



# WEEKEND SCORCHER ALERT AS KUWAIT FACES 49°C HIGH



Left: A delivery rider takes shelter from scorching temperatures reaching 45-48 degrees Celsius on May 30. Right: The temperature inside a car shows 53 degrees Celsius on Thursday afternoon. Photos by Samer Shaqir

### Security plan underway

## 'Massive sweep' targets 18,000 violators in Jleeb

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The concerned authorities are currently preparing a comprehensive security plan to arrest around 18,000 Residency Law violators in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting a reliable source from the security sector.

The source pointed out that the Ministry of Interior has been exerting tremendous efforts to put an end to the random and illegal activities in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, but it is impossible to address the problem with such efforts alone; hence, the need for the concerted efforts of all concerned authorities.

According to recent statistics from the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI), the total number of people residing in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh has reached 268,601 expatriates including 46,000 women; and that 100,000 bachelor expatriates are residing in the area.

The source revealed the security plan is being prepared in coordination with the concerned authorities with the aim of eliminating violations in the area, strictly enforcing the law, maintaining security and rehabilitating the area.

He stated this is in compliance with the directive of Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousuf Al-Sabah; indicating that the plan will be implemented through the coordinated efforts of several institutions including the Kuwait Army, National Guard, Kuwait Fire Force, Ministry of Health and Kuwait Municipality.

It is worth mentioning that the Council of Ministers discussed the situation in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh in September 2023; specifically the conditions of buildings, traffic and security.

## Kuwait FM leads delegation at China-Arab States forum

KUWAIT CITY, May 30, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya headed his country's delegation partaking in the 10th ministerial conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, held in Beijing on Thursday.

Addressing the gathering, Al-Yahya commended bilateral cooperation and successful partnership between the Arab League and China, as well as the level of strategic relations between Kuwait and China.

He touted the 20th anniversary of forging Arab-Sino cooperation, pointing out shared views at regional and international events, particularly regarding Arab causes.

He also announced that Kuwait would host the third Arab-Chinese summit in 2030, underlining that his country commits itself to pushing forward Arab-Chinese cooperation to broader horizons.

The Kuwaiti foreign minister pointed out challenges the region is facing, primarily the Palestinian cause, which remains to be "a bleeding wound in the hearts of all Arab peoples".

In this context, he restated Kuwait's condemnation of the ongoing military aggression by Israeli occupying forces in Rafah City and its concomitant unprecedented humanitarian crisis as well as breaches of international humanitarian law.

Sounding the alarm about conflict spillover, the minister underlined that it is essential to cease military operations and allow humanitarian and relief aid into the Gaza Strip immediately.

Furthermore, Al-Yahya stressed the need to keep funding the UN refugee agency, UNRWA, and to throw much weight behind a full UN Palestinian membership, along with an independent and sovereign Palestinian state on the 1967 borderline with East Jerusalem as its capital.

On the other hand, he expounded on Kuwait's national plan designed to achieve sustainable development goals, including infrastructure, human capital, human resources, and technology localization.



MoFA photo  
Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya leads Kuwait's delegation at the 10th ministerial conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, held in Beijing on Thursday.

# Electricity load nears critical levels as temperatures soar

Minister sounds alarm on energy crisis, urges conservation

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The electricity load index will continue to rise with temperatures approaching 48 degrees Celsius, as it recorded 15,450 megawatts Wednesday, thereby approaching the

orange zone.

According to informed sources at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, the number recorded by the index today separates us from the expected maximum load of 1,275 megawatts, as the ministry expected the maximum load for the summer of this year to be 16,707 megawatts.

The sources indicated that loads will rise in the coming days due to the expected temperature increases.

They stressed the need to rationalize electricity consumption by citizens, residents and government agencies during the current stage by turning off lights and appliances in rooms and unused areas, and replacing and renewing air conditioners with modern ones that conserve electricity because air conditioners consume 70 percent of energy production during the summer.

Meanwhile, the Meteorological Department announced that weather maps and numerical models indicate the country will be affected by an extension of a high-pressure area accompanied by a hot, dry air mass and light to moderate northwesterly winds that may be active at times, raising dust. The weekend weather is expected to be generally very hot

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### Newswatch

**RAMALLAH:** At least 53 people were killed and 357 others injured in renewed atrocities by Israeli occupation forces against families in the Gaza Strip in the last 24 hours, according to health authorities.

The latest fatalities have brought the total number of Palestinian martyrs killed by the Israeli occupation since October 7 up to 36,224, the authorities said in a press release.

The number of Palestinians injured in Israeli occupation attacks during the reporting period has also surged to 81,777, according to the release. (KUNA)

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**BAGHDAD:** Two separate attacks involving sound grenades struck branches of American and British companies in Baghdad overnight Thursday, according to a statement from the Iraqi military's Security Media Cell.

The first attack occurred at 1:20 am local time (2220 GMT Wednesday) in the Jadriya neighborhood, targeting the local branch of U.S. heavy machinery company Caterpillar.

Ten minutes later, a second sound grenade detonated in Palestine Street, eastern Baghdad, outside the British Cambridge Institute, a language education center. (Xinhua)

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**ANKARA:** Turkey won't hesitate to carry out a new offensive in northern Syria if Kurdish-led groups, which Ankara accuses of links to outlawed Kurdish militants, proceed with plans to hold local elections in the region, Turkey's president said Thursday.

A Kurdish-led autonomous administration that controls northern and eastern parts of Syria has announced plans to hold municipal elections on June 11. The vote to choose mayors will be held in the provinces of Hassakeh, Raqqah, Deir el-Zour and eastern part of Aleppo province. (AP)



Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah carries out an inspection tour in Souq Mubarakia accompanied by the Head of the Voluntary Work Center Sheikha Amthal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Photo by Mohammad Morsi

## Kuwait economy to rebound strongly in 2024: World Bank

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: A recent World Bank report on the Gulf region's economic developments projects a recovery in Kuwait's economic growth to 2.8 percent in 2024, reports Al-Qabas daily.

This resurgence is attributed to expansionary fiscal policies, increased oil production, and enhanced output from the Al-Zour refinery.

The report, anticipates a 3.6 percent growth in oil production and a 2.1 percent increase in the non-oil sector. However, relatively high interest rates may limit domestic consumption, preventing the economy from achieving its full potential.

The report highlights a positive economic outlook for the Gulf region, driven by a recovery in oil production as OPEC+ gradually liberalizes production quotas in the latter half of 2024, coupled with strong momentum in the non-oil economy.

The Gulf countries' commitment to diversifying their economies is seen as a strategic approach to enhancing resilience and achieving sustainable development amid global economic fluctuations.

Despite diversification efforts, oil revenues remain crucial in shaping public finances and external transaction account balances in the medium term. The Gulf countries' public finance surplus is expected to decline to 0.1 percent of GDP in 2024, while the current account surplus is projected to be 7.5 percent of GDP, down from 8.4 percent in 2022.

The report underscores the importance of education quality in promoting sustainable economic growth in the Gulf region. Economic growth in the Gulf countries is expected to reach 2.8 percent in 2024 and 4.7 percent in 2025. Safaa Al-Koqali, Regional Director of the Gulf States Department at the World Bank, emphasized that good education prepares young people for better job opportunities and higher wages.

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## Tour focuses on problem-solving

# Capital governor urges protection of Souq Mubarakia's cultural identity

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah has stressed the importance of preserving the authentic archaeological, popular features and cultural identity in Souq Mubarakia due to its link with the Kuwaiti cultural heritage.

He said this during the inspection tour

he carried out Thursday morning in Souq Mubarakia accompanied by the Head of the Voluntary Work Center Sheikha Amthal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The tour included visiting multiple sites with the aim of reviewing the existing problems in Souq Mubarakia, and working to develop appropriate solutions to them in accordance with laws and regulations.

The governor explained that Souq Mubarakia carries a historical fragrance and ancient heritage value. It is an area that combines architectural, tourism, marketing and entertainment styles, and is regarded as one of the most attractive areas for citizens, residents and visitors from the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, as well as foreign tourists. The Capital Governorate will spare no effort in supporting all efforts that would preserve the high style of popular heritage in Souq Mubarakia, and cooperate with the relevant government institutions and private parties, in order to address all existing problems. This can be either at the level of public cleanliness or developing the necessary facilities and services, in



Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah

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Prayer Timings			
Fajr .....	03:16	Asr .....	15:20
Sunrise ..	04:49	Maghrib ..	18:42
Zohr .....	11:45	Isha .....	20:12

# Local

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** Very hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 10-38 km/h.  
**By Night:** Rather hot with light

Weather			
to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-42 km/h.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	47	35	

Kuwait Airport	48	34
Abdaly	48	29
Jahra	49	35
Salmiyah	44	33
Nuwaisib	46	29
Wafra	48	28

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

## Kuwait media professionals participate in ‘Arab Media Summit’ in UAE

# Modern tech helps in developing Arab media, communication

By Salem Al-Methen

DUBAI, May 30, (KUNA): Kuwaiti media professionals stressed the importance of benefiting from modern technology, considering it to be the basis of media development in the Arab world and building interactive relationships with the public.

In separate statements to KUNA during their participation in the “Arab Media Summit”, media professionals unanimously agreed on the importance of taking advantage of modern technologies and social media to enhance communication and improve the spread of information effectively in society.

Journalist and academic Dr. Mohammad Al-Rumaihi, expressed his thanks and appreciation to the UAE for organizing this summit, which brought together a large group of media professionals, writers and specialists.

He also stressed the need to investigate the quality of information provided by the

media or social media to the public to improve communication.

Kuwaiti journalist Mohammed Al-Mulla, said that achieving an ideal media environment in the Arab world requires governments and media institutions to provide the necessary support to achieve these factors, as well as cooperation between society and the public and private sectors.

For his part, journalist and writer on Gulf affairs Dr. Issa Al-Amiri, said that the media industry worldwide is witnessing a major transformation based on the development of modern technologies in providing media content, which is now establishing new rules for media work that will shape the media landscape.

He stated that the most prominent modern technological developments are the use of artificial intelligence and the delivery of media materials through digital channels and social media, which play a vital role in expanding the circle of audiences and interacting with them.

Radio and television broadcaster Ali Najim, said that encouraging innovation, creativity, and supporting alternative media that provides diverse and attractive content to the public, such as podcasts, contribute to developing the media scene in the region.



Al-Mulla



Chinese Ambassador Zhang Janwei with the delegation of media personalities and journalists in Kuwait.

### Janwei hosts media personalities

## Ambassador commits to enhancing Kuwait-China ties

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: Ambassador of China to Kuwait Zhang Janwei has affirmed the commitment of his country to further strengthen friendly bonds between the Chinese and Kuwaitis in all fields.

Ambassador Janwei made the statement during his meeting with a delegation of media personalities and journalists who were invited to a dinner in his residence.

He praised the unwavering support of the Kuwaiti leadership for the ongoing efforts to

strengthen relations and cooperation between the two friendly countries.

He highlighted the touristic richness of China; which covers various fields like culture, therapy and entertainment. He revealed China offers different touristic activities throughout the year; citing as an example the winter activities like ice skating.

He stressed that the Chinese government, in coordination with travel agencies and airlines, is working hard to increase the number of direct flights from Kuwait to different cities in China. This is in addition easing visa procedures for tourists, he stated.

He also confirmed the commitment of China to enhance cooperation in many fields, including education by increasing the number of scholarships.

He went on to say that the Kuwaitis and Chinese share many common traditions, especially the strong family ties and regular visits. He disclosed that he visits the diwanis of Kuwaiti citizens regularly, as it is one way of knowing more about each other.

He concluded his statement by wishing for continuous development of Kuwait-China relations under the auspices of the leaders of both countries.



Photo by Rizk Taufiq

US Ambassador Sasahara poses for a photo with Kuwaiti graduates.

### Envoy highlights long-standing ties

## US Embassy ‘honors’ over 100 outstanding Kuwaiti graduates

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The US Embassy recently celebrated the achievements of more than 100 distinguished Kuwaiti graduates who pursued studies in the United States, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Karen Sasahara, the US Ambassador to Kuwait, emphasized the enduring historical ties between the two nations, highlighting the significant role educational exchange has played in strengthening bilateral relations for over six decades.

She noted how five generations of Kuwaitis have continued their academic journeys in the US, fostering deeper understanding and cooperation between the two countries.

“As a native of Boston, a city renowned for its esteemed academic legacy, I take

pride in witnessing the profound impact of educational exchange,” remarked Sasahara.

“Boston,” she said, “epitomizes the ethos of learning and critical thinking inherent in the American educational paradigm.”

Sasahara reiterated the embassy’s commitment to fostering ongoing collaboration and exchange between Kuwait and the United States through its extensive alumni network, aiming to further mutual prosperity and understanding.

The embassy’s statement elucidated that the event served as a platform for Kuwaiti graduates to share their enriching experiences while studying in the US, while also promoting increased engagement within the Kuwaiti business community and with the embassy.

### Other Voices

## The ant & the card for elderly

By Ahmad alsarraf

Once, there was a diligent ant who approached her work with gusto and joy each day, yielding abundant results. Observing her industriousness, a forest tiger fancied that she could achieve even more with proper supervision and organization.

Thus, he enlisted a spider for oversight, implementing a system of attendance tracking and performance evaluation, while a cockroach managed administrative tasks and communications on behalf of the ant by implementing the fingerprint attendance system for the ant.

Pleased with the structured approach, the tiger requested more detailed reports from the spider, including analyses of productivity fluctuations and factors influencing them, to present to the council of the “Al-Naml Company,” established to ensure transparency and accountability.

However, the oversight inadvertently stifled the ant’s productivity. In response, a bee was brought in to investigate and proposed various changes: introducing new incentives like acquiring artwork and altering the workplace environment by redecorating and implementing surveillance. Additionally, the bee suggested streamlining the ant’s commute with electronic entry systems and appointed assistants to alleviate fatigue.

Despite these efforts, productivity remained stagnant, leading to financial losses and the imminent collapse of the “Ant Company.” To address the escalating expenses, particularly the high salaries, intervention from the tiger was deemed necessary. Consequently, the



alsarraf

ant, being the highest-paid employee, was relieved of her duties.

I remembered this classic story while examining the “senior citizens” card issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs, which gives its holder the right to bypass any queue or floor in any government agency, as long as the citizen reaches the age of sixty-five.

In order to issue the “age identification” card, which is not recognized by any party at all and does not mean anything, the Ministry created an administrative structure whose mission was to print the card, keep its records, distribute it through several branches in various governorates, cancel the card of those who died, and other administrative tasks that are not necessary.

There is no need for it, not even for the existence of that entire administration. The point is that a citizen’s eligibility for service requires only one condition, which is that he reaches a certain age, and this can be easily known through the civil ID card, and this means that there is no need for that card or administration to exist at all!

What the experts on the “Senior Citizen’s Card” or the Priority Health Card did not think about is that exempting the elderly from the entry number, standing in queue at doctors’ clinics, dispensing medications, meeting with officials, etc., is meaningless, because it does not solve the problem of priority of some over others, as it is very difficult to determine who arrived before the other, and the problem becomes greater when a large number of them arrive at the same time.

This problem, which no one has thought about, needs a solution, which is to establish a priority number system for the elderly only, and this requires the creation of a new department in the Ministries of Health and Affairs to carry out this task!

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## Minister issues 3 decisions to improve administrative sector

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi issued three regulatory ministerial decisions to strengthen the administrative apparatus and achieve sustainable development.

The first decision stipulates the transfer of the technical subordination of the accounting departments, financial support departments, and their divisions and units in all health zones and central departments directly to the Assistant Undersecretary for Financial Affairs.

The second decision is related to the transfer of technical affiliation for monitoring engineering affairs and engineering affairs offices in all health zones directly to the Assistant Undersecretary for Engineering Affairs and Projects.

The third decision stipulates that the technical subordination of the warehouses’ subdivisions, divisions, and units in all health zones and central departments be transferred to the Assistant Undersecretary for Financial Affairs.

In another development, the Ministry of Health is set to unveil an organ transplant center in the Al-Sabah Specialized Medical District next week, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This move signifies the beginning of a series of openings in specialized healthcare facilities across the nation to cater to patients and visitors in all regions.

The forthcoming center will cater to patients requiring organ transplants, offering comprehensive outpatient services for examination and diagnosis. It will be equipped to perform kidney, liver, and heart transplants using state-of-the-art medical technology. Notably, the center boasts highly skilled medical professionals renowned for their professionalism and efficiency.

In a related development, the Hamed Al-Issa Center for Organ Transplantation witnessed a significant milestone in 2023, conducting 140 kidney transplants, including 78 from living donors and 62 from deceased donors, with an additional 80 kidney transplants performed abroad.

The success rate of kidney transplants in Kuwait, exceeding 90 percent in the first year, is attributed to the availability of advanced medications and meticulous tissue matching between donors and recipients.

Furthermore, common causes of kidney failure in Kuwait, such as diabetes, hypertension, and glomerular nephritis, mirror global trends.



Al-Qabas photo

A photo from the exhibition.

## Kuwait-Morocco meeting to boost trade & investment opportunities, claims Chamber

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry highlighted the significance of the Kuwaiti-Moroccan meeting and the accompanying exhibition of Moroccan products, emphasizing the opportunity to explore and enhance commercial and investment relations between Kuwait and Morocco, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The event aims to open new avenues for economic cooperation and elevate the relationship between the two nations to higher levels of constructive collaboration.

During the reception of a Moroccan economic delegation, led by Rachid Sami, Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Services of the Rabat-Sale-Kenitra region, and in the presence of the Moroccan Ambassador to Kuwait, Ali Ben Issa, and several Moroccan companies, the Chamber noted that the current volume of trade exchange between the two countries does not meet their full potential.

The Chamber expressed hope that such meetings would help

translate shared visions into reality and overcome obstacles to increase trade exchange to desired levels.

Ambassador Ben Issa thanked the Chamber for organizing the meeting and hosting the exhibition, praising the strong and multifaceted relations between Kuwait and Morocco, which are nurtured by the leadership of both countries.

He emphasized the importance of economic cooperation within these distinguished relations, noting Kuwait’s significant investment in Moroccan projects. Kuwait is the third-largest Arab investor in Morocco and ranks tenth globally in terms of investment volume.

The Moroccan ambassador highlighted Morocco’s efforts to attract more foreign investments by improving the legislative environment and infrastructure. He pointed to promising sectors such as tourism, agriculture, and renewable energy, as well as rapid growth in the aviation and automobile industries.

Rachid Sami stressed the impor-

tance of the meeting in fostering economic relations between Kuwait and Morocco. He expressed Morocco’s desire to increase economic and trade cooperation with Kuwait and underscored the value of forums that bring together business leaders from both countries. Sami highlighted the abundant investment opportunities in Morocco.

The visiting delegation engaged in an economic meeting with the Kuwaiti business sector, where they introduced key Moroccan economic sectors and presented investment and commercial opportunities for partnership and cooperation with Kuwait. Over two days, the Chamber’s building hosted an exhibition showcasing important Moroccan products across various sectors, particularly industrial and agricultural.

This event is expected to serve as a platform for strengthening bilateral economic relations and exploring new opportunities for mutual benefit, paving the way for a prosperous partnership between Kuwait and Morocco.







Kuwaiti productions shine, claim top accolades

# Al-Mutairi honors winners of Arab Media Excellence Award

## 54th Arab Info Ministerial Council’s meet kicks off, call for unity echoes



Arab Ministers of Information pose for a group photo during the 54th Arab Information Ministerial Council meeting in Manama.

Kuwait seeks multi-generational awareness on ‘Palestinian cause’

MANAMA, May 30, (KUNA): Arab information ministerial council held its 54th meeting on Wednesday in Manama, with Kuwaiti Information Minister Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi taking part.

Bahraini Minister of Information Ramzan Al-Noaimi welcomed participating ministers to the inaugural session, and expressed hope that their efforts culminate in success.

He also wished that their efforts boost role of media in Arab issues, with Palestine at the forefront, as well as instill peace and security in region.

Al-Noaimi pointed out that the meeting is held after Bahrain hosted 33rd Arab summit, a summit with extraordinary timing and outcomes exemplified in the Bahrain declaration that reflects unity.

Saudi Information Minister Salman Al-Dousari in his speech highlighted Saudi efforts since its establishments in uniting Arab position and promoting joint Arab work, most recently by hosting Arab and Islamic summits to deliberate Israeli occupation aggression on Gaza strip.

He also pointed out Saudi Arabia’s efforts in employing its might to urge international community to recognize state of Palestine.

Arab League Assistant Undersecretary Ambassador Ahmad Khatabi underlined importance of media support to Palestinian case as the Israeli occupation continues to commit horrible crimes against Palestinian people.

Khatabi affirmed the vital role of media outlets in supporting this just cause, and indicated that the media and communications sector is keen on activating Arab media strategy, at heart of which lies the integrated platform that sets forth to counter extremist conflicts.

Khatabi, congratulating the winners of the

Kuwaiti-sponsored media excellence award, affirmed that it is an encouraging endeavor for exceptional professionalism.

