



Sixty-one sign candidacy for election



Britain's King Charles III sits after being crowned with St Edward's Crown by The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby during his coronation ceremony in Westminster Abbey, London, Saturday, May 6, 2023. (AP)

NewsWatch

IRBIL: The Joint Operations Command declared on Friday that three members of the so-called "Islamic State" had been killed in a military operation in the south of **Kirkuk** governorate in northern **Iraq**.

The command information apparatus said in a statement that security forces carried an air strike in **Wadi Al-Shai**, demolishing a number of hide-outs and killing "three terrorists." The regular forces seized and confiscated equipment, hand-grenades and some cash money.

The US-commanded international coalition had declared that recurrent attacks by the IS, named in Arabic as Daesh, had noticeably subsided over the past months. (KUNA)

BAGHDAD: Iraqi security forces have busted a group of drug dealers and confiscated more than 2.5 tons of ecstasy pills in the capital.

The National Security Apparatus said in a statement on Friday that the squad had carried out a rapid operation in Baghdad, detaining six persons involved in the illicit drug trade and burst into a huge warehouse packed with more than 12 million ecstatic pills (equivalent to 2.5 tons of narcotics).

The security apparatus released a video clip, showing detention of the suspected drug dealers and seizure of the drugs. (KUNA)

BRUSSELS: Belgian authorities said Friday they have arrested an Iraqi on charges of murder, war crimes and crimes against humanity over bombings that took place in **Baghdad** more than a decade ago.

The federal prosecutor's office identified the suspect as a person in their 40s who has been living in **Belgium** since 2015. It said the suspect was believed to belong to a cell of the al-Qaeda terrorist network that was "partly responsible for several bombings in the Green Zone of Baghdad in 2009 and 2010, which killed at least 376 people and injured more than 2,300."

The suspect was charged with "several murders with terrorist intent, participation in the activities of a terrorist group, war crimes and crimes against humanity." (AP)

WASHINGTON: US President **Joe Biden** is dispatching one of his top advisers to **Saudi Arabia** to meet with Crown Prince **Mohammed bin Salman**, the de facto leader of the oil-rich kingdom, later this week.

White House national security adviser **Jake Sullivan** said Thursday he will travel to Saudi Arabia on Saturday for talks

with Saudi officials and will also meet with his counterparts from the **United Arab Emirates** and **India** during his visit.

Sullivan said he would "discuss new areas of cooperation between **New Delhi** and the Gulf, as well as the United States and the rest of the region." India and UAE last year signed a comprehensive economic partnership aimed at improving ties between the two countries. (AP)

DUBAI: Iran executed an Iranian-Swedish dual national Saturday accused of masterminding a 2018 attack on a military parade that killed at least 25 people, one of several enemies of **Tehran** seized abroad in recent years amid tensions with the West.

Farajollah Cha'ab, also known as **Habib Asyoud**, had been a leader of the Arab Struggle Movement for the Liberation of Ahwaz, an Arab separatist movement that has conducted oil pipeline bombings and other attacks in Iran's oil-rich **Khuzestan** province. That group had claimed the 2018 attack in its immediate aftermath. (AP)

TEHRAN: Iran has expelled four Azeri diplomats amid ongoing tensions with neighboring **Azerbaijan**, Iranian media reported on Friday.

Iran's semi-official news outlets did not provide details except to say that the four had been working in Azerbaijan's Embassy in Tehran and its consulate in the northwestern city of **Tabriz**.

Last month, Azerbaijan expelled four Iranian diplomats from **Baku**.

Relations between Tehran and Baku, long chilly, soured further after a gunman in January stormed Azerbaijan's embassy in Iran's capital, killing its security chief and wounding two guards. (AP)

ATHENS: Israel's defense minister claimed Thursday that **Iran** could have enough enriched uranium for five nuclear weapons, and warned Tehran that proceeding to weapons-grade enrichment could "ignite the region."

His remarks echoed international concerns, which have mounted over the past months, on Tehran enriching uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels. Experts have said that the Islamic Republic has enough fuel to build "several" atomic bombs if it chooses.

"Make no mistake, Iran will not be satisfied by a single nuclear bomb," Israeli Defense Minister **Yoav Gallant** said Thursday during a visit to Athens. (AP)



His Highness the Amir's Representative, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met King Charles III at Buckingham Palace on Friday. His Highness delivered the best wishes of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the eve of the king's coronation. He also recalled the UK's special status to Kuwait's leadership and people, congratulating the king on the occasion and praising his role in strengthening bilateral relations. The king in turn thanked the Kuwaiti Crown Prince on the gesture, which he said reflected the depth of ties between the two countries.

Sworn to serve

Charles III crowned

LONDON, May 6, (Agencies): King Charles III was crowned Saturday at Westminster Abbey, receiving the bejeweled St. Edward's Crown in a ceremony built on ancient tradition at a time when the monarchy is striving to remain relevant in a fractured modern Britain.

