnets of the future."

However, the wealth profile in the Gulf region still lags behind leading global wealth centers. Credit Suisse estimates the total wealth of households in the United States at about $151 trillion, $104 trillion in Europe, and $84 trillion in China, significantly eclipsing per capita wealth in the Gulf countries, which remains lower than North America and Europe.

The real estate sector emerges as a pivotal repository of Gulf families' wealth while attracting international capital, notably in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Foreign ownership of real estate has been encouraged in many areas, known as freehold ownership, attracting significant interest, particularly following the Russo-Ukrainian War, which prompted a surge in demand. Dubai recorded 118,993 residential transactions in 2023, marking a substantial 29.6% increase from 2022.

In a bid to elevate the region as a rising center for global wealth, the next strategic move for Gulf states involves opening their economies and major assets to foreign investors. Attention is focused on the much-anticipated IPO of Etihad Airways, which witnessed a 41% year-on-year increase in passenger numbers in the first quarter of 2024. The IPO of Etihad Airways would garner global attention, offering international investors access to the profits of Gulf airlines and their dominance on the Asian-European route.

The momentum of public offerings in the Gulf region extends beyond the UAE, with nearly 70% of the 138 initial public offerings of Gulf state companies between 2018 and 2023 occurring on the Saudi Tadawul. Booming stock market activities have attracted foreign inflows, with Saudi Arabia aiming to achieve 25% foreign ownership by 2020. While falling short of this goal, foreign ownership has steadily risen, reaching 11.6% by May 2024.

Photo during the event

Corporate tie-ups & member benefits highlighted by KCICAI

KCICAI hosts insightful CPE event on Kuwait and GCC economic landscape

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The Kuwait Chapter of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (KCICAI) hosted a captivating Continuing Professional Education (CPE) event focused on the economic landscape of Kuwait and the wider Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region. The event was held at the prestigious Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel, Kuwait. The event garnered significant attention from industry professionals and stakeholders alike.

The keynote address was delivered by Mr. Daniel Kaye, Group Chief Economist of the Economic Research Group at the National Bank of Kuwait. With a wealth of experience and expertise in macroeconomic analysis, Mr. Kaye provided invaluable insights into the global and regional economic dynamics shaping the future of Kuwait and the GCC.

The event commenced with opening remarks by CA Andaleeb Girkar, setting the stage for a comprehensive exploration of the factors influencing the economic trajectory of the region. CA Rabin Gonsalves, Chairperson of KCICAI, emphasized the significance of the Kuwait and GCC economic outlook, underscoring its impact on residents and businesses in the region. He expressed gratitude to the attendees for their participation and highlighted the importance of staying abreast of economic developments in a rapidly evolving landscape. He highlighted the rarity of such events post-pandemic, and emphasized the challenges in accessing accurate economic data in the region.

CA Sweta Chipra, took over as meeting coordinator, introduced Mr. Daniel Kaye, acknowledging his accomplishments in the field of economic research. Mr. Kaye delved into a detailed analysis of the global economic outlook and Oil prices, providing nuanced perspectives on key economic indicators and trends. He highlighted the resilience of the US economy, the challenges facing Europe, and the evolving dynamics in China and Japan. Additionally, Mr. Kaye offered insights into the outlook for oil prices, emphasizing the importance of geopolitical factors and supply-demand dynamics.

The session also featured comprehensive highlights of GCC countries' economic prospects, including Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Oman, and Bahrain. Each country's unique opportunities and challenges were examined, providing a holistic understanding of the regional economic landscape.

Turning the focus to Kuwait, Mr. Kaye outlined the country's economic outlook, noting the subdued growth post-pandemic and the challenges posed by its reliance on the oil sector. Structural challenges such as low GDP growth, limited economic diversification, and low investment were discussed, along with potential strategies to address them in alignment with Kuwait's Vision 2035.

The vote of thanks was proposed by KCICAI Vice Chairperson ,CA Aditya Dhanuka, .He expressed gratitude to Mr. Daniel Kaye for his enlightening presentation, the attendees and the annual sponsors Al Mulla Exchange and NBK for their unwavering support. He also thanked KCICAI's media partners for their extensive coverage of the events. The event was conceptualized, structured and executed under the leadership of Executive Committee member and CPE lead CA Venkata Raman.

The event concluded with an emphasis on the benefits available to KCICAI members through corporate tie-ups with Al Rifai, Crowne Plaza, Metro Medical, Jazeera Airways, Mugal Mahal & Pokiddo, highlighting the chapter's commitment to enhancing member value and fostering professional development.

For more information about KCICAI and upcoming events, please visit icaikw.org.

Kuwait Oil Company and Ministry ink deal to integrate solar energy into national grid

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The Kuwait Oil Company has inked a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy to integrate renewable energy plants into the national electricity grid, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The aim is to generate one gigawatt of electricity from solar energy to power the company's facilities. This collaboration involves establishing a joint working group to devise strategies for energy transformation and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

The focus is on coordinating efforts and overcoming obstacles hindering the implementation of renewable energy projects.

Experts view this memorandum as a significant stride towards fulfilling the state's objective of attaining a renewable energy production rate of approximately 15% by 2030.

They emphasize that this endeavor is not solely the responsibility of the Ministry of Electricity but also entails active participation from the oil sector.

Given that the oil sector is a major energy consumer, accounting for over 10% of total electrical energy consumption, its involvement in energy production can alleviate the burden on the electricity sector while mitigating environmental impact by reducing emissions from traditional fuel combustion.

The move towards solar energy production is deemed highly suitable for Kuwait despite facing challenges such as prolonged dust seasons. Experts advocate for establishing partnerships with leading solar energy institutions to tailor technologies to Kuwait's climatic conditions.

While acknowledging the efficacy of solar energy in moderate conditions, they underscore the need for heat-resistant panels and increased panel area to withstand Kuwait's hot, dusty environment. However, they caution that implementing such technologies incurs significant costs, posing economic feasibility challenges.

Reflecting on past renewable energy projects like the Dabdaba project, experts criticize the lack of learning from previous experiences and emphasize the importance of aligning energy projects with national goals and environmental realities. They assert that the primary objective of renewable energy initiatives should be economic feasibility rather than geopolitical motives or meeting international agreements.

Former officials from the Ministry of Electricity and Water stress the benefits of the oil sector's involvement in renewable energy projects, highlighting the potential to reduce state support for the electricity sector and mitigate environmental impact.

They note that the direct integration of renewable energy sources into oil company facilities can alleviate strain on the national grid.

Oil experts emphasize Kuwait's ambition to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 and underscore the urgent need for concerted efforts to transition to renewable energy sources.

Despite Kuwait's abundant solar potential, the country lags in global energy indicators, necessitating a reevaluation of current strategies to ensure future energy security and environmental sustainability.

Academics advocate for clear goals and mechanisms for purchasing clean energy from the private sector to encourage investment in renewable energy infrastructure.

They emphasize the importance of creating opportunities for investors in renewable energy projects and call for strategic partnerships between the government and private sector to expedite progress towards national renewable energy targets.

Russian court freezes assets of 2 German banks

A court in the Russian city of St. Petersburg has ordered the seizing of assets of Germany's Deutsche Bank and Commerzbank in the country, the Russia state news agency Tass says. The order is in response to a lawsuit over the planned construction of a liquefied natural gas terminal in the Baltic Sea.

The banks were among the guarantors in the contract for building a gas processing plant by a multinational construction firm, Renaissance Heavy Industries, and German company Linde. But the project was cancelled after Western sanctions, with the banks withdrawing their guarantees.

The cancellation came at the request of RusChemAlliance, a subsidiary of Russian gas giant Gazprom and the operator of the project, German news agency dpa reported.

RusChemAlliance paid advances to Linde for the building of the plant. The company is claiming about 238.61 million euros ($260 million) against Deutsche Bank and 94.92 million euros ($103 million) against Commerzbank, according to dpa.

In a statement Deutsche Bank said that it has made a provision for approximately 260 million euros ($283 million) under an indemnification agreement. (AP)

Musk launches Starlink sat net service in Indonesia

Elon Musk traveled to Indonesia's resort island of Bali on Sunday to launch Starlink satellite internet service in the world's largest archipelago nation.

Wearing a green Batik shirt, Musk was greeted with a garland of flower petals at a community health clinic in Denpasar, the provincial capital of Bali, where he launched the Starlink service alongside Indonesian ministers.

Indonesia, a vast archipelago of 17,000 islands sprawled across three time zones with a population of more than 270 million, has been trying for years to secure deals with Musk's Tesla on battery investment and for Musk's SpaceX to provide fast internet for the country's remote regions.

During the ceremony, Musk took a speed test of the Starlink internet service with several health workers in Indonesia's remote regions, including in Aru, one of Indonesia's unserved and outermost islands in Maluku province.

"This can make it really a lifesaver for remote medical clinics, and I think it could be a possibility for education as well," Musk told reporters. b"If you can access the internet and then you can learn anything and you can also sell your business services worldwide. So, I think it's going to be incredibly beneficial," he said. (AP)

Embassy in Kuwait holds honoring ceremony

UAE Ambassador lauds KFH's support and development role

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: UAE Ambassador to Kuwait, Dr. Matar Hamed Al-Neyadi commended Kuwait Finance House (KFH) for its recent participation in the UAE Companies Investment Meet. He praised KFH's significant contribution to development and investment and expressed his hope for further strengthening economic and investment collaboration between the UAE and Kuwait.

A ceremony at the UAE Embassy in Kuwait honored sponsors of the embassy's "Unlocking Kuwait's Potential" Investment Meet. Representing KFH, Acting Group Chief Executive Officer Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood expressed his gratitude for the recognition.

Al Rushood stressed that KFH's strong presence both in the local and global markets promotes its commitment towardsboosting investment, fostering collaboration between private sectors in Kuwait and the UAE, and creating further opportunities for companies from both countries to collaborate and leverage the diverse investment prospects available in Kuwait. This aligns with Kuwait's status as a prominent financial hub in the region.

Dr. Matar Hamed Al-Neyadi honoring Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood.

Dr. Matar Hamed Al-Neyadi with Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood, Yousef Al-Ruwaih, Walid Al-Khashti and embassy officials.

> **Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood**
> KFH is a highly proficient strategic partner for financing significant development projects

He added: "Thanks to its robust capital base, high solvency, and strong credit rating, along with its wide-ranging, flexible, and efficient Sharia-compliant financing solutions, KFH is a highly proficient strategic partner for financing and supporting mega development projects in Kuwait and the UAE.It operates as a model for collaboration among the private sector institutions across the GCC."

Al Rushood pointed out that KFH's leadership in Islamic finance stems from its values-driven approach, which translates into a professional and disciplined operational model. This significant contribution reflects KFH's belief in the crucial role played by the corporate sector and mega projects in driving economic development.

It is worth noting that KFH's recent participation in the UAE Companies Investment Meet, which was organized by the UAE Embassy in Kuwait, is part of its keenness to support and encourage distinguished economic events while solidifying its leadership role in financing strategic development projects.

The event aimed at diversifying the commercial partnerships, supporting their growth in the Kuwaiti market, as well as exploring promising investment opportunities that contribute to achieving sustainable growth, serving as a platform for the sharing of ideas, knowledge, and expertise.

A large audience of economic leaders and officials from both Kuwait and the UAE attended the event, with the participation of 20 significant Emirati companies from both the private and public sectors.

UN experts confirm deal

S.Sudan close to securing $13b oil-backed loan from a UAE co

UNITED NATIONS, May 20, (AP): U.N. experts say South Sudan is close to securing a $13 billion loan from a company in the United Arab Emirates, despite the oil-rich country's difficulties in managing debts backed by its oil reserves.

The panel of experts said in a report to the U.N. Security Council that loan documents it has seen indicate the deal with the company, Hamad Bin Khalifa Department of Projects, would be South Sudan's largest-ever oil-backed loan.

The experts, who monitor an arms embargo against South Sudan, said in the oil section of the report obtained by The Associated Press this week that "servicing this loan would likely tie up most of South Sudan's revenue (for) many years, depending on oil prices."

Hamad Bin Khalifa Department of Projects, registered in Dubai, has no listed phone number and its website isn't working. An email address associated with the company bounced back. The UAE Mission to the United Nations declined to comment, saying Hamad is a private company.

South Sudan gained independence from Sudan in 2011 following decades of civil war that cost million of lives, and oil is the backbone of the young nation's economy.

Soon after independence, South Sudan fought its own civil war from 2013 to 2018, when rivals President Salva Kiir and Vice President Riek Machar signed a power-sharing agreement and formed a coalition government. South Sudan is under pressure from the United States and other nations to more quickly implement the 2018 peace deal that ended the civil war and prepare for elections.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration's latest update, South Sudan produced an average of about 149,000 barrels of liquid fuels per day in 2023. The landlocked country uses Sudan's pipelines to transfer its oil to Port Sudan for shipment to global markets in an agreement with the Sudanese government, which pockets $23 per barrel as transit fees for the oil exports.

South Sudanese Information Minister Michael Makuei Lueth told reporters in February that outside factors, including the civil war still raging in Sudan, have hurt South Sudan's oil exports. He also said oil wells, which were water-logged by heavy floods during the past rainy season, weren't yet fully operational.

The section on oil in the experts report said documents for the loan from the UAE company, signed between December and February by South Sudan's minister of finance, indicate the loan is split into tranches.

According to the documents, around 70% of the loan is to be allocated to infrastructure projects, with the first payment in excess of $5 billion, the panel said. Following a three-year grace period, "the loan will be secured against the delivery of crude oil for a period of up to 17 years."

The panel of experts raised serious questions about South Sudan's oil-based debts.

Sharp declines in critical mineral prices mask risks of future supply

IEA report sounds alarm bell

PARIS, May 20, (KUNA): Prices for key minerals used in clean energy technologies dropped in 2023, but a new International Energy Agency (IEA) analysis shows the need for greater and more diversified investment to support efforts to reach energy and climate goals.

The Global Critical Minerals Outlook 2024, published Friday, updates the IEA's inaugural review of the market last year while also offering new medium- and long-term outlooks for the supply and demand of important energy transition minerals, such as lithium, copper, nickel, cobalt, graphite and rare earth elements.

Materials used to make batteries saw particularly significant decreases, with the price of lithium dropping by 75 percent and the prices of cobalt, nickel and graphite falling by between 30 percent and 45 percent, helping drive battery prices 14 percent lower, it said.