Awareness about the “Palestinian cause” should linger through multiple generations, Kuwait’s information minister said on Wednesday, underlining that it would use all tools at its disposal to bring that goal to fruition.

Such measures aim to “serve the best interests” of the wider Arab region, besides being a legal obligation given the “grave violations” committed by Israeli occupation forces that run counter to established humanitarian laws and principles, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi told a gathering that joined him with his counterparts from the region.

The Kuwaiti minister reiterated his country’s unwavering support for the Palestinians, emphasizing that such backing would continue until their statehood aspirations are realized with the creation of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

MANAMA, May 30, (KUNA): A ceremony was held in Manama on Wednesday to honor the laureates of the eighth Arab Media Excellence Award on the sidelines of the 54th session of the Arab information ministers’ council.

The ceremony gathered Kuwait’s Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, his Bahraini counterpart Ramzan Al-Naeimi and Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab League for Media and Communication Affairs Ahmad Rashid Khattabi.

The award, sponsored by Kuwait and themed this year “media of crisis, disasters and risks,” aimed to promote professionalism of Arab media people.

Kuwait TV’s “Gaza,” written and presented by Hawraa Khaleb and directed by Meshal Al-Shemmeri, won the best TV reportage category of the award.

“Al-Walad wa Al-Asfoura” (The Boy and Sparrow) of Egypt’s Cairo News TV, telling the story of a Palestinian boy who was evicted from his home by the Israeli occupation forces, won the best TV report award.

“Ardh Al-Hejarah” (The Land of Stones), of the Iraqi Media Network, on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, won the best documentary award.

Morocco’s SNRT won the best radio report award for its chain or reports themed “Zelzal Al- Al-Haouz” (Earthquake of Al-Haouz).

Algeria Radio’s “risks of desertification and drought” won the best educational promo award.

The category of the award for printed press was given to Egypt’s Mobtada website for its investigative reportage on “families deleted from Palestinian register due to genocide.”

The op-ed article award was given to Mohammad Aswab, a journalist of Maghreb Arab Press (MAP) for his story “Sa’osami al-husein” (I’ll call him Hussein).

The digital media award for the best video was given to “Hatha Wajebona” of Kuwait’s new media sector. The video was compiled by Sara Haidar and directed by Bashaer Al-Sayegh.

Saudi Press Agency won the award for the best investigative report by King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSrelief) which documents the

100-day deadline

Social Affairs Minister issues new directives

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: Minister of Social, Family and Children Affairs and State Minister for Youth Affairs Anthal Al-Huwaila issued a circular to all departments in the Ministry of Social Affairs, reports Al-Anba daily.

In the circular, Al-Huwaila asked the departments to submit the following:

- Vision to improve procedures, guarantee achievements and overcome difficulties in order to accomplish tasks smoothly;
- List of the heads of departments, supervisors and employees, including their qualifications.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Social Affairs received a letter from the Council of Ministers on the need to determine the number of ongoing projects that will be completed within the next 100 days.

The council sent this letter to all ministries, urging them to provide the requested information before its next meeting.

The council has stressed the need to coordinate efforts in order to complete the ongoing projects and asked every minister to submit regular reports on the progress of each project with the aim of completing them as per the timetable.

efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to deliver aid to residents in Gaza Strip.

The best photo award was given to Libya’s Hassan Al-Majdoub for his “hal najawna” (Have we survived) photo.

Dr. Nawal Al-Sherif, of Libya too, Wael Al-Dahdouh, the late reporter of Al-Jazeera news network from Gaza, as well as Palestine TV were also honored at the ceremony for their struggle to uncover the crimes of the Israeli occupation forces.



Kuwait’s Minister of Information and Culture and his Bahraini counterpart honor winners of Arab Media Excellence Award.

Bonuses disbursed to employees

### MEW announces 9 tender contracts for customer service sector modernization

By Mohammed Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: According to informed sources in the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, the Customer Service Sector has nine tender contracts in the current fiscal year of 2024/2025 for developing and modernizing work mechanisms within the sector to carry out the roles assigned to provide integrated services to customers and raise the revenues of the ministry.

The sources explained that one of the most prominent and important contracts to be offered is for the development and maintenance of the smart meter system (hardware systems and software) and its communications network for the sector’s main and exchange site. The contract work will include maintenance and development of software, computers and infrastructure for the smart meter system, supply, installation, operation and maintenance of the smart meter connection service, and installation, operation and maintenance of network lines for sites affiliated with the customer services sector.

There are two contracts to carry out building construction work and all maintenance and restoration work for the facilities of the customer services sector in the six governorates, with the aim of providing a suitable work environment for employees and customers, especially since most of the buildings have been constructed for many years.

Among the contracts is the supply, installation and maintenance of smart water filling card devices, along with installing surveillance cameras in the 26 water filling stations

nationwide, which contributes to the development of a new system to keep pace with technological development in this field.

There are also two contracts for disconnection and connection work and for the replacement of electricity and water meters in all governorates, as well as a contract for cleaning work for the sector’s facilities and customer services.

There is also a contract for reading utility meters for electricity and water consumption in all governorates, which includes distributing bills to customers, field survey work, and distributing warnings to customers to visit the ministry to update data, pay bills, and inspect meters.

The sector’s contracts also include a contract to carry out civil maintenance work for 26 water filling stations nationwide through the contract, and the construction of new buildings that will replace the existing buildings due to their age and the wear and tear of their parts, provided that these buildings are modern and can save the amounts that are used in civil maintenance work.

Meanwhile, the Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative Affairs at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Ahmed Al-Namaa affirmed that excellent work bonuses have been disbursed to 16,197 eligible employees among the ministry’s employees.

In a press statement issued yesterday, Al-Namaa said the bonuses will be disbursed to the rest of the employees gradually during the coming period after completing the actual days of work according to the nature of the work of these categories.

### Municipal Council members submit proposal for utilizing ‘water basins’

By Inaas Awadh  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: Members of the Municipal Council Abdullatif Al-Daei and Sharifa Al-Shalfan yesterday submitted a proposal to study the utilization of water collection basins and rainwater sewers in Kuwait.

In the preamble of their proposal, they explained that water collection basins are considered one of the solutions implemented in Kuwait to protect new residential cities from floods resulting from heavy rain, in addition to causing significant material losses due to the large number of wasted land that have been allocated, which requires reconsidering them and studying the extent of the possibility of benefiting from them.

Basins and rainwater streams are considered insufficiently exploited water resource

es in the country, which results in the loss of large quantities of water and land, and valuable economic and environmental opportunities.

In their proposal, they called for conducting a survey of all water basins and rainwater streams and studying how to benefit from them and their feasibility in coordination with the relevant authorities, taking into account basic conditions, which are:

1. The use of collected water for multiple purposes, such as agricultural irrigation, industries, and energy generation,
2. The use of collected water to recharge groundwater and benefit from it as drinking water.
3. The use of rainwater collection basins as a resource that can be used to enhance tourism and economic opportunities for the state by creating resort projects or similar projects and green reserves.

# May

## Room Promotion

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

Promo period from 2<sup>nd</sup> May to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024

Terms & conditions apply\*



Application extends until Sept 8

PAAET opens re-enrollment for dismissed students

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The Deanship of Admission and Registration at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training has announced the commencement of re-enrollment applications for students who have been expelled from institutes and private training courses. The application period begins today, May 30 and extends until Sept 8, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a press release, the Deanship invited dismissed students seeking re-registration to visit the PAAET website within the specified timeframe. Applicants are required to adhere to the rules and conditions governing the re-enrollment process.

MoH to host international doctors as part of visiting doctors program

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The Public Relations and Media Department of the Ministry of Health has announced plans to host 20 doctors throughout June, spanning various medical specialties, as part of the Visiting Doctors Program, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This initiative reflects the ministry's commitment to welcoming esteemed international consultants to deliver top-notch medical, therapeutic, research, and training services.

According to a press statement issued by the Ministry, the roster of consultants comprises a distinguished cadre of international medical experts hailing from the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and other nations. Specialties covered include ophthalmology, orthopedics, otolaryngology (ENT), and general surgery.

The Visiting Doctors Program aims not only to address medical

Street names may be replaced with numbers

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The Al-Qabas has learned from reliable sources that the Council of Ministers is considering canceling street names and replacing them with numbers, with the exception of

streets bearing the names of heads of state.

The source added that the principle of "reciprocity will be applied in the issue of streets bearing the names of heads of state."

Jahra Governorate committee gives nod for fish & shrimp farming site allocation



Photo shows the committee meeting in progress.

Agenda retained

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The Jahra Governorate Municipal Council committee has approved the request from the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources to allocate a site for fish and shrimp farming in the northern Subbiya region, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Chaired by Abdullah Al-Enezi, the committee also retained on its agenda a letter from the Public Authority for Industry regarding the annexation request for the eastern part of Plot No A2 to Plot 1 in the Sulaibiya Industrial Area.

This approval follows Kuwait Municipality's technical opinion, endorsing PAAAFR's request to re-allocate a site spanning 7-square kilometers for fish and shrimp farming in the North Subbiya area.

The Municipality's approval stipulated coordination with the Silk City and the Boubiyan Island Development Authority, alongside the presentation of project details and components to the municipal council prior to implementation.

The Municipality emphasized that the project land delivery will occur in multiple stages, starting with an initial 1-square-kilometer phase. Subsequent stages will proceed following the presentation of project outputs to the Municipality, along with an environmental and social impact assessment study.

Compliance with the Subcommittee on Facilities and Public Services' requirements from meeting No. 2023/24 held on November 7, 2023, is also mandated, necessitating coordination before implementation.

Furthermore, the Municipality requested authorization for competent departments to adjust the site's dimensions and areas, up to designated limits, if conflicts arise with existing infrastructure services or regulatory reasons during installation. This decision underscores the Municipality's commitment to prudent planning and adherence to regulatory standards in developmental projects.



Group photo shows course participants.

Engineering offices institute concludes specialized course

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The Training Institute of the Kuwaiti Engineering Offices and Consulting Houses concluded its inaugural specialized consulting engineering course titled 'Preparing and Evaluating Terms of Reference and Consultants' Offers - Contractual, Legal, Technical, and Financial Aspects,' reports Al-Jarida daily.

The five-day course, held at the Grand Hyatt Kuwait Hotel, garnered significant attendance from both male and female trainees, who lauded the valuable training program.

Led by Dr. Nabil Qartam from the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University and Eng. Faisal Al-Ustaz, Director of the Construction Projects Engineering Design Department at the Ministry of Works, the course provided comprehensive insights into preparing and evaluating technical and financial offers submitted by engineering offices and consulting houses. Participants received special accredited certificates upon completion of the program.

Throughout the course, participants gained essential concepts and skills in designing reference booklets, understanding modern engineering contracts, and interpreting contractual documents.

Emphasis was placed on preparing, reviewing, and overseeing contract implementation, as well as resolving issues and settling claims.

The program also addressed principles of coordination between project teams and beneficiaries, distinguishing between technical and administrative project requirements, and crafting terms of reference during contract execution.

This training initiative reflects the pressing need for skilled professionals in engineering offices to support the implementation of various government and private projects. By equipping participants with practical knowledge and expertise, the course contributes to enhancing the capabilities of Kuwait's engineering workforce and ensuring the successful execution of future projects.

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: Reflecting its dedication to spreading financial awareness across all sectors of society under the umbrella of the "Let's Be Aware" campaign introduced by the Central Bank of Kuwait, in cooperation with local banks and Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) organized two cybersecurity sessions at two schools, public and private, thereby expanding its efforts to promote awareness on fraud risks to include the educational sector.

The sessions delivered to the students of Amra Bint Hazm School and Universal American School highlighted the different types and risks of cyberfraud and the required protection precautions. The sessions also included educating students on the principles of cybersecurity and tips to protect their accounts from fraudulent messages, by using strong, long hard-to-guess passwords which contain letters, numbers, and symbols, and changing them frequently.

Speaking on this, Sarah Al-Amad, Senior Communications Officer at National Bank of Kuwait said, "NBK is always dedicated to promoting banking and financial culture in the society. It is a pleasure to extend our



Sarah Al-Amad, Senior Communications Officer at National Bank of Kuwait

awareness efforts to students in public and private schools to familiarize them with cybersecurity and educate them on the different types of fraud and required security precautions."

"The engagement was great, with students not only enjoying the session but also gaining valuable insights that will undoubtedly benefit them in navigating online and protect them from cyber fraud," she noted.

"Organizing such awareness activities underscore NBK's proactive approach in educating and empow-

ering individuals to steer clear of fraud. As one of the leading financial institutions in Kuwait and across the region, NBK frequently organizes various activities to raise awareness on all topics related to the banking sector to help combat fraud and financial crime," she added.

NBK shares educational content on all its social media and other digital channels to warn customers against fictitious investments whether in cash, commodities, virtual currencies or real estate.

Moreover, the bank always warns customers against all fraud types via SMS, e-mail or phone calls by publishing material on its social media platforms to warn customers from clicking ads with unknown sources like those promising highly lucrative returns, enticing them to register their personal information on fake trading platforms to obtain profits, or accounts claiming offering financial aids.

It is worth mentioning that NBK is a key promoter and participant in all CBK's campaigns and initiatives to increase financial and banking awareness among different segments of society. The bank also ranked first in promoting the "Let's Be Aware" campaign in 2023 according to CBK, outperforming all local banks.



Participants of the financial awareness campaign.

Kuwait economy

Continued from Page 1

thereby stimulating economic growth.

Over the past decade, the Gulf countries have seen significant improvements in learning outcomes, but there is still room for further enhancement as current outcomes remain below international standards.

The report identifies the lack of quality education as a major obstacle to human capital development in the Gulf region, limiting the ability of these countries to compete globally. On average, children in the Gulf countries are expected to receive 12.7 years of education by age 18.

However, when considering actual learning in schools, the effective years of schooling decrease to 8.6 years, indicating a loss of 4.1 years of learning due to poor education quality.

According to the World Bank Human Capital Index, a child born today in the Gulf countries is expected to achieve only 62 percent of their full potential productivity, primarily due to the low quality of education. This underscores the need for continued investment in improving educational outcomes to fully realize the region's human capital potential.

The report recommended that Gulf countries invest in the most effective strategies:

- Improving the quality of learning.

- Building basic skills starting from early childhood.
- Improving teaching practices.
- Utilizing learning assessments to guide decisions regarding education policies.
- Build strong basic skills at an early age because they are the cornerstone on which future learning and skills are based.

Kuwait FM leads

Continued from Page 1

He spoke highly of constructive cooperation regarding a host of issues of mutual interest, such as sustainable development, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, climate change, regional security, terrorism, extremism, maritime freedom in line with international law, and food and water security.

Capital governor

Continued from Page 1

in addition to adding an aesthetic character while preserving the heritage value of that area.

He expressed his readiness to address and develop solutions to a number of problems existing in Souq Mubarakia, with the cooperation of the relevant authorities in the country.

Meanwhile, Head of the Voluntary Work Center Sheikha Amthal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah praised the efforts exerted by the Capital Governor, who fulfilled the desire of His Highness the Amir of the country in this field visit to closely examine the problems of the people and government agencies.

She said the governor observed the challenges and problems existing in Souq Mubarakia, and asked for appropriate solutions to be developed, adding that he will form a joint committee for this purpose.

Electricity load

Continued from Page 1

during the day and hot at night.

Director of the Department, Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi, told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that Thursday's weather is very hot, with light to moderate northwesterly winds, speeds ranging from 8 to 35 kilometers per hour, and maximum temperatures between 45 and 48 degrees Celsius. Sea conditions are light to moderate, with waves rising from 2 to 4 feet.

Al-Qarawi predicted that nighttime weather will be hot, with northwesterly to variable winds, light to moderate at 8 to 32 kilometers per hour, a minimum temperature of 31 to 36 degrees, and light to moderate sea waves between 1 and 4 feet.

For Friday, he forecasted very hot weather, with winds varying from light to moderate northwesterly at 8 to 38 kilometers per hour, and maximum temperatures between 46 and 49 degrees. The sea state will be light to moderate, with waves ranging from 1 to 4 feet.

At night, Friday's weather will remain hot, with light to moderate northwesterly winds, sometimes active at 12 to 45 kilometers per hour, and a minimum temperature of 32 to 35 degrees. The sea state will be light to moderate, with waves sometimes rising between 2 to 6 feet.

On Saturday, it is expected to be very hot, with moderate to active northwesterly winds, sometimes strengthening from 20 to 60 kilometers per hour, causing dust. The maximum temperature is expected to be between 45 and 47 degrees, with light to moderate sea conditions and waves sometimes rising between 2 to 6 feet.

Saturday night will be hot, with light to moderate northwesterly to variable winds, speeds ranging from 8 to 32 kilometers per hour, and the expected minimum temperature between 32 and 35 degrees. The sea will be light to moderate, with waves ranging from 1 to 4 feet.

In related news, during an extensive meeting led by Dr. Mahmoud Bushehri, Minister of Electricity and Water, Kuwait's energy outlook for the upcoming year was starkly outlined, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Dr. Bushehri warned of a challenging period ahead, indicating that Kuwait may soon face difficulties in providing electrical energy, potentially leading to irregular or insufficient supply.

This alarming forecast stems from a culmination of factors, including disruptive policies in oil-producing nations like Iraq and Venezuela, which have spiraled into perpetual energy crises despite their significant oil reserves.

The Minister's call for consumer energy conservation, particularly during peak periods from 11 am to 5 pm, underscores the gravity of the situation. Years of stagnant infrastructure development, exacerbated by escalating demographic shifts, rising temperatures, and climate change concerns, have compounded Kuwait's energy woes.

Despite efforts to bolster capacity by purchasing 500 megawatts from neighboring countries and initiating solar energy projects, the country has failed to establish new power plants for nearly two decades.

Recent incidents, such as the outage at Mirqab A substation and disruptions in Nuzha and Mansouriya areas, highlight the vulnerability of Kuwait's aging infrastructure. With a maximum production capacity of 18,700 megawatts and an impending demand surge due to ongoing housing and industrial expansions, the gap between supply and demand looms large.

Drug sweep results in 'multiple' arrests

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The Ministry of Interior has announced that the 24-hour campaign simultaneously carried out by the security directorates in various governorates where a total of 72 checkpoints were established resulted in the confiscation of an undisclosed quantity of drugs, alcoholic drinks and drug paraphernalia; issuance of 690 traffic violation citations; arrest of 36 people who committed various crimes; impounding of 10 vehicles wanted by law for being utilized in committing crimes and dealing with 145 traffic accidents, reports Al-Anba daily.

On the other hand, the Capital patrolmen arrested a citizen, in his 30s, who was driving a four-wheel vehicle in Shuwaikh Industrial Area for consuming drugs with narcotic substances and drug paraphernalia in his possession.

The arrest happened after the patrolmen noticed a speeding vehicle. The officers chased the vehicle and forced the driver to stop. When the officers searched him and his vehicle, they found the abovementioned items. He was referred to the Drug Control General Department, along with the confiscated items.

To avert a full-blown crisis, urgent action is imperative. Dr. Bushehri advocates for sustainable energy solutions, necessitating unconventional financial, service, and technological policies. Completing the electricity pricing program, incentivizing energy-efficient practices, and prioritizing renewable energy initiatives are crucial steps. Moreover, addressing bureaucratic hurdles and implementing effective maintenance strategies are paramount.

Kuwait's trajectory must diverge from that of Iraq and Venezuela, where mismanagement and corruption have exacerbated energy woes. By proactively embracing sustainable practices and investing in robust infrastructure, Kuwait can navigate its way towards energy security and resilience.



# World News Roundup

## Europe

**Spain gives final approval to amnesty law:** More than six years since Catalonia's separatist movement took Spain to the brink of rupture, the nation's Parliament gave its final approval Thursday to a controversial amnesty for hundreds of secessionists in hopes of putting a definitive end to the traumatic episode.

The legislation was backed by Spain's left-wing coalition government, two Catalan separatist parties and other smaller parties. It passed by a vote of 177-172 in the lower house with the conservative Popular Party and far-right Vox opposing it.

The amnesty could benefit former Catalan regional President **Carles Puigdemont**, who is a fugitive from Spanish law in Belgium after fleeing his country following the failed October 2017 breakaway bid that he led. It should also help hundreds more, including former government officials in Barcelona, average citizens who participated in the secession attempt or protests, and some police officers involved in the crackdown on an illegal independence referendum held by Puigdemont's government.

The passing of the amnesty law, however, does not immediately clear up the legal mess of the separatists.

The law is likely to face legal challenges and will be reviewed by higher courts. It also must be applied by courts on a case-by-case basis. There are experts who question its constitutionality since they say it would create inequality between Spanish citizens by favoring some over others. (AP)



Puigdemont

**Int'l police op takes down ransomware networks:** Police coordinated by the European Union's justice and police agencies have taken down computer networks responsible for spreading ransomware via infected emails, in what they called the biggest ever international operation against the lucrative form of cybercrime.

The European Union's judicial cooperation agency, Eurojust, said Thursday that police arrested four "high value" suspects, took down more than 100 servers and seized control of over 2,000 internet domains.