Trumpets sounded inside the medieval abbey and the congregation shouted "God save the king!" at a service attended by more than 2,000 guests, including world leaders, aristocrats and celebrities. Outside, thousands of troops, tens of thousands of spectators and a smattering of protesters converged.

In Kuwait, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Saturday addressed a cable of congratulations to King Charles III, the Monarch of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, on his coronation.

His Highness the Amir sent his in his name and on behalf of the people of Kuwait.

He praised the solid and historic relations between the State of Kuwait and the UK, affirmed his aspiration to strengthen further the bonds of friendship, and promote cooperation between the two countries in various domains in the shadow of the Kuwait-UK

strategic partnership.

His Highness the Amir wished King Charles III all the best, the UK and Northern Ireland optimum progress and prosperity.

The Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, on Saturday attended the ceremonial crowning of King Charles III as the Monarch of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland held at Westminster Abbey in London.

In displays of royal power straight out of the Middle Ages, Charles was presented with an orb, a sword and scepter and had the solid gold, bejeweled St. Edward's Crown placed atop his head as he sat upon the 700-year-old oak Coronation Chair.

In front of world leaders, foreign royals, British aristocrats and stars, Charles declared: "I come not to be served but to serve." Inside the medieval abbey, trumpets sounded and the congregation of more than 2,000 shouted "God save the king!" Outside, thousands of troops, hundreds of thousands of spectators and a smattering of protesters converged.

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Envoys begin talks

Kuwait sends aid plane

KUWAIT CITY, May 6, (Agencies): The State of Kuwait on Saturday dispatched a third Air Force aircraft carrying 10 tons of food supplies to violence-hit Sudan.

The aid plane is part of the recently announced airlift aiming at helping the Sudanese people amid their country's tough circumstances due to ongoing violence there, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Emergency Chief Yusuf Al-Mearaj told KUNA.

He hoped that the Kuwaiti initiative would contribute to easing out the suffering and woes of the Sudanese people in the aftermath of the ongoing fighting between the Sudanese army and paramilitary forces in Khartoum and several other cities.

He vowed that the KRCS would carry on dispatching humanitarian and relief aid to affected people in Sudan.

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said on Thursday that Kuwait's four-day aid airlift to Sudan came at the behest of the country's political leadership, and reflected its solidarity with brotherly and sisterly countries.

He said the initiative is aimed at dispatching relief aid to the Sudanese people due to the current circumstances in their country.

In this context, a committee of the ministries of foreign affairs, defense, finance and health as well as the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) was formed, with a view to ensuring the immediate delivery of relief and medical aid to the Sudanese people.

Vying for power

Meanwhile, Qatar flew a relief flight into Sudan carrying some 40 tons of food and left with 150 evacuees early Saturday as fighting continued between two generals vying for power in the African nation.

The Qatari Emiri Air Force C-17 Globemaster touched down in Port Sudan, some 670 kilometers (415 miles) northeast of Sudan's violence-torn capital of Khartoum. The port city has been spared in the fighting and has become one of the few safe transit points out of the country, whether by air or by ships crossing the Red Sea heading to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Evacuees boarded the C-17 bearing the livery of Qatar Airways, the energy-rich nation's long-haul carrier. Those who spoke to The Associated Press described facing "very scary, terrifying" conditions trying to leave Khartoum for the airfield.

"We still faced many difficulties because of the lack of security in the country due to the security forces being occupied with the battles. We were faced by mobs on the way," said Nemat Allah Saber Ibrahim, a Sudanese doctor evacuated who lives in Qatar. "Other than the burden of travel and the different checkpoints by both security forces and Rapid Support Forces. But thank God we have arrived safely to the Port of Sudan."

In latest developments, Sudan's warring sides began talks Saturday that aim to firm up a shaky cease-fire after three weeks of fierce fighting that has killed hundreds and pushed the African country to the brink of collapse, the United States and Saudi Arabia said.

The negotiations, the first between the Sudanese military and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, or RSF, since the fighting broke out on April 15, were underway in Saudi Arabia's coastal city of Jeddah, on the Red Sea, according to a joint Saudi-American statement.

The talks are part of a diplomatic initiative proposed by the kingdom and the U.S. that aims to stop the fighting, which has turned Sudan's capital, Khartoum, and other urban areas into battlefields and pushed hundreds of thousands from their homes.

Work underway

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, May 6: A total of 61 citizens, including one woman, filed their candidacies for the 2023 parliamentary elections on Friday and Saturday – first two days of the 10-day registration period for candidates.