Growth

With demand growth remaining robust, these declines were mostly driven by a strong increase in global supply, helping to offset the steep price rises in 2021 and 2022, according to the report.

The report finds that while lower prices for critical minerals in the past year have been good news for consumers and affordability, they have also provided a headwind for new investment. In 2023, investment in critical minerals mining grew by 10 percent and exploration spending rose by 15 percent, still healthy, but slower than in 2022. Today's well-supplied market may not be a good guide for the future, with the Outlook noting that demand for critical minerals continues to grow strongly in all IEA scenarios, driven by the deployment of clean energy technologies, it showed.

Today's combined market size of key energy transition minerals is set to more than double to USD 770 billion by 2040 in a pathway to net zero emissions by mid-century, it said.

Detailed project-by-project analysis suggests that announced projects are sufficient to meet only 70 percent of copper and 50 percent of lithium requirements in 2035 in a scenario in which countries worldwide meet their national climate goals, according to the IEA report.

Markets for other minerals look more balanced if projects come through as scheduled. However, announced projects do not change the high geographical concentration of supply, and China is projected to retain a very strong position in the refining and processing sector.

Secure and sustainable access to critical minerals is essential for smooth and affordable clean energy transitions. The world's appetite for technologies such as solar panels, electric cars and batteries is growing fast, it concluded.

Arab League: Energy security is essential for economic growth

CAIRO, May 20, (KUNA): Assistant Secretary General and Head of the Economic Affairs Sector at the Arab League Dr. Ali Al-Maliki underlined that energy security is vital for impacting economic growth, national security, and citizens' well-being.

In a speech delivered on Al-Maliki's behalf by Director of the Energy Department at the Arab League Eng. Jamila Matar, during the 12th Arab Energy Efficiency Day, Al-Maliki underscored the strategic importance of energy security in a world driven by interests and conflicting with strife.

He pointed out the challenges in ensuring energy security and transitioning to sustainable sources, encouraging for a comprehensive approach that includes improving energy efficiency, developing renewable energy, protecting critical energy infrastructure, and reducing carbon emissions.

Al-Maliki identified energy efficiency as crucial for energy security, aiming to provide energy services at the lowest cost without compromising quality, which involves managing energy demand through various efficiency strategies to reduce consumption in line with national development plans.

The Arab Ministerial Council for Electricity (AMCE) has been tracking energy efficiency progress in the region, developing and tracking national energy efficiency plans, where they also prepared a guide on renewable energy and energy efficiency in Arab countries, providing statistical information on policies and programs aimed at improving energy production and consumption efficiency, he mentioned.

Al-Maliki announced the theme for the 12th Arab Energy Efficiency Day competition: "Best Patent in Energy Efficiency," following the decision of the 38th session of AMCE of implementing resolution 294, underlining the role of intellectual property in promoting innovation and achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Focusing

On his side, Executive Director of the Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (RCREEE) Jauad Al-Kharraz described the day as a celebration of energy, focusing on patents due to the Arab world's lag in this area, calling for greater efforts in patent registration, research, and innovation in sustainable energy.

Al-Kharraz emphasized the significant role patents play in economic development, supporting decision-making in research, innovation, and investment, stressing the need for a focus on social responsibility to improve economic, social, and cultural conditions by ensuring reliable and equitable energy supplies for all citizens in the Arab region.

Meanwhile, First Undersecretary for Research, Planning and Authorities Follow Up at the Egyptian Ministry of Electricity Dr. Ahmad Mohina discussed Egypt's achievements in energy efficiency, including high-efficiency power plants and substantial investments in electricity transmission, clarifying the urgent need for enhanced efforts in energy efficiency across the Arab world.

Approximately USD 10 billion were spent on electricity transmission networks in the past 10 years, he said, noting that Egypt reduced the rate of fuel needed to produce each unit of electricity measurement by 20 percent, which saved about a billion dollars and led to a reduction in emissions harmful to the environment.

The Arab League Energy Department, in collaboration with RCREEE, organized the 12th Arab Energy Efficiency Day celebration at its headquarters in Cairo, featuring a session on the best energy efficiency patent competition, won by Qatari Eng. Dr. Yousef Mohammad Yousef Al-Horr for his air conditioning system project.

The day also included discussions on the role of research, development, and innovation in achieving energy efficiency goals and the cumulative environmental and social impact of renewable energy projects in the Arab region.

The event, attended by senior officials from electricity ministries, international and regional organizations, and major energy companies, underscored the strategic importance and Arab efforts of energy efficiency.

Things to know about an AI safety summit in Seoul

SEOUL, South Korea, May 20, (AP): South Korea is set to host a mini-summit this week on risks and regulation of artificial intelligence, following up on an inaugural AI safety meeting in Britain last year that drew a diverse crowd of tech luminaries, researchers and officials.

The gathering in Seoul aims to build on work started at the U.K. meeting on reining in threats posed by cutting edge artificial intelligence systems.

Here is what you need to know about the AI Seoul Summit and AI safety issues.

What international efforts have been made on AI safety?

The Seoul summit is one of many global efforts to create guardrails for the rapidly advancing technology that promises to transform many aspects of society, but has also raised concerns about new risks for both everyday life such as algorithmic bias that skews search results and potential existential threats to humanity.

At November's U.K. summit, held at a former secret wartime codebreaking base in Bletchley north of London, researchers, government leaders, tech executives and members of civil society groups, many with opposing views on AI, huddled in closed-door talks. Tesla CEO Elon Musk and OpenAI CEO Sam Altman mingled with politicians like British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

Delegates from more than two dozen countries including the U.S. and China signed the Bletchley Declaration, agreeing to work together to contain the potentially "catastrophic" risks posed by galloping advances in artificial intelligence.

In March, the U.N. General Assembly approved its first resolution on artificial intelligence, lending support to an international effort to ensure the powerful new technology benefits all nations, respects human rights and is "safe, secure and trustworthy."

Earlier this month, the U.S. and China held their first high-level talks on artificial intelligence in Geneva to discuss how to address the risks of the fast-evolving technology and set shared standards to manage it. There, U.S. officials raised concerns about China's "misuse of AI" while Chinese representatives rebuked the U.S. over "restrictions and pressure" on artificial intelligence, according to their governments.

What will be discussed at the Seoul summit?

The May 21-22 meeting is co-hosted by the South Korean and U.K. governments.

On day one, Tuesday, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Sunak will meet leaders virtually. A few global industry leaders have been invited to provide updates on how they've been fulfilling the commitments made at the Bletchley summit to ensure the safety of their AI models.

Promising future seen for photovoltaic solar power in Spain

MADRID, May 20, (Xinhua): Photovoltaic (PV) solar energy has a "promising future ahead" and "great potential to expand" in Spain, an industry executive told Xinhua in an interview on Friday.

In April, renewables in Spain reached a share of 64.6 percent of total monthly generation. For the first time, three renewable technologies led the mix: wind (22.2 percent), hydro (19.7 percent) and solar photovoltaic (18.8 percent), official figures showed.

Solar photovoltaics increased production by 4.4 percent compared to the same month in 2023.

"The demand for solar energy remains high, and there is great potential to expand our business. With government policies increasingly favorable towards renewable energies, we are confident the industry has a promising future ahead," Daniel Fernandez, co-CEO of Spanish company SotySolar, told Xinhua.

The firm, which works with European and Chinese manufacturers, began installing PV technology in Spain and Portugal in 2016.

"China provides us with products fueled by innovation, while SotySolar guarantees the expansion of photovoltaics and its brands," Fernandez said.

Last year, Spain raised its target for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 to 32 percent, up from a previous goal of 23 percent.

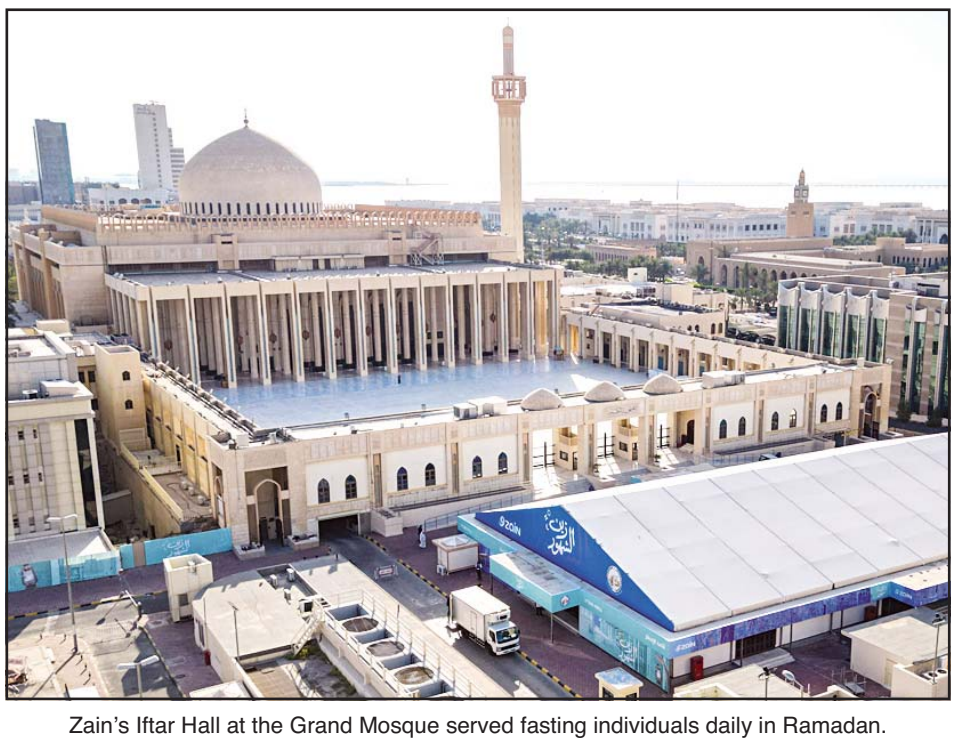
It also elevated its renewables target to 48 percent of final energy production by 2030, reaching 81 percent in electricity while improving energy efficiency to 44 percent.

However, Fernandez explained, "although more roofs are seen full of solar panels, obstacles persist such as high initial investment, lack of public awareness and regulatory complexity."

At an industrial level, meanwhile, companies have already understood the advantages of solar power, and more power purchase agreements are being negotiated.

Fernandez said these contracts enable companies "to stop suffering from fluctuations in electricity costs, while reducing their energy costs."

In 2023, the installation of solar photovoltaic power increased by 28 percent in Spain, bringing an additional 5,594 MW to the generation pool, the highest figure since records began, according to Spanish electricity grid operator Red Electrica.



Zain's Iftar Hall at the Grand Mosque served fasting individuals daily in Ramadan.

Al Mutairi honors Al Musaibeeh with Ministry officials present.

Daily Iftar meals and Quran recitation competition among joint programs

Ministry of Awqaf recognizes Zain for contributions to community

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Zain was recently recognized by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Mosques and Cultural Affairs Divisions, to highlight the fruitful collaboration and strategic partnership between the company and the Grand Mosque of Kuwait during the Holy Month of Ramadan this year. The collaboration resulted in presenting several community programs aimed at serving worshippers and Mosque attendees throughout the Holy Month under the umbrella of the Zain Alshuhoor social campaign.

The recognition came during the special event held by the Ministry at its headquarters to celebrate success partners. In attendance were Undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Dr. Bader Al Mutairi, Zain Kuwait Corporate Relations Department Manager, Hamad Al Musaibeeh, along with Ministry officials and Zain's team.

The step highlighted the recent successful partnership between Zain and the Grand Mosque, where many community programs and contributions were jointly presented under the umbrella of the annual Zain Alshuhoor Ramadan community campaign. The initiatives included daily Iftar meals at the Mosque's Grand Hall, Zain's first Holy Quran Recitation Competition, hospitality and transportation services at the Mosque, and Eid breakfast meals during Eid Al Fitr prayers.

This year, Zain's annual Iftar initiative to serve fasting individuals came back in its 17th year, this time in strategic partnership with the Grand Mosque of Kuwait and the Kuwait Food Bank. A total of 42,000 meals were served throughout the entire month.Meals were served daily at the Grand Mosque's main tent, and the initiative was directly supervised and organized by Zain's team and Zain Alshuhoor volunteers to ensure the quality of all the meals delivered.

Zain also hosted its first Holy Quran Recitation Competition in strategic partnership with the Grand Mosque. The contest aimed to encourage the community to pursue recitation of the Holy Quran and embody its values and offered prizes for the first three winners in each of the six categories. It was supervised by a certified judges panel from the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs in collaboration with the Grand Mosque.

In a step to engage its employees in its community programs and initiatives, Zain also held the fourth Holy Quran Recitation Competition for employees and their children. The competition was held at the Grand Mosque, and the first three winners in each of the six categories were awarded with cash prizes.

Salma Al-Hajjaj advocates for Corporate Coaching Culture

Gulf Bank successfully supports ICF Kuwait Chapter Conference as 'platinum sponsor'

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: As part of its ongoing efforts to enhance and develop its employees, Gulf Bank concluded its platinum sponsorship of the International Coaching Federation (ICF) Kuwait Chapter's conference, held in celebration of Global Coaching Week. The event attracted numerous coaches, professionals, and corporate leaders.

During the conference, Ms. Salma Al-Hajjaj, General Manager of Human Resources at Gulf Bank, delivered a lecture on "Creating a Corporate Coaching Culture." She highlighted its role in employee development and its positive impact on the organization's performance.

In this context, Al-Hajjaj stated, "Gulf Bank's sponsorship of this significant conference reflects our deep belief in the importance of training to enhance and prepare employees and national talents for advancement and leadership roles."

She emphasized that the bank's active participation in supporting the ICF Kuwait Chapter's efforts aligns with their shared goals, which include promoting a culture of continuous learning, investing in personal development, and empowering talents and skills.

She added, "As part of the bank's social responsibility and ongoing efforts to promote sustainability principles in the community, we are committed to supporting all initiatives that enhance personal development, and bring positive changes to individuals' lives; helping them achieve professional and practical growth."

Al-Hajjaj further emphasized, "In alignment with our unwavering dedication to supporting Kuwait's vision, Gulf Bank is wholeheartedly devoted to driving substantial progress in sustainability across environmental, social, and governance fronts.This dedication is demonstrated through carefully planned sustainability efforts carried out within and outside the bank.