The huge takedown this week, codenamed Endgame, involved coordinated action in Germany, the Netherlands, France, Denmark, Ukraine, the United States and United Kingdom, Eurojust said. Also, three suspects were arrested in Ukraine and one in Armenia. Searches were carried out in Ukraine, Portugal, the Netherlands and Armenia, EU police agency Europol added.

It is the latest international operation aimed at disrupting malware and ransomware operations. It followed a massive takedown in 2021 of a botnet called Emotet, Eurojust said. A botnet is a network of hijacked computers typically used for malicious activity. (AP)

**US pledges \$135m to Moldova:** US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Wednesday pledged \$135 million in aid to Moldova for energy security and to counter Russian disinformation as the Western-leaning nation struggles to blunt Moscow's push for influence that has been buoyed by recent successes in its war in neighboring Ukraine.

Blinken opened a short visit to Eastern Europe with a stop in Chisinau, Moldova's capital, where he announced the assistance at a news conference with President Maia Sandu. America's top diplomat said \$85 million would go to bolster energy infrastructure and \$50 million was aimed at overhauling the energy and farming industries and deterring disinformation.

"That in turn will bolster the ability of Moldovans to resist Russian interference, to hold free and fair elections, to continue down the path to the European Union and Western integration, to create more economic opportunity," Blinken said. "One of the other things that's so important is sharing information about disinformation and misinformation, which is one of the most potent hybrid tools that Russia uses - and that's something that we are doing." He planned to travel to the Czech Republic later. (AP)

**Hungary's foreign minister visits Belarus:** Hungary's top diplomat visited Belarus on Wednesday for talks on expanding ties despite the European Union's sanctions against the country.

Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó declared that "our position is clear: the fewer sanctions, the more cooperation!" The EU has slapped an array of sweeping sanctions on Belarus for the repression, which followed mass protests fueled by the 2020 presidential election that was widely seen by the opposition and the West as rigged. Belarus' isolation further deepened after authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko allowed Russian troops to use his country's territory to launch a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022.

While saying that "sanctions don't work," Szijjártó noted, however, that Hungary was "increasing economic cooperation with Belarus in areas not affected by sanctions." (AP)

**'Help political prisoner dying of cancer':** UN human rights experts have appealed to Belarusian authorities to help a political prisoner who has been diagnosed with an advanced form of cancer.

The experts expressed the "utmost concern" about the denial of medical assistance to Pavel Kuchynski, 29, who was detained in 2022 and sentenced to four years and nine months in prison on charges on insulting the president and threatening to use violence.

Kuchynski was diagnosed with advanced Hodgkin's lymphoma, which worsened in prison where conditions make it impossible for him to receive a bone marrow transplant, the U.N. experts said in a statement.

Belarusian authorities have cracked down harshly on any form of dissent since the country was rocked by mass protests during President Alexander Lukashenko's disputed 2020 reelection. The Belarusian opposition and the West denounced the result of the vote as fraudulent. (AP)

**Dutch police homing in on robbers:** An international investigation is homing in on a gang of robbers believed to be responsible for a brazen multimillion-dollar jewelry heist at an art show in the Netherlands and two stolen gemstones have been recovered, Dutch police said Wednesday.

Smartly dressed robbers wielding sledge hammers snatched jewelry from display cases at an international art fair in the southern Dutch city of Maastricht nearly two years ago, triggering an international police operation to hunt them down and recover the loot that police say is worth tens of millions of dollars.

In their latest update on the progress of the investigation, police in the southern Dutch province of Limburg said they now have narrowed down the location of the robbers, who they previously said came from the Balkans.

The investigation team also said that a diamond taken from a necklace that was stolen in the robbery had been found in Israel and another in Hong Kong. (AP)

**Iceland volcano spews red streams of lava:** A volcano in southwestern Iceland erupted Wednesday for the fifth time since December, spewing red lava that once again threatened the coastal town of Grindavik and led to the evacuation of the popular Blue Lagoon geothermal spa.

The eruption began in the early afternoon following a series of earthquakes north of the town of 3,800 people that was largely evacuated in December when the volcano came to life after centuries of dormancy and put on an impressive show of nature's power.

Although activity began to calm down by early evening, the eruption was estimated to be the area's most vigorous so far, as lava shot 50 meters (165 feet) into the sky from a fissure that grew to 3.5 kilometers (2.1 miles) in length, the Icelandic Meteorological Office said. (AP)



US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris waves at a campaign event at Girard College on May 29 in Philadelphia. (AP)

## Politics

### Are you with me?

## Biden, Harris warn of 2nd Trump term

PHILADELPHIA, May 30, (AP): US President Joe Biden renewed his election-year pitch to Black voters on Wednesday, lashing out at Donald Trump's "MAGA lies" and saying the winner of this year's White House race will make crucial decisions, including on nominees for the Supreme Court, that could affect the country for decades.

Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, in a joint appearance at a Philadelphia boarding school, thanked Black voters in Pennsylvania and beyond for being the lynchpin to their 2020 victory and they made the case that their agenda has had an enormous impact on improving lives for Black voters.

### Win

The Democratic president also argued that an "unhinged" Trump is peddling misinformation in an effort to win back the White House.

"I'll be ... if I'm going to let Donald Trump turn America into a place of anger, resentment and hate," Biden said, calling on the crowd to help him and Harris win a second term. "My question is a simple one: Are you with me?"

At Girard College, which has a predominantly Black student body, Biden warned about the threat he said a second Trump presidency would pose and cited some of the racial controversies fanned by the presumptive Republican nominee during his life.

The Philadelphia visit was the start of what the Biden campaign describes as a summerlong effort to engage Black student organizations, community groups and faith centers. It reflects in part how much of their support of him has frayed as Trump aims to make inroads into the longtime Democratic constituency.

The issue of abortion rights and the judiciary also featured in the remarks from Biden and Harris. Biden pledged to codify the protections of Roe vs. Wade, the now-nullified Supreme Court decision that had legalized the right to an abortion, if he and enough Democratic lawmakers are elected, while Harris noted that Trump dramatically shaped the Supreme Court as she invoked the name of Thurgood Marshall, the high court's first Black justice. Trump, she said, "handpicked three

## Sen Wicker calls for generational increase in US defense spending

WASHINGTON, May 30, (AP): The top-ranking Republican on a Senate committee that oversees the military is calling for a "generational investment" in America's defense, saying aggressive and significant spending increases are necessary to deter coordinated threats from US adversaries such as Russia, Iran and China.

Sen Roger Wicker told The Associated Press that he will seek an additional \$55 billion in defense spending over the limits that were forged in the deal to suspend the nation's debt limit a year ago. Wicker explained his position in global terms, saying there has "never been such a level of cooperation and coordination among an axis of aggressors" that aims to challenge US dominance.

The plan lays down a significant marker for Senate Republicans as they enter into a new round of budget fights with Democrats in the heat of a closely fought election year. The White House has proposed \$850 billion in defense spending, adhering to the debt limit deal by proposing a 1% increase from the previous year. That plan is unlikely to keep pace with inflation

and would seek to reduce the military's costs by retiring older ships and aircraft.

Wicker acknowledged it would be "a hill to climb" to convince Congress to break from the spending caps at a time of deep political upheaval. Washington is still grappling with divisions over support for Ukraine, the aftershocks of two long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and a presidential election between two presumptive candidates - Biden and Republican Donald Trump - who espouse vastly different visions of America's role abroad.

But Wicker, R-Miss., said the US has no choice. "We would be very foolish on a national survival basis to adhere to that when it comes to national defense," said Wicker, the ranking member on the Senate Armed Services Committee.

While GOP defense hawks have long advocated for robust defense spending, Wicker's plan goes a step further, calling for a broad shift in the US defense posture that would amount to a reshuffling of national priorities. Under his proposal, the military would eventually consume 5% of America's gross domestic product, or total economic output.

members of the Supreme Court - the court of Thurgood - with the intention that they would overturn Roe vs. Wade," the landmark abortion rights ruling. "And as he intended, they did."

"Who sits in the White House matters," she said. Underscoring that point later, Biden said the next president is "going to be able to appoint a couple justices." With some vacancies on the Supreme Court, Biden said he could "put in really progressive judges, like we've always had."

"Tell me that won't change your life," he said.

Among Black adults, Biden's approval has dropped from 94% when he started his term to just 55%, according

to an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll published in March.

The economy has been a particular thorn in Biden's side since 2022, when inflation hit a 40-year high. But there have also been signs of discontent in the Black community more recently over Biden's handling of the seven-month Israel-Hamas war.

Turning out Black voters could prove pivotal for Biden's chances in what's expected to be among the most closely contested states - Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Biden beat Trump in all six states in 2020, but he could face a more difficult climb this year.

Nicolas Alan Daniels, of West Portsmouth, Ohio, entered a plea to one felony count of threatening a legislative officer last Thursday in Wake County court, according

to legal documents. He received a suspended sentence of 6-17 months in addition to two years of probation.

Daniels, 38, was arrested in February by



Rohitha Bogollagama, High Commissioner for the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, presents her credentials to Britain's King Charles III, accompanied by his wife Deepthi Bogollagama, during a private audience at Buckingham Palace, London on May 30. (AP)



Lat/Am

‘Mexico wants peace’

Violence clouds last day of campaigning

MEXICO CITY, May 30, (AP): Mexico held the last day of campaigning Wednesday before Sunday’s nationwide election, but the closing rallies were darkened by attacks on candidates and the country’s persistently high homicide rate.

Opposition candidate Xóchitl Gálvez started her last campaign rallies early Wednesday on the outskirts of Mexico City, and she focused her ire on President **Andrés Manuel López Obrador**’s “hugs not bullets” policy of not confronting the drug cartels.

Gálvez is facing the candidate of López Obrador’s Morena party, former Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum. Sheinbaum, who leads in the race, has promised to continue all of López Obrador’s policies.

“Are we going to continue with hugs, or are we going to apply the law to criminals?” Gálvez asked a cheering crowd. “Mexico wants peace, wants tranquility.”

López Obrador has withdrawn funding for police forces and directed it to the quasi-military National Guard, which critics say lacks the professional and investigative abilities needed to fight the drug gangs. Gálvez promised to return the funding to police forces and guarantee them wages of at least \$1,200 per month.

Gálvez also pledged to reconcile a country that has been highly polarized by the outgoing president’s rhetoric, saying “enough division, enough hatred ... we are all Mexicans.”

Sheinbaum held her final rally later Wednesday in Mexico City’s vast, colonial-era central square. She delivered a strongly nationalistic speech to a large crowd.

“Mexico is respected in the world, it is a reference point,” Sheinbaum said, claiming that López Obrador’s government “has returned to us the pride of being Mexicans.”

“Mexico has changed, and for the better,” she said.



Obrador

Policy

On the violence issue, Sheinbaum vowed to continue López Obrador’s policy of offering apprenticeships to encourage youths not to join drug cartels.

“We will deepen the strategy of peace and security, and the progress that has been made,” she said. “This is not an iron fist” policy, Sheinbaum said. “This is justice.”

While López Obrador has increased the country’s minimum wage and increased government benefit programs, he has been unable to significantly reduce the historically high homicide rate, which currently runs at more than 30,000 killings per year nationwide. That gang-fueled violence has also cast a shadow over the campaigns.

Late Wednesday, a mayoral candidate in the violent southern state of Guerrero was shot to death in the town of Coyuca de Benítez. Gov. Evelyn Salgado identified the dead candidate as Alfredo Cabrera, but gave no further details on his killing. Local media reported he was shot in the head at his closing campaign event.

A mayoral candidate in the western state of Jalisco was shot multiple times by intruders in his campaign offices late Tuesday. Two members of Gilberto Palomar’s campaign staff were also wounded, and all three were hospitalized in serious condition, according to Jalisco state security coordinator Sánchez Beruben.

Mexicans will vote Sunday in an election weighing gender, democracy and populism, as they chart the country’s path forward in voting shadowed by cartel violence. With two women leading the contest, Mexico will likely elect its first female president. More than 20,000 congressional and local positions are up for grabs, according to the National Electoral Institute.

Also:

**SABANA DE MENDOZA, Venezuela:** One of the most influential politicians in Venezuela once deemed images of his fellow citizens abandoning their home country the result of a professionally scripted, “Hollywood-type blockbuster.”

Migration, **Diosdado Cabello** said, was an issue conjured by a “media apparatus.” Similarly, his boss, President **Nicolás Maduro**, denied for years, at least publicly, that millions of people were literally walking away from Venezuela.

Nothing, however, could have pushed them out of denial and into acceptance faster than the existential threat that their self-described socialist government is facing for the first time in years.

As Maduro works toward reelection with a divided, diminished and disappointed base, he has slowly transformed into a defender for migrants, challenging news reports linking some to criminal activities and accusing immigration authorities in other countries of abusing Venezuelans.

Maduro, like the chief opposition coalition, is promising job opportunities to lure people to return or not leave. But unlike the opposition’s proposals, his no longer ring true for many voters, and they have already made up their minds: If Maduro wins on July 28, they will become migrants.

“I love Venezuela. I would like to pursue a medical career here, but one must think about the future,” said **Arnaldo Benítez**, 18. “I want my family to have a decent life and not be thinking ‘I can’t afford this or that.’ So, I have to plan for a better future even if it unfortunately means leaving Venezuela.”

■ ■ ■

**BUENOS AIRES, Argentina:** A criminal court in Argentina has postponed to Oct 1 the start of a trial in a criminal negligence case brought against eight people allegedly involved in the death of soccer legend **Diego Maradona**.

The trial was set to start on June 4, but the criminal court in San Isidro, on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, said in a decision published by local media Tuesday night that “several questions have been raised” by all parts involved in the homicide case, adding that “at this date they are still to be resolved.” The court did not elaborate further on its decision.

The 1986 World Cup winner died at age 60 on Nov. 25, 2020 due to a cardiorespiratory arrest.

The investigation started by request of members of Maradona’s family days after his death. The eight people on trial, including doctors and nurses, are accused of being responsible for the death of the legendary footballer, who was being treated at a rented home after a surgery to extract a bleeding in his brain.

The defendants have denied any violations or irregularities in Maradona’s treatment.



Presidential candidate Claudia Sheinbaum speaks at her closing campaign rally at the Zocalo in Mexico City on May 29. Mexico’s general election is set for June 2. (AP)

Asia

Landslide survivors slow to move to safer ground

NKorea fires missile barrage toward its sea

Foreign govts slam verdict

14 convicted in HK nat’l security case

SEOUL, South Korea, May 30, (AP): North Korea on Thursday fired a barrage of suspected ballistic missiles toward its eastern sea, according to South Korea’s military, days after its attempt to launch a military reconnaissance satellite ended in failure but still drew strong condemnation from its rivals.

South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said it detected the North firing around 10 projectiles that appeared to be short-range ballistic missiles from an area near its capital, Pyongyang. It said the suspected missiles flew around 350 kilometers (217 miles) before landing in waters off the North’s eastern coast. It said the South Korean military has increased surveillance and vigilance and is closely sharing information with the United States and Japan.

Condemns

Japan’s coast guard issued a maritime safety advisory over the North Korean launches and urged ships to exercise caution if they find any fallen objects. Japan’s Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told reporters that the suspected missiles were believed to have landed in waters outside of Japan’s exclusive economic zone and there were no immediate reports of damages. He said Tokyo “strongly condemns” the launches, which are in violation of UN Security Council resolutions against the North.

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula have increased in recent months as the pace of both North Korea’s weapons testing and South Korea’s combined military exercises with the United States and Japan have intensified in a cycle of tit-for-tat.

Thursday’s launches came after North Korea flew hundreds of trash-carrying balloons toward the South since Tuesday night in retaliation against South Korean activists flying anti-North Korean propaganda leaflets across the border. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un had warned of unspecified “overwhelming actions” against South Korea after it staged an aerial exercise involving 20 fighter jets near the inter-Korean border hours before North Korea attempted to launch its second military reconnaissance satellite.

The rocket exploded shortly after liftoff, but Kim has urged his military scientists to overcome the failure and continue developing space-based reconnaissance capabilities, which he described as crucial for monitoring US and South Korean military activities and enhancing the threat of his nuclear-capable missiles. Also on Thursday,

HONG KONG, May 30, (AP): Fourteen pro-democracy activists were convicted in Hong Kong’s biggest national security case on Thursday by a court that said their plan to effect change through an unofficial primary election would have undermined the government’s authority and created a constitutional crisis.

After a 2019 protest movement that filled the city’s streets with demonstrators, authorities have all but silenced dissent in Hong Kong through reduced public choice in elections, crackdowns on media and the Beijing-imposed security law under which the activists were convicted.

Those found guilty of conspiracy to commit subversion included former lawmakers Leung Kwok-hung, Lam Cheuk-ting, Helena Wong and Raymond Chan, and they could face up to life in prison when sentenced later. The two defendants acquitted were former district councilors Lee Yue-shun and Lawrence Lau. But the prosecution said it intends to appeal against the acquittals.

The activists were among 47 democracy advocates who were prosecuted in 2021 for their involvement in the primary. Prosecutors had accused them of attempting to paralyze Hong Kong’s government and topple the city’s leader by securing the legislative majority necessary to indiscriminately veto budgets.

In a summary of the verdict distributed to media, the court said the election participants had declared they would use their legislative power to veto the budgets.

The conviction drew condemnation from human rights groups and expressions of concern from foreign governments.

The conviction “marks a further deterioration of fundamental freedoms and democratic participation in Hong Kong,” the European Union’s foreign affairs office said. It added that the defendants “are being penalized for peaceful political activity that should be legitimate in any political system that respects basic democratic principles.”

The case calls into question Hong Kong’s commitment to openness and pluralism, the cornerstones of the city’s attractiveness as an international commercial and financial center, the office said.

North Korea hit back at international condemnation of its failed satellite launch, which drew strong rebukes from the United Nations and other countries as it involves technologies used for developing intercontinental range ballistic missiles.

Also:

**MELBOURNE, Australia:** Traumatized survivors of the massive landslide estimated to have buried hundreds in **Papua New Guinea** have been slow to move to safer ground as the South Pacific island nation’s authorities prepare to use heavy machinery to clear debris and risk triggering another landslide, officials said Thursday.

Government and army geotechnical experts on Thursday were examining the stability of the massive swath of rubble that crushed **Yambali** village when a mountainside collapsed last week, **Enga** provincial administrator **Sandis Tsaka** said. Australian and **New Zealand** experts were expected to arrive on Friday.

Two excavators and a bulldozer were ready to start digging on one side of the mass of debris more than 150 meters (500 feet) wide while another excavator and a bulldozer were also ready on the other side, Tsaka said. Villagers have been digging with shovels, farming tools and their bare hands since the disaster in search of survivors or bodies.

“It’s still very active. We’re getting rocks and debris still moving so it’s been unsafe for our first responders and our emergency team,” Tsaka told The Associated Press.

The United Nations estimated 670 villagers died in the disaster that immediately displaced 1,650 survivors. Papua New Guinea’s government has told the United Nations it thinks more than 2,000 people were buried. Only six bodies have been retrieved.

A hospital in the provincial capital Wabag on Thursday reported 17 patients had been injured by the disaster, that struck at 3 a.m. while the village slept.



Election volunteers count ballots at Craighall Park Elementary school in Johannesburg, South Africa on May 29. (AP)



Tinubu



Guterres

Africa

**‘7m people internally displaced’:** The number of internally displaced people in Sudan has topped 7 million, a UN spokesman said on Wednesday.

More than half of the 7 million internally displaced people are children. In addition, some 2 million people have fled across borders into neighboring countries, said Stéphane Dujarric, chief spokesman for UN Secretary-General **Antonio Guterres**, quoting figures from the International Organization for Migration.

“For our part, we and our humanitarian partners continue to ramp up efforts to respond to rising hunger and food insecurity across the country,” said Dujarric.

He said the World Food Programme (WFP) reports that 1,200 metric tons of food supplies are en route for some 116,000 men, women and children in Darfur.

They are nearing their final destinations: Central Darfur and 12 locations across South Darfur, including displacement camps in Nyala, Dujarric said.

The WFP convoy crossed into Sudan from Chad, he said.

Elsewhere in Sudan, food distributions are ongoing for 135,000 people in South Kordofan near the border with South Sudan, said the spokesman. (Xinhua)

■ ■ ■

**30 suspected terrorists killed:** At least 30 suspected terrorists were killed recently when the Nigerian military launched a series of airstrikes on their hideouts in the country’s northern region, the air force said Wednesday.

The airstrikes targeted the hideouts of the suspected terrorists in the northern states of Borno and Katsina on Monday, following credible intelligence, Edward Gabkwet, the spokesman for the air force, said in a statement Wednesday.

Several terrorists from the camp of Babura, a known terrorist commander in the Kankara local government area of the northwestern state of Katsina, were killed in one of the airstrikes, according to the statement. Babura narrowly escaped being killed, unlike several of his foot soldiers, it said.

The suspected terrorists in that area had regrouped at a once-abandoned hideout but were decimated by the airstrike after intelligence surveillance, it added. (Xinhua)

■ ■ ■

**Anthem sparks criticism:** Nigeria adopted a new national anthem on Wednesday after lawmakers passed a law that replaced the current one with a version dropped nearly a half-century ago, sparking widespread criticism about how the law was hastily passed without much public input.