Following are the 30 candidates who registered on Friday:

First Constituency: Ahmed Lari, Osama Al-Shaheen and Hassan Ibrahim Bu Abbas

Second Constituency: Hamad Al-Harshani, Hamad Al-Matar, Salem Rashed Al-Saleh, Saad Khalid Al-Fajji, Abdulwahab Al-Essa, Fahd Sayyah Bu Sheba, Mona Muhammad Al-Kandari and Nawaf Al-Azmi

Third Constituency: Ibrahim Dashti, Saadoun Hammad, Fares Al-Otaibi, Mahmoud Khamis Al-Failakawi and Hani Hassan Ali Husain

Fourth Constituency: Badr Shallal Al-Mutairi, Badr Nasser Al-Mujaweb, Bakr Badi Al-Rashedi, Khalifa Muhammad Al-Khalifa, Salah Muhammad Al-Harbi and Ali Jaber Al-Dhufairi

Fifth Constituency: Fawaz Meteb Al-Daihani, Khalid Rashed Al-Saddi, Khalid Al-Otaibi, Saad Abdullah Al-Kandari, Saleh Faleh Al-Azmi, Abdullah Ibrahim Al-Tamimi, Faisal Muhammad Al-Kandari and Marzouq Faleh Al-Hebeini

Candidates

The 31 candidates who registered on Saturday are as follows:

First Constituency: Jamal Sulaiman Al-Qabaie, Husain Nasser Al-Heraiti, Saleh Ahmed Ashour, Ali Hassan Jaafar and Ali Husain Muhammad

Second Constituency: Ahmed Muh-sen Al-Shatti, Badr Husain Ashour, Thamer Khalid Al-Anzi, Khalil Husain Al-Saleh, Shuaib Ali Shaaban, Farz Mohammad Al-Daihani, Faleh Faraj Al-Mutairi, Fahd Ayed Al-Benyam and Muhammad Lafi Al-Azmi

Third Constituency: Jarrah Khalid Al-Fawzan

Fourth Constituency: Badr Sayyar Al-Shemmari, Fayeze Ghannam Al-Jomhour, Faleh Sultan Al-Mutairi, Fawaz Soud Al-Azmi, Mubarak Haif Al-Hajraf and Marzouq Sultan Al-Mutairi

Fifth Constituency: Ahmed Mutairi Al-Azmi, Jaber Saad Al-Azmi, Jaber Awad Al-Mutairi, Khalil Muhammad Al-Obaidli, Rashed Fares Al-Azmi, Soud Al-Asfour Al-Hajri, Abdulhadi Hadi Al-Azmi, Faleh Abdullah Al-Subaie, Majed Musaed Al-Mutairi and Nasser Saad Al-Doussari

Meanwhile, Minister of Oil and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Badr Al-Mullah resigned as he intends to run for the parliamentary elections.

Former MP and Third Constituency candidate Saadoun Hammad said political instability has been hindering achievements. He intends to submit a bill on increasing the citizens' salaries and granting incentive to all citizens like the KD3,000 given to retirees earlier. He added that other Gulf countries have had remarkable achievements, because they enjoy political stability even if they have no parliament.

He called for ensuring justice and transparency of parliamentary elections by using projectors to show the counting of votes to the citizens and media.

Former MP and First Constituency candidate Osama Al-Shaheen affirmed his commitment to push for the implementation of reforms. He stressed the need to break the connection between power and wealth in order to allocate public funds in the interest of citizens, instead of a few traders and influential individuals.

Former MP and Fifth Constituency candidate Khalid Al-Otaibi said the 2022 election was the fairest ever, as it was carried out according to the address in the civil identification cards of voters and there was no vote-buying considering the former MPs accused of buying votes did not win in that election.

Elected

Former MP and Fifth Constituency Marzouq Al-Hebeini candidate believes Ahmed Al-Saadoun will most likely be elected as National Assembly speaker if he wins in the election.

Al-Hebeini chaired the inauguration session of the 2022 Parliament, during which Al-Saadoun was elected speaker. He then unveiled his plan to run for deputy speaker if he wins a seat in the next legislature.

On the other hand, the Peace and Justice Alliance chose former MP Saleh Ashour as their candidate for the First Constituency and former MP Khalil Al-Saleh for the Second Constituency.

Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Anas Al-Saleh announced that he will not stand for the elections due to judicial and political issues that affected the parliamentary path in recent months. He stressed the need for the executive and legislative authorities to carefully study the reasons behind the frequent political crises, which negatively affected the interests of the public.

In addition, acting Assistant Under-secretary for Publishing Affairs at the Ministry of Information Lafi Al-Sebaie has affirmed that the ministry is keen on implementing decision number 17/2023 regarding the media coverage of the parliamentary election.

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ABK holds First Quarter 2023 Analyst Conference Call

— Details Page 7 —

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:35	Asr	15:20
Sunrise ..	05:02	Maghrib ..	18:27
Zohr	11:45	Isha	19:46

Local

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

Great scope for tourism boost: Al-Serafi

Unified visa for Gulf states like Europe’s ‘Schengen’ on the cards

KUWAIT CITY, May 6: Gulf experts and officials working in the field of tourism, who participated in the Arab Travel Exhibition in Dubai, affirmed that they plan to make the Gulf region a “Schengen” region similar to Europe by launching unified tourism packages that attract travelers from abroad to multiple tourist stations in the region, according to the website “Zawya”, reports Al-Qabas daily.