Salma Al-Hajjaj

Salma Al-Hajjaj:

We support initiatives aimed at fostering the professional growth of individuals' talents and competencies, empowering them to take on leadership roles.

It's worth noting that the International Coaching Federation (ICF) stands out as a top global training institution dedicated to advancing the profession through the establishment of best practices and standards. The ICF strongly advocates for the transformative potential of coaching, viewing it not only as a tool for personal development, but also as a catalyst for promoting social responsibility within communities.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.

Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining robust developments in sustainability at environmental, social and governance levels through diverse sustainability initiatives, strategically selected to benefit the Bank both internally and externally. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.

Warba announces winners of Al Sunbula weekly draws

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Warba Bank - the best bank in corporate and investment banking services in Kuwait - announced the winners of the weekly Al Sunbula draws. Warba Bank will continue to hold weekly draws for ten winners of Al Sunbula account, in the presence of a representative of Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Warba Bank employees.

Each of the 10 lucky winners of the Sunbula weekly draw of Warba Bank received KD 1,000, and the winners are: Firas Faisal Bader Al-Qattan, Yousef Nasser Al-Otaibi, Bader Nasser Soud Al-Dosari, Bader Waleed Khaled Al-Bahar, Mashael Nahar Khalaf Al-Mutairi, Abdul Karim Saleh Al-Khateeb, Hussein Ali Hamdan Al-Adwani,Shibeeb Manea Shibeeb Al-Ajmi, Moath Adnan Abed Oweidat, and Jamal Hadi Khalaf Al-Anezi.

As for the Sunbula account, it is the ideal choice for all those wishing to save money and achieve appropriate financial returns on their accounts at the same time, in addition to the opportunity to win cash prizes throughout the year.

Regarding the conditions, Mr. Abdulaziz Saud Al-Bakhait, Area Manager Retail Banking Group said: "KD 100 is now required to enter the weekly Sunbula draws and major draws, and the client still gets one chance for every KD 10 in the account, and the chances are counted according to the lowest balance in the account during the month. Therefore, a full month must have passed in the account to qualify for the weekly draw, and two full months for the major draws to count the chances. There are no restrictions or limits for withdrawal and deposit, the higher the deposited amount, the greater the client's chances to win".

Abdulaziz AlBekheet

Warba Bank launched its latest banking solutions service, "Customer Onboarding ", in accordance with the terms of its ambitious five-year strategy, which enables non-Warba Bank clients to apply for opening a Sunbula account in an easy digital way via the Bank's website without the need to visit any of the Bank's branches, and within only five minutes - through the new and unique automated system used to enable this service - new clients will be able to complete the request to open an account at any time and any place.

Warba Bank is one of the banks that has achieved great successes in a short period, as it occupied a leading position in the field of Islamic digital banking services for individuals, and it is one of the largest local banks in the number of shareholders, and these are among the most prominent components that make the Bank close to all members of society.

Campaign aimed at increasing public awareness on cyber threats

Kuwait International Bank issues online safety tips to enhance consumer security

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: In an effort to increase public awareness about online financial security, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) issued a comprehensive set of safety tips designed to protect consumers while they shop online. The initiative comes as part of KIB's continuous support for the 'Let's Be Aware' (Diraya) campaign, which was launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) in collaboration with local banks, as well as the Bank's comprehensive social responsibility program.

Commenting on the campaign, Dawood Behbehani, Assistant General Manager - Information Security, Privacy and Anti-Fraud Department at KIB, said: "As e-commerce continues to grow, so does the importance of safeguarding personal and financial information against the rise in cyber threats targeting unsuspecting shoppers. At KIB, our priority is to empower our customers with knowledge and tools to enhance their shopping experience without compromising their security."

Behbehani pointed out several key safety measures, saying: "It is highly advised to avoid connecting to public Wi-Fi networks when conducting any financial transactions online to avoid vulnerabilities associated with the insecure network. Customers must also create strong passwords that do not include their names, dates of birth, or phone numbers for all e-commerce accounts. They are also advised to adopt Two-Factor Authentication to add an extra layer of security against any hacking attempts."

Dawood Behbehani, Assistant General Manager.

'Let's Be Aware' campaign poster.

Behbehani also highlighted: "Shopping should be confined to reputable websites that are known to have safe electronic point of sale systems, ensuring the security of data transfers. Additionally, consumers should be cautious about the personal information they share online and adjust their privacy settings on social media and other platforms to minimize the exposure of information that may be exploited by fraudsters through social engineering. Awareness of common online scams, such as phishing emails and fake websites, is also of great importance."

Behbehani warned against sharing OTP codes with anyone and advised users to carefully read OTP text messages, as they often contain the transaction details and the transaction amount. Additionally, he emphasized the importance of reviewing the reason for validation before authenticating any process via the Kuwait Mobile ID app.

For more safety, activating notifications to view the details of each online banking transaction processed through all the different types of debit cards is recommended, Behbehani added. Consumers are advised to regularly monitor their bank statements and transaction histories for any signs of unauthorized or suspicious activity, as prompt reporting can prevent further fraud, while the password and PIN should be changed frequently. He also advised keeping track of the social media accounts of local banks and the Central Bank of Kuwait to stay well-informed about the latest methods employed in cyber fraud through the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign.

It is worth noting that KIB remains dedicated to promoting a secure banking environment, driven by its leading role in raising the community's awareness about various aspects of the banking sector. As a main pillar within its comprehensive social responsibility program, the Bank continues to launch initiatives to promote financial literacy on a wide scale and actively participates in related events and campaigns, including the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign.

Khalaf Al Habtoor hosts 'Open Talk' series on shaping Emirati youth

DUBAI, May 20: Khalaf Ahmad Al Habtoor, Founding Chairman of the Al Habtoor Group, hosted the eighth session of the "Open Talk" series titled "Shaping the Future" at the Al Habtoor Group's head office. The "Open Talk with Khalaf Al Habtoor" series began in January 2017, aiming to provide a platform for direct discussionson key issues affecting the UAE and the region.

The session featured a distinguished panel, including Dr Ahmed bin Abdulaziz Al Haddad, Grand Mufti at the Islamic Affairs and Charitable Activities Department in Dubai, Col. Dr Abdulrahman Sharaf Almamari, Director of Hemaya International Centre, General Department of Anti-Narcotics at Dubai Police, and Dr Abdulkhaleq Abdulla, Professor of Political Science.

The discussions focused on the importance of the role of the family and educational institutions in guiding youth and protecting them from contemporary challenges. In his opening remarks, Khalaf Al Habtoor emphasised the critical role of mothers in raising future generations, highlighting the necessity of supporting them to raise their children according to Emirati customs and traditions.

He stressed that while some mothers feel the need to work to provide a better standard of living for their families, the role of the mother in upbringing is paramount. Thus, it is essential for businessmen and those with means to support the state's efforts by establishing a fund to enable women to care for their children until they reach the age of 14 or 15.

Al Habtoor proposed the creation of a fund to support mothers, expressing his readiness to contribute an amount ranging from AED 25 million to AED 100 million. He stated, "The mother is the cornerstone of the family, and we as a community are responsible for enhancing this support. I urge the wealthy to contribute to this fund to support Emirati mothers."

Photo during the event.

Dr Ahmed bin Abdulaziz Al Haddad highlighted the importance of work, worship, harmony, and loyalty to the land, stressing the dangers posed to youth by technology and artificial intelligence. He added, "Great men are raised by great women. We should not leave children to nannies as this will have harmful effects on their upbringing."

Col. Dr Abdulrahman Sharaf Almamari discussed the risks facing today's youth and the role of schools in raising awareness and protecting them. He emphasised the importance of parents being present in their children's lives, especially amid the challenges of the modern age. He said, "Some people use the internet for more than seven hours daily, which is concerning. Instead, they should spend more time with their children to protect them from potential dangers."

Dr Abdulkhaleq Abdulla expressed his confidence in the ability of Emirati youth to lead the society towards a bright future. He said, "We trust our youth and their ability to take responsibility. The UAE is in safe hands, and we strive for a better society on all fronts."

Photos by Iehab Qurtal

Photos from the event.

Ambassador honors 46 years of diplomatic ties with Kuwait

Philippines marks 126th Independence Day

By Paul Francis X. Fernandes
Arab Times/Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines, Sunday, celebrated the 126th anniversary of the country's independence.

The event was graced by chief guest HE Ambassador Sameeh Essa Johar Hayat, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; HE Zubaydullo Zubaydov Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to Kuwait and invited guests.

Speaking on the occasion, HE Jose A. Cabrera III, the Ambassador of the Republic of the Philippines to Kuwait said, "This occasion holds special significance as it also marks the 46th anniversary of the formal establishment of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Kuwait on 17 January 1979, which subsequently led to the opening of the Philippine Embassy in Kuwait later that same year.

Developments

"As we celebrate this momentous occasion," he said, "I am pleased to share positive developments regarding the Philippine economy despite facing challenges such as a global economic slowdown, supply chain disruptions, and higher inflation and interest rates.

"In 2023, the Philippine Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 5.6 percent, reaching $471.52 billion, positioning the Philippine economy as the 33rd largest in the world.

"This growth trend continued into the first quarter of 2024 at 5.7 percent, surpassing expectations despite significant challenges, including the impact of El Nino.

"Moreover, foreign direct investments played a crucial role in driving economic growth, with the Philippine Board of Investments approving USD 22.6 billion worth of investments in 2023, marking a 73% increase from 2022.

"Additionally, inflation has stabilized within the 2 to 4 percent target range, contributing to consumer relief, while unemployment rates have reached their lowest level in 18 years," he added.

Over the years, the Philippines and Kuwait, he said, have forged strong bilateral ties, culminating in eight agreements covering various fields such as labor, fisheries, trade, cultural cooperation, investment, and visa waivers for diplomatic and official passport holders.

The Philippines deeply appreciates Kuwait's humanitarian assistance, particularly through the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), which provided aid during disasters such as Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. Moreover, Kuwait has offered valuable scholarship and study programs to Filipino students, fostering educational cooperation between our nations, he added.

Trade between Kuwait and the Philippines has witnessed significant growth, reaching $387.3 million in 2023, a 72% increase from the previous year. With over 267,000 Filipino workers in Kuwait, "our countries share a strong economic partnership, with Filipino nationals making valuable contributions to Kuwait's economy and society."

Cooperation

He went on to say, the Philippines remains committed to strengthening cooperation with Kuwait across various sectors, including security, climate action, and disaster risk reduction. "We are grateful for the support and cooperation extended by Kuwait, and we look forward to further enhancing our partnership for mutual benefit and prosperity," the Philippines said.

On another note the Philippine envoy said, he is pleased to announce the commencement of preparations for the first parliamentary elections to be held in May 2025 for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

This significant milestone, he said, will mark the completion of major targets outlined under the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, emphasizing the importance of peace and development in Southern Mindanao.

H.E. Tuba Nur Sönmez, Türkiye ambassador

Vibrant flavors, sustainability

Turkish Cuisine Week 2024 celebrates Aegean heritage

By H.E. Tuba Nur Sönmez
Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to the State of Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Turkish cuisine, with its rich, multi-layered heritage, offers a culinary journey through history and geography, embodying traditions from ancient civilizations to modern-day practices. The Aegean region, in particular, stands out with its Mediterranean diet, famed for its health benefits and vibrant flavors. This year, Turkish Cuisine Week, held from May 21-27, highlights these Aegean delights, underscoring the sustainability and zero waste principles that have been integral to Turkish culinary culture for millennia.

Turkish cuisine has evolved over centuries, influenced by the diverse cultures and climates of Anatolia. From the ancient Neolithic heritage of wheat cultivation to the rich legacies of the Hittites, Greeks, and Ottomans, Turkish food has been shaped by a tapestry of historical interactions. The cuisine incorporates a wide variety of ingredients and techniques, reflecting the abundant flora and fauna of Türkiye's fertile lands.

History

The Aegean region of Türkiye, with its stunning landscapes and deep-rooted history, epitomizes the Mediterranean diet recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This area is renowned for its olive oils, seafood, vegetables, and local herbs. Olive trees, some of which are centuries old, flourish in this region, contributing to a diet that emphasizes health and sustainability.

Key ingredients of the Aegean diet include artichokes, zucchini blossoms, and a variety of local herbs. The olive oil from this region, particularly from İzmir and Milas, is celebrated for its quality and historical significance, with olive processing methods dating back 2,600 years. The Aegean menu featured during Turkish Cuisine Week includes dishes such as tarhana soup, fava bean puree, mücver (zucchini fritters), green beans braised in olive oil, and shrimp casserole, reflecting the region's bounty.

Turkish cuisine has long embraced a zero-waste philosophy, ensuring that every part of an ingredient is utilized. This approach is not only ecologically sustainable but also culturally significant. Traditional dishes often incorporate leftovers, transforming stale bread into delicious meals like tirit and papara, or using vegetable peels and fish bones to create new dishes.

The nomadic Yoruk women of Türkiye exemplify this zero-waste ethos. Their frugal and resourceful cooking practices, which involve using every part of their ingredients and preserving seeds for future planting, highlight a sustainable lifestyle that modern society can learn from. This tradition of respecting and maximizing resources is echoed in Turkish proverbs and everyday practices, ensuring that food is shared and never wasted.

Natural

During Turkish Cuisine Week, the focus on geographically marked products underscores the ecological and cultural sustainability of Turkish cuisine. With 2218 products registered by the Turkish Patent Institute and 21 recognized by the European Union, Türkiye showcases a wealth of unique regional foods. These include Gaziantep baklava, Aydın chestnuts, Malatya apricots, Milas olive oil, and more, each contributing to the rich tapestry of Turkish culinary tradition.

These products, known for their high quality and natural production methods, are celebrated not only for their taste but also for their role in preserving the cultural heritage and biodiversity of Türkiye. By promoting these regional specialties, Turkish Cuisine Week highlights the importance of sustainable and traditional food practices.

Turkish Cuisine Week is particularly special as it is being held under the auspices of our First Lady H.E. Emine Erdoğan, also in cooperation with the Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA) with the support of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Her dedication to promoting Turkish culture and sustainable practices has been instrumental in bringing this event to the forefront. Her involvement underscores the significance of Turkish culinary traditions and the importance of preserving and promoting these rich cultural practices on both a national and international stage.