President **Bola Tinubu**’s assent to the law comes a day after it was approved by both chambers of Nigeria’s National Assembly, which is dominated by the governing party. The federal lawmakers introduced and passed the bill in less than a week, an unusu-



Lawrence Lau, a former pro-democracy district councilor, waves hand to media as he leaves the West Kowloon Magistrates’ Courts in Hong Kong on May 30. Fourteen pro-democracy activists were convicted in Hong Kong’s biggest national security case on Thursday by a court that said their plan to effect change through an unofficial primary election would have undermined the government’s authority and created a constitutional crisis. (AP)

ally fast process for important bills that usually take weeks or months to be considered.

The “Arise, O Compatriots” anthem being replaced had been in use since 1978, when it was introduced by the military government. The anthem was composed at a time when the country was reeling from a deadly civil war and calls on Nigerians to “serve our fatherland with love and strength” and not to let “the labor of our heroes past (to be) in vain.”

The new version that takes immediate effect was first introduced in 1960 when Nigeria gained independence from Britain before it was dropped by the military. Titled “Nigeria We Hail Thee,” it was written by Lillian Jean Williams, a British expatriate who was living in Nigeria at the time. (AP)

■ ■ ■

**‘ANC might lose majority’:** Very early counts in South Africa’s national election put the long-ruling African National Congress at just over 42% of the vote, raising the possibility that it might lose its majority for the first time since it swept to power under Nelson Mandela at the end of apartheid in 1994.

With only just over 16% of votes counted and declared, it was only a partial picture after Wednesday’s election. The final results of a vote that could bring the biggest political shift in South Africa’s young democracy were expected to take days, with the independent electoral commission saying they would be delivered by Sunday.

South Africans were set to wait with baited breath to see if their country, Africa’s most advanced economy, was about to see momentous change.

The electoral commission was projecting a 70% voter turnout in this election, up from the 66% in the last national election in 2019. The ANC won 57.5% of the vote in that last election, its worst performance to date. (AP)



Market Movements				30-05-2024							
		Change	Closing pts			Change	Closing pts				
↑	DUBAI	-	DFMGI	+11.21	3,971.01	↓	SAUDI	-	TASI	-193.02	11,503.49
	PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	+118.93	74,997.38		JAPAN	-	Nikkei 225	-502.74	38,054.13
							PHILIPPINES	-	PSEI	-39.66	6,371.75
							EGYPT	-	EGX 30	-166.92	26,922.76

# Business



Kuwaiti Minister of Finance and his Saudi counterpart during their discussions.

KUNA photo

## Kuwait, Saudi finance ministers discuss investment cooperation

Saudi minister highlights Central Asia's natural resources

**RIYADH, May 30, (KUNA):** Kuwait's Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf explored with his Saudi counterpart Khaled Al-Faleh strengthening cooperation in the economic and investment fields.

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Mudhaf said that both sides agreed during a meeting after their participation in the GCC and Central Asia Investment Forum, on the importance of strengthening mutual investments between both countries.

They also discussed Kuwait's upcoming big projects, including Mubarak Port, Failaka Island, the GCC railway project and the Kuwait-Saudi railway link, as well as various other topics of common interest.

**Also:**

**RIYADH:** The GCC and Central Asia Investment

Forum was hosted, on Wednesday, by the Saudi capital of Riyadh, with Kuwaiti Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Dr. Anwar Al-Mudhaf's participation.

Delivering an inaugural speech in the forum, Saudi Investment Minister Khalid Al-Falih stressed the necessity of exploiting natural resources and reserves in Central Asia countries to address challenges facing the world's countries.

He touched upon historical and cultural relations between the GCC and Central Asia states to pave the way for investment strategic dialogue and find different channels to increase commerce in all domains.

He elaborated that the Central Asia countries have fertile land that will enable them to exploit agricultural development and rivers to be invested in producing hydroelectric energy, in addition to vast areas for wind energy.

Al-Falih noted that **Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan** and **Uzbekistan** have large reserves of oil and gas, and **Kyrgyzstan** and **Tajikistan** own reserves of gold and minerals as well as Kazakhstan enjoy the largest reserves of uranium in the world, which

is an important element in non-carbon energy.

Speaking to KUNA in a statement, Al-Mudhaf said the forum is an opportunity to enhance Gulf strategic partnerships with the world's countries, and open wider doors for investment through enhancing communication between the public and private sectors of the GCC and Central Asian states.

He thanked Saudi Arabia for hospitality and warm reception, lauding development in the Kingdom over the last years, under the leadership of **King Salman bin Abdulaziz** and **Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman**.

Furthermore, Assistant Director General of Kuwait's Chamber of Commerce and Industry **Imad Al-Zaid** said, in a similar statement to KUNA that, the chamber is participating in the forum to meet with representatives of the private and public sectors, and discuss how to enhance bilateral cooperation and communication for broader opportunities and investment.

The aim of participation is to find new horizons of cooperation, he said, considering the forum a chance to learn about available opportunities in the participating states.

### Building consumer trust and authenticity is key to Ubuy's success

## Ubuy secures 'double honors' for trusted Cross-Border E-Commerce & rapid growth

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: Ubuy, the leading cross-border e-commerce platform trusted by millions of shoppers worldwide, has been named the Best D2C Cross-Border E-Commerce Platform of the Year for the second year running. The director of Ubuy Technologies Pvt. Ltd (India), Mr. Dinesh Kumar accepted the award on behalf of Ubuy at the award ceremony held at the Sheraton Grand Hotel, Bangalore, on 30th April 2024. The prestigious accolade recognizes Ubuy's commitment to providing an authentic, reliable and trusted online shopping experience that bridges the gap between global merchants and consumers across 180+ countries.

Adding to its recognition, Ubuy was also selected as one of the Deloitte Technology Fast 50 companies in the Middle East and Cyprus region. This program celebrates the fastest-growing technology firms headquartered in the area, lauding their resilience, innovation and entrepreneurial excellence.

"We are incredibly honored to receive the Best D2C Cross-Border Platform award for the second consecutive year, validating our unwavering focus on building deep consumer trust and authenticity,"



Award 2024 Ubuy

said Mr Dhari Alabdulhadi, CTO and Founder of Ubuy "To be named alongside the Deloitte Technology Fast 50 is a testament to Ubuy's rapid growth driven by our unique technology platform and services."

The D2C award highlights Ubuy's unique managed marketplace model that enables millions of shoppers in over 180 countries to securely access and purchase from leading U.S. and global brands. With intelligent logistics, comprehensive support and stringent product vetting, Ubuy ensures the authentic provenance of all 150 million products on its platform.

"As we celebrate this double recognition, upholding the highest standards of trust and authenticity will remain Ubuy's guiding principles," Mr Alabdulhadi added. "We will continue driving technological innovations that provide a seamless cross-border shopping experience for consumers worldwide."

Ubuy's fast-paced growth and global expansion over the past year also contributed to its inclusion in the prestigious Deloitte Technology Fast 50 ranking for the Middle East and Cyprus region.



Photos from the event.



85 loans and 31 grants to SIDS worth \$790 million

## Kuwait Fund partakes in fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The Kuwait Fund for Development participated in the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4), held in Antigua and Barbuda from May 27 to 30, under the theme "Charting the Course Toward Resilient Prosperity." The conference aimed to assess the ability of SIDS to achieve sustainable development and reach an internationally agreed-upon future plan.

The Kuwaiti delegation was led by Kuwait's Ambassador to Cuba, H.E. Mr. Adel Mubarak Al-Adgham, representing His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The delegation also included Director of Operations at the Kuwait Fund, Mr. Abdullah Khalil Al-Mesaibih, and Deputy Director of Operations for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mr. Nesf Sami Al-Nesf.

On the sidelines of the conference, Mr. Al-Nesf delivered an introductory lecture on the Fund's developmental contributions in addressing environmental, social, and economic challenges faced by small island developing states since 1976. He highlighted the Fund's support for sustainable development projects and disaster recovery programs to safeguard their communities and economies from challenges such as food security, rising sea levels, ocean management, and other adverse effects of climate change. It is worth noting that the Kuwait Fund has provided extensive support to numerous projects in 20 small island developing states through 85 loans with a total value of approximately \$773.44 million USD, alongside 31 grants and technical assistance amounting to about \$17.09 million USD.

### General & Premier markets gain

## Boursa Kuwait sees 'mixed' trading day

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The Boursa Kuwait witnessed a mixed day of trading, with the General and Premier Market indices experiencing gains while the Main Market index declined, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The general market index saw an increase of 0.13 percent, closing at 7067.37 points, while liquidity remained stable at 45.5 million dinars, with 173.9 million shares traded through 15,346 transactions.

On the other hand, the Premier Market Index rose by 0.19 percent to close at 7,707.31 points, with liquidity at 36.5 million dinars and 91.2 million shares traded. However, the main market index declined by 0.18 percent, closing at 5,940.95 points, with liquidity at 8.9 million dinars and 82.7 million shares traded.

Trading began with a decline in prices for leading and speculative stocks, but activity remained robust, particularly for leading stocks such as KFH and NBK. Notably, Arzan stock saw significant liquidity, sur-

passing its rates from the previous three months.

The session saw fluctuations in leading shares, with NBK experiencing a strong increase of 6 fils and KFH gaining one green penny. Boubyan rose by four fils, and Al-Mabani by ten fils, while Agility saw the highest rise of 1.7 percent.

While some stocks experienced declines, such as Unicap and GFH, others like Al-Eid and Rasiyat continued to rise.

Overall, the market showed mixed performance, with the general and primary market indices in the green while the main index declined due to Commercial Bank stock. The market awaits the outcome of the MSCI Morganstall indicators review for emerging markets, scheduled for today's auction period.

At the international level, the GCC market indices showed varied performance, with some rising and others declining by less than 1 percent, amidst increasing oil prices nearing \$85 per barrel for Brent crude.

### Oil dependency highlighted

## Kuwait faces potential GDP contraction for second year

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: A recent report has indicated that Kuwait may experience a GDP contraction for the second consecutive year due to the weak oil market and production cuts, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Kuwait ranked fifth in the MEED Index of Economic Activity, which evaluates the short-term economic health of regional markets. The report highlighted Kuwait's heavy dependence on oil, with 95 percent of its exports and 90 percent of government revenues originating from the oil sector, making its real GDP highly susceptible to oil price fluctuations. Despite this, Kuwait still maintains a fiscal surplus.

The report also noted the underperformance of Kuwait's project market, with contracts awarded 40 percent below the long-term average and 25 percent below the completion rate.

Meanwhile, the UAE has regained the top position in the MEED Index, surpassing Saudi Arabia. Both countries started 2024 with optimistic growth forecasts of 4 percent real GDP from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

However, their economic trajectories have since diverged. The IMF revised its 2024 growth forecast for the UAE to 3.5 percent and for Saudi

Arabia to 2.6 percent. The World Bank offered a more positive outlook for the UAE, forecasting 3.9 percent real GDP growth, while it projected a lower 2.5 percent growth for Saudi Arabia.

The trade and financial balances between the two nations also show significant differences. The UAE is expected to achieve a current account surplus of 7.8 percent of GDP and a fiscal surplus of 4.5 percent of GDP. In contrast, Saudi Arabia's current account surplus has decreased to 0.5 percent of GDP, and its budget has slipped into a deficit of 2.8 percent of GDP.

Despite these differences, both the UAE and Saudi Arabia remain at the top of the MEED Index, largely due to their thriving enterprise markets. The value of contracts awarded in the past 12 months in both countries was double the long-term average. Furthermore, new projects in the UAE outpaced completed projects by two times, while in Saudi Arabia, new projects outnumbered completed ones by four times.

This report underscores the economic challenges faced by Kuwait due to its oil dependency and highlights the contrasting economic trajectories of the UAE and Saudi Arabia, driven by their robust enterprise markets.

## Kuwait oil price rises to \$86.39 per barrel

KUWAIT CITY, May 30, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by 86 cents to USD 86.39 pb on Wednesday, compared to USD 85.53 pb recorded on Tuesday, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC)

on Thursday.

At the global level, the price of the Brent crude dropped 62 cents to USD 83.60 per barrel, and West Texas Intermediate lost 60 cents to USD 79.23 pb.

### Oil exports vital for economy

## Iraq exports over 102 mln barrels of crude oil in April

BAGHDAD, May 30, (Xinhua): Iraq exported about 102.38 million barrels of crude oil in April, the country's Oil Ministry announced on Wednesday.

During the month, about 100.92 million barrels were exported from oil fields in central and southern Iraq via the port of Basra, and 1.016 million barrels from the Qayyara oilfield in the northern province of Nineveh, the ministry said in a statement, citing

statistics from the State Organization for Marketing of Oil, an Iraqi company. A total of 448,606 barrels were sent to neighboring Jordan in April, said the ministry.

In March, Iraq exported about 106.11 million barrels of crude oil, according to the ministry. Iraq's economy heavily relies on crude oil exports, which account for more than 90 percent of the country's revenues.

### Bread price to surge 300%

## Egypt raises bread price for first time in 'decades'

CAIRO, May 30, (KUNA): The Egyptian government has decided to increase the price of subsidized bread for the first time in decades as of early next June in a bid to curtail the gap between the production cost and sale price.

Under the decision, the bread price will shoot up by 300 percent to 20 piasters (USD 0.0042) from just five piasters, Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouli said at a press conference following a cabinet meeting.

The State has kept the subsidized

bread policy unchanged for more than 30 years, Madbouli said, adding that the cost of a loaf of bread is 125 piasters, while its price is only five.

Bread subsidy costs the State more than 120 billion Egyptian pounds (around USD 2.5 billion), he estimated, noting that the price should be increased in order to cut the subsidy.

As the world's biggest wheat importer, Egypt imported roughly 10.88 million metric tons of wheat in 2023, up 14.7 percent from 9.48 million tons in 2022.



### Gitex Africa opens in Marrakech

The 2nd edition of Gitex Africa Morocco kicked off in Marrakech on Wednesday, with the participation of over 1,500 exhibitors from more than 130 countries, including Gulf ones.

In a keynote speech addressing this year's edition, which focuses on innovation and digitalization, Moroccan Prime Minister Aziz Akhannouch said digi-

tal transformation marks a core catalyst for economic and social development, especially for the African continent.

He added that digitalization would add USD 712 billion to Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) by 2050, which shows stupendous potential for spurring growth and triggering continental trans-

formation, citing a recently issued World Bank report in this regard.

The Moroccan prime minister underlined that digitalization could introduce tangible solutions to challenges the African continent is facing, stimulate development, and provide a congenial atmosphere for deepening pan-African integration. (KUNA)

### Morocco to launch digital economic dev roadmap

Moroccan Prime Minister Aziz Akhannouch announced on Wednesday in the central Moroccan city of Marrakech that his government will launch Digital Strategy 2030, a roadmap for advancing digital economic development, "in the coming weeks."

Speaking at the opening ceremony of Gitex Africa 2024, a tech show of the African continent, Akhannouch emphasized his government's steadfast commitment to prioritizing the digital transition, the Moroccan official

news agency MAP reported.

The Moroccan Digital Strategy 2030 will center on enhancing the digitalization of public services and giving new impetus to the digital economy, Akhannouch said, adding that the strategy aims to "develop Moroccan digital solutions and create added value and jobs."

Akhannouch also stressed the importance of the digital transition for African countries.

"The digital transition is not a technological luxury but an essential le-

ver for consolidating cooperation between African countries, insofar as it offers tangible solutions to the challenges facing the continent, promotes sustainable development, and guarantees an environment conducive to strengthening African integration," he was quoted as saying.

Morocco has shown a strong commitment to bolstering its role in spearheading Africa's digital transition, aiming to position itself as an innovation hub on the continent. (Xinhua)

### As part of its strategy to support youth in schools and universities

## ‘Warba’ concludes sponsorship of Schools and Higher Education League with great success

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: Warba Bank concluded the 2023/2024 Warba Bank School League in its first year, which was held via a strategic partnership with the Kuwait School and High Education Sports Federation, which was a resounding success. The Four Seasons Hotel hosted the concluding ceremony of the current sports season.

Chairman of Warba Bank, Hamad Musaed Al-Sayer, started his speech by extending his appreciation to all members of the organizing committee and the general supervisor of the tournament for his continuous follow-up and support, which contributed and helped to make the tournament a success. Thanks also goes out to all the participating teams in the tournament, all the parties that cooperated with the organizing committee, all the print, visual and audio media that contributed to the success of the tournament in the media, the tournament commentators, the head of the referees' committee and the tournament referees.

Al-Sayer added that such sporting events have many positives apart from winning and losing competitions, as they always create a familiarity atmosphere among young people. Noting that the success of the tournament came only through solidarity and concerted efforts among young people, harnessing all capabilities, and overcoming all difficulties that would limit reaching this achievement.

Al-Sayer explained that this tournament would not have been successful without concluding strategic partnerships with official bodies, which aim to support community development efforts and contribute to preparing successive generations who will contribute to the advancement of Kuwait, which is considered one of the fundamental pillars firmly established in Warba Bank's strategy.

Al-Sayer stated that the Bank's sponsorship of the School League comes as an affirmation of its permanent commitment to supporting young talents, enhancing the development opportunities available to them, providing them with the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for success in academic and professional life, instilling the values of



Officials and participants pose for a group photo.

#### Hamad Musaed Al-Sayer

- Sporting events have many positives apart from winning and losing competitions, as they always create a familiarity atmosphere among young people.
- The tournament wouldn't be successful without the strategic partnerships with official bodies which aim to support community development efforts and contribute to preparing successive generations who will contribute to the advancement of Kuwait.

#### Faisal Abdullah Al-Maqseed

- We appreciate the great role played by Warba Bank in serving Kuwaiti sports
- We aim to promote school and higher education sports, and build a strong sports generation

Al-Sayer stressed that Warba Bank continues to support sports initiatives and contribute to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, specifically the third goal, "Good Health and Well-Being," and the seventeenth goal, "Partnership for Sustainability Goals," and the various activities that the Bank provides to its clients and the community, to build a healthy, sustainable, sporting future for the youth.

Regarding other benefits, Al-Sayer commented that sports treat loneliness and contribute to reducing the use of mobile phones that increase the level of physical and mental stress, and enhance the spirit of belonging and one team, especially football, which depends on



An official raises a plaque during the closing ceremony.

the spirit of team play and one team.

Al-Sayer also said that this continuous support by Warba Bank for the School League is an essential factor in the success of the competition and enriching it in all aspects, especially the marketing ones, adding that the sponsorship by Warba Bank gives the officials of the School League committee a great motivation to work exponentially to contribute to the success of the League in line with the Bank's directions of serving Kuwaiti sports in general and the Schools League in par-

ticular.

Al-Sayer praised those in charge of the Schools and Higher Education League and their unlimited support for the success of the league, as it comes in line with Warba Bank's directions in supporting sports and the youth movement in Kuwait to employ youth creativity in programs that benefit Kuwaiti sports.

Al-Sayer concluded his statement saying that Warba Bank is keen to play a proactive role in nurturing Kuwaiti talents and supporting young Kuwaiti

entrepreneurs, stressing that our sponsorship of sports leagues and institutions that contribute to spreading sports practices is not the first and will not be the last, in light of our efforts to encourage healthy and sports practices to build a sustainable future.

For his part, the Chairman of the Kuwait School and High Education Sports Federation, Faisal Abdullah Al-Maqseed, appreciated the great role played by Warba Bank in serving Kuwaiti sports, and its unlimited support and partnership with the Federation to achieve the desired goals for which it was found, represented in the development and return of school sports to its previous era.

Al-Maqseed stressed that the strategic partnership between the Kuwait School and High Education Sports Federation and Warba Bank is very important, as it comes as an extension of the series of ambitions and achievements that have been achieved since the establishment of the Federation. It aims to promote school and higher education sports and build a strong sports generation that can proudly represent our country at the local, regional, Arab and international levels.

### Chief commercial officer exits

## American Airlines lowers 2nd quarter expectations

WASHINGTON, May 30, (AP): American Airlines is lowering some of its second-quarter financial forecasts and has announced the departure of its chief commercial officer.

Shares slid more than 14% Wednesday and shares of all other airlines fell as well. Passenger airlines were among the worst performers on the S&P.

American Airlines said in a regulatory filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission that it now anticipates second-quarter adjusted earnings in a range of \$1 to \$1.15 per share. Its prior forecast was for \$1.15 to \$1.45 per share. Analysts surveyed by FactSet forecast second-quarter earnings per share of \$1.20, on average.

Total revenue per available seat mile is now expected to be down approximately 5% to 6%. Its prior forecast was for a decline of about 1% to 3%.

The airline said in the filing that CCO Vasu Raja will be leaving the company next month. He joined the company in 2004. Stephen Johnson, vice chair and chief strategy officer, was named to lead the commercial organization and assist with the search for a new chief commercial officer.

#### Issued

In February American Airlines announced that starting with tickets issued on May 1, customers would have to buy tickets directly from the airline or its partner carriers or from preferred online travel agencies if they wanted to earn points in its AAdvantage loyalty program. The airline said at the time that it would list the preferred travel agencies in late April.