During one of the exhibition’s seminars, the Bahraini Tourism Minister Fatima Al-Serafi revealed that joint talks between the countries of the region and international organizations have begun about the possibility of granting a unified Gulf visa to tourists, similar to the “Schengen” visa in the European Union.



Al-Serafi

She said, “What we saw of tourist demand in the Gulf region during the World Cup had a multiplying tourism and economic impact on the entire region.”

Minister Al-Serafi highlighted the benefits of the unified tourism destination strategy for the Gulf countries.

She said, “When we announced the 2026 tourism strategy last year, we aimed to receive 8.3 million tourists, but we were surprised by the arrival of about 10 million tourists to the country. This was prompted by a major initiative we took last year to promote tourism to Bahrain along with other Gulf countries, starting with Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Promotion

We noticed that the joint promotion of Bahrain as a unified tourist destination led to an increase in the number of travelers to the country, in addition to an increase in the diversity of the coming nationalities.”

Al-Serafi acknowledged that joint talks between the countries of the region and international organizations had started about the possibility of granting a unified Gulf visa to tourists,

similar to the “Schengen” visa in the European Union.

She added, “What we saw of tourist turnout in the Gulf region during the World Cup had a multiplying tourism and economic impact on the entire region. The tourism experience that Saudi Arabia went through during the tournament was a great catalyst for the future of tourism in Saudi Arabia. There are discussions among the countries of the region about how to achieve joint tourism cooperation, because we are aware of the great value that it can achieve in the future for the entire Gulf region.”

Belongs

Meanwhile, the CEO of the Saudi Tourism Authority Fahad Hamid al-Din said, “The Saudi Tourism Authority believes that tourism belongs to the entire Gulf region, not just Saudi Arabia.

Travelers around the world look at the Gulf region as a whole, and this is how we should all think of the Gulf countries. The success of any Gulf state contributes to the success of the entire region.

We have seen how the FIFA World Cup presented a wonderful example of the success of mass tourism in the Gulf region, and this gave us a strong impetus for collective and joint action in the future success of the tourism sector.”

In this regard, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy for Foreign Trade Affairs in the UAE Abdullah Al-Saleh said, The “Schengen” tourism strategy for the Gulf region also led to an increase in the UAE’s preferences as a major tourist destination over the past years.

We have seven emirates in the country, and each emirate has developed itself as a tourist destination. These seven emirates compete with each other to attract tourists in a healthy way, which adds great tourism value to the country in general.”

It is worth highlighting that, while Qatar hosted the FIFA World Cup late last year and witnessed a large influx of tourists and fans from all over the world, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain also witnessed a large tourist turnout because of the tournament.

Weather

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Hot and relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind to southerly wind with speeds of 12-45 km/h with a chance for rising dust over

open areas.
By Night: Mild and relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate southeasterly wind to light variable wind with speeds of 08-30 km/h.
Station Max Exp Min Rec
Kuwait City 36 25

Kuwait Airport	38	16
Abdaly	39	17
Jahra	38	22
Salmiyah	34	25
Ahmadi	32	26
Nuwaisib	36	18
Wafra	38	16

‘We seek Kuwait alliance’

Global sustainability, tackling crises: UNGA president

KUWAIT CITY, May 6, (KUNA): The United Nations seeks “alliance” and “cooperation” on achieving 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), Security Council reforms and finding solutions to global crises, a visiting UN official said.

Both Kuwait and Austria’s ambassadors to the UN had been nominated, earlier this year, to spearhead efforts to introduce reforms to the Security Council, President of the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly, Csaba Korosi, mentioned in an interview with KUNA and

Kuwait TV.

“I came here to seek alliance and seek cooperation of Kuwait for this huge impactful transformation of humanity with the participation of the United Nations ... transformation for sustainability,” indicated Korosi, affirming that such collaboration was needed to address all challenges whether caused by natural disasters or man-made conflicts.

Korosi indicated that the Kuwaiti government was very forthcoming when it came to cooperation with the UN on various issues, expressing the desire to continue coordinating with Kuwait on a multitude of matters.

On Kuwait’s 60th anniversary of celebrating its membership in the UN, the President commended the Gulf country’s role in the international organization,

noting that Kuwait knew the value of the UN and its importance to people around the globe.

He said that Kuwait’s liberation from the Iraqi invasion was partly due to extensive collaborative efforts at the UN and other international organizations.

“Kuwait is not only a consumer of the benefits of the multilateral cooperation ... You are a huge contributor. Kuwait is known in the United Nations as a force of moderation, as force of mediation, as a force of providing a platform for sorting out some of the debated issues including some of the very difficult humanitarian issues,” stated Korosi who thanked the Gulf State on the behalf of the UN members for its crucial humanitarian role worldwide.

In regard to his meeting with Kuwait’s Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the UNGA President revealed that issues of security, stability, and cooperative nature related to the region were discussed.

Crises in Syria, Yemen, Ukraine, Sudan and the plight of the Palestinian refugees were also touched upon, added the official.

He went on to say challenges to the 2030 UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) and the debt crisis facing many countries were also discussed during the meeting with Sheikh Salem.