Author shares illuminating insights with students

Claudia Al Rashoud shares Kuwait's history at KES

By Hisham Asad Ullah

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Author Claudia Al Rashoud's visit to Kuwait English School (KES) captivated students and staff alike as she shared her experiences in Kuwait and beyond. The event, held on Sunday, May 12th, and hosted by school librarian Ms. C. Roy, drew in a number of avid readers and those interested in the vivid history of Kuwait and the art of journalism.

Claudia Farkas Al Rashoud, an American-Kuwaiti photojournalist and author, became Kuwait's first female photojournalist in 1979. She has written several books on Kuwaiti history and culture, including "Kuwait Before and After the Storm" and "Kuwait's Age of Sail." Al Rashoud has dedicated herself to capturing traditional lifestyles and modern developments through her photography, amassing over 5,000 images documenting Kuwait from the 1980s to the early 2000s. She is also known for her contributions to animal welfare in Kuwait, founding the country's largest animal shelter, Touch of Hope Q8.

During the engaging and educational 60-minute session, Al Rashoud recounted her initial experiences upon arriving from California, USA. She shared insights and stories about Kuwait's rich history, cultural heritage involving architecture, and trade.

Author Claudia Al Rashoud poses with Kuwait English School students.

Al Rashoud also spoke about living in Kuwait during the Kuwait-Iraq War. She recalled being sent back to the USA early in the conflict, leaving her heart in Kuwait. Reflecting on her return, she said, "When I came back, everything was different," remembering how an old park she cherished had been dismantled, and heavily mined.

Following her enlightening talk, a Q&A session allowed students and staff to draw more incisive anecdotes from Al Rashoud. As the gathering concluded, the school's library presented Al Rashoud with flowers and a vote of thanks, with many hoping to welcome her back to the school again.

Film

Lionsgate's 'The Strangers-Chapter 1' surprises with $12m debut

Krasinski's 'IF' hits a box office nerve with $35 million debut

LOS ANGELES, May 20, (AP): John Krasinski's imaginary friends movie "IF" claimed the top spot at the box office this weekend according to studio estimates Sunday. Its $35 million North American debut was also a bit lower than some projections.

Is that a disappointment? An ominous sign of the box office times? Or is the final story on " IF " yet to be written? It's not just your imagination: In these bumpy early weeks of the 2024 summer box office season, in which nothing has been a runaway hit and every new movie has more and more pressure to succeed, "IF" hit a nerve.

Starring Ryan Reynolds, Cailey Fleming, and an army of A-list voices including Steve Carell, Matt Damon, Emily Blunt, Louis Gossett Jr., Phoebe Waller-Bridge and Maya Rudolph, "IF" was an original idea from Krasinski, who wrote, directed and co-stars.

Paramount debuted the film, which cost a reported $110 million to produce, in 4,041 locations in North America. Internationally, it earned an estimated $20 million from 56 markets, adding up to a $55 million global debut.

"Families came out in force and they loved the film," said Chris Aronson, who heads Paramount's domestic distribution.

There are several somewhat contradictory narratives swirling around its performance as well. With its PG-rating, "IF" was the first major family friendly film to open in theaters in weeks. And unlike a front-loaded superhero or horror movie, family pics are often running a marathon not a sprint. Last June, Pixar's "Elemental" was assumed to be dead on arrival when it opened with $29.5 million domestically. But it continued earning throughout the summer and ultimately made nearly $500 million globally.

"IF" got middling reviews from critics (it's currently sitting at a "rotten" 49% on Rotten Tomatoes), but, as with "Elemental," audiences gave it a solid A CinemaScore this weekend. The studio considers it a successful debut and is optimistic about its longevity as summer actually begins for school age children.

Summer

"I think it bodes well for moviegoing in general as we move into the summer movie season," Aronson said. "Kids are out of school starting this coming week and I couldn't think of a better film to be in the marketplace than this one: It's new, it's fresh, its original, and it's such a heartwarming film."

"Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes " continues to be a bright spot. In just 10 days, it surpassed $100 million domestically and $237 million globally. It came in second place in its second weekend with $26 million (down 55%).

But there also hasn't been a major movie moment akin to last year's "The Super Mario Bros. Movie," "Barbie" or "Oppenheimer" in quite some time. Last year on this weekend "Fast X" opened to over $60 million.

"This is a very unusual summer. It got off to an unusual start without a Marvel movie," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. "The box office has been in a holding pattern 20% down from last year."

"IF" wasn't the only new film to open this weekend either. Lionsgate's horror "The Strangers-Chapter 1" overperformed with a $12 million debut from 2,856 locations. The innovative marketing campaign staged some viral moments by bringing the "strangers" to major events, from the Trump trial to Coachella.

The Amy Winehouse biopic " Back to Black " opened in North America to an estimated $2.9 million from 2,010 screens.

The filmed-for-IMAX documentary " The Blue Angels " also made $1.3 million this weekend from 227 screens. It's playing on the premium large format screens through May 22 before flying to Prime Video on May 23.

The summer, which for Hollywood begins the first weekend in May, is still getting started and could rev up next weekend with the infusion of "Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga" and "The Garfield Movie."

Dergarabedian noted that Memorial Day weekend is a time when moviegoers play can play catch up with films they've missed and heard about. For a film like "IF," which picked up over the weekend with word of mouth buzz, that could bode well. Still, there is no sugar-coating the reality that the 2024 box office is not going to build on 2023.

Variety

Julianne Moore poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'Horizon: An American Saga' at the 77th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Sunday, May 19. (AP)

Film

Actor's biggest ever gamble for 'Horizon'

Costner unveils Western epic at Cannes

CANNES, France, May 20, (AP): A month before Kevin Costner puts the first installment of his multi-chapter Western "Horizon: An American Saga" into theaters, the actor-director came to the Cannes Film Festival to unveil his self-financed passion project.

"Two of my boys are out fishing right now," Costner said with a grin in an interview at the Carlton Hotel. "And the three girls found their way onto a boat. So dad's in here, stumping for his movie."

The movie is actually two, or if Costner has his way, four. "Horizon: Chapter One," which runs three hours, will be released by Warner Bros. in theaters June 28. "Chapter Two" follows August 16. Costner has scripts ready for parts three and four.

It's only the fourth time Costner, 69, has directed, following 1990's "Dances With Wolves," 1997's "The Postman" and 2003's "Open Range." But when he has, Costner has usually done it with a clear-eyed passion for storytelling and character. That's on display in the wide-ranging epic "Horizon," with a cast including Sienna Miller, Abbey Lee, Sam Worthington and Costner.

It's also Costner's biggest gamble, ever. To raise the money for the $100 million-plus production, he mortgaged his seaside Santa Barbara, California, estate. He's been trying to make "Horizon" for more than 30 years.

"I thank God for Cannes. I'm an independent filmmaker, essentially, and I'm here by myself," said Costner, whose film premiered Sunday. "So this is a high moment for me because it's helping me create awareness for a movie. I don't have all the money in the world to expose this movie. But I have my time and a platform here."

Remarks have been lightly edited for brevity.

AP: What was your calculus in deciding to put your money into "Horizon"? What made it worth it to you?

Costner: You can spend your life just trying to make your pile grow bigger and bigger. And I've not been really terribly great at that. I'm like anyone else, I'd like it to be big. But not at the expense of not doing what I feel like I've love to do. If no one will help me do it and I believe strongly in its entertainment value – there's commerce on my mind. But I don't let it overshadow the entertainment value and essence of what I'm trying to portray. I don't try to let the fear of that control my instincts on any level. I don't want to live that way. If I was watching a movie about me and I thought, "Oo, don't risk your money and make something like that," what a (expletive).

AP: Was it an easy decision? You didn't look around your seaside Santa Barbara estate and question mortgaging it?

Costner: No, it wasn't an easy decision, but it was the decision I needed to make. It's like, wow, why am I having to do this? I think I'm making mainstream entertainment. I don't know what you felt about the movie but I felt like it's really mainstream. I don't feel that I'm an avant-garde type of a person. But yet I think my things are a little off. I'm willing to (in a wagon trail scene in the film) see a woman bathe because her desire to be clean was so pronounced. If you're a woman, who wouldn't want to be? But then in the next moment, you realize it's against the rule, man. You could cost yourself your life. So that scene became important to make the next scene important. To me, a scene like that is just as important as a gun fight. And if that kind of scene doesn't want to exist in a mainstream movie…

AP: Could this have been a series?

Costner: I guess. It will be. They're going to break this up into a hundred pieces, you know what I mean? After four of these, they're going to have 13, 14 hours of film and they're going to turn into 25 hours of TV, and they're going to do whatever they're going to do. That's just the way we live in our life but they'll also exist in this form. And that was important for me, to make sure that happened. And I was the one who paid for it.

AP: It's an audacious release plan, with the second film opening two months after the first. What appealed to you about that?

Costner: The studio wanted to try that. I knew this was going to come out fairly quickly, like every four or five months. That may have been easier. But this is something they feel like people can remember the first one and it can tie into the second one. I built into all of them a montage of what's coming.

AP: Since directing "Dances With Wolves," you've directed "Open Range" and starred in "Wyatt Earp" and "Yellowstone." What keeps bringing you back to the West?

Costner: I like seeing behavior in men that makes sense. I make movies for men. I just make sure there's great women characters because that's really important to me. The backbone of our movie is actually women. I don't like boys behaving stupid. I like the little boy who (fleeing an attack) takes the two horses and effectively saves his life. I like seeing people behave honestly in desperate situations. The heroism of a little boy saying "I'll stay with you, Dad" is a really powerful moment. That's my son (Hayes Costner) and it was very hard to watch.

AP: In dramatizing the drive West of settlers, what was the Native American perspective you wanted to consider?

Costner: Confusion about it. The colonel says, "If we salt the earth with enough of their dead, the wagons won't come anymore." When you're that far out there, you can't go. When people said goodbye in the East Coast, they didn't come back. So the confusion for the Native American was they couldn't make sense of that. Normally if you kill enough people they won't bother you. But these Americans, these people were getting flyers saying you could have this land. There are salesmen in every century, every decade selling something they don't really know what it is. It's just America. It's just this giant experiment of hope.

AP: But America means different things to different people, right? You have Chinese immigrants in the film as well.

Costner: When they weren't useful, they were just cast away. And they had to create a sense of community and they came en masse. They came together and they were very industrious. They'll be the wealthiest people in that town until there's a tipping point and racism kicks in and suddenly they're gone, too. You watch. That's what would happen in real life.

AP: What I'm getting at is there's tragedy in this. Do you see westward expansion and your film as a tragedy?

Costner: There's inevitable tragedy to it. And there's divisions. You see a whole tribe break in half. You see a father break from a son.

AP: Have you already started shooting the third installment?

Costner: I've shot three days and I continue to have to press for money to finish this. I have to figure out what else I can do to make this. But I'm not waiting to see how people feel. I know what this is, and I think if people love the movie experience, they have a really good chance of wanting to see the next one. That's all I can believe. The prudent thing would be to wait, but I guess I'm not built for that wait.

LOS ANGELES: **Sean "Diddy" Combs** admitted that he beat his ex-girlfriend **Cassie** in a hotel hallway in 2016 after CNN released video of the attack, saying in a video apology he was "truly sorry" and his actions were "inexcusable."

"I take full responsibility for my actions in that video. I was disgusted then when I did it. I'm disgusted now," the music mogul said in a video statement posted Sunday to Instagram and Facebook.

The security video aired Friday shows Combs, wearing only a white towel, punching and kicking Cassie, an R&B singer who was his protege and longtime girlfriend at the time. The footage also shows Combs shoving and dragging Cassie, and throwing a vase in her direction.

Cassie, whose legal name is **Cassandra Ventura**, sued Combs in November over what she said was years of sexual, physical and emotional abuse. The suit was settled the next day, but spurred intense scrutiny of Combs, with several more lawsuits filed in the following months, along with a federal criminal sex-trafficking investigation that led authorities to raid Combs' mansions in **Los Angeles** and **Miami**.

He had denied the allegations in the lawsuits, but neither he nor his representatives had responded to the newly emerged video until Sunday.

"It's so difficult to reflect on the darkest times in your life, but sometimes you got to do that," Diddy says on the video. He adds, "I went and I sought out professional help. I got into going to therapy, going to rehab. I had to ask God for his mercy and grace. I'm so sorry. But I'm committed to be a better man each and every day. I'm not asking for forgiveness. I'm truly sorry."

Combs is looking somber and wearing a T-shirt in the selfie-style apology video, and appears to be on a patio. It is the hip-hop mogul's most direct response and first apology after six months of allegations that have threatened his reputation and career. (AP)

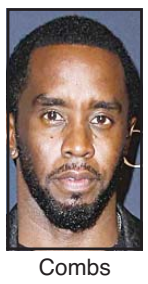
❑ ❑ ❑

NEW YORK: The man charged with assaulting actor **Steve Buscemi** on a Midtown street has been held in jail on bond in **New York**, prosecutors said.

Police have said the 66-year-old actor - known for his roles in "Boardwalk Empire," and "Fargo," among other performances - was walking in **Manhattan** on May 8 when a stranger punched him in the face. Police arrested a man Friday in connection with the assault, three days after having released a photo of the suspect.

Buscemi's publisher has confirmed the attack, and said the actor was treated at a hospital with injuries to his eye but was otherwise okay.

Buscemi



Combs

The accused man, who is 50 years old, was arraigned on Saturday and the judge set bail at $50,000, prosecutors said. It was unclear if the defendant had a lawyer who could speak for him. A phone message has been left with the local public defender's office. The suspect is due back in court on Thursday. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

GENEVA: With an assist from **Paul McCartney** the Paralympic Games starts its 100-day race on Monday to the opening ceremony in **Paris** in August.

The former Beatle has let "We All Stand Together" - the signature tune from an award-winning animated film he wrote and produced 40 years ago - be used in a promotional film for the International Paralympic Committee.