When the changes were announced, Raja said in a prepared statement that American Airlines was looking to make travel more convenient for customers and that by booking directly with the airline customers would get the best fares and it

would be the most rewarding for its loyalty program members.

But the changes were met with criticism by some customers, who were unhappy with the limitations being placed on how they could earn points for the loyalty program.

American Airlines CEO Robert Isom, speaking at the Bernstein Strategic Decisions Conference on Wednesday, said that Raja was an innovator and disruptor, but that a change was needed.

#### Executing

"He is a good friend, but sometimes we need to reset. And in this case, we do," Isom said. "We have to be better at executing those long-range plans. We have to be more attentive to the marketplace. We have to be more detail-oriented, and we have to go forward as a team and really make it easy for American to do business with."

Isom said at the conference that American Airlines no longer plans to differentiate who earns AAdvantage miles and who doesn't, based on where they booked.

"We're not doing that because it would create confusion and disruption for our end customer, and we're going to make sure that we take care of it," he said. "We're listening to feedback. We're learning and adapting."

In April the pilots union at American Airlines said that there had been "a significant spike" in safety issues at the airline, including fewer routine aircraft inspections and shorter test flights on planes returning from major maintenance work.

American Airlines, based in Fort Worth, Texas, said at the time that it has an industry-leading safety management system. An airline spokesperson said then that the airline is in regular contact with regulators and unions "to further bolster our strong safety record and enhance our ever-evolving safety culture."

### WASHINGTON, May 30, (AP): Consumer confidence in the U.S. rose in May after three straight months of declines, though Americans are still anxious about inflation and interest rates.

The Conference Board, a business research group, said Tuesday that its consumer confidence index rose in May to 102 from 97.5 in April. Analysts were expecting the index to decline again.

The index measures both Americans' assessment of current economic conditions and their outlook for the next six months.

The measure of Americans' short-term expectations for income, business and the job market climbed to 74.6 this month from a dismal 68.8 in April. A reading under 80 can signal a potential recession in the near future.

Consumer expectations of a recession in the next year rose again in May but are still well below their peak in May of 2023. More than two-thirds of respondents to the survey said they believe a recession is "somewhat" or "very" likely in the next 12 months. That's in contrast to the Conference Board's survey of CEOs, only about a third of whom foresee a recession in the next 12 to 18 months.

The number of respondents who said they planned to buy a car rose slightly for a second straight month and those who said they planned to buy a major appliance rose for the first time in several months, the board said.

## Mining giant BHP pledges to invest in South Africa economy

LONDON, May 30, (AP): Australian mining giant BHP Group on Wednesday pledged to invest in South Africa's economy as it seeks support for a \$3.6 billion pound (\$49.3 billion) bid to acquire Anglo American, which was founded in the country more than a century ago and remains one of its biggest employers.

London-based Anglo American last week rejected BHP's latest offer, raising concerns about its complex structure. The proposed deal would require Anglo American to spin off two

South African units, Anglo American Platinum and Kumba Iron Ore, as BHP seeks to focus on copper and other products expected to benefit from a transition to green energy.

BHP on Wednesday said the South African government and economy would benefit from Anglo Platinum and Kumba Iron becoming independent companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. It also made a series of commitments to invest in South Africa and support charitable projects in the country.

"BHP believes that its proposal will contribute to South Africa and allow the benefits of South African mining to be shared with more South African stakeholders," the company said in a statement. The latest chapter in the takeover battle came as South Africans went to the polls in the country's most important election since the end of white minority rule 30 years ago. High unemployment, lingering inequality and poverty affecting the Black majority are key issues in an election that could see the governing African Na-

tional Congress lose its parliamentary majority for the first time.

BHP said it would maintain current employment levels at Anglo American's Johannesburg office and keep funding the company's charitable commitments in South Africa if the takeover goes ahead.

The company also promised to list its own shares on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and establish a mining center of excellence to support research and development and promote the country's mining industry.

### Most economic indicators show economy in good shape

### Energy prices rise

## ConocoPhillips buying Marathon Oil for \$17.1 billion in an all-stock deal

DALLAS, May 30, (AP): ConocoPhillips is buying Marathon Oil in an all-stock deal valued at approximately \$17.1 billion as energy prices rise and big oil companies reap massive profits.

The deal is valued at \$22.5 billion when including \$5.4 billion in debt.

Crude prices have jumped more than 12% this year and the cost for a barrel rose above \$80 this week. Oil majors put up record profits after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and while those numbers have slipped, there has been a surge

in mergers between energy companies flush with cash.

Chevron said last year that it was buying Hess in a \$53 billion acquisition, though that deal faces headwinds. The company warned the buyout may be in jeopardy because it will require the approval of Exxon Mobil and a Chinese national oil company, which both hold rights to development of an oil field off the coast of the South American nation Guyana where Hess is a big player.

In July of last year, Exxon Mobil said that it would pay \$4.9 billion for

Denbury Resources, an oil and gas producer that has entered the business of capturing and storing carbon and stands to benefit from changes in U.S. climate policy. Three months later, Exxon announced the proposed acquisition of shale operator Pioneer Natural Resources for \$60 billion.

All of the proposed acquisitions could face pushback from the U.S. which, under the Biden administration, has stepped up antitrust reviews for energy companies and other sectors as well, such as tech.

rates, down from a brisk 3.4% growth rate in the final three months of 2023.

Retail sales were flat in April from March's 0.6% gain as prices remained elevated and high interest rates made shoppers more hesitant to put purchases on credit cards.

More cautious spending in the face of inflation has some big retailers offering discounts this summer. The latest quarterly earnings reported by big retailers show that while consumers have not stopped spending, they are becoming more price-conscious and choosy.



5G-advanced, digital transformation, green network, cloud gaming solutions showcased

Zain and Huawei two-day forum focuses on innovative technologies

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: Zain Group, in partnership with Huawei, successfully held a two-day Mobile Tech Forum on May 26 at the Four Seasons Hotel, Kuwait accompanied by an exhibition of innovative technologies at Zain's Innovation Campus (ZINC) on May 27.

As a leading telecom operator in the Middle East and Africa, Zain continues to pioneer in deploying 5G technology and beyond, demonstrating its commitment to technological excellence.

The forum brought together multi-disciplinary teams from Zain Group, Zain Kuwait and Huawei, to explore cutting-edge technologies and strategic directions.

The event provided a platform for Zain employees to engage with innovative technologies, fostering talent development and maintaining Zain's leadership in the 5G-Advanced era. Key topics covered include 5G-Advanced, digital transformation, transmission, and green network solutions. Innovative services showcased during the forum included glasses-free 3D, cloud gaming, RedCap CPE, etc.

In collaboration with Huawei, Zain released the Zain Group 5G-Advanced Blueprint during MWC 2024 and completed the first 10Gbps verification in Kuwait, and first new calling trial in Kuwait which is



Mohammad Al Murshed speaking at the forum.



The Zain-Huawei Forum showcased innovative technologies.

Mohammad Al Murshed, Acting CTO of Zain Group, commented "We are committed to provide our customers with a superior network experience and services.

Our dedication to leading technologies will drive Zain's business success and deliver the best service experience to our customers. In the 5G-Advanced era, we aim to maintain our leading position in the region while building green networks in support of our corporate sustainability 2050 net-zero agenda."

Mr. Richard Liu, President of Huawei Global ICT Marketing & Solution Sales, said: "Our partnership with Zain exemplifies our joint commitment to innovation and sustainability.

Huawei is committed to bring the most advanced technologies to continuously enable Zain's technological leadership and business success in Kuwait and beyond in the 5G-Advanced era. We look forward to continuing our collaboration to achieve these ambitious goals."



Alfouz monthly draw winner

Alfouz draws offer KD 20,000 monthly

ABK unveils Fatemah AlBanat as winner of 'Alfouz' monthly draw

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced Fatemah Samah Bo AlBanat as the winner of the Alfouz KD20,000 monthly draw, held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for the month of May.

To show appreciation for their loyalty, ABK recently increased the number of draws and prizes, making it even more enticing for customers to join. Introducing a new KD 20,000 monthly draw and an exceptional KD 100,000 quarterly draw, it has become even more attractive for customers to join the Alfouz family.

ABK has also made it easier for customers to enter the draws and

increase their chances of winning by granting an entry for every KD 10 deposited as opposed to KD 100 previously. This means that the more customers save, the higher their chances become to win these amazing prizes.

ABK encourages everyone to open an Alfouz draw account or increase their balance to participate in the upcoming monthly draw to turn their dreams into reality.

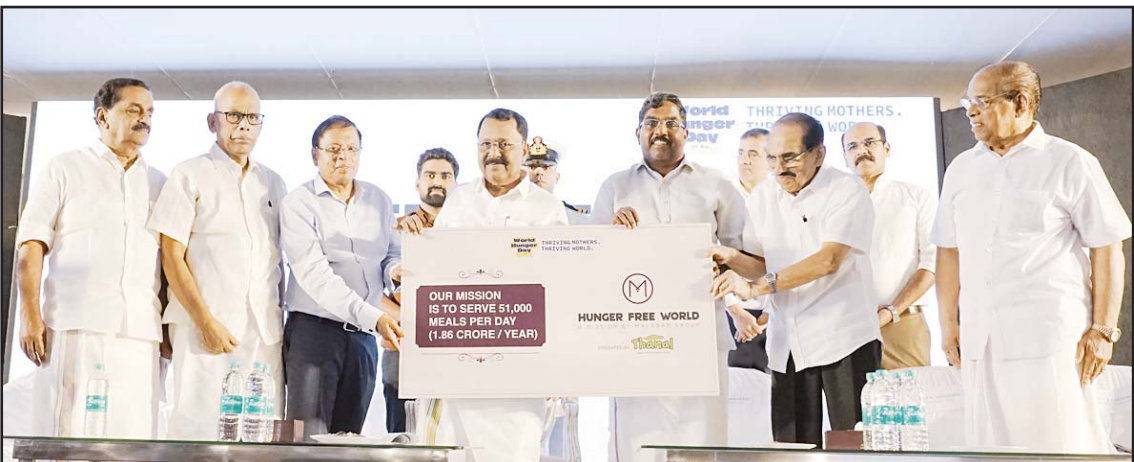
To learn more about the Alfouz account and its range of exciting draws and prizes, please follow the ABK's Instagram account @ abk\_kuwait, visit eahli.com, contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit one of the Bank's branches across Kuwait.

Program to distribute 51,000 daily food packets

Malabar Group expands 'Hunger-Free World' program

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: 'Hunger-Free World', the ongoing social welfare program by Malabar Group to provide nutritious daily meals to the needy, will be expanded to cover more people and cities. At present, as many as 31,000 food packets are distributed under the ambitious program, initiated to support the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 2 - Zero Hunger. As part of scaling up, 51,000 nutritious food packets will now be distributed on a daily basis.

The expansion plan was officially flagged off by P S Sreedharan Pillai, Honourable Governor of Goa, at the World Hunger Day observance event held on May 28th, at Malabar Group Headquarters (MHQ) in Kerala, India. M P Ahammed, Malabar Group Chairman, presided over the function. P T A Rahim, MLA from Kozhikode, Kerala, unveiled the Hunger-Free World donation gateway. Dr Basith Vadakkayil, Project Head - IPRH Daya Rehabilitation Trust, briefed about the program and Thottathil Raveendran launched the official newsletter. P K Ahammed, PK GroupChairman, and P V Chandran, Mathrubhumi Managing Editor, offered felicitations. K P Veeran Kutty, Executive Director of Malabar Group graced the occasion with his presence. The attendees including the chief guest took an oath, pledging their commitment to creating a hunger free world. O Asher, Malabar Gold & Diamonds Managing Director (India Operations), welcomed the guests and Nishad A K, Malabar



Hunger free world initiative

Group Executive Director, proposed the vote of thanks.

At present the program is implemented in 37 cities spread across 16 states including Union Territories, apart from a few centers in the Gulf countries. As part of the expansion, the program will now cover 70 cities in 16 States. Besides, the Group also plans to launch the same program for school children in the African nation of Zambia known for the largest level of gold mining in the world.

"There are still plenty of people around us who are struggling to secure at least one square meal a day. We launched this program as a small hand of help to those governments and agencies working hard to eliminate hunger from our world," said M P Ahammed,

Chairman of Malabar Group.

As part of the Hunger Free World initiative, modern kitchens have been set up in different places to prepare nutritious food in a hygienic environment by skilled chefs. The volunteers of Malabar Group identify the needy people in the streets and urban suburbs and bring the food packets to their doorsteps.

The volunteers are also surveying the beneficiaries to assess the social and economic causes of hunger. As part of this program, the Malabar Group has already started the 'Grandma Home' project to identify poor and orphaned elderly women and provide them with free food, accommodation, and other health care. Two such 'Grandma Homes' have been set up in

Bangalore and Hyderabad. Plans are afoot to set up similar homes in Chennai, Kolkata, Delhi, Mumbai and a few select cities in Kerala. This will provide an opportunity for neglected and orphaned women to live with dignity. The Group has also launched a micro-learning program to support the primary education of street children.

Apart from this, the Malabar Group is also active in other social welfare and charitable activities like financial assistance for medical care, education support to female students, and partial support for house construction. The Group earmarks five percent of the profits towards ESG activities in every region of operation. To date, Malabar Group has spent over 29 Million USD towards social welfare schemes.



Photos from the event.

LuLu World Food promotion sets sail on mouth-watering sea of flavors

LuLu Hypermarket, the region's leading retailer, has taken customers on a delicious journey around the world with 'LuLu World Food' promotion. The two-week celebration of all things food kicked off on 29 May across all LuLu Hypermarket outlets in Kuwait.

The grand opening ceremony held at the hypermarket's Al Rai outlet on 29 May was a star-studded event, graced by the presence of renowned Indian Master Chef Season 8 winner Chef Mohammed Ashiq, Chef Prachi Agarkar (Master Chef Season 8), and the highly-regarded Kuwaiti Arabic Chef Terra Hamada. LuLu Kuwait's top management and representatives of the event's sponsors also joined the festivities.

The LuLu World Food promotion proved to be a smorgasbord of amazing offers and discounts across all food categories. From groceries, fresh produce, and meat and seafood to frozen foods, dairy products, and even home appliances and kitchen essentials, there was something for everyone. Shoppers had the opportunity to participate in a variety of exciting contests and competitions held throughout the promotion period at all LuLu Hypermarket outlets.

Aspiring chefs put their culinary skills to the test in various competitions across different cuisines, including Arabic, Indian, Italian, Continental, Filipino, and coming up with a variety of dishes, including desserts. Additionally, 'Wow the Master Chef' competition allowed contestants to impress Chefs Ashiq, Prachi, and Terra Hamada with their fragrant dishes.

The heartwarming 'Mom & Me' competition was not to be missed, where mothers and children teamed up to create healthy salad masterpieces. Young chefs also shone bright on their own in the 'Master Junior Chef' contests, with categories for age groups 6-10 and 11-15. Coffee enthusiasts showcased their latte art and brewing skills in the Barista Competition, while crafty bakers put their cake decorating talents on display in the Cake Challenge.

There were enticing prizes for all winners, including consolation prizes for all the participants. For those seeking cooking inspiration, there were chit-chat sessions with the Master Chefs and live cooking demonstrations by celebrity chefs.

The LuLu World Food promotion was a true celebration of global gastronomy, with the hypermarket serving the

world on a platter to its customers through a variety of cuisines like Mexican, Korean, Italian, Spanish, Thai, and many more. 'Desi Dhaba' gave shoppers a taste of Northern India and for health-conscious foodies, the 'Healthy Eats' section offered fresh salads, cheeses, and olives. Meat lovers rejoiced at the 'Meet a Meat' section, while seafood lovers swam in a sea of flavors at the 'Go Fish' section.

The sweet-toothed soothed their sweet cravings with the 'Best Bake' and 'Cake so Cookies' sections, while the traditionalists delved into traditional flavorful spices of Kerala at the 'Naadan Thattukada' corner. A must-visit for all was the 'Kitchen-Must-Have' section that offered essential kitchenware to elevate culinary creations. The highlight of the promotion was the special Global Cuisine Street Food' counters at all outlets of the hypermarket, which offered a taste of South Indian, North Indian, Mexican, Korean, Italian, Spanish, Continental, and more dishes to whet every taste bud.

Throughout the promotion, LuLu Hypermarket excited visitors and shoppers alike with some of the biggest and longest food items ever seen. The amazing 'Longest Taco Shawarma', the 'Biggest Burger', and the 'Biggest Pizza', as well as the 'Biggest Biryani' and the 'Longest Zings Fillet', blew everyone's minds. The wondrous displays continued with the 'Biggest Bazbooza', a 'Biryani Dhamaka', the 'Longest Mexican Crispy Wrap Sandwich', the 'Longest Lotus Cake' and much more.

This promotion was made possible by the support of sponsors such as Alwazan, Bayara, Afia, Betty Crocker, Nature Valley, Americana, Sadia, Lamb Weston, Arla, Puck, Kraft, Kitco, Nestle, IFFCO, Noor, London Dairy, McCain, President, Panasonic, Kenwood, and Moulinex.

The 'LuLu World Food' promotion may have drawn to a close, but the culinary adventures it ignited are just beginning. With a newfound appreciation for global cuisines, exciting recipes to try, and kitchens equipped with fantastic finds, LuLu Hypermarket's customers are now perfectly prepared to embark on a delicious journey of their own.

From exploring the spice markets of Morocco, to savoring the fresh seafood of the Mediterranean, or indulging in the rich curries of India, their taste buds will be their compass.



# China’s hit show spotlights Xinjiang’s nomadic culture

URUMQI, May 30, (Xinhua): For thousands of years, many herders in today’s Altay Prefecture in northwest China’s Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region have been following a nomadic life, leading their livestock on journeys to different pastures at certain times throughout the year.

Recently, this millennia-old tradition has been thrust back into the spotlight following the release of “To the Wonder,” a TV series adapted from Li Juan’s prose collection “My Altay.” The show, which aired lately, became an instant hit. The spring migration in Altay has basically concluded, and the summer migration will begin in early June.

A month ago, 600 heads of livestock belonging to Adalbek Beldumulati, a Kazak herder from a village in Altay, were loaded onto multi-deck trucks and transported to a pasture over 200 kilometers away from the village.

After a five-hour drive, they arrived at the Sarbulak spring pasture in Altay’s Fuhai County. “In the past, it would take at least a week to complete the migration. Now, we can leave in the morning and arrive in the afternoon,” said Adalbek Beldumulati, who is in his 50s.

Sarbulak, meaning “yellow spring,” is a place where melting ice and snow form rivers that flow through the mountains. At the foot of these mountains, lush green grasslands stretch out, dotted with herds of cattle and sheep.

The TV series has scored 8.8 out of 10 on China’s popular rating platform Douban. The series portrays nomadic life during migration journeys, highlighting the collision of old and new ideas and the integration of traditional and modern ways of life, drawing significant attention to the nomadic culture in Altay.

Altay, one of the pastoral areas in Xinjiang, is home to vast grass-

lands stretching between the Altay Mountains and the Junggar Basin. Nomadic ethnic groups migrate in search of water and grass throughout the year, leading their livestock on long-distance journeys to different pastures based on the growth cycle of the grass. This unique nomadic culture has existed for thousands of years.

Even today, the herders in Altay maintain different pastures for each season. Every year, they migrate back and forth from south to north, and vice versa, covering distances ranging from a few dozen kilometers to more than 1,000 kilometers. In the spring of 2024, over 2.2 million livestock in Altay were part of this migration.

**Resources**

In the vertical mobile grazing practiced by the Kazak ethnic group, migration allows for the efficient use of forage resources. “The grazing style is adapted to the fragile alpine grassland natural ecosystem,” said Chen Xiangjun, professor at the School of Ethnology and Sociology in South-Central Minzu University.

In recent years, local government has increased investment in infrastructure in the pastoral areas, transforming some traditional pastoral trails into highways to facilitate the transportation of herders. Over 100 posthouse facilities have also been established along the herders’ migration routes, providing them with easier access to services such as accommodation, food and bathing, as well as supplies for their livestock.

Today, many herders use modern equipment, such as motorcycles and walkie-talkies, and the younger generation enjoys communicating with the outside world through the internet.

Bota, a “post-90s” herder in Altay, has an innate love for pastoral

life. She often livestreams and creates videos while grazing, capturing everything from making felt blankets to preparing food with modern kitchenware and electricity. Through her videos, netizens can experience the scenery of the Altay pastures and see how modern life preserves traditions while embracing change.

The nomadic culture has also become a tourism attraction in Altay, drawing visitors and shutterbugs alike.

An important stopover for herders during their migration journeys, Sarbulak town in Fuhai has been hosting a migration-themed tourism festival for years. Traditional activities like horse racing and wool knitting offer tourists from home and abroad a chance to immerse themselves in the nomadic culture.

“An increasing number of tourists have been coming to the pasture to experience the slow-paced life and the unique folk culture,” said Waspan Malek, owner of a homestay in Altay’s Burqin County. He added that when he first started the business, there were only two to three guest rooms, but with Altay’s increasing popularity, he had to expand the homestay to encompass more than 50 guest rooms.