On human rights in Kuwait and the Gulf region, Korosi said, “I see a very encouraging progress in the Gulf countries particularly when it comes to the education of the young ... I see very encouraging intencancies of the empowerment of the women. I would like to congratulate your country (Kuwait) ... You are a very progressive country within the GCC when it comes to the involvement of women not only in the education sector, but in broader public life.”

Returning to the 2030 UNSDGs, Korosi warned that the world was way off track when it came to achieving the sustainable development goals.

Next September, the UN would be holding in New York the Sustainable Development Goals Summit to see what the world has achieved so far and finding solutions to matters that are pending the full implementation of the plan, he pointed out.

Understanding the situation and moving forward to achieve the UNSDGs is very important, asserted Korosi who indicated that alarming development such as the COVID-19 pandemic had hindered the progress of this ambitious global strategy.

Speaking on the recent conflict in Sudan, the President of the UNGA took a chance to thank Kuwait for providing humanitarian aid to the fellow Arab country, saying that the Gulf country was one of the first and most efficient in delivering support to those in need.

Continues

The events on the ground in Sudan are very disturbing and the UN continues to try to defuse the conflict there, said Korosi who lamented those who died and the people fleeing the violence.

To resolve the conflict, involved parties must stick to the ceasefire agreements, ensure the protection of civilians and their safe movements, as well as preventing the violence from affecting Sudan as a whole or worse the nearby countries, he indicated.

The UNGA President discussed various matters during the interview from how to deal with racism globally, handling the refugee crisis, in addition to the alarming effects of climate change and global warming on all countries.

On Palestine, Korosi acknowledged that the issue of the Palestinian refugees was a longstanding matter that needed to be addressed by the UNSG.

He revealed that the UNGA had discussed in the current session a multitude of resolutions connected with the Palestinian refugees, namely an adopted resolution requesting an advisory opinion on part of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in a year’s time on the status of Palestine, the occupied territories, and the international community obligations towards this issue.

Touching on the crisis in Syria, the official expressed hopes for a solution in the near future, commending the recent meeting by several Arab countries’ foreign ministers with their Syrian counterpart, within efforts to find a lasting solution to this conflict.

The President of the 77th UNGA also touched on the Ukraine-Russia war, saying that it was important to end the conflict diplomatically and not militarily for the sake of the world.

The ongoing of this particular crisis might affect some of the nuclear facilities in Ukraine, which might cause a global disaster.

On the plight of the Rohingya refugees, Korosi indicated that it was crucial to end their suffering, revealing that he would like to ask Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to increase support for the Rohingya refugees.

The Rohingya must be allowed to return to their homes in Myanmar as part of the solution to this saddening humanitarian situation, he affirmed.

Meanwhile, the State of Kuwait underlined that the United Nations (UN) is the cornerstone of international multilateral action and that the UN Charter, with its noble purposes and principles, marks a solid base for inter-state relations. This came in a speech delivered by Senior Secretary of the Kuwaiti Permanent Delegation at the UN Fahad Al-Hajji during an open UNSC debate on peacebuilding and sustaining peace late Thursday.

Hajji reiterated Kuwait’s backing to UN reform efforts aiming at making the international organization more effective and qualified to address present and future challenges.

The session came at a critical and delicate time where the world is facing more intricate risks, challenges and threats than ever, he said, lamenting that the current international order has become less effective due to sharp splits and differences among member states.

Therefore, the Kuwaiti diplomat called for more concerted efforts to take serious and tangible procedures in order to overhaul the international multilateral order, mainly the UN, so that it could address relevant challenges.

However, he pointed out that the UN Charter includes several tools for resolving conflicts by peaceful means, negotiations, mediation, arbitration and judicial settlement, citing Chapter VI of the UN Charter.

He emphasized that it is essential for the UNSC to move effectively in order to prevent the eruption of conflicts, rather than just to attempt to ease out relevant impacts and ramifications.

This, he maintained, could be achieved by means of deepening strategic partnerships with the UN in the context of mediation efforts, he said, citing Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.



KUNA photo

Representative of His Highness the Amir of the country, His Highness the Crown Prince, receives the Prime Minister of Lebanon at his residence in London.

Amir rep receives Lebanon PM

The Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, received on Friday the prime minister of the Lebanese caretaker government, Najib Mikati, at His Highness’ residence in London, the United Kingdom.

The two sides explored, during the meeting, the solid brotherly relations and means of boosting these ties further, in addition to regional and interna-

tional topics.

The meeting was attended by the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Director of His Highness the Crown Prince office (Ret. Lieut. Gen.) Jamal Al-Dhiabi, the undersecretary at the His Highness the Crown Prince Office Mazen Al-Issa, the assistant foreign minister for Europe’s affairs Ambassador Sadeq Maarefi, the State of Kuwait Ambassador to the UK of Great Britain and North Ireland, Badr Al-Awadhi. (KUNA)



Photo by Samer Shaqair

Turkish citizens at the embassy to vote.