"Sir Paul really understands what we stand for as a movement and he was so generous to us," IPC president **Andrew Parsons** told The Associated Press. "He was not difficult to convince, it was something that came very naturally." (AP)

New unit to revolutionize healthcare

Kuwait introduces cutting-edge hyperbaric oxygen therapy unit

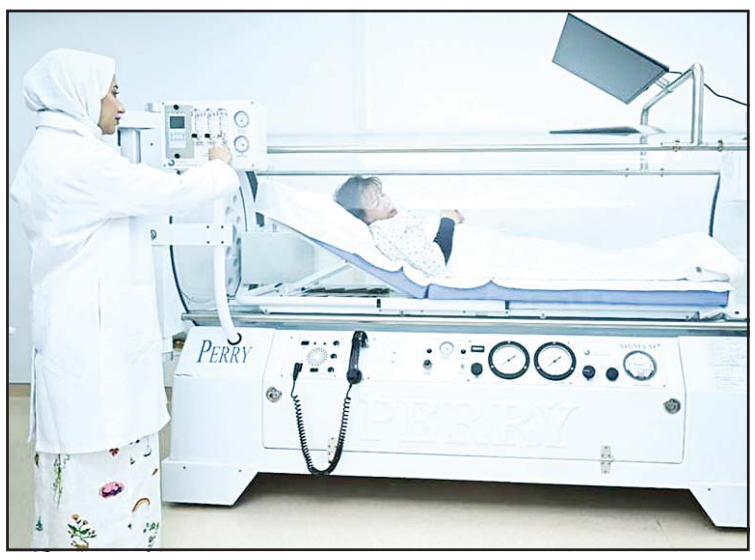
KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The inauguration of the hyperbaric oxygen therapy unit at Kuwait Hospital, led by Dr. Abrar Al-Husseini and Dr. Ahmed Amir, marks a significant advancement in medical care, reports Al-Qabas daily.

This unit offers oxygen therapy under increased pressure to achieve therapeutic benefits by enhancing the concentration of oxygen inhaled. The primary focus of this therapy is to address cases of poor blood vessel perfusion.

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy involves administering oxygen at higher-than-normal atmospheric pressure, allowing patients to breathe in high doses of oxygen in a controlled, pressurized environment.

Treatment consists of multiple sessions where patients spend time in an oxygenated chamber, facilitating the diffusion of oxygen into tissues to alleviate irritation and promote healing.

The unit specializes in treating various conditions, including diabetic foot cases, complex wounds, burns, anemia, and strokes. By improving blood flow and aiding the healing process, these treatments mitigate the risk of complications and enhance patients' overall quality of life.



Hyperbaric oxygen therapy unit

With a specialized medical team and state-of-the-art technologies, the Vascular Surgery Unit at Kuwait Hospital stands ready to provide comprehensive care to patients in need.

Nutrition expert unveils four key dietary strategies

Dr. Fajr offers tips to combat cancer through diet

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Dr. Fajr Al Jumairi, a specialist in public health and community nutrition, sheds light on the pivotal role of nutrition in bolstering the body's defenses against cancer, reports Al-Qabas daily.

She underscores four key factors that influence the body's ability to combat cancer cells and emphasizes the significance of incorporating anti-cancer foods into one's diet.

Dr Al-Jumairi highlights the importance of blood flow to cancer cells for their growth and proliferation. Larger capillaries facilitate this process, whereas weaker and thinner ones impede it, allowing the immune system to eradicate cancer cells.

Foods rich in certain nutrients can help reduce the mass of blood capillaries around cancer cells. These include organic soy, artichoke, parsley, garlic, turmeric, various berries, pomegranate, grapes with seeds, green tea, red tea, and bone broth soup.

Stem cells, she says play a crucial role in cell regeneration and preventing mutations that could lead to cancer. Al-Jumairi notes that populations following the Mediterranean diet, rich in leafy greens, vegetables, seafood, legumes, and healthy fats, exhibit higher levels of stem cells.

Additionally, consuming dark chocolate with a high cocoa content can increase stem cell production.

Saying beneficial bacteria in the gut help prevent cancer cell mutation by supporting digestion, nutrient absorption, and immune function, Dr Al-Jumairi, emphasizes the importance of maintaining a healthy microbiome, particularly by promoting the growth of Akkermansa bacteria.

Foods that can enhance Akkermansa levels include pomegranate, berries, and raw almonds or walnuts.

The DNA damage from factors like sunlight, toxins, and environmental pollutants can contribute to disease development. Ensuring DNA health is vital for disease prevention and Dr Al-Jumairi recommends consuming organic black coffee, dark green leafy vegetables, and vitamin C-rich foods to support DNA integrity.

In conclusion, Al-Jumairi underscores the importance of adhering to a balanced diet rich in nutrient-dense foods to support the body's natural defenses against cancer. While nutrition plays a crucial role, she also emphasizes the importance of following prescribed treatment plans and undergoing regular medical check-ups for cancer patients.

Ex-NASA candidate flies with Blue Origin

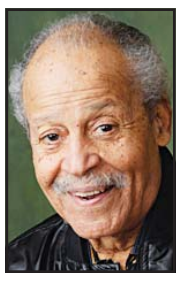
Ed Dwight soars into space at age 90

VAN HORN, Texas, May 20, (AP): Ed Dwight, America's first Black astronaut candidate, finally rocketed into space 60 years later, flying with Jeff Bezos' rocket company on Sunday.

Dwight was an Air Force pilot when President John F. Kennedy championed him as a candidate for NASA's early astronaut corps. But he wasn't picked for the 1963 class.

Dwight, now 90, went through a few minutes of weightlessness with five other passengers aboard the Blue Origin capsule as it skimmed space on a roughly 10-minute flight. He called it "a life changing experience."

"I thought I really didn't need this in my life," Dwight said shortly after exiting the capsule. "But, now, I need it in my life .... I am ecstatic."


Dwight

The brief flight from West Texas made Dwight the new record-holder for oldest person in space - nearly two months older than "Star Trek" actor William Shatner was when he went up in 2021.

It was Blue Origin's first crew launch in nearly two years. The company was grounded following a 2022 accident in which the booster came crashing down but the capsule full of experiments safely parachuted to the ground. Flights resumed last December, but with no one aboard. This was Blue Origin's seventh time flying space tourists.

Dwight, a sculptor from Denver, was joined by four business entrepreneurs from the U.S. and France and a retired accountant. Their ticket prices were not disclosed; Dwight's seat was sponsored in part by the nonprofit Space for Humanity.

Dwight was among the potential astronauts the Air Force recommended to NASA. But he wasn't chosen for the 1963 class, which included eventual Gemini and Apollo astronauts, including Apollo 11's Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins. NASA didn't select Black astronauts until 1978, and Guion Bluford became the first African American in space in 1983. Three years earlier, the Soviets launched the first Black astronaut, Arnaldo Tamayo Mendez, a Cuban of African descent.

After leaving the military in 1966, Dwight joined IBM and started a construction company before earning a master's degree in sculpture in the late 1970s. He's since dedicated himself to art. His sculptures focus on Black history and include memorials and monuments across the country. Several of his sculptures have flown into space.

High-frequency

China's radar network aids space weather forecasting

BEIJING, May 20, (Xinhua): China has built a mid-latitude high-frequency radar network in the country's northern regions to provide high-quality detection data for global space weather forecast and warning.

The first batch of scientific detection results of the network was released at an international workshop of the Super Dual Auroral Radar Network (SuperDARN), which opened in Beijing on Monday.

The network, constructed by the National Space Science Center (NSSC) under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, was completed in October 2023. It's also a part of the second phase of China's Meridian Project, a space weather monitoring network comprising ground-based stations.

China has made new breakthroughs in high-frequency coherent scattering radar technology and scientific research, and will deepen international cooperation in this field, said NSSC.

The ionosphere is home to all the charged particles in Earth's atmosphere. It's also home to many spacecraft including the space stations. Ionospheric irregularities can disrupt signals, scientists say.

Six high-frequency coherent scattering radars were set up in Jilin Province, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in northern regions of China.

This high-frequency radar chain achieves large-scale continuous detection of ionospheric irregularities in mid and high latitudes of the Asian sector. The detection range can reach 4,000 km from south to north, and the east-west span exceeds 12,000 km, according to NSSC.

The high-frequency radar chain is expected to join the SuperDARN, a global network of scientific radars monitoring conditions in the near-Earth space environment, and realize real-time data exchange and sharing with databases in the United Kingdom and Canada.

The SuperDARN, which has members from a dozen of countries including the UK, the United States, Canada, Japan, China, France, Italy, Norway, Australia and South Africa, is also one of the main international organizations participating in the International Meridian Circle Program proposed by China.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: NASA plans to launch a new mission this month to study the heat loss from Earth's polar regions and provide information on changing climate, NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) said recently.

The mission, named the Polar Radiant Energy in the Far-InfraRed Experiment (PREFIRE), will study two of the most remote regions on Earth: the Arctic and Antarctic.

A pair of shoebox-size climate satellites will be launched to measure the amount of heat the planet emits into space from these polar regions. Each of PREFIRE's cube satellites, or CubeSats, will use a thermal infrared spectrometer to measure the heat, in the form of far-infrared energy, radiated into space by Earth's surface and atmosphere.

The data from the mission will help improve our understanding of the greenhouse effect at the poles -- specifically, the capacity of water vapor, clouds, and other elements of Earth's atmosphere to trap heat and keep it from radiating into space, according to the JPL. Researchers will use this information to update climate and ice models, which will lead to better predictions of how sea level, weather, and snow and ice cover are likely to change in a warming world.

A group photo from the event.

Dasman Diabetes Institute celebrates Int'l Nursing Day

Recently Dasman Diabetes Institute, founded by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, celebrated International Nursing Day. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the nursing staff for their unwavering commitment to patient care and their continuous dedication.

'Medications can effectively suppress virus'

HIV-positive mothers can now breastfeed

NEW YORK, May 20, (AP): People with HIV can breastfeed their babies, as long as they are taking medications that effectively suppress the virus that causes AIDS, a top US pediatricians' group said Monday in a sharp policy change.

The new report from the American Academy of Pediatrics reverses recommendations it had in place since the start of the HIV epidemic in the 1980s.

It recognizes that routinely prescribed drugs can reduce the risk of transmitting HIV via breast milk to less than 1%, said Dr. Lisa Abuogi, a pediatric HIV expert at the University of Colorado and lead author of the report.

"The medications are so good now and the benefits for mom and baby are so important that we are at a point where it is important to engage in shared decision-making," Abuogi said.

The drugs, known as antiretroviral therapy, don't eliminate all risk of transmitting HIV through breast milk. Avoiding breastfeeding is the only certain way to prevent spreading the virus, Abuogi said.

In addition, parents must breastfeed exclusively for the babies' first six months because research shows that switching between breast milk and formula can disrupt an infant's gut in ways that increase the risk of HIV infection.

About 5,000 people who have HIV give birth in the US each year. Nearly all take drugs to suppress the virus to very low levels, Abuogi said, though viral levels can rebound if they don't stay on them.

Infections

Before the medications became widely available starting a decade ago, about 30% of HIV infections transmitted from moms to babies occurred during breastfeeding, said Dr. Lynne Mofenson, an adviser to the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation. In the early 1990s, about 2,000 infections occurred in U.S. infants each year. Today, it's fewer than 30.

The AAP policy comes more than a year after the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reversed longstanding recommendations against breastfeeding by people with HIV. That guidance said people who have consistent viral suppression should be counseled on their options. It also emphasizes that health care providers shouldn't alert child protective services agencies if a parent with HIV seeks to breastfeed.

The goal is listening to patients "and not blaming or shaming them," said Dr. Lynn Yee, a Northwestern University professor of obstetrics and gynecology who helped draft the NIH guidance.

Breastfeeding provides ideal nutrition for babies and protects them against illnesses and conditions such as obesity and Type 2 diabetes, research shows. Nursing also reduces the mother's risk of breast and ovarian cancer, diabetes and high blood pressure.

The World Health Organization has recommended since 2010 that women with HIV in developing countries breastfeed their infants and have access to antiretroviral therapy. The guidance weighed the risk of infants acquiring HIV through breastfeeding and the risk of babies dying from malnutrition, diarrhea and pneumonia in places where safe replacements for breast milk aren't available.

Record set at North Wilkesboro Speedway

Logano dominates All-Star Race, takes home $1 million prize

NORTH WILKESBORO, May 20, (AP): A little prep work paid off for Joey Logano.

Logano dominated the short track at North Wilkesboro Speedway leading all but one of 200 laps to win his second All-Star Race on Sunday night and earn $1 million.

Logano started on the pole after posting the fastest time in qualifying on Saturday and was never really challenged, setting a record by leading more laps than any driver has in the race's 40-year history.

"We were so fast," Logano said. "We came here before and tested and ran over 800 laps and really figured out what it was going to take to win the race."

He also won the All-Star Race in 2016.

Denny Hamlin finished second and Chris Buescher third in a race that lacked drama for the second straight year at the renovated track.

Kyle Larson, who arrived about an hour before the race after spending the afternoon qualifying fifth for the Indianapolis 500 and flying to North Wilkesboro, finished fourth and came up short in the quest to tie Jimmie Johnson for the most All-Star Race wins with four after starting at the back of the field.

CAR RACING

The newly paved track and different versions of soft tires were supposed to create more passing. They didn't.

Hamlin admitted afterward that he just couldn't get the lead.

"I would run to him, and then you couldn't pass," Hamlin said. "I would lose a little bit of air there, and I would try to give my car a break and then run to him again - just have to be so much faster to get around."

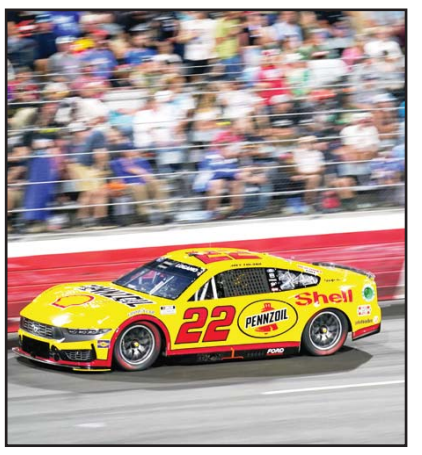
Said Logano: "If it wasn't for the clean air (and being out front) I would not have won."

Team Penske president Michael Nelson called it a great day for the organization after they swept the top three starting spots at Indianapolis 500 earlier in the day.

"We have been close this year (in NASCAR) and to finally make it happen on a day like today, if you had to wait this was the day to get that done," Nelson said. "A great day for Mr. Penske and the whole organization."

There only real fireworks came on the second lap when Kyle Busch sent Ricky Stenhouse Jr. into the wall after Stenhouse tried to pass him on the first lap. An upset Stenhouse pulled his wrecked car down pit lane and parked in Busch's pit stall, got out and climbed a ladder to yell at Busch's crew.

Afterward, Stenhouse confronted Busch in the pits, then threw a punch at Busch igniting a scuffle that involved members of both crews. Stenhouse said that he was tired of Busch "running his mouth talking about me" after he had wrecked him at Daytona in the past.