Jilin New Village, a filming location of the series “To the Wonder,” located in Altay’s Habahe County, welcomes nearly 5,000 tourists daily. Among them is An Meimei, 21, who hails from central China’s Hubei Province.

“I was drawn by the breathtaking scenery portrayed in the TV series. While I had previously seen images of the migration, witnessing the herders’ journey firsthand allowed me to truly grasp the essence of their nomadic lifestyle. It’s an epic tale of harmony between people and animals,” An said.

## Variety



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Ryan Gosling in a scene from ‘The Fall Guy,’ which is currently showing in Kuwait cinemas. (AP)

## Film

Actor dedicated to preserving the Japanese American legacy

# ‘Star Trek’s’ Takei to keep telling his story

TOKYO, May 30, (AP): The incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans, including children, labeled enemies during World War II is an historical experience that has traumatized, and galvanized, the Japanese American community over the decades.

For George Takei, who portrayed Hikaru Sulu aboard the USS Enterprise in the “Star Trek” franchise, it’s a story he is determined to keep telling every opportunity he has.

“I consider it my mission in life to educate Americans on this chapter of American history,” he said in a recent interview with The Associated Press.

He fears the lesson about the failure of US democracy hasn’t really been learned, even today, including among Japanese Americans.

“The shame of internment is the government’s. They’re the ones that did something unjust, cruel and inhuman. But so often the victims of the government actions take on the shame themselves,” he said.

Takei, 87, has a new picture book out for children ages 6 to 9 and their parents, called “My Lost Freedom.” It’s illustrated in soft watercolors by Michelle Lee.

Takei was 4 years old when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 on Feb. 19, 1942, two months after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, declaring anyone of Japanese descent an enemy of the United States and forcibly removing them from their West Coast homes.

Takei spent the next three years behind barbed wires, guarded by soldiers with guns, in three camps: the Santa Anita racetrack, which stunk of manure; Camp Rohwer in a marshland; and, from 1943, Tule Lake, a high-security segregation center for the “disloyal.”

“We were seen as different from other Americans. This was unfair. We were Americans, who had nothing to do with Pearl Harbor. Yet we were imprisoned behind barbed wires,” Takei writes in the book.

Throughout it all, his parents are portrayed as enduring the hardships with a quiet dignity. His mother sewed clothes for the children. They made chairs out of scrap lumber. They played baseball. They danced to Benny Goodman. For Christmas, they got a Santa who looked Japanese.

Takei’s is a remarkable story of resilience and a pursuit of justice, repeated throughout the Japanese American experience.

It’s a story that’s been told and retold, in books like the 1973 “Farewell to Manzanar” by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston; “Only What We Could Carry,” edited by Lawson Fusao Inada more than 20 years ago; and “The Literature of Japanese American Incarceration,” which just came out, compiled by Frank Abe and Floyd Cheung.

David Inoue, executive director of the Japanese American Citizens League, headquartered in Washington, D.C., believes the message of Takei’s book remains relevant.

He said discrimination persists today, as seen in the anti-Asian attacks that flared with the COVID-19 pandemic. Inoue said his son has been taunted in school in the same way he was growing up.

**Honest**

“One of the important things about having books like this is that it humanizes us. It tells stories about us that show we’re just like any other family. We like to play baseball. We have pets,” Inoue said.

Takei and his family were sent to Tule Lake in northern California because his parents answered “No” to key questions in a so-called loyalty questionnaire.

Question No. 27 asked if they were willing to serve in the US armed forces. Question No. 28 asked whether they swore allegiance to the US and would forswear allegiance to the Japanese emperor. Both were controversial questions for people who had been stripped of their basic civil rights and labeled enemies.

“Daddy and Mama both thought that the two questions were stupid,” Takei writes in “My Lost Freedom.”

“The only honest answers were No and No.”

Takei said the questions did not explain what would become of families with young children. The second question was also a no-win, he said, because his parents felt there was no loyalty to Japan to denounce.

Tule Lake was the largest of the 10 camps, holding 18,000 people.

Young men who answered “Yes” became part of the all-Japanese American 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which fought in Europe while their families remained incarcerated. The 442, with their famous “Go for Broke” motto, is the most decorated unit of its size and length of service in US military history.

“They were determined to prove themselves and get their families out of barbed wires,” Takei said. “They are our heroes. I know I owe so much to them.”

After Japan surrendered, Takei and his family, like all Japanese Americans freed from the camps, were each given \$25 and a one-way ticket to anywhere in the U.S. Takei’s family chose to start all over again in Los Angeles.

In 1988, the Civil Liberties Act - after years of effort and testimonies by Japanese Americans, including Takei - granted redress of \$20,000 and a formal presidential apology to every surviving US citizen or legal resident immigrant of Japanese ancestry incarcerated during World War II.

Takei’s voice became choked when he recalled how his father did not live to see it.

He noted with pride the diversity depicted in “Star Trek,” a TV series that started in the mid-1960s and developed a devout following. There, the crew that flew together through the galaxies was of various backgrounds.

“Star Trek” writer, creator and producer Gene Roddenberry wanted to portray the turbulent times and the civil rights movement on a TV show but had to do it metaphorically to make it acceptable, Takei said.

“Different people, different ideas, different taste, different food. He wanted to make that statement. Each of the characters was supposed to represent a part of this planet,” Takei said.

Takei recalled how his father taught him how the government “of the people, by the people and for the people,” as Abraham Lincoln put it in his Gettysburg Address, could also prove a weakness.

“All people are fallible, even a great president like Roosevelt. He got stampeded by the hysteria of the time, the racism of the time. And he signed Executive Order 9066,” Takei said.

**NEW YORK:** Manhattan prosecutors told a judge Wednesday they are evaluating more claims of sexual misconduct made against **Harvey Weinstein** and could potentially seek a new indictment against him before his scheduled retrial on rape and sexual assault charges.

Assistant District Attorney **Nicole Blumberg** said during a court hearing that additional people have come forward with assault claims and prosecutors are currently assessing which fall under the statute of limitations.

She said some potential survivors that were not ready to step forward during Weinstein’s first New York trial may now be willing to testify.

When asked by Judge **Curtis Farber** whether there was a possibility of prosecutors filing a new indictment, Blumberg replied: “Yes, your honor.”

Blumberg said prosecutors would be in a better position to update the court on the direction of the case at the end of June.

Farber set the next hearing date for July 9. The retrial on the rape charge is tentatively scheduled for some time after Labor Day.

Weinstein’s lawyer, **Arthur Aidala**, told reporters outside the courthouse after the hearing that his client was confident no additional accusers would be found to bolster the prosecution’s case.

“He knows he’s never done anything like this,” Aidala said of Weinstein. (AP)

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**BEIJING:** Chinese comedy “The Last Frenzy” continued its reign at the top of the box office chart on the Chinese mainland on Wednesday, according to data from the China Movie Data Information Network.

The film, which explores life’s choices in the face of death, earned 5.6 million yuan (about 787,000 U.S. dollars) in box office sales that day, pushing its total revenue to 713 million yuan since its May 1 release.

Action crime thriller “Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In” came in second, garnering box office sales of 5.27 million yuan on Wednesday.

It was followed by American sci-fi “Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes” with a daily earning of

1.79 million yuan.

The total box office revenue on the Chinese mainland stood at 23.65 million yuan on Wednesday.

China is gearing up for this year’s summer movie season, which runs from the beginning of June to the end of August. According to the Chinese movie data platform Maoyan, 53 new films



Weinstein



Simo

are scheduled for release during this period. (Xinhua)

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**BARCELONA, Spain:** The accurate portrayal of Chinese culture and history was a priority in the making of the new animated movie “Dragonkeeper,” the film’s director **Salvador Simo** told Xinhua in an

interview on Wednesday.

Coproduced by Spanish production company Guardian de Dragones AIE and China Film Animation, the film was directed by Simo alongside Beijing Film Academy professor **Li Jianping**. The production is an adventure fantasy story set in Imperial China during the Han Dynasty that fea-

tures dragons and wizards.

“The main direction of the film was Spanish, but the Chinese involvement was above all to ensure its ‘Chineseness’, making sure it is faithful to Chinese culture, because it’s important that you are accurate when you tell a story in a culture that’s not your own,” Simo told Xinhua. (Xinhua)



People & Places

Television

NSB’s saddest day

Hyped ‘spellers’ see their hopes dashed

OXON HILL, Md., May 30, (AP): When Achyut Ethiraj’s final appearance in the Scripps National Spelling Bee (NSB) ended far earlier than he anticipated, the 14-year-old grimaced at the microphone, walked off the stage quietly and exited the ballroom with his mother’s arm draped around his back.

Achyut had plenty of company among the 140 spellers eliminated on Wednesday, spelling’s saddest day.

“I didn’t expect to get out, but I did, and I guess I have to accept the truth now,” said Achyut, an eighth-grader from Fort Wayne, Indiana. “I’m happy to do high school and do other things, but I’m kind of confused what to do now that I’m done with spelling.”

“It’s my last year, and I expected to do better, but I guess it is what it is,” he said. “And I have to move on.”



Loeffler

The structure of the spelling bee has undergone plenty of changes over time, but over the past three years under executive director **Corrie Loeffler**, the competition has gotten very hard, very fast for spellers who make it past the preliminary rounds.

The morning began with 148 spellers. By the end of the first quarterfinal round, there were 59 left, and 46 of those got through a vocabulary round to reach the semifinals. By the end of the day, eight finalists remained. They will return Thursday night, when the winner will receive a trophy and more than \$50,000 in cash and prizes.

The champion won’t be Shradha Rachamreddy, who finished third last year and was a consensus favorite to go all the way. She was eliminated on exactly the sort of “super short, tricky word” she said she concentrated on studying after misspelling “orle” last year.

Mistake

This year it was “varan,” a type of lizard. She added an extra “r,” and former spellers in the audience gasped at her mistake.

“I am in shock and despair,” said Dev Shah, the 2023 champion.

“We all thought she was going to win,” added Charlotte Walsh, last year’s runner-up.

Starting in the quarterfinals, the bee’s word panel can use any of the more than half a million words in Webster’s Unabridged dictionary, plus some geographical names that aren’t even listed in that volume. While the panel tries to maintain a consistent level of difficulty in each round, it can vary from word to word.

That’s when luck comes into play.

Achyut was asked to spell the word “sistine.” Derived from the Sistine Chapel, it’s an adjective meaning “a light blue color.” He went with “cistine,” and his coach, Grace Walters, was second-guessing herself.

“I’m sure when I was making my lists, I just assumed, ‘Oh, everybody knows the Sistine Chapel.’ But the reality is these kids are like 10 to 14. They might not have the ... cultural knowledge that us older people have,” said the 22-year-old Walters, a former speller. “So that’s definitely something I feel like I overlooked in helping him prepare.”

Two years ago, Achyut finished in a tie for 14th place, and last year he tied for 23rd. This year, he tied for 60th place alongside the 88 others eliminated in the round.

“My rank has been going lower. But the reality is my preparation has been increasing a lot,” Achyut said. “And I don’t know how that matches up, but I know that I know the words and I deserve a good break.”

He has plenty of company. Rare is a speller like Vanya Shivashankar, who came in with enormous buzz in 2015 after years of strong finishes and ended up winning. Even Shivashankar had a setback the previous year when a written spelling and vocabulary test kept her out of the finals.

Naysa Modi, the 2018 runner-up, didn’t make the finals the following year. Ishika Varipilli, who hoped to make a run at the trophy this year in her third and final attempt, bowed out in a tie for 47th after missing a vocabulary word, “swanky,” and said afterward she was “trying to keep it together.”

In the semifinals, Shradha was followed to the exit by two more top-ten finishers from 2023: Aryan Khedkar and Sarah Fernandes. Aryan got a long hug from fellow competitor Faizan Zaki before leaving the stage.

Pressure

“These kids put a lot of pressure on themselves. I think they get nervous. They get worried. They get more focused on, ‘What if I don’t make it? What if this happens? What if that happens?’” Walters said. “The kids feel it around them that, you know, they’re being looked up to as previous finalists, previous semifinalists, and they internalize that people expect something from them.”

Aliyah Alpert, who finished ninth in 2022, missed the bee entirely last year because she flubbed the word “recoup” in the Yavapai County spelling bee in her home state of Arizona.

“It was on-list, I totally knew the word, but I blanked. Choked,” said 13-year-old Aliyah, who returned this year and was ousted in the semifinals.

Matthew Bader came in knowing he might not improve upon his finish last year, a tie for 57th.

“The farther you make it in the competition one year, that’s the more chance you’ll do worse next year,” said Matthew, a 14-year-old from Peachtree City, Georgia. “Actually, I didn’t really mind getting out. Win or lose, to be here, it’s a pretty big accomplishment.”

Ananth Chepuri of Bradenton, Florida, thought his daughter, 11-year-old Amara, was eliminated by one of the most difficult words (“ephectic”) of what he called an inconsistent round.

“It’s been brutal,” Chepuri said. “The first kid, I felt so sorry for him. This was a bloodbath!”

Last year’s champion, Dev Shah, wrote in a Washington Post op-ed that to become a champion speller, you must accept that you’ll be asked a word you don’t know - and be calm enough to figure it out.

“The skill of guessing is everything,” he wrote.

Aryan Khedkar, a 13-year-old from Rochester Hills, Michigan, who finished tied for fifth last year, breaks down tricky words into categories.

“There are words with roots and words without roots that you just have to memorize. The ones that you have to memorize, I use language patterns. That really helps. If it doesn’t have language patterns, I just try to use the simplest way possible,” Aryan said. “That’s what the spelling bee is about. It’s not about knowing as many words as you can.”



This image released by MurphyMade shows the cast of the musical ‘Water For Elephants’ in New York. (AP)

Stage

Jessica Stone relishes Tony nod for musical

‘Water for Elephants,’ a director’s tale

NEW YORK, May 30, (AP): You don’t initially see a full elephant at the Broadway musical “Water for Elephants.” It’s more like a tease. First come a pair of enormous ears. Then a trunk. And then the legs.

The execution is by director Jessica Stone, who wanted to make it extra special for the audience when they finally get to see the big reveal at the end of Act 1. She thought it had to be awe-inspiring, tender and the spirit of an elephant.

“People were talking about how moved they were when they finally were seeing her in full and I was like, ‘OK, I think it’s going to be OK,’” Stone says.

It’s been more than OK for Stone, whose show earned seven Tony Award nominations, including one for best new musical and one for her heroic efforts to seamlessly create a big Broadway musical with elements of circus.

Stone knits puppets and vaudeville acts, songs and somersaults, as well as melds two groups of people who might not have shared a lunch table in high school - the jocks and the theater geeks.

“It’s a very humble, disciplined, hard-working, loving cast,” she says. “I overuse this metaphor, but it couldn’t be more true: We literally and figuratively hold out our arms and catch each other.”

The show - adapted by Sara Gruen’s popular 2006 historical romance novel and with music by the band PigPen Theater Co. - follows a love triangle in a traveling circus during the Depression.

The New York Times called it “a stunning, emotional production that” leads with movement, eye candy and awe.” Variety raved that Stone brought “it all under one spectacular tent without forgetting its human - and animal - hearts.”

Her skill is on show with the first big song - “The Road Don’t Make You Young” - a nine-minute, upbeat number that involves 23 performers, singing, dancing and flipping. It leans on circus designer Shana Carroll, who co-choreographs with Jesse Robb, both who also earned Tony nods.

The number starts with a circus train coming into town, and the audi-

ence learns about each of the characters as they get off and raise a tent. Soon we’re in the middle of a circus act, with acrobats flying through the air, twisting on ropes and poles.

That took two years to develop, and Stone calls it “the gate to the rest of the show.” She credits producers for giving her team the time to create it and to figure out the way to marry Broadway timing to circus.

“You actually have to have a little wiggle room for circus because you don’t fly through the air on the exact same counts every single time,” she says. “So everywhere throughout the show and the number, there’s always a little bit of wiggle room. We’ve had to build it in for safety.”

Elements

Rick Elice, the playwright of “Jersey Boys” and “Peter and the Starcatcher” who earned a Tony nod for “Water for Elephants,” said he was intrigued when Stone auditioned as director and spoke her mind even about elements that seemed non-negotiable, like his initial framing device.

“She’s brilliant. She’s funny. She’s totally prepared. She’s fast on her feet. She’s somebody that you just love to have lunch with because you laugh a lot and you bat ideas back and forth, which to me is a great lunch,” he says.

“Water for Elephants,” framed as an elderly former circus worker fondly looking back, joins a raft of recent memory plays on Broadway like “Mother Play,” “The Notebook,” “A Beautiful Noise” and “Harmony.”

“It’s not like we all got in a room and said, ‘You know what? 2024 is going to be the memory season,’” she says with a laugh. She thinks it’s a by-product of the pandemic.

“Memory plays have to do with looking back on your life and determining whether or not you did it right, and whether or not you’re still doing it right,” she says.

That became the key to how to marry circus elements in “Water for Elephants” - they are hazy memories for the main character, fragmented and not fully formed.

“I really didn’t want people arbi-

trarily peeling off into back hand-springs for no reason. It had to really honor his most, important memories,” Stone says.

“Once you realize you’re looking at it through that prism, you don’t really want to see a literal animal. Go to the zoo if you want to see a literal animal. What you want to see is a fragment.”

So, a lion is presented as just a head and a jaw and a horse in pain is shown by a mask in an actor’s lap while French performer Antoine Boissereau elegantly swings high from a white cloth, the spirit of the animal drifting between life and death.

Stone was an actor on and off-Broadway, in television and in film, for decades before transitioning to directing. She previously earned a Tony nod directing the Tony-winning Broadway musical “Kimberly Akimbo,” which beautifully captured sadness with humor.

“That dichotomy is the thing that’s most interesting to me - that you can feel great pain and still something can really make you laugh in that moment. That’s something that I seek when I’m telling stories.”

Elice says Stone’s background as an actor gives her an ability to know how to talk to actors, comparing her favorably to the late, great Mike Nichols, which is saying a lot.

“I’ve never seen anybody better than Nichols talking to actors. She just has the knack of being able to cut through a lot of b.s. and say exactly the right thing to get a great performance.”

Stone is part of a sisterhood of directors who crashed through a Broadway barrier this year: Seven women took the 10 musical and play directing nomination slots. Only 10 women have gone on to win a directing crown.

Stone, who is married to Broadway veteran actor Christopher Fitzgerald, celebrated her nomination in a very New York way: She got an everything toasted bagel with cream cheese and a manicure.

That’s in keeping with a director who likes to lighten something profound with something ordinary. “You can be nominated for an award and just want a bagel,” she says, laughing.



Jessica Stone attends the Broadway opening night for ‘Water For Elephants’ at The Imperial Theatre on March 21, 2024, in New York. (AP)



McInnis



Homma

Variety

**ANAHEIM, Calif.:** Character and parade performers at Disneyland in California are officially unionized.

Federal labor officials said Wednesday that they’ve certified the results of a three-day election that took place earlier this month in Anaheim.

Actors’ Equity Association will represent roughly 1,700 performers and assistants who help bring Disney’s popular characters to life at its Southern California theme parks. The union already represents theatrical performers at Disney’s **Florida** parks.

Most of Disneyland’s other workers in California - including cleaning crews, pyrotechnic specialists and security staff - are already in labor unions. (AP)

□ □ □

**NEW YORK:** Maurie McInnis, a longtime higher education leader and cultural historian, was named the 24th president of Yale University on Wednesday, becoming the first woman to be appointed permanently to the position.

McInnis, 58, is the president of Stony Brook University on **Long Island** in New York. She will succeed **Peter Salovey**, who is retiring and taking a faculty position at the Ivy League school in **New Haven, Connecticut**, after having led it for the past decade.

**Yale** said McInnis was the unanimous choice of the school’s Board of Trustees.

“A compelling leader, distinguished scholar, and devoted educator, she brings to the role a deep understanding of higher education and an unwavering commitment to our mission and academic priorities,” senior trustee **Josh Bekenstein** said in a statement. “Her experience and accomplishments over the past three decades have prepared her to lead Yale in the years ahead.” (AP)

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**LOS ANGELES:** Jacqueline Stewart is leaving her post leading the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures to return to the University of **Chicago**. Academy Museum veteran **Amy Homma** will succeed her as director and president, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences said Wednesday.

Stewart, a prominent film scholar and Turner Classic Movies host, has helped steer the Academy Museum through its opening phase, serving as its chief artistic and programming officer from 2020-2022, when she became its leader. During her tenure, she helped make new galleries bilingual and oversaw the opening of many exhibitions, including one on Black Cinema between 1989 and 1971.

Homma has been with the **Los Angeles** based museum for five years, most recently as its chief audience officer. (AP)

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**SHANGHAI:** Puy du Fou, a French

theme park operator known for historical presentations, launched its immersive theater in Shanghai in a trial operation on Wednesday.

The Sino-French joint project, named **SAGA City of Light**, involves a total investment of 650 million yuan (about 91.4 million U.S. dollars).