‘Doors open till 9 pm Sunday’

High turnout of voters: envoy

KUWAIT CITY, May 6: Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Tuba Nur Sonmez confirmed the high turnout of voters among the Turkish community in both the parliamentary and presidential elections of Turkiye.

In a press statement, Sonmez pointed out “such turnout is the clearest evidence of the desire of our citizens to play a fundamental role in this democratic process, as the Turks consider voting their duty and right. Our democracy is distinctive and strong.”

The Turkish Embassy opened its doors to receive voters on Friday and this will continue until 9:00 pm on Sunday.

According to Sonmez, a total of 171 ballot boxes were designated for Turkish overseas voters in 73 countries, including Kuwait. She said the voters will choose 28 members of Parliament, in addition to electing the president. She said there are more than 4,000 eligible voters in Kuwait; emphasizing that “the interest of Turkish living abroad in the elections is steadily increasing in each election, as the participation rate reached 18.94 percent in the presidential election held in 2014 and it increased to 50.09 percent in 2018.” She added the percentage is expected to increase dramatically in this year’s election.

She thanked the Kuwaiti government, specifically the ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs, for the facilities provided to organize and make this democratic process a success. She praised the unwavering support of Kuwaiti government for any event held by the embassy.

Med care limited

‘Emergencies only’

KUWAIT CITY, May 6: The Ministry of Health has limited the overseas treatment for emergency or urgent cases only, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a press statement, the ministry announced that only the overseas treatment committees in public hospitals and specialized medical centers will be given the authority to determine emergency or urgent cases for a period of one month starting from Sunday. The Medical Team will then decide on the urgent cases for which treatment is not available in the country.

The head of the Overseas Treatment Department will submit the overseas treatment application along with a detailed medical report to the specialized committee for assessment. The Medical Team will forward the application including its recommendations to the Higher Committee for Overseas Treatment for approval.

On the other hand, the ministry is preparing local training programs for its employees. Sources said the Civil Service Commission has recommended exclusion of computer courses from the local training programs and to coordinate with the Central Agency for Information Technology in case such courses are needed.

Other Voices

Drunkard who found God

By Ahmad alsarraf

This is a short story by the Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky who was better known as Paolo.

Paolo lived his whole life alone, even when life was full of noise around him, he was lonely, and he was addicted to alcohol.



alsarraf

Paolo did not marry, but one day a woman who had a relationship with him for a few months told him that she was pregnant, but she disappeared, and he does not know yet whether she was sincere or wanting to cheat him for a handful of money. The important thing is that he remained alone except for the bottle of booze that always accompanied him.

He lived in a small room, not burdened by the value of its rent, which was commensurate with the value of the pension he was receiving.

His neighbor was a priest and a mysterious man, his silence was more than his words, sharp eyes, you rarely saw delicacy from him, and it was a great irony that the man who climbs up to the pulpit had such qualities, and “Paolo” avoided talking to him, perhaps because the priest despised him. He is nothing but an atheist drunkard who has never set foot in the church!

“Paolo” knew about the man what no one else knew. He was just a servant in the church, who only did some manual work. Then the war came, and the church became a shelter for the wounded and immigrants from the homes destroyed by the bombs, but after the end of the war he became a priest and preached the word of God. People lined up to him to confess all their sins to Paolo who sat behind a dark curtain and received donations; hence the secret

of the mutual hatred between a man who, in the absence of time became a priest, and an atheist drunkard looking for God.

The truth is that “Paolo” was a kind-hearted and peaceful man to the highest degree, as he was often seen feeding stray dogs, and on one occasion he sheltered one of them for several days to escape the harshness of snow and rain, and he always said that he searched for the Lord a lot within the walls of the church and the sermons of the priests and the wisdom and asceticism of the monks. But he failed, as the pastor’s sermons kept him further away from the path that brought him closer to God, but he felt that a miracle would one day put him on the road away from his contempt – an infidel drunkard.

One night, while Paulo was returning from the tavern, semi conscious, he met the daughter of his neighbor Thomas, who was ill with asthma. And he was carrying with him a bottle of wine, which he had just bought for Christmas Eve, which was just around the corner, and he offered it in barter for medicine and gave the girl enough medicine for her father for a whole month, so the Jew agreed immediately, as the bottle of wine dated back to the 1930s, meaning it was twenty years old and rare.

Paolo returned to his room without his drink, but he returned with something much more valuable than he had been looking for, for a long time. He returned with a quiver heart that he had failed to find within the walls of the church or from the sermons of priests and the intercession of saints and monks.

This tremor of the heart was from the sky, and what a miracle it was, as he did not drink alcohol after that, and when he died, they found under his pillow a paper on which he wrote: “Search for God in making people happy...”

Paolo died as a believer not a preacher or a priest or a monk. He died as a believer with a trembling heart.