Joey Logano drives during the NASCAR All-Star auto race at North Wilkesboro Speedway in North Wilkesboro, N.C. (AP)

"I know he is frustrated because he doesn't run as well as he used to," Stenhouse said after the race.

Larson was the big story ahead of the race.

He arrived at North Wilkesboro Speedway about an hour before the race following a busy afternoon

His plane landed at Wilkes County Airport and was then transported via helicopter to the racetrack and then taken by golf cart to his hauler to begin preparations for the 200-lap exhibition race.

Fans cheered his arrival into the track and he waved to them along the way.

NASCAR and its broadcast partner FOX helped accommodate the sport's star attraction and points leader by moving the start of the race back 16 minutes to 8:30 p.m. to ensure he would arrive in time after shocking some in the racing world by qualifying for the Fast 6 at Indianapolis.

Larson will have to do it again next weekend when he attempts to run the double and finish the Indianapolis 500 and the Coca-Cola 600 in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Seventeen drivers qualified for the race based on their past accomplishments. All-Star Open winner Ty Gibbs and second place finisher Bubba Wallace advanced into the race on Sunday, along with fan vote winner Noah Gragson.

Hendrick Motorsports vice president of competition Chad Knaus marveled at what Larson was able to do in his first qualifying runs in Indianapolis in an open-wheel racecar against the best drivers in the world.

"We were watching him run and we were like, my gosh, I can't believe this," Knaus said. "I was like my goodness how did that happen? Very limited track time. Did a couple of tests. Was able to go up there and he holds a pretty good wheel as anybody I have seen. He is a phenomenal talent. He gets it. He is so emotionally stable. You can put him in just about any environment and he is going to excel."

Hyderabad tops Punjab to finish second in IPL table

Sunrisers Hyderabad's Abhishek Sharma plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Sunrisers Hyderabad and Punjab Kings in Hyderabad, India. (AP)

Rajasthan vs. Kolkata game washed out

HYDERABAD, India, May 20, (AP): Abhishek Sharma smacked 66 runs off 28 balls as Sunrisers Hyderabad beat Punjab Kings by four wickets to finish second in the Indian Premier League points table after the second game between Rajasthan Royals and Kolkata Knight Riders was abandoned without a ball being bowled because of rain.

Kolkata had opted to bowl after winning the toss in Guwahati. The match was shortened to seven overs a side, but the game hadn't been able to start at the cut-off time of 10:56 p.m IST.

That meant both Kolkata and Rajasthan were awarded a point each.

Kolkata finished atop the table on 20 points and will take on Sunrisers Hyderabad (17 points) in Qualifier 1 in Ahmedabad on Tuesday. Rajasthan (17) finished third and will play Royal Challenge-

CRICKET

ers Bengaluru in the eliminator on Wednesday, also in Ahmedabad.

Bengaluru had secured the fourth playoff spot after beating defending champions Chennai Super Kings on Saturday.

Earlier, Sharma hit five fours and six sixes as Hyderabad equaled its highest run-chase on its home ground, finishing with 215-6 in 19.1 overs. Punjab chose to bat first and scored 214-5 with Prabhsimran Singh scoring a 45-ball 71.

Punjab made a good start. Singh hit seven fours and four sixes, putting on 97 off 55 balls with Atharva Taide who scored 46.

Left-arm pacer T Natarajan (2-33) provided the breakthrough but Singh put on another 54 off 32 balls with Rilee Rossouw.

Shashank Singh was run out for two, after Singh's dismissal in the 15th over, but Rossouw carried the innings forward with 45 off 24 balls. Stand-in captain Jitesh Sharma scored 32 not out off 15 balls to take Punjab past 200.

Hyderabad's chase started badly when Arshdeep Singh bowled Travis Head for a golden duck.

Sharma though had other ideas as he stroked another quickfire half-century - his third this season, coming off only 21 balls.

He put on 72 off 30 balls with Rahul Tripathi (33 off 18). Harshal Patel broke the partnership, but Nitish Reddy helped carry forward the momentum with 37 off 25 balls.

Hyderabad was in complete control of the chase, bringing up 150 in only 12 overs. Heinrich Klaasen smacked 42 off 26 balls, including two sixes, after Sharma's dismissal earlier in the 11th over.

Punjab was able to dismiss Reddy and Klaasen, but thev remaining target was too little to cause Hyderabad any trouble.

Sunrisers Hyderabad's fans cheers from the stands during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Sunrisers Hyderabad and Punjab Kings in Hyderabad, India. (AP)

Co-hosts from the Caribbean aiming to defy history and win a 3rd T20 WC title

KINGSTON, May 20, (AP): After leading the West Indies to two Twenty20 World Cup titles as a captain, Daren Sammy has to defy history to win again as a head coach.

No host has won the tournament on home soil in the first eight editions, a trend Sammy is hoping to break with the 2024 T20 World Cup being staged in the United States and the Caribbean.

Sri Lanka went the closest by reaching the final in 2012 before losing to West Indies in Colombo. That win is widely remembered for the 'Gangnam Style' celebrations of the Caribbean players after Sri Lanka was bowled out for 101 in pursuit of a 138-run target.

Four years later, a fearless brand of West Indies cricket set the Eden Gardens alight in India, where Carlos Brathwaite hit four consecutive sixes against Ben Stokes in the final over to steer the Caribbean team a second T20 World Cup title.

Sammy was appointed head coach of the West Indies limited-overs squads last year. His past teammates Johnson Charles and Andre Russell, T20's most accomplished allrounder, are the only two-time champions still in the squad.

"We know how to select winning teams," Sammy said in a news conference with Caribbean media to announce the squad. "We've done it before and I think, as a selection group, we're really excited about it."

"It's an exciting time, and this preparation did not start now. It started from the last World Cup in Australia," Sammy was quoted as saying by CNC3. "What we've been able to do throughout the last year as a T20 group, the players we've exposed, has brought us to this moment, and I think we're about to 'knock it out of this world.'"

Curtley Ambrose, the great West Indies pace bowler, was confident the squad could play the consistent, smart cricket required to win a third title.

West Indies and England are the only teams to have won the title twice, and no host has ever won, he said, "so all that is motivation for the guys to do well."

CRICKET

The last two T20 World Cups in the United Arab Emirates in 2021 and Australia in 2022 didn't go well for West Indies. Kieron Pollard's team was eliminated in the group stage in the UAE with just one win. Nicholas Pooran's side didn't qualify for the main round in Australia the following year.

It was a setback for West Indies cricket, which dates back to the late 1800s when a collection of mainly English-speaking Caribbean nations and territories began playing under a unified banner.

And it's something Sammy's squad is determined to put right, coming off some solid individual performances in the Indian Premier League.

Without the pressure of the captaincy, Pooran could be a key to success in the middle-order. The left-hander had an impressive outing in the IPL, scoring 499 runs at a strike rate of 178.21 for Lucknow Super Giants.

The absence of Sunil Narine, who helped Kolkata Knight Riders top the IPL standings this season with his batting and bowling exploits, will be difficult to cover.

Sammy said he'd had conversations with Narine since the last Caribbean Premier League season but couldn't convince him into a West Indies comeback: "As the news clearly stated, Narine is retired."

But led by captain Rovman Powell, West Indies has enough batting firepower to challenge the leading teams as well as the advantage of playing in the CPL.

Young fast bowler Shamar Joseph, who has just played three T20s and is yet to make his international T20 debut, was selected ahead of Matthew Forde as the West Indies looked for extra speed in the bowling attack.

"Shamar Joseph has the pace, he has skills with the new ball," Sammy said. "Not saying Matthew Forde doesn't but when you look at the role, it makes it easier for us to now pick the personnel to fit that role."

West Indies will be playing its first two Group C games against Papua New Guinea and Uganda at Providence on June 2 and June 9 before taking on higher-ranked New Zealand and Afghanistan at Torouba and Gros Islet on June 13 and June 18. Top two teams from each of the four groups in the league stage will advance to Super 8.

PSG grab league title

Brest secure CL spot in French league

PARIS, May 20, (AP): Brest secured the final automatic berth in next season's Champions League with a 3-0 win at Toulouse that sealed a third-place finish for the surprise package of the French league on a dramatic final day.

Heading into the last round of matches, Lille and Brest were level on points behind already-crowned champion Paris Saint-Germain and Monaco, with Lille ahead only by a difference of two goals.

Lille looked set for a third place finish but blew a 2-1 lead against Nice in added time to draw 2-2, dropping into fourth place.

After the expansion of Europe's top club competition from next season, the French league will have three automatic spots in the tournament rather than two. Brest, whose attack-minded approach developed by coach Eric Roy has been a pleasure for fans to watch this season, will play in Europe for the first time. Its previous best league finish was eighth.

The club stadium holds 15,000 compared to PSG's capacity of nearly 49,000 at Parc des Princes, while PSG's yearly budget of 700 million euros ($763 million) dwarfs Brest's 48 million euros ($52 million) - among the smallest in the league.

The small club from the Brittany region's trophy cabinet is also small - the club won the second division in 1981.

Lille captain Benjamin Andre thought he had scored the winner in the 73rd minute with a powerful and precise header from a corner but the hosts could not hold onto their lead as Jordan Lotomba found the net with a header between the legs of Lille goalkeeper Vito Mannone.

Roy has done a remarkable rebuilding job at Brest. The team was in the relegation zone when he was hired midway through last season and finished 14th. Roy had been 12 years without a coaching job, too.

Mahdi Camara, Jordan Amavi and Kenny Lala scored Brest's goals.

Already crowned champion for a record-extending 12th time, PSG concluded its campaign with a 2-0 win at Metz that condemned the hosts to a relegation playoff.

Carlos Soler and Lee Kang-in scored PSG's goals.

PSG finished top of the league with 76 points, nine more than second-place Monaco, which thrashed Nantes 4-0.

PSG was without star striker Kylian Mbappé, who was left out of the Paris Saint-Germain squad for the final French league game of the season amid media reports that he spent the weekend at the Cannes film festival.

Mbappé is leaving PSG after seven seasons at the French league club.

SOCCER

Asked to comment, PSG did not give a reason to explain Mbappé's absence. Ousmane Dembélé, Vitinha, Marquinhos, Fabian Ruiz and Gianluigi Donnarumma also sat out the trip to Metz. Unless PSG coach Luis Enrique decides to snub him, Mbappé will have a final occasion to play with PSG in the French Cup final on May 25 against Lyon.

Lyon captain Alexandre Lacazette scored a brace in a 2-1 win over Strasbourg, including one goal deep in added time, to help Lyon finish in sixth place ahead of Lens, which was held 2-2 at home by Montpellier.

Nine-time champion Marseille concluded a mediocre season with a rare victory on the road, a 2-1 win at Le Havre.

In a contest between two teams that will be demoted to the second-tier of French soccer next season, Lorient demolished last-place Clermont 5-0.

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Paris organizers launching a campaign to boost ticket sales for Paralympics

PARIS, May 20, (AP): With 100 days until the Paralympics begin, Paris organizers are delivering a message from the athletes in a bid to boost ticket sales: I am not missing anything, except you.

The countdown campaign for the Aug 28-Sept. 8 Paralympic Games begun Monday. It features three Paralympic athletes, each of them alone in an empty stadium. The campaign slogan - "Il ne me manque rien, sauf vous" (I'm not missing anything, except you) - is a rallying call to get people to come along and watch them competing.

The French athletes featured in the campaign are Arnaud Assoumani, a long jump and triple jump specialist who won gold at the 2008 Games in Beijing; wheelchair tennis player Pauline Déroulède, and blind soccer player Gaël Rivière who was a European championship winner two years ago. He plays at club level for Bondy Cécifoot Club - in the same suburb where France star Kylian Mbappé grew up.

National broadcaster France Télévisions will show the campaign in a bid to raise awareness and - ultimately - boost sales. So far, 900,000 of the 2.8 million tickets have been sold.

A total of 4,400 athletes will take part in the Paralympics. Tickets are available from 15 euros ($16) for track and field sessions at Stade de France, wheelchair tennis at Roland Garros, or blind soccer at the foot of the Eiffel Tower. The finals cost from 25 ($27) euros and it's 45 euros ($49) to watch the closing ceremony.

Ticket sales could escalate once posters start appearing around Paris, with organizers aiming to raise awareness and increase fan engagement and solidarity.

There will be 651 posters dotted around the city, 972 on the subway and a further 2,520 on the sides of buses.

On Tuesday, four Paralympic athletes will walk up the famed steps at the Cannes Film Festival along with Paris 2024 Olympic head Tony Estanguet.

Of the tickets sold so far, organizers said 300,000 have been bought by the state and 150,000 by the International Olympic Committee and National Paralympic Committee.

Dr. Amthal Hadi Al-Hewaila inspects General Sports Authority sectors

Youth Affairs Minister advocates for sports development and integrity

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Dr. Amthal Hadi Al-Hewaila, Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, inspected the sectors and departments of the General Sports Authority during her visit yesterday. She was welcomed by Faisal Al-Yateem, Acting Director-General of the Authority, and Hamid Al-Hazeem, Deputy Director-General of the Sports for All Sector and Director of Departments.

During her visit, Dr. Al-Hewaila urged all employees and leaders to intensify their efforts to improve the sports system. She emphasized the importance of facilitating the work of all sports clubs and federations, providing comprehensive support to athletes, and working diligently to implement the vision outlined in the noble speech of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, which set the framework for the government's future efforts.

Minister Dr. Al-Hewaila highlighted the government's commitment to transparency and responsiveness, stressing the importance of listening to public feedback to streamline processes, in line with the directives of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmed Al-Abdullah.

Dr. Amthal Hadi Al-Hewaila, Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, inspects the sectors and departments of the General Sports Authority.

She stated, "It is essential to conduct field follow-ups at work sites to facilitate procedures through inspection tours. This will be a priority in the coming period to accelerate the implementation of development projects, advance digital government services, uphold justice and transparency protect public funds, and combat corruption."

Schauffele wins first major

Korda continues fine form

LOUISVILLE, Ky., May 20, (AP): Xander Schauffele cashed in at just the right time Sunday, swirling in a 6-foot birdie putt on the final hole to win the PGA Championship for his first major with the lowest score in major championship history.

The Olympic gold medalist got something even more valuable in silver - that enormous Wanamaker Trophy after a wild week at Valhalla.