Director Ishana Night Shyamalan, (left), and Dakota Fanning pose for photographers during a photo call for the film ‘The Watched’ on Wednesday, May 29, in London. (AP)

Puy du Fou Asia, founded in Shanghai in 2018, is dedicated to innovatively telling the stories of **China**.

After years of development, the **SAGA City of Light** has recreated 46,000 square meters of scenes of Shanghai in the 1930s for audiences and visitors, said **Joseph Corbo Courtemanche**, chief operating officer & executive producer of Puy du Fou Asia. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

**WASHINGTON:** The Library of Congress, the largest library in the world, lies in the heart of Washington with very precious contents including 137 million items in up to 470 languages -- an iconic hub for researchers and scientists.

The library, founded in 1800, boasts more than 51 million books, publications, four million records, 17 million photographs, 5.6 million maps, eight million music records, 75 unique manuscripts, making it the number one cultural foundation in the **US** and the favorite reference for researchers and literati worldwide.

Its birth started when the second American president **John Adams** signed a bill to transfer the state administration’s headquarters to Washington, with establishment of a library of various references for aiding members of the government and the legislators in their researches. (KUNA)



New treatments halt disease progression by 95%

# Kuwait tops Middle East in MS cases: Over 3,000 affected

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: According to a consultant in diseases related to the nervous system and multiple sclerosis (MS) Dr. Raed Abdullah Al-Roghani, about 3,000 citizens and residents have been infected with atherosclerosis in the country. The infection rate among citizens has reached 85 percent, with a total of 2,550 cases.

In an exclusive statement to Al-Seyassah on the occasion of the celebration of World Sclerosis Day, Dr. Al-Roghani stressed that Kuwait has the highest number of MS cases in the Middle East region, with about 105 cases per 100,000 people.

He indicated that MS is an acquired disease and is not hereditary, and it affects women more than men by a ratio of 3:1.

Dr. Al-Roghani attributed the reasons for the spread of MS infection in Kuwait to several factors, including the change and development of diagnostic standards in the country, the availability of specialized medical personnel and competencies, and modern diagnostic devices, in addition to some environmental factors, such as the spread of viruses that lead to increased infection rates including the Epstein-Barr Virus (EBV), which is a virus widespread in all countries of the world.



Dr. Al-Roghani

Regarding the symptoms of the disease, he explained that blurry eyesight or blindness, numbness in the face or limbs, lack of balance, and muscle weakness are among the basic symptoms of infection. The continued appearance of one of these symptoms for more than 24 hours is one of the most important indicators of the disease.

Dr. Al-Roghani highlighted the tremendous therapeutic renaissance that Kuwait and other countries around the world have witnessed in the last ten years, with the emergence of highly efficient treatments capable of stopping the disease by up to 95 percent.

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Sclerosis

Society Yousef Al-Kandari revealed that the “Best MS Patient” competition will be held at the Radisson Blu Hotel on Tuesday, June 4 under the patronage of the Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi and in the presence of an elite group of specialists, to celebrate World MS Day.

In a statement to Al-Seyassah, Al-Kandari revealed that three stories had been selected from more than 100 stories submitted to compete for the grand prize for an MS patient.

He explained that the heroes of these stories are from different nationalities between Egypt, Jordan and Kuwait. These stories highlight the patient’s struggle in living with the disease, as it is considered a chronic disease that cannot be cured.

Al-Kandari expressed his appreciation and pride that Kuwait is considered the first country in the world to include MS in the educational curricula for 12th grade students, confirming with the International Federation’s certificate that Kuwait is a pioneer in providing this educational educational service, which reflects the great interest that Kuwait attaches to MS.

He highlighted the provision of free sclerosis treatments for inpatients at a rate of up to 90 percent, in coordination with the Ministry of Health and the Patient Helping Fund.



Participants of the diabetes foot care workshop organized by DDI.

## DDI holds workshop on diabetes foot care, prevention

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

Despite the high prevalence of diabetes in the Middle East and North Africa region, many countries in the region lack adequate foot care, foot check up, and self-care education programs.

This was stated in a press release issued by the Dasman Dia-

betes Institute during the last day of the “Recommendations and Approved Practices for the Prevention of Diabetic Foot Complications” workshop, which was held over a period of three days with the cooperation of the Central Administration for Primary Health Care in the Ministry of Health.

The workshop included many scientific lectures held in the pres-

ence of health care specialists and experts in order to teach the trainees the skills of evaluating and treating foot issues of diabetic patients, and to resort to the latest evidence-based evaluation and treatment methods, as well as to reduce complications of the diabetic foot that may lead to amputation.

Int’l experts gather for glaucoma workshop

# Kuwait medical workshop focuses on innovations in glaucoma treatments

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The Kuwaiti Ophthalmology Association, in collaboration with the Council of Ophthalmology Departments in the Ministry of Health, recently hosted a workshop focused on “high eye pressure” (glaucoma). The event featured participation from esteemed international experts hailing from Spain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Republic of Egypt, alongside a contingent of Kuwaiti doctors.

Dr. Ahmed Al-Foudari, Chairman of the Council of Ophthalmology Departments at the Ministry of Health and President of the Kuwaiti Ophthalmology Association, underscored the workshop’s significance as a testament to the ongoing commitment to medical education. He emphasized the unwavering support from Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi, the Minister of Health, in advancing medical knowledge and skills.

During the workshop, attendees benefited from numerous scientific lectures delivered by experts specializing in glaucoma. These ses-



A group photo from the glaucoma workshop.

sions covered the latest international protocols for diagnosing and treating high eye pressure, along with detailed insights into surgical procedures within this specialty.

Practical training sessions were also conducted, offering doctors hands-on experience with the latest

valve used in treating high eye pressure cases. Dr. Al-Foudari expressed the intention to organize similar workshops in the future, highlighting the importance of continuous learning and skill enhancement in ophthalmology.

## Youth vulnerable to strong nicotine addiction

# Vaping, smoking at young age can have long-lasting effects on brain

CLEVELAND, May 30: There is no safe form of tobacco use and young people are particularly vulnerable to developing a strong addiction to nicotine,says an expert from global health system Cleveland Clinic, speaking ahead of World No Tobacco Day, arranged by the World Health Organization (WHO) each year May 31.

According to the WHO, which this year aims to give a platform to young people across the world to “urge governments to shield them from predatory tobacco marketing tactics,” children are using e-cigarettes, or vaping, at rates higher than adults in all regions. Worri-

ngly, the health body estimates that, globally, 37 million young people aged 13 to 15 years use tobacco.

“Young people are at particular risk from smoking or vaping, as doing so as a child or teenager can have life-long effects on brain development,” says Cleveland Clinic pulmonologist Humberto Choi, MD.

All forms of nicotine use have health risks, from vaping liquid nicotine and chewing tobacco to smoking cigarettes and shisha – even occasionally or without inhaling, Dr. Choi says. He points out that anything containing nicotine is addictive, and almost all nicotine-delivery methods also contain chemicals such as acetaldehyde and formaldehyde, known to cause cancer, and acrolein, diacetyl and diethylene glycol, known to cause lung disease.

“Vaping is particularly challenging as we do not yet know the full

implications for health, even though it has already been linked to acute lung inflammation, strong levels of addiction and dental problems, among others, and we know that the many of the same mechanisms that cause lung issues in smoking are involved,” says Dr. Choi.

In addition to the harm from the chemicals and additives in vapes, Dr. Choi points out that some vaping liquids contain very high levels of nicotine, making them very addictive, and that vapes are often more tolerated in public spaces, with more opportunities for a quick puff. The result is that individual consumption may be higher than is the case with cigarettes, for example.

**Consequences**

Dr. Choi adds that there are short- and long-term dangers associated with tobacco use. Short-term effects could include a persistent cough, asthma attack and acute lung inflammation, while long-term use could see the user develop conditions such as heart disease and emphysema.

Particularly concerning, though, is developing an addiction at a young age. “Using nicotine as a teenager can have life-long effects on brain development,” Dr. Choi cautions. “Studies suggest that smoking from a young age could in-

crease the likelihood for prolonged tobacco addiction or the risk of addiction to other problematic substances. In addition, the compulsion to smoke can interfere with concentration and daily life. Another issue is that young people might be using tobacco to self-medicate if they have anxiety or depression, thereby masking the symptoms so that the condition remains undiagnosed and untreated.”

Dr. Choi points out that the harmful effects of nicotine use are cumulative, and people often do not realize the extent of the harm they are doing to themselves until they develop a chronic health condition.

“No matter which type of nicotine delivery method individuals are addicted to, or the frequency of use, they can benefit from quitting at any point, but the earlier the better,” says Dr. Choi. “Research has shown that no amount of smoking is risk-free and even light smokers can develop deadly lung diseases, while even a new smoker can develop inflammation and damage to their lungs.”

Dr. Choi encourages parents to keep the lines of communication open, so that they can talk to their children about the risks of using tobacco, and also offer support to quit if needed.

“Giving up nicotine can be really difficult and people often make several attempts before they are successful,” says Dr. Choi. He adds that there is no ‘one size fits all’ solution, which is why programs such as Cleveland Clinic’s Smoking Cessation Program take a comprehensive and multi-pronged approach.

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Demus will bring her husband and kids along for the trip

12 yrs later, US Oly hurdler Demus will get gold medal at ceremony in Paris



Sporting Kansas City midfielder Nemanja Radoja (6) and Vancouver Whitecaps midfielder Andrés Cubas, (right), chase the ball during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Kansas City, Kan. Whitecaps won 2-1. (AP)

Charles, Gray lift Dream over Mystics, who have ‘dropped’ 7 straight to open season

Liberty beat Mercury

WASHINGTON, May 30, (AP): Allisha Gray scored 19 points, Tina Charles had 17 points and 15 rebounds, and the Atlanta Dream beat the winless Washington Mystics 73-67 on Wednesday night.

Washington (0-7) is off to its worst start since 2007, when it set a franchise record with eight straight losses. The Mystics head on the road for games against the New York Liberty and the undefeated Connecticut Sun.

Gray made a steal and fast-break layup to extend Atlanta’s lead to 63-58 midway through the fourth quarter.

Rhynne Howard took over the scoring for Atlanta down the stretch, scoring eight of her 11 points in the fourth quarter. Howard sank a one-footed jumper from the top of the key with 1:02 left in the fourth quarter and she added two free throws on the Dream’s next possession for a nine-point lead.

Aerial Powers added 12 points and Cheyenne Parker-Tyus had 10 points and nine rebounds for Atlanta (3-2). Howard, averaging a team-high 21 points per game, was just 2 of 11 from the field.

BASKETBALL

Charles secured her double-double in the first half with 14 points and 13 rebounds. Gray also scored 14 points in the first half to help Atlanta build a 38-34 lead.

Ariel Atkins led Washington with 21 points. Shakira Austin had 12 points and nine rebounds and Stefanie Dolson scored 10.

Liberty 81, Mercury 78

In New York, with the game in the balance, Jonquel Jones took over.

Jones scored 10 of her 20 points in the fourth quarter to help the New York Liberty beat the Phoenix Mercury.

The Liberty’s star center spent most of the first few quarters outside of the paint, but made a concerted effort to get inside in the fourth.

“We had a different level of intentionality with me getting it down there,” Jones said. “Giving me time to post up and really seal, but ultimately it was a mindset shift from me and my teammates.”

New York (5-2) trailed 74-71 late in the fourth quarter before going on a 9-0 run, including four points by Jones to take control.

Her layup with 2:12 left started the spurt and she hit two free throws with 1:09 left that gave New York a 76-74 lead. After a stop, Betnijah Laney-Hamilton hit a tough foul line jumper with 30 seconds left giving the Liberty a four-point cushion.

Phoenix (3-4) couldn’t recover. Sabrina Ionescu led New York with 22 points, nine assists and six rebounds.

Natasha Cloud scored 21 points and Kahleah Copper added 20 for

Maradona’s heirs lose court battle to block auction of the World Cup Golden Ball trophy

PARIS, May 30, (AP): A French court ruled the auction of a trophy awarded to the late Diego Maradona after the 1986 World Cup can go ahead as planned despite opposition from his heirs, their lawyer told The Associated Press on Thursday.

Maradona’s heirs tried to stop the auction of the Golden Ball trophy he received for being the best player of the 1986 World Cup by starting an urgent judicial procedure. Lawyer Gilles Moreu told The AP the court’s ruling “was not favorable to the heirs of Diego Maradona.”

The trophy is set to be auctioned next Thursday in Paris by the Aguttes auction house.

The Golden Ball was missing for decades after it disappeared in uncertain circumstances and only recently resurfaced. Maradona’s heirs say the trophy was stolen and claimed the current owner wasn’t entitled to sell it. Aguttes said the trophy reappeared in 2016 among other lots that were acquired from a private collection at auction in Paris.

Moreu said the president of the Nanterre court outside Paris considered the current owner of the trophy, identified as Mr. Benchaieb, “should be considered as acting in good faith.”

Benchaieb and Aguttes claimed that when he bought the trophy years ago he was not aware it had been stolen.

Maradona received the award in 1986 at a ceremony at the Lido cab-



In this file photo, Argentina’s soccer star Diego Maradona (left), and West German goalkeeper Harald Schumacher are holding their World Cup Soccer Ball awards while posing with two young soccer players during the Soccer Golden Shoe Award ceremony held in Paris, France, on Nov. 13, 1986. (AP)

aret on the Champs-Élysées. It subsequently disappeared, giving rise to rumors. Some say it was lost during a poker game or sold to pay off debts. Others say Maradona stored it in a safe in a Naples bank that was robbed by local gangsters in 1989 when he played in the Italian league. Maradona’s heirs believe it was stolen from the bank.

Moreu added he and his clients were “both surprised and saddened” by the ruling.

“We intend to use all available

means of recourse between now and June 6,” he said.

Maradona, who died in 2020 at age 60, captained Argentina in its 3-2 win over West Germany in the 1986 final in Mexico City. In a quarterfinal win over England he scored the “Goal of the Century.”

Aguttes said it expects the trophy “to fetch millions due to its uniqueness.”

Bidders will be asked to make a deposit of 150,000 euros (\$161,000) to participate in the auction.

start of the season with a broken toe on her left foot. She did get some work in before the game on the court and told the AP she’s progressing.

Coach Nate Tibbetts said before the game that Griner was out of a boot.

Aces 80, Lynx 66

In Minneapolis, A’ja Wilson had 29 points, 15 rebounds and four blocks, Jackie Young added 19 points and 10 assists, and the Las Vegas Aces beat the Minnesota Lynx.

Las Vegas had its nine-point half-time lead trimmed to 56-54 with 1:28 left in the third quarter before Kate Martin sank a corner 3-pointer from the corner and Wilson beat the third-quarter buzzer with a layup for a 62-56 advantage.

The Aces continued to pull away in the fourth by extending their run to 20-5 to make it 77-61.

Kelsey Plum scored 10 points on 4-of-14 shooting for Las Vegas (4-1). Alysha Clark and Martin each finished with nine points.

Young narrowly missed her fifth straight game with at least 20 points and six assists. She is one of only two WNBA players to accomplish the feat in four consecutive games, joining Arike Ogunbowale in 2019.

Napheesa Collier had 18 points and 13 rebounds for Minnesota (4-2). Courtney Williams and Cecilia Zandalasini each scored 12, and Kayla McBride added 11.

Minnesota announced earlier in the day that forward Diamond Miller underwent successful surgery on her right knee.

PARIS, May 30, (AP): There’s no making up for what Olympic hurdler Lashinda Demus lost on the day she finished .07 seconds behind a Russian opponent who, everyone found out later, was doping.

What the American 400-meter hurdles champion will get is a great day under the Eiffel Tower where she’ll be presented with the gold medal she was denied 12 years ago at the London Olympics.

Demus, now 41 and the mother of four boys, said so much time had passed that she wasn’t all that excited when she learned last year that the medal first captured by Natalya Antyukh would go to her.

“But one thing I did know was that I was on an international stage,” Demus said. “And whatever happens, I wanted to receive this upgrade on an international stage.”

With the help of a lawyer and the determination not to take the IOC’s first offer - normally a presentation at a national or world championship - Demus negotiated a deal to receive

OLYMPICS

the medal on Aug. 9 at the Paris Olympics, at the Champions Park in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower.

This will mark the first time the IOC has held a “reallocation” ceremony at a Summer Games.

Demus will bring her husband and kids along for the trip. She has started a Go Fund Me page to raise money to bring parents, maybe her grandmother and other friends and family.

She said she holds no ill will against the IOC for the decade-plus that it took to get this medal to her. But she wanted more than a mere pro forma commemoration of the moment. What she really wanted was a ceremony at the track stadium, but the IOC told her that wasn’t possible. The Eiffel Tower isn’t a bad backup plan.

“I would have appreciated a little more, I guess, glitz and glam for people who are receiving their medals” belatedly, Demus said. “It’s a work in progress. I’m pushing on in good faith. I’m glad I’m at the forefront in this. I can literally say that I am the trailblazer of this movement.”

Among the others slated to receive medals that day will be Zuzana Hejnová of the Czech Republic and Kaliese Spencer of Jamaica, who finished behind Demus in the 400. Also in the group of 10: American high jumper Erik Kynard, who finished second to a Russian found to be doping.

Demus estimates she lost in the seven figures when it came to what she could have made had she returned home in 2012 as a gold medalist. She had battled injuries all that season



Russia’s Natalya Antyukh, middle, holds the gold medal, United States’ Lashinda Demus, left, the silver medal, and Czech Republic’s Zuzana Hejnová the bronze medal during a ceremony for the women’s 400 hurdles in the Olympic Stadium at the Summer Olympics in London, Aug. 9, 2012. Demus is to be presented in Paris this summer the gold for the race, which was stripped from Antyukh for doping. Demus, now 41 and the mother of four boys, said so much time had passed that she wasn’t all that excited when she learned last year that the medal would go to her. (AP)

and felt getting to the starting line at the Olympics was a victory of sorts.

When Antyukh beat her to the finish line by less than half a step, Demus said it crossed her mind that the Russian had never beaten her before.

“But it wasn’t in my mindset that anyone who beats me is automatically dirty. I didn’t let that infiltrate my thinking,” she said. “I just kind of accepted that I lost and I tried my best to move on. But it was a five- or six-year process of me just getting over failing at something I’d trained my whole life to do.”

Not until details emerged about a widespread Russian doping scandal that began in the early 2010s did Demus start viewing her loss in a different light. Even then, it took years for Antyukh to be tagged for doping.

After stepping away from the sport for a handful of years, Demus is back coaching at Culver City High School near Los Angeles. She works as a clinical researcher for a medical care company. She has 16-year-old twin boys and two more sons, ages 4 and 5.

She said she’s thrilled that she’ll get to feel like a gold medalist this summer at the Olympics, even if the prize will come some 12 years after her race was run.

She also is under no illusions that her journey to gold - 400 meters, plus 4,384 days - will mark a grand turning point in the fight against doping in world sports. Due to doping and, this year, the war in Ukraine, the last Olympics the Russians will have brought a full track team to remains the same 2012 Games that eventually made Demus an Olympic champion.

“It doesn’t break my heart,” she said. “But what comes to mind is that (doping) is never going to leave. I don’t think anything has changed since the big Russian scandal. I think it’s always going to be there.”

Financial difficulties cited

Melbourne Rebels are out of Super Rugby from 2025

MELBOURNE, Australia, May 30, (AP): The Melbourne Rebels have been dumped from Super Rugby due to financial difficulties just as they’ve reached their first playoffs in their 14 seasons.

The Rebels have been in voluntary administration since January with debts owed to creditors exceeding 23 million Australian dollars (\$15.2 million), half of that amount owed to the Australian Taxation Office.

A private consortium put forward a plan to fund the club from 2025-30, which was supported by the administrator, but Rugby Australia voted against the deal. RA decided not to give Melbourne a license to play in the 2025 Super Rugby Pacific.

Staff and players were called to Rebels headquarters on Thursday as they were preparing to fly to Fiji for their last regular-season match against the Drua on Saturday.

“Deadly silent, just absolute devastation. No one said a word,” Rebels coach Kevin Foote said of the players’ reaction. RA chief executive Phil Waugh and chairman Daniel Herbert flew to Melbourne to speak with the team.

It comes as the Rebels are seventh in the standings and guaranteed their first berth in the eight-team playoffs.

“We said we’ve really got the opportunity to finish strong and the group and playing staff are really motivated to do that,” Foote said. “We’re going to hold our heads high and have a crack.”

Waugh said credit should go to the players, who have continued to perform despite the uncertainty facing the club.

Rugby Australia cut staff and took over player and coaching payments for the 2024 season, with the Rebels handing over their competition license.

Most of the leading Rebels players were recruited from the rugby strongholds of Queensland and New South Wales states and the national capital, Canberra. Seven Rebels were at the 2023 Rugby World Cup including captain Rob Leota, front-rowers Taniela Tupou and Jordan Uelese, and backs Andrew Kellaway

RUGBY

In an earlier statement, Rugby Australia said the consortium’s projections for revenue growth and cost savings were “overly optimistic” and requiring additional funding from head office.