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‘Iraq seeks environment of good neighborliness’

“I STAND wondering about the beauty of the harmony between a person’s name and his behavior, and I find in the Ambassador of Iraq to Kuwait, His Excellency Ambassador Al-Manhal Al-Safi, what represents the harmony between the name and its meanings and between his character and behaviors and the instinct that forms his tendencies, and how his parents were inspired by a name that interacts with his future in continuous reading and extracting the most beautiful of its outcome to remain a treasure that forms his identity and multiplies in the digestion of knowledge and science,” columnist **Abdullah Bishara** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

“The comments of Ambassador Al-Manhal Al-Safi during a ceremony he held at the Iraqi House in the embassy that the President of Iraq, Abdul Latif Rashid, invited His Highness to visit Iraq, which he promised to meet this year, and continues to comment that Kuwait is a brotherly and neighboring country, and our relationship is excellent and we are developing for the better and said there are good things coming in the near future.



Bishara

“He began his speech announcing that the Kuwaiti-Iraqi joint bilateral committee at the ministerial level will meet in Kuwait in the first week of May, explaining that it is a special legal technical committee concerned with the issue of demarcating the maritime borders beyond Mark 162, and his words pleased me.

“The history of relations between the two countries during the past century was not devoid of ripples of caution, which was characterized by examining data and analyzing indicators in search of something that might end distress and bring confidence and from that comes the rise of benefits and the expansion of channels of cooperation.

“We had this feeling despite the fact that Iraq, since the army took control of the government in 1958, did not enjoy stability, and the successive governments until 2003 did not represent the real aspirations of the Iraqi people.

“There were internal clashes in which the various components of Iraqi society participated, and was characterized by the continuation of plans for coups and the replacement of the government, so Qassem ended with violence, followed by Abd al-Salam Aref in a plane accident, and his brother Abd al-Rahman continued relying on the army’s grip, and the Baath party came with a tyrannical, bloody and suffocating rule, in which the people of Iraq endured the unspeakable injustice and tyranny ended after the people of Iraq tasted the ignorance of their leaders and fortified them with plots and gallows to survive.

“The constant question remains about the method and how to transfer relations between the two countries from a season of calm and anticipation to crossing into a stage in which relations flourish.

“And with the Iraqi ambassador’s reference to the meeting of the Technical Committee for demarcating the maritime borders, hope shines through to cross over to a chapter that increases the content of relations, from the economic and investment point of view, in all aspects.

“He did not reach a stable solution due to the lack of reassurance between these components, which is the main factor behind the causes of the absence of tranquility and internal stability, and for this reason the neighbors and other Arabs and others continue to follow the internal situation, pending unity of understanding between the three forces that make up the people of Iraq, who expect their friends and neighbors to pass through the platform is waiting for partnership in development and investment plans, but the truth is that the major companies that invest, implement and send technicians and administrators will not contribute capital without steps in which there is certainty in the safety of their participation.

“Despite all this, the Iraqi government headed by the current Prime Minister succeeded in gaining the confidence of the Arab group, the countries of the region and the outside world due to its moderation in stances, its good vocabulary of expression, its sincerity in its efforts to earn alms, confidence in its goals, and its good intentions in focusing on development.

“With regard to the responsibilities of the neighborhood, I am certain that all the people of Kuwait, waiting for the emergence of a stable environment, and in confirming social security and normal life in our neighbor Iraq, to lead the ranks of those wishing to work and invest in all fields, including culture and tourism.

“We hope that the Prime Minister will achieve the goals he set for Iraq with the collective support of all groups in Iraq, and we understand the complex circumstances in which Iraq lives.

“After the failed regimes have been pursued since the revolution, until the end of the era of clashing abuse, different jurisprudence must emerge that reveal the diversity of jurisprudence in this complex situation, as well as flexibility in positions between the various groups.

“In the soundness of intentions the Iraqi people want a positive movement towards stability and development, so all these disturbances must disappear in order for Iraq to remain healthy and ready for the launch that everyone awaits, especially the people of Kuwait who are sympathetic and aware that Iraq’s recovery is a gain for us and its development is of great benefit. Its fruits reach Kuwait in line with the dictates of geography and the course of logic.

“The provisions of neighborhood that we see between European countries and some countries in Asia and Africa must tempt both Iraq and Kuwait to

receive their benefits.

“The Kuwaiti response was to summon the ambassador and broadcast grumbling, complaining and admonishing, and I was preparing the minutes of those sessions, and I do not forget the amount of pain that occurred because the Iraqi police patrols crossed the borders of Kuwait and the tension escalated to the point that the late Sheikh Sabah refused to receiving the Iraqi ambassador and the ambassador was calling me asking for an appointment, and I personally begged Sheikh Sabah to receive the ambassador, and after hopes and fears I accompanied the Iraqi ambassador to the house of the late Sheikh Sabah at ten o’clock that evening and after a discussion between Sheikh Sabah and the Ministry of Interior, the two sides withdrew from the spot of tension.

“They were painful days, and now we unite with great hope with Ambassador Al-Manhal Al-Safi, representing the moderation regime, after the Iraqi people got rid of the system of slander and executions.