Schauffele closed with a 6-under 65 to beat Bryson DeChambeau, who made a 10-foot birdie putt on the par-5 18th for a 64.

Schauffele became the first player

GOLF

since Phil Mickelson in 2005 at Baltusrol to win the PGA Championship with a birdie on the last hole to win by one.

Viktor Hovland, the FedEx Cup champion who wasn't sure he even belonged at Valhalla while trying to work his way out of a slump, also had a 10-foot putt after DeChambeau hit his to tie for the lead. He missed the birdie, then missed a meaningless par putt and shot 66 to finish third.

Schauffele, who began this championship with a 62 to tie the major championship record, finished at 21-under 263 with that winning birdie. That beats by one shot the major record previously shared by Brooks Koepka in the 2018 PGA Championship at Bellerive and Henrik Stenson in the 2016 British Open at Royal Troon.

Xander Schauffele holds the Wanamaker trophy after winning the PGA Championship golf tournament at the Valhalla Golf Club in Louisville, Ky. (AP)

Masters champion Scottie Scheffler, whose week included an arrest and brief jail time right before his second round for not following police directions, shot 65 and tied for eight.

Schauffele moved to No. 2 in the world and secured his spot in the Olympics.

Nelly Korda won a back nine showdown with Hannah Green of Australia with a par on the 18th hole to capture the Mizuho Americas Open by a stroke Sunday for her sixth win in seven starts on the LPGA Tour this year.

The victory made the 25-year-old Korda the first player since Inbee Park (2013) to record six wins in a single season. Korda also bounced back from seeing her record-tying five-tournament winning streak snapped last week by Rose Zhang at the Cognizant Founders Cup.

Zhang withdrew Thursday after three holes with an intestinal issue.

After playing the front nine in 2 over, Korda matched birdies with Green on the 10th, 13th and 15th holes at scenic Liberty National to stay tied with Green. The Australian's two wins this year made her the only other multiple winner on tour this year.

After Korda put her drive in the fairway on the par-4, No. 18, Green pulled her drive into the left rough. Her second to the green was short and left and still in the rough and she failed to get up-and-down for par to force a playoff.

Harry Higgs made eagle on the par-5 18th hole Sunday to force a playoff with Tanner Gore, and then made birdie on the first extra hole to capture the AdventHealth Championship on the Korn Ferry Tour.

It was a sudden turnaround at the end. Higgs was three shots behind when he made his eagle putt for a 6-under 66. Gore, a Monday qualifier, took bogey on the 17th and then narrowly missed a birdie putt for the win on the closing hole. He shot 69.

Higgs, who grew up in the area, was projected to move to No. 7 on the points list, a big step toward returning to the PGA Tour.

Dalton Ward birdied his last two holes for a 64 and missed the playoff by one shot.

Fiona Xu closed with an 8-under 64 to win the Copper Rock Championship by seven shots. She set the Epson Tour record by finishing the 54-hole event at 22-under 194. Takahiro Hataji won for the second time this year when he closed with a 3-under 67 for a three-shot victory in the Kansai Open on the Japan Golf Tour. Hataji also won the New Zealand Open before the Japan tour season began.

Alexandra Forsterling of Germany won the Amundi German Masters for her fourth Ladies European Tour title in the last nine months. She shot 5-under 67 in the final round and defeated Emma Spitz of Austria in a playoff. ... Harry Hillier, who shot a 59 in the second round, closed with a 5-under 67 for an eight-shot victory in the Inter Rapidisimo Golf Championship in Bogota on the PGA Tour Americas. It was the sixth sub-60 round on tours around the world this year.

Rio Takeda closed with a 4-under 68 and won the Bridgestone Ladies Open by two shots on the Japan LPGA.

Hyunkyung Park lost a 3-up lead early and then won the last two holes for a 1-up victory over Ye Won Lee in the Doosan Match Play on the Korea LPGA.

For now competition is still evident

Is Man City dominance making EPL boring?

MANCHESTER, England, May 20, (AP): After the celebrations come the questions.

A fourth straight Premier League title for Manchester City marks an unprecedented period of dominance by one team in English soccer. A sixth in seven seasons underlines City's superiority in a league that is widely regarded as the most competitive - and certainly the most popular - in the sport.

But does City's pre-eminence mean England's top division is in danger of becoming a turn-off for billions of fans around the world? Pep Guardiola doesn't think so.

"It's boring? It's not. It is so difficult," the City manager said last week as his team closed in on another title.

City's run of success bares comparison to the likes of Germany where Bayern Munich had turned the Bundesliga into a one-horse race until its 11-year winning streak was ended by Bayer Leverkusen this season. Paris Saint-Germain has won 10 of the last 12 titles in France. Celtic has won all but one of the last 13 in Scotland.

None of those leagues are as popular as England's top flight and a lack of competition could be a reason why.

That is not City's problem. But if four in a row becomes five, six, seven, it could be a problem for all of England's leading clubs if it impacts on the revenues generated by the sale of global broadcast rights.

The competition is what makes the Premier League such box office entertainment. And, for now, that competition is still evident.

City needed to win its final game of the season against West Ham to finally hold off the challenge of Arsenal and clinch the title by two points. It was the third time Guardiola's team had been taken to the final day of the campaign before being crowned champion, having twice been pushed all the way by Liverpool.

While the headline figure tells the story of City's near unbroken rule over the past seven seasons, the detail shows just how closely they were challenged, with Liverpool missing out by just one point in 2019 and 2022.

Liverpool amassed totals of 97 and 92 points in those campaigns - more than any team that hasn't gone on to win the title. A total of 97 points would have been enough to win the title in all but two other Premier League seasons - in 2018 when City set a new record of 100 points and in 2022 when Liverpool ended its 30-year wait to be champion with 99.

That is a measure of the heights City has had to reach to stay ahead of the rest. Even last season it had to overcome an Arsenal team that spent 248 days at the top of the standings - the most for any team that hasn't gone on to win the title.

This season Arsenal set a new club record for wins (28) and goals (91) in the Premier League - even surpassing its last title-winning team from 2004, which went an entire league campaign unbeaten.

SOCCER

"Before it was Liverpool to push our limits and now it was Arsenal," Guardiola said. "We got the message from Mikel (Arteta) and his players. We have to make the right decisions in the next years because they are here to stay." City's dominance has certainly been underpinned by the fabulous wealth of its owners, having been bought by Abu Dhabi's ruling family in 2008.

Manchester City's Jeremy Doku (right), is challenged by West Ham's Tomas Soucek (left), and West Ham's Vladimir Coufal during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester City and West Ham United at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

Since then some of the world's finest players have been lured to the Etihad Stadium at a cost of around $2 billion along with arguably the greatest manager of his generation in Guardiola.

Yet City is not alone in being able to spend big and its Premier League rivals are among the richest clubs in the world.

"They spend much more in the last five years than us. They should be there but they are not," Guardiola said.

Manchester United have consistently splashed out to try to keep pace with City - spending an estimated $1.5 billion since Guardiola's arrival in England in 2016.

In that time Liverpool has set new transfer records for a defender in Virgil van Dijk and for a goalkeeper in Alisson.

Chelsea has spent around $1 billion over the past two seasons since being bought out by U.S. investor Todd Boehly and Clearlake Capital. Before that it was bankrolled by Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich.

And Arsenal was able to sign Declan Rice for a then-British transfer fee of $138 million last summer to strengthen its title challenge.

United and Chelsea are examples of what can happen when money isn't spent well, with both teams assembling expensive squads that have drastically underperformed.

It is now 11 years since United last won the title in 2013. In that time it has repeatedly missed out on Champions League qualification - this season included - and has never been closer than 12 points off the eventual winner.

Chelsea, meanwhile, has endured a dramatic slump since winning the Champions League in 2021 and has failed to qualify in each of the past two seasons.

Basketball season 'concludes' with Al-Qadisiya and Kazma showdown

By Khaled El Anzi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The 2023-2024 basketball season draws to a close with the Federation Cup final showdown between Al-Qadisiya and Kazma. The eagerly awaited match is set to tip-off at 9:00pm at the Al-Ittihad Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex, Sabah Al-Salem suburb. Preceding this clash, at 5:00 pm, is the

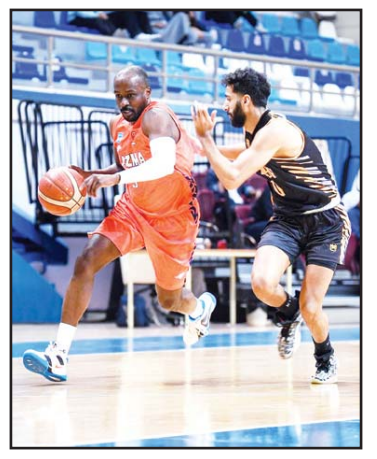
BASKETBALL

battle for third and fourth places, featuring Kuwait Club against Qurain.

Al-Qadisiya secured its spot in the final by defeating Al-Qurain in a fiercely contested semi-final with a scoreline of 89-82. The showdown was marked by intense competition, particularly from Al-Qurain, whose players delivered a formidable performance. In the other semi-final, Kazma achieved a remarkable feat by dethroning the reigning champion, Kuwait Club, and exacting revenge for previous defeats suffered at its hands throughout the season.

Throughout the history of the Basketball Association Cup, seven clubs have clinched the title: Al-Qadisiya with 25 titles, Kuwait with 16, Al-Arabi with nine, Kazma with three, Al-Jahra with two, and Al-Sahel with one.

The semi-final encounter between Al-Qurain and Al-Qadisiyah showcased a spirited display from both sides. Despite Al-Qurain's relative lack of experience, it managed to hold its own against the seasoned Al-Qadisiya team. Al-Qurain led at halftime with a narrow margin of 38-37, but it was Rashid Al-Rabah's clutch performance in the crucial moments that



Kazma player dribbles past an opponent.

sealed victory for Al-Qadisiya.

In the other semi-final, Kazma overcame the defending champion, Kuwait Club, with a well-rounded display of defense and attack. Despite a strong start from Kuwait Club, Kazma gradually asserted its dominance and secured a slim one-point victory.

The final promises to be a thrilling encounter between two evenly matched teams. Kazma, under the guidance of Slovenian coach Bojan Lazic, boasts a talented lineup including Ahmed Al Balushi, Abdulaziz Al Hamidi, Youssef Bourahma, and Abdullah Ibrahim, alongside American professionals Travis Leslie and Clint Chapman. Meanwhile, Al-Qadisiya, led by American coach Anthony Stebbing, relies on the prowess of Muhammad Ashkanani, Rashid Al-Rabah, Muhammad Al-Dakhil, and Abdul Mohsen Al-Moussawi, supported by the trio of Robert Lowry, Ilono, and Martic.

Kuwait Volleyball Federation calls for 28th May General Assembly meeting

By Khaled El Anzi
Al-Seyassah /Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The Volleyball Federation's Board of Directors has extended an invitation to clubs for their participation in the federation's upcoming "regular" general assembly meeting. The meeting is scheduled for seven in the evening on Tuesday, the twenty-eighth of this month. The primary agenda includes the approval of fi-

VOLLEYBALL

nancial and administrative reports covering the period ending on March 31, 2024, as well as the appointment of an auditor.

Meanwhile, Al-Arabi Club has finalized a contract with player Taha Al-Kaabi to represent the team in the upcoming season. Hussein Al-Roumi, the director of the club's youth sector, expressed the organization's commitment to enhancing and elevating the team with the backing of the Board of Directors ahead of the forthcoming season.

Hussein Al-Roumi with Taha Al-Kaabi.

Al-Roumi stated, "There are no plans for renewing the coach or the Tunisian professional, Mohamed El-Arabi. Instead, there is a strong inclination to extend the contract with the Dominican professional, Alves. Additionally, efforts are underway to secure a second professional player and recruit local talent to strengthen the team."

Best of the Rest

Inter lift trophy after draw: Lazio almost disrupted Inter Milan's award ceremony, but Denzel Dumfries' late equalizer prevented a home defeat on Sunday as Inter received the Serie A trophy after a 1-1 draw.

Inter had already secured their 20th Serie A title in April and entered their final home match with a relatively full squad.

Marcus Thuram missed a golden opportunity in the opening minutes when his solo run was denied by Lazio's goalkeeper Ivan Provedel. At the other end, Taty Castellanos' goal was disallowed due to offside.

The away side took the lead in the 33rd minute when Daichi Kamada unleashed a powerful shot that beat a helpless Yann Sommer. (Xinhua)

❑ ❑ ❑

Barcelona seal lucrative place: Barcelona routed Rayo Vallecano 3-0 to secure the lucrative second place in the Spanish league on Sunday, while champion Real Madrid drew 4-4 at Villarreal with Norway striker Alexander Sorloth scoring all four goals for the hosts.

There won't be much left to fight for in the final round next weekend as Cadiz became the last team to be relegated after being held to a 0-0 draw at home against Las Palmas. Real Sociedad secured the last Europa League spot with a 2-0 win at Real Betis, which was left with a place in the Europa Conference League. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Brazil replaces Ederson: Brazil coach Dorival Júnior has replaced injured goalkeeper Ederson with Sao Paulo's Rafael in his Copa America squad.

Manchester City's Ederson has a broken right eye socket.

Júnior, who took over as the national team's coach in January, already has Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson and Athletico Paranaense's Bento in the squad.

Juventus defender Bremer, Atalanta midfielder Éderson and Porto forward Pepe were added to the squad on Sunday. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Boca sink Central Cordoba: Boca Juniors recovered from a two-goal deficit to secure a 4-2 away win over Central Cordoba in Argentina's Primera Division on Sunday.

Rodrigo Atencio and Mateo Sanabria gave the hosts a 2-0 lead before Ezequiel Fernandez and Miguel Merentiel netted twice each after the interval at Estadio Unico.

The result leaves the Buenos Aires giants 10th in the 28-team top flight standings with three points from their first two games while Central Cordoba are last, having yet to pick up a point. (Xinhua)

❑ ❑ ❑

Cruz Azul reach final: Cruz Azul booked a place in the Liga MX Clausura final despite a 2-1 defeat to Monterrey in their semifinal second leg on Sunday.

Having won the first leg 1-0 away, the Mexico City outfit extended their aggregate lead to 2-0 when Angel Sepulveda struck just after the hour at Ciudad de los Deportes.

The goal sparked Monterrey into action and German Berterame put his side on level terms on the night with a 67th minute strike before he netted again six minutes later.