“Given the lack of detail made available to RA, the lack of transparency and the significant doubts over the consortium’s proposed financial model, RA has determined that there is an unacceptable level of risk associated with entering into a participation agreement with this consortium for the 2025 Super Rugby Pacific season,” Rugby Australia said.

“RA does not take this decision lightly, however, it must act in the best interests of the game and its stakeholders, and to provide certainty for the Rebels’ players and staff, and all Super Rugby clubs in planning for the 2025 Super Rugby Pacific season.”

The Rebels were due to play the touring British and Irish Lions in July next year between the first and second tests. RA said it was talking to the Lions about a new opponent.



Seattle Storm forward Nneka Ogwumike, (right), is hit on the face by the hand of Washington Mystics forward Myisha Hines-Allen, (left), as they vie for the ball during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Seattle. (AP)



Kuwait Club face Al-Hikma

Financial and administrative reports approved by KBA General Assembly

By Hassan Musa  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: The Kuwait Club will face Al-Hikma in the semi-finals of the Asian Basketball League Championship for the West and Central Continent "Super League" at Lusail Arena in Doha, Qatar, at 6:00. In another semi-final match, the Lebanese team Al-Riyadi will compete against Iran's Shahrdari Gorgan at 3:00 pm. The match between "Al-Abyad" and Al-Hikma promises to be one of the tournament's highlights. German coach Peter Schumers is determined to seize the opportunity to win the continental title and secure a spot in the AFC Champions League. Known for his strategic player recruitment and consistent rotation policy, Schumers ensures his team remains physically and mentally prepared, offering Kuwait a significant advantage.

Meanwhile, the General Assembly of the Kuwait Basketball Association approved the financial and administrative reports for the year ending 2023-2024 and endorsed the work plan for the fiscal year 2024-2025. The meeting,

BASKETBALL

held at the Federation's headquarters in the Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Indoor Hall Complex, saw full attendance from General Assembly members, except for Al-Jahra. Dhari Burgess, President of the Basketball Association, expressed his gratitude to the General Assembly members for their participation and support, which were crucial in the success of the 2023-2024 sports season and the Association's numerous Gulf, Arab, and Asian achievements at both club and team levels.



General Assembly of the Kuwait Basketball Association in progress.

Swiatek survives scare against Osaka

Pole extends Roland Garros winning streak to 16

PARIS, May 30, (AP): Iga Swiatek played like the current No. 1 and the two-time defending champion at the French Open. No surprise there. That Naomi Osaka looked like the former No. 1 that she is - and on clay, no less - amounted to an announcement that she is still quite capable of elite tennis.

Surging down the stretch as Osaka faded, Swiatek saved a match point and grabbed the last five games to sneak her way to a 7-6 (1), 1-6, 7-5 victory in the second round of the French Open on Wednesday night in a thrill-a-minute contest befitting two women who both own four Grand Slam titles.

"For sure, this match was really intense. Much more intense for the second round than I ever expected. For sure, I'll be more ready next time," Swiatek said. "Naomi played amazing tennis. ...

I'm happy that she's back and she's playing well." For Swiatek, this extended her Roland Garros winning streak to 16 matches as she pursues a third consecutive trophy at the clay-court major. For Osaka, who cried when she left the court after letting a 5-2 lead in the concluding set slip away, this amounted to a return to her big-hitting best.

They went back-and-forth for nearly three hours as rain loudly pelted the outside of the closed roof at Court Philippe Chatrier - showers forced the postponements of 23 singles matches until Thursday - and a riveted, if hardly full, crowd alternated their support between the two players. Sometimes, spectators called out before a point was done, prompting admonishment from chair umpire Aurélie Tourte during the match. And from Swiatek afterward.

"Sometimes, under a lot of pressure, when you scream something during the rally or right before the return, it's really, really hard to be focused," Swiatek said. "The stakes are big and there is

a lot of money here to win. So losing a few points may change a lot. So please, guys, if you can support us between the rallies but not during, that would be really, really amazing." Osaka served for the victory at 5-3 in the final set, and was a point away from winning, but she put a backhand into the net. Soon, when Osaka missed another backhand, this one long, Swiatek finally converted a break point on her 10th chance of that set, and they played on.

Maybe the lack of high-level matches caught up to Osaka, because her mistakes continued to mount, including a double-fault that put Swiatek in control 6-5. Swiatek, who has led the WTA rankings for nearly every week since April 2022, then held serve one last time.

"I don't necessarily feel like I regret anything," Osaka said.

TENNIS

Still, this was, without a doubt, Osaka's top performance since she returned to the tour in January after 15 months away while becoming a mother. (Her daughter, who is 10 months old now, accompanied Osaka to Paris and recently started walking.) "I was watching Iga win this tournament last year, and I was pregnant. It was just my dream to be able to play her," Osaka said. "When I kind of think of it like that, I think I'm doing pretty well. And I'm also just trying not to be too hard on myself. I feel like I played her on her better surface. I'm a hard-court kid, so I would love to play her on my surface and see what happens." Because of the weather, only nine matches were completed Wednesday, and winners included Coco Gauff, Ons Jabeur, Sofia Kenin, Carlos Alcaraz, Stefanos Tsitsipas and Andrey Rublev.

It's been a few years since Osaka played this capably and confidently, hammering big serves at up to 122 mph (197 kph) and imposing groundstrokes. Her quick-strike capabilities were on full display: Osaka won 82 of the 139 points (59%) that lasted four strokes or fewer, and she finished with a 54-37 advantage in total winners.

All of those familiar mannerisms were back, too. She turned her back to Swiatek to reset between points, hopped in place, tugged at her pink visor's brim and slapped her palm on her thigh. Osaka celebrated points by shaking a clenched fist and shouting "Come on!" She grabbed nine of 10 games to dominate the second set and lead 3-0 in the third. Then 4-1. Then 5-2.

As one ball or another would fly past Swiatek, zipped near a corner or right at a line, she turned toward her guest box and shot a look of confusion or concern in the direction of her coach and her sports psychologist.

She helped usher in a change in the way athletes, sports fans and society at large understood the importance of mental health - and prompted those in charge of various sports, including tennis, to take the issue seriously and try to accommodate and protect them better.

Osaka entered with an 0-4 record on the red stuff against opponents ranked in the top 10 and never has been past the third round at Roland Garros. This also would have been her first win anywhere against a top-10 opponent since January 2020.

Instead, though, it is Swiatek who moves on and continues her bid to become the first woman with three championships in a row in Paris since Justine Henin in 2007-09.

In the men's draw, Carlos Alcaraz progressed to the round of 32 for his fourth successive trip to Roland-Garros, winning a gripping 6-3, 6-4, 2-6, 6-2 battle against Jesper de Jong under the roof of Court Philippe-Chatrier.



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz plays a shot against Netherlands' Jesper de Jong during their second round match of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris. (AP)

Dortmund is aiming to pull off upset

Real eye record-extending 15th European Cup

LONDON, May 30, (AP): Real Madrid is going for a record-extending 15th European Cup.

Borussia Dortmund is aiming to pull off one of soccer's biggest upsets in recent memory.

Whoever wins the Champions League final on Saturday will be defying the odds in their own way.

Madrid's domination of European club soccer's biggest prize confounds belief. Its record of 14 titles is twice as many as its closest rival AC Milan.

"The club has created its history in this competition," coach Carlo Ancelotti says.

Madrid's record in the Champions League era is even more impressive: Eight wins since the tournament was

It is a clash between the old money and glamor of Madrid and the savvy approach of a Dortmund team that has found an alternative way to compete with Europe's superpowers.

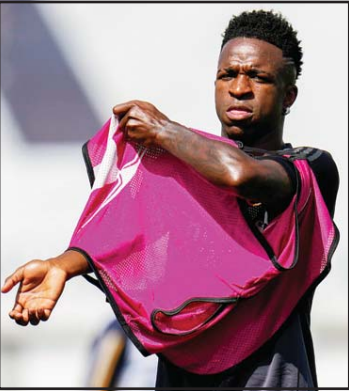
There is no better illustration of the contrast between the rivals than Jude Bellingham, who swapped Dortmund for Madrid last year in a deal worth up to \$139 million.

Bellingham could well be the match-winner, having helped fire Madrid to the Spanish title in a spectacular debut season.

Yet, in his absence, Dortmund stands on the brink of adding to its lone Champions League triumph in 1997 in its third final ever.

Selling the likes of Bellingham is part of the German club's strategy of buying emerging talents and then cashing in.

A year earlier, it was Erling Haaland and who was sold to Man City. The roll call of stars who have passed through the club includes Jadon Sancho, Christian Pulisic, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, Ousmane



Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior attends a training session during a Media Opening day in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

Dembele and Robert Lewandowski.

Not that Dortmund represents a fairytale in the strictest of terms. Forbes ranks it as the 12th most valuable soccer team in the world in its most recent rich list. But it represents a different way of competing at the top.



Former Chelsea player Mikel John Obi who won the Champions League final with Chelsea poses with the trophy at the opening of the Champions Festival in Trafalgar Square in London. The Champions League final between Dortmund and Real Madrid will take place at Wembley Stadium on Saturday June 1. (AP)

Irsan to continue with Kazma Club

By Hassan Musa  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 30: Kazma Club has renewed the contract of Jordanian professional Ahmed Irsan for another season, at the request of head coach Mohamed Dehelis.

Irsan impressed last season, earning the approval of the Board of Directors as well as the technical and administrative staff, marking his fourth season with the team.

Regarding other professionals, Algerian Imad Eddine Ezzi is close to a renewal, while the club is unlikely to renew contracts with Frenchman Reda Bencha and Nigerian John Teddy.

In other news, Al-Fahaheel

SOCCER

has finalized its professional roster for the upcoming season. The club has agreed to retain Brazilian Vitor, who will join his compatriots Julio Cesar and Williamsburg, as well as the Ivorian player. Meanwhile, Syrian Nasouh Nakdali is no longer in the plans of head coach Firas Al-Khatib, and has been replaced by former Jahra striker Rodrigo.

Al-Fahaheel has also begun negotiations with several local players. The club has reached an agreement with Nayef Zuwaid, who played for Al-Qadisiyah last season, and is in serious talks to sign Al-Arabi player Sultan Al-Anazi. The administration is also monitoring other local players based on recommendations from the technical staff.



Ahmed Irsan

Best of the Rest

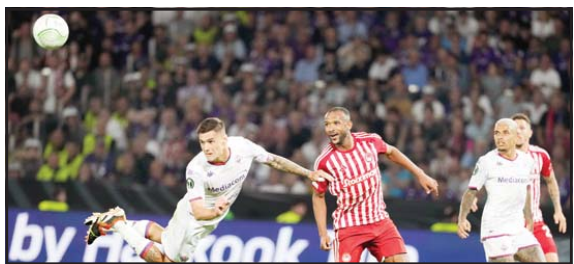
**Reports approved:** The General Assembly of the Kuwait Diving and Rescue Club approved the administrative and financial reports for the fiscal year ending last March 31.

This approval came during the annual ordinary general assembly meeting held last Tuesday at Al-Saraawi Diwan. The meeting was attended by the Chairman of the Club's Board of Directors, Eng. Talal Al-Sarhan, along with members of the Board of Directors and the General Assembly.

The club's secretary, Muhammad Al-Saraawi, commented that the past season was challenging for the club due to the suspension of the annual budget and the Sports Authority's decision to dissolve the club. However, a fair decision eventually reinstated the club. Despite this positive development, the annual subsidy has yet to be disbursed.

**Gremio stay alive in Copa:** Brazil's Gremio kept alive their hopes of advancing to the Copa Libertadores knockout stage with a 4-0 home victory over Bolivian side the Strongest on Wednesday. Venezuelan playmaker Yeferson Sotelo opened the scoring with a 14th-minute strike before Joao Pedro, Everton and Gustavo Nunes added second-half goals at Couto Pereira stadium in Curitiba. (Xinhua)





Olympiakos' Ayoub El Kaabi (center), watches Fiorentina's Lucas Martinez Quarta jump for the ball during the Conference League final soccer match between Olympiakos FC and ACF Fiorentina at OPAP Arena in Athens, Greece. (AP)

# Sports

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## Olympiakos clinch first European title

El Kaabi provides dramatic ending against Fiorentina

ATHENS, Greece, May 30, (AP): Setting off wild celebrations in Athens, Olympiakos won Greece's first European club title by beating Fiorentina 1-0 with a goal in extra time of the Europa Conference League final.

Ayoub El Kaabi provided the dramatic ending, diving to nudge in a last-gasp goal in the second period of extra time, with fans erupting in celebration after a lengthy wait for a VAR check for offside.

"Praise be to God, we promised our supporters we'd do this today and we did it," El Kaabi said.

The Morocco striker - who finished as the competition's top scorer - struck in the 116th minute of the match and dropped to his knees as he waited to see if the goal would stand after he had met a cross from Santiago Hezze.

The goal decided a game that had looked destined for a penalty shootout following an energetic but largely risk-free encounter at AEK Arena, and condemned Fiorentina and its coach Vincenzo Italiano to a second straight defeat in the final of the Europa Conference League after losing last year to West Ham.

### SOCCER

"We created chances and had the opportunity to lift the cup but unfortunately it didn't happen - I'm sorry," Italiano said. "In Europe it's not an easy thing to get this far and lose."

Olympiakos coach Jose Luis Mendilibar secured a second straight European title after winning the Europa League with Sevilla last season.

"It's an honor to have made all these people happy, I feel immense joy and happiness to have made people feel this way and I dedicate it to them," Mendilibar said.

"We have achieved something that our club has never achieved before. We will celebrate it and celebrate it the way we should. Then we will start working on what comes next." Tens of thousands of Olympiakos fans joined boisterous celebrations across the Greek capital after attending outdoor viewing parties. Youths held up lit flares in the port city of Piraeus, near Athens, where the team is based.

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis described Olympiakos as "a true legend," adding in an online post: "Olympiakos has won the Europa Conference League and made history! A sensational night for the club itself, but also for Greek football as a whole."

The third-tier European club competition took place amid a massive security operation, with some 5,000 police officers forming concentric cordons around a northern area of the capital - amid Europe-wide security concerns this summer for major sporting events including the Paris Olympics and European soccer championship in Germany.

The final was briefly marred by scuffles between Fiorentina fans inside the stadium and riot police next to them.

Although the visitors dominated the early stages of the final, Fiorentina goalkeeper Pietro Terracciano kept his team in the game with two impressive fingertip saves to block on-target shots from Daniel Podence in the fourth



Olympiakos' Kostas Fortounis lifts the trophy after winning the Conference League final soccer match between Olympiakos FC and ACF Fiorentina at OPAP Arena in Athens, Greece. Olympiakos won 1-0. (AP)



Players battling for the ball.

minute and Stevan Jovetic in the sixth minute of extra time.

El Kaabi, who scored a total of 11 goals in the competition, had been largely sidelined in the match by Fiorentina's unyielding four-man defense.

Olympiakos players celebrated with 15,000 fans after the game, some holding their young children as golden confetti was fired into the air around the awards podium.

"It's the best emotion I've felt so far in my career," defender Panagiotis Retsos said. "I've had a lot of ups-and-downs but I'm very, very happy to be here."

By Khaled El Anzi  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

ZAGREB, May 30: Kuwait has been assigned to Group C, alongside Qatar, France, and Austria, for the upcoming Handball World Championship. The championship is set to take place next year in Croatia, Norway, and Denmark in Zagreb, Croatia.

Kuwait qualified for the World Cup finals by finishing fourth in the 21st Asian Championship held in

Bahrain last January. This will be the ninth time the team has qualified for the World Cup, with previous appearances in 1982, 1995, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, and 2009 in Croatia.

### HANDBALL

Commenting on the draw, our national team coach, Saeed Hegazy, said, "Kuwait has been placed in a challenging group, but World Cup

groups are always difficult." He added, "We are preparing rigorously, as all teams will be competitive. We must adhere to the Federation's roadmap, which includes several friendly matches."

In other news, Kuwait Club achieved a significant victory over Al-Qadisiya, avenging its previous defeat with a 34-26 win at the end of the Premier League's first leg. The match took place in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex. This

win widened its lead over Kazma to seven points, bringing it closer to securing the league shield for the 12th consecutive time.

In other matches, Kazma defeated Burgan 29-25, while Al Arabi and Al Salmiya ended in a 28-28 draw.

Meanwhile, former national team star Faisal Siwan, invited the president of the Sulaibikhat Club, Saad Enad, to attend his retirement festival, which will be held in the final round of the Premier League on June 9.

### Handball World Cup Draw

**Group A:** Germany, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Switzerland  
**Group B:** Denmark, Italy, Algeria, and Tunisia  
**Group C:** Kuwait, France, Austria, and Qatar  
**Group D:** Hungary, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, and

Guinea  
**Group E:** Norway, Brazil, Portugal, and the USA  
**Group F:** Sweden, Spain, Japan, and Chile  
**Group G:** Slovenia, Cuba, Iceland, and Cape Verde  
**Group H:** Egypt, Croatia, Argentina, and Bahrain

## Messi scores, but Miami's streak ends in loss to Atlanta

FORT LAUDERDALE, May 30, (AP): Lionel Messi scored yet again. It was the lone real highlight for Inter Miami, as its 10-match Major League Soccer winning streak was ended by an Atlanta United side that got its first league win in nearly two months.

Saba Lobjanidze scored once in each half, Jamal Thiare helped put the game away with a goal in the 73rd minute and Atlanta United snapped a nine-match MLS winless streak with a 3-1 victory on Wednesday night.

Atlanta United was 0-5-4 in MLS play since beating Chicago 3-0 on March 31. But it never trailed on Wednesday, with Lobjanidze scoring

ern Conference and the overall MLS standings over Cincinnati (10-3-3, 33 points). Cincinnati lost to Nashville on Wednesday night, missing a chance to take the top spot.

"We were missing a gear," Inter Mi-

ami coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino said through an interpreter.

Inter Miami entered Wednesday with a 7-0-3 mark in its last 10 MLS matches. It is now 10-0-4 when allowing two goals or less in MLS play this

season - and 0-3-0 when surrendering three goals or more.

"I'd say it was a night where the team went backwards from other matches," Martino said.

So, Wednesday was a dud. The first half of the season, though, has gone largely to plan.

With 34 points through exactly half the MLS schedule - matching its total from all of the 2023 season, when Messi joined around the midway point and helped the team win Leagues Cup but couldn't get it into the playoffs - Inter Miami is on pace for 68 points this season.

Mathematically, yes, that's correct. Realistically, well, probably not so much.

The plan, for now, calls for Messi to play at least some minutes when Inter Miami plays host to St. Louis on Saturday. After that, Messi will be trading Inter Miami's pink kit for the blue of Argentina - playing for country instead of club for a bit.

Copa America - the 16-team tournament which runs from June 20 through July 14 - is looming, with Messi set to play for defending champion Argentina and Suarez a possibility to play for Uruguay.



Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi (right), runs with the ball during the first half of the team's MLS soccer match against Atlanta United in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (AP)

## Pinto 'replaces' Al-Awadi with Al-Asmaa in the Kuwait squad

By Khaled El Anzi  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

BANGKOK, May 30: Kuwait's national team coach, Rui Pinto, has added Salmiya club player Moaz Al-Asmaa to the Kuwait squad, replacing Al-Arabi striker Salman Al-Awadi.

According to Kuwait national team director Abdul Rahman Al-Mousa, the Asian Football Confederation's Disciplinary Committee rejected the Kuwaiti Federation's appeal regarding striker Salman Al-Awadi's participation in the matches against India and Afghanistan in the joint Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup in the United States and the 2027 Asian Cup in Saudi Arabia. Al-Awadi had received a red card during the AFC U-23 Cup match against Malaysia in Qatar last March and April.

### SOCCER

Al-Asmaa, who impressed with his performance last season for Al-Salmiya, has gained the trust of the national team's technical staff. He is expected to join the team's training today or tomorrow at their camp in Bangkok, Thailand.

The Kuwait national team continues its training at the STB Stadium in Bangkok as part of its preparatory camp, which began last Wednesday. They will leave for Calcutta next week to face the Indian national team on Thursday in the fifth round of the first group competitions of the joint Asian qualifiers. They will then return



Moaz Al-Asmaa

to host Afghanistan on June 11 in the sixth and final round. The group also includes the Qatari national team.

Kuwait currently holds fourth place in the first group standings with 3 points. The Qatari team leads with 12 points, followed by India and Afghanistan, each with 4 points but separated by goal difference.

**Squad:** Muhammad Dahham, Faisal Zayed, Youssef Nasser, Saud Al-Hoshan, Sami Al-Sanea, Fahd Al-Hajri, Ahmed Al-Dhafiri, Redha Hani, Mishari Ghannam, Rashid Al-Dosari, Khaled Ibrahim, Abdulaziz Wadi, Eid Al-Rashidi, Mubarak Al-Fanini, Ali Khalaf, Sultan Al-Anazi, Badr Tariq, Suleiman Abdul-Ghafour, Hassan Hamdan, Abdul-Rahman Al-Fadhli, Athbi Shehab, Mahdi Dashti, Bandar Boursli, Hamad Harbi, and Salman Burmese.