Cruz Azul survived a tense final half hour to reach the final by virtue of having finished higher in the standings after the regular season. (Xinhua)

Dr. Amthal Hadi Al-Hewaila, Minister of Social Affairs, Labour, Family, and Childhood Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs tours the stadium ahead of the final.

Sports

Latest sports scores at — http://sports.arabtimesonline.com

Al-Qadsia and Al-Salmiya confident of victory

Amir patronizes and attends final match of Cup

KUWAIT CITY, May 20, (Agencies): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah will patronize and attend the final of the 2023-24 seasons Amir Football Cup on Tuesday. The match, featuring Al-Qadsia Sports Club against Al-Salmiya, is scheduled to begin at 7:15 pm local time at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium.

Al-Qadisiya coach Muhammad Al-Mashaan emphasized his team's strong determination to win the championship title, highlighting its ambition and desire to deliver a perfect performance.

Speaking at a press conference, Al-Mashaan noted that both teams have equal chances, with all strategies seemingly transparent based on their previous encounters this season.

He acknowledged that both teams might play with heightened caution to avoid mistakes, given the stakes of the final match. Drawing from his experience with Salmiya in past matches, Al-Mashaan stated that he is well aware of their strengths and weaknesses and plans to exploit them.

Al-Mashaan also expressed confidence in his players' ability to handle the intense pressure from their fans, which are eager for a title win. He confirmed that all players are ready, including Badr Al-Mutawa, who sustained a bruise in the last match against Al-Arabi.

He dismissed concerns about any negative effects from the strenuous effort in the recent "derby" match, ensuring that the team is in good shape.

Al-Qadisiya player Abdullah Al-Shamali added that the team is determined to return to the podium and that everyone in the club is fully prepared. He emphasized, "We are seeking to achieve the title as it is the last hope for a championship this season."

Salmiya's Croatian coach, Ante Misha, expressed "great enthusiasm" ahead of the Amir Cup final against Al-Qadisiya, highlighting that his team had been eagerly anticipating this match and had prepared in the best possible way.

Misha acknowledged his respect for the Al-Qadisiya team, praising its distinguished players and top-level technical staff. Despite this, he expressed optimism about Salmiya's chances, believing in his team's potential to secure the title.

SOCCER

Misha emphasized that Al-Qadisiyah's past successes do not necessarily give them an edge, noting that cup matches differ from league matches and demand greater focus and effective use of opportunities. He also downplayed the potential impact of Al-Qadisiya's fan support, expressing confidence in Al-Samawi players' ability to handle the pressure.

He further mentioned that his team does not have any significant absences, allowing him to select the best-suited players for the match.

Salmiya player Ayed added, "We will enter the match with high concentration, and whoever makes the fewest mistakes will win the title." Ayed hopes that their efforts this season will be rewarded by winning the prestigious cup.

Al-Qadsia qualified for the final after defeating Al-Arabi with a score of 2-1, while Al-Salmiya advanced by beating Al-Tadamon 3-0 in the semi-final matches.

At the press conference for the final match on Monday, Salmiya Club's Croatian coach, Ante Misha, expressed confidence in his team's readiness and commitment to winning the cup. Meanwhile, Qadsia Club's coach, Dr. Mohammad Al-Anazi, acknowledged the difficulty of the upcoming match, noting the strengths of the Al-team and emphasizing the need for Al-Qadsia to play a perfect game to secure victory.

A file photo of the Amir Cup.

The Amir Cup has been held 61 times before this season. Kuwait SC, Al-Qadsia, and Al-Arabi have each won the title 16 times, Kazma has won it 8 times, while Al-Salmiya and Yarmouk have each won it twice and Al-Fahaheel has won it once.

In another development, Dr. Amthal Hadi Al-Hewaila, Minister of Social Affairs, Labour, Family, and Childhood Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, received a detailed briefing from Abdullah Al-Shaheen, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Football Association. The briefing covered the Federation's latest preparations for the final match of the His Highness the Amir Cup, may Allah protect him. The meeting took place at the Federation's headquarters at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium and included the presence of Acting Director General of the General Sports Authority, Faisal Al-Yateem, along with Federation Board members Dr. Mansour Pasha, Fatima Hayat, Jamal Al-Otaibi, Abdulaziz Al-Samhan, and Federation Secretary-General Salah Al-Qenaei. Representatives from the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs and the General Sports Authority were also in attendance.

During the briefing, Al-Shaheen discussed the Federation's preparations for the final match, the work plan for all committees involved, and the festival set to coincide with the final, featuring Al-Qadisiya and Al-Salmiya.

The Chairman expressed gratitude to all state ministries and participating government and private agencies for their role in organizing the final match.

Following the meeting, Dr. Amthal Hadi Al-Hewaila conducted an inspection tour of Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium to review the latest preparations.

Misha and Ayed address the media on eve of the final.

Al-Mashaaan and Al-Shamali hold press conference.

3x3 basketball teams confirmed

MIES, Switzerland, May 20, (Xinhua): The full lists of the Paris 2024 3x3 basketball competitions were confirmed after the final 3x3 Olympic qualifying tournament was concluded in Debrecen, Hungary, at the weekend, the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) announced here on Sunday.

France, Lithuania and Poland advanced from the men's category, while Germany, Spain and Canada emerged from the women's draw to be the last six teams at Paris 2024.

OLYMPICS

France beat Mongolia 21-20 and Lithuania defeated Poland 21-15 for the first two tickets to Paris, before Poland grabbed the last one with a close 22-20 win over Mongolia.

In the women's competition, Germany and Spain booked the first two berths to the Olympics, while Canada beat Hungary for the final spot.

The 3x3 competition at the Paris 2024 will take place at Place de La Concorde on July 30-August 5.

The qualified teams are as follows:

Men:

Serbia (ranking), United States (ranking), China (ranking), Latvia (UOQT 1), Netherlands (UOQT 2), France (OQT), Lithuania (OQT), Poland (OQT)

Women:

China (ranking), United States (ranking), France (ranking), Azerbaijan (UOQT 1), Australia (UOQT 2), Germany (OQT), Spain (OQT), Canada (OQT).

Timberwolves end Nuggets title defense

Pacers make Eastern Conference finals

DENVER, May 20, (AP): Anthony Edwards overcame a slow start and the Timberwolves roared back from a 20-point second-half deficit to eliminate the reigning NBA champion Denver Nuggets 98-90 in a Game 7 Minnesota masterpiece.

The Timberwolves overcame a 15-point halftime deficit - the largest comeback in a Game 7 in NBA playoff history - behind Edwards, who had just four points, no rebounds and three assists at halftime but finished with 16 points, eight boards and seven assists.

His impact belied his 6-of-24 shooting that included a 2-for-10 3-point performance.

BASKETBALL

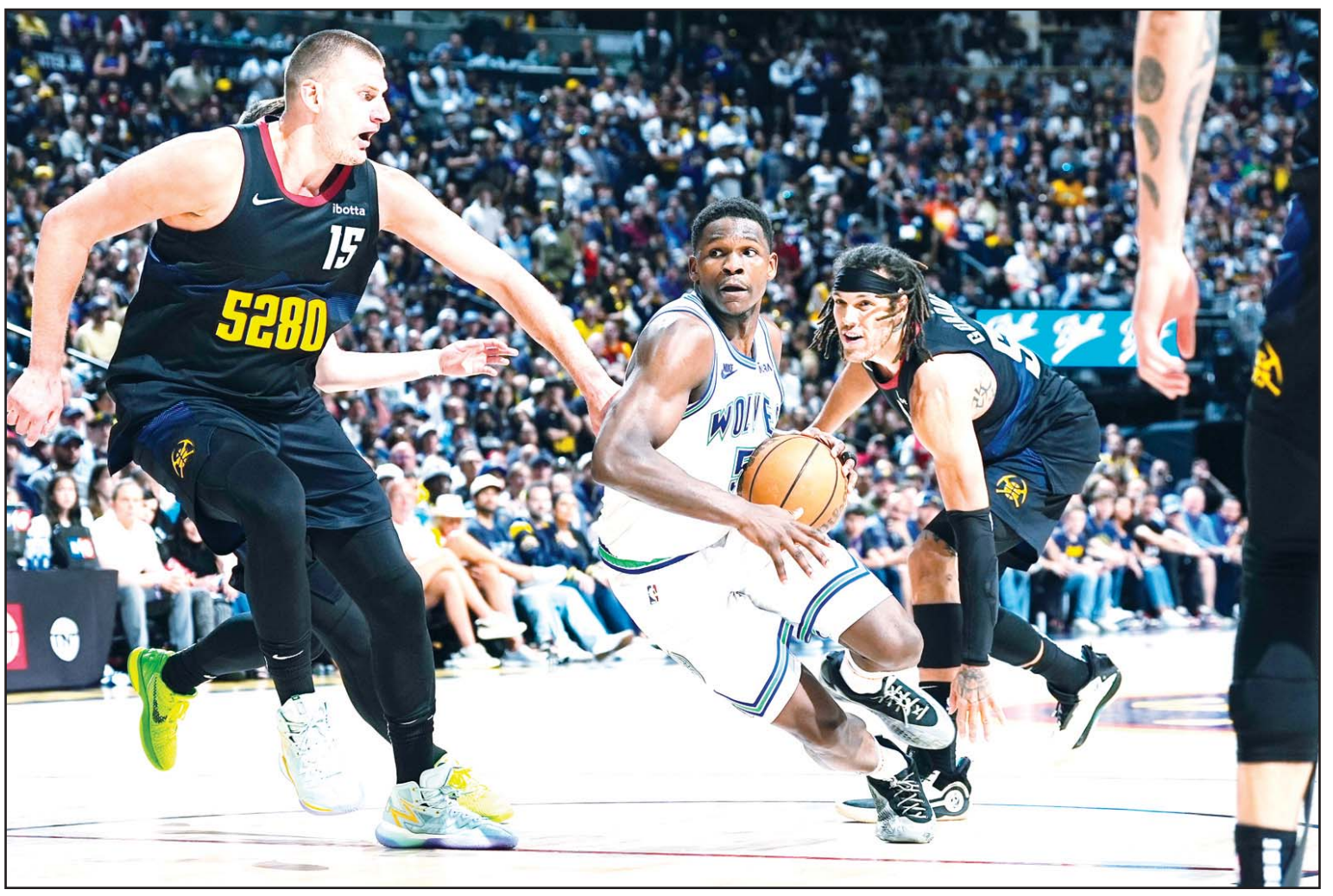
As the seconds ticked away, Edwards dribbled the ball upcourt and took time to wave good-bye to the crowd.

The Wolves, who got 23 points each from Karl-Anthony Towns and Jaden McDaniels, advanced to the Western Conference finals for the first time in exactly 20 years. They'll face the Dallas Mavericks beginning Wednesday night at Target Center.

The Nuggets became the fifth consecutive defending champion to fail to reach the conference finals. Behind Jamal Murray's 24 first-half points, the Nuggets raced to a 53-38 halftime lead and Murray's 3-pointer with 10:50 left in the third pushed Denver's lead to 58-38.

The Wolves turned to their defense, the NBA's stingiest, to get back into the game, and they closed the quarter on a 28-9 run to pull to 67-66 heading into the fourth.

Rudy Gobert gave the Wolves their first lead since the first quarter with a bucket to start the fourth and when Towns picked up his fifth foul, Naz Reid, the NBA's Sixth Man of the Year, was spectacular at both ends of the floor to keep Minnesota ahead.



Minnesota Timberwolves guard Anthony Edwards, (center), drives to the basket between Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic, (left), and forward Aaron Gordon in the second half of Game 7 of an NBA second-round playoff series in Denver. (AP)

Tyrese Haliburton scored 26 points and the Pacers set an NBA playoff record by shooting 67.1% from the field, beating the New York Knicks 130-109 on Sunday to advance to the Eastern Conference finals for the first time in 10 years.

The Pacers averaged 123.3 points during the regular season, sixth highest in league history, and set an NBA record by scoring 140 11 times.

They haven't slowed down much in the playoffs.

The Pacers made 29 of their 38 shots in the first half, a shooting percentage of 76.3% that was the highest in the postseason since 1997, when the NBA began keeping detailed play-by-play for all four quarters. They led 70-55 at that point and pulled away every time the Knicks tried to make a run in the second half.

The No. 6-seeded Pacers advanced to face top-seeded Boston in a series that begins Tuesday. Indiana last reached the conference finals in 2014, losing to Miami.

Jalen Brunson left in the second half with a broken left hand, one final injury for a Knicks team that was decimated by them.

They got OG Anunoby back Sunday after he missed the previous four games with a strained left hamstring, but he clearly wasn't moving well and was taken out of the game after just five minutes.

Pascal Siakam and Andrew Nembhard each scored 20 points and Aaron Nesmith was 8 for 8 en route to his 19 for the Pacers.

Donte DiVincenzo made nine 3-pointers and scored 39 points for the Knicks, who were trying to reach the conference finals for the first time since 2000 but couldn't overcome the losses of Julius Randle, Mitchell Robinson and Bojan Bogdanovic, before losing Anunoby and finally Brunson.

Chinese dominate

Al-Rajhi 'finishes' 5th in 400m final

TOKYO, May 20, (Agencies): Kuwaiti athlete Faisal Al-Rajhi concluded the men's 400 meters T54 final at the Para Athletics World Championships on Monday, securing a fifth-place finish. His impressive performance saw him clocking in at 46.78 seconds. Meanwhile, China's Hu Yang clinched the gold medal with a Championship record time of 44.98 seconds in the event held at the Kobe Universiade Memorial Stadium in Western Japan.

Prior to this, on Saturday, the 25-year-old Al-Rajhi had a remarkable victory, securing the gold medal in the 5,000-meter wheelchair race, showcasing his exceptional talent ahead of the upcoming Paralympic Games in Paris 2024. Additionally, he is scheduled to compete in the 1,500 meters and 800 meters races during the Kobe games.

PARA ATHLETICS

Throughout the nine-day championships, which run until May 25, Kuwait has fielded a team of four athletes. Alongside Al-Rajhi, the team includes Dhari Buti competing in the men's shot put F37 category, Tokyo Paralympics bronze medalist Faisal Sorour in the men's shot put F63 event, and Malak Ali participating in the women's javelin throw F54 discipline.

Meanwhile, China impressed the Universiade Memorial Stadium in Kobe with a clean sweep of all three medals in the men's 400m T54 final at the Para Athletics World Championships on Monday.

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