“And as long as we live in a moderate neighborhood environment, it is inevitable for the two parties to provide a starting environment that needs a calm climate that entices investors and dispels their fears, and it is natural that the two parties seek to prepare for the stage of defining what each party expects from the chapter of changes and alterations in the construction sector while remembering that Kuwait is the easy passage that transports what Iraq exports to the Gulf, not commodities and materials, but behavior, intentions and clarity of conscience that the leaders of Iraq store for the people of the Gulf.

“The late Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad was pushing hard to hold conferences on the reconstruction of Iraq, and I felt from his conversations that he wanted to expedite the Iraqi aspiration to create the appropriate atmosphere for holding these conferences.

“I have certainty that the leadership and people of Iraq are fully aware that the trappings of ambitions and the manufacture of claims are the fast path to loss and setbacks, which have afflicted many different peoples and on all continents, and are always champions of trivialities and bandits, who steal power when rational people neglect and people of good intentions become preoccupied.

“On top of that, we took lessons from the lessons of the past, which did not provide Kuwait with anything of comfort since the end of the civilized era of the Hashemites, and we had difficult times that the Kuwaiti leaderships dealt with patience, endurance, and the ability to digest pain and search for a thread of hope in a sullen space, and with all that was secrecy.

“A prerequisite for approaching this file, so silence accompanied us throughout that ugly era, and even the sessions of the Gulf Cooperation Council did not reach that file, because hope did not leave Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad because of his belief that Arab solidarity and the bond of Arabism remove rivalries and extract solutions, and he was, may God have mercy on him, not comfortable with Arab divergences.”

Also:

“After the issuance of the decree on dissolving the National Assembly, we – the Kuwaiti people – must carry out the responsibility entrusted to us. This responsibility is choosing Assembly members with the capability of representing us under the legislative dome,” columnist **Dr Mohammad Al-Azmi** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

“It is not easy to choose a member of the Assembly, as some have imagined. It is not only about performing a duty – as they say – or going to the election headquarters to search for the person who is close to give him our vote.

“The issue is more important than that. It is a national responsibility. It is the responsibility of generations and the country, as the wrong choice based on temperaments, interests, kinship, friendship or even inclinations without thinking could lead to dire consequences for the country and the citizen. Such a choice could bring a member who neither serve in the interest of the public nor advance an inch in dealing with issues related to the development of all aspects of the State.

“We want a high level of public awareness, through which we can separate the general concerns of the whole country from the private concerns of a specific class or group. Looking at the public will lead to the development and prosperity we desire and aspire for.

“If the Assembly members turn their eyes to the public and stay away from the private as much as possible, we can count on them to achieve our aspirations.”



“Far from the political, economic and social conflicts, and the limelight, there are promising and creative Kuwaiti youths with an advanced position globally and locally,” columnist **Mohamad Al-Joma’a** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

“Recently, the American Institute of Physics awarded a Kuwaiti – Hussein Al-Qattan who is known as the star of the bright future – for his research on the synthesis of the electric field or laser radiation. His research ranked first among the young researchers in 2022.

“Why do we kill the aspirations of youths in the midst of endless conflicts? Why do we smash their creations on the rocks of political and other conflicts? Are they not the promising future that we seek and talk about? Are they not the Kuwait of the future that requires all of us to protect them from the dangers of these conflicts?”

— Compiled by Ahmed Al-Shazli



KUNA photo

Some of the seized diesel containers.

Customs seizes 33 diesel containers

Kuwait’s General Administration of Customs announced on Saturday the seizure of 33 containers of petroleum derivative (diesel), which is prohibited from being exported.

The customs handed over the containers to the Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) after they were seized by the inspectors of the northern ports and Failaka Island. The containers were headed to one of the Gulf

countries, said general administration of customs in a statement. The containers were unloaded into tanks belonging to the KNPC, in coordination and cooperation with the Kuwait Fire Force, it added in a statement.

For his part, the Director General of the General Administration of Customs Sulaiman Al-Fahad expressed his appreciation to the KNPC and administration of customs efforts and rapid response. (KUNA)

Steps taken to curb smuggling of state subsidized food items

Customs inspectors made 500 seizures in 2022

KUWAIT CITY, May 6: The concerned government agencies have been waging a war for years to prevent organized gang networks from working on depleting state-subsidized food commodities and smuggling them abroad, and to take more stringent punitive measures with smugglers and agencies that assist or facilitate smuggling operations, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

According to official sources from the General Administration of Customs, officers succeeded in seizing about 500 loads containing tens of thousands of food supplies during the year 2022. They included about 200,000 food packages, some of which were being smuggled abroad through the land ports.

They stressed that attempts by some individuals and shipping companies to smuggle these materials to neighboring countries or some Arab and Asian countries have increased significantly in recent periods, amid high vigilance of customs officers and the rest of the relevant authorities.

They explained that smugglers devise many ways daily to smuggle food supplies, such as emptying them into transparent plastic containers or placing them inside electrical appliances. Some others try to distribute them to a number of personal vehicles, as part of their miserable attempts to get them out of the country.

The quantities seized during the past year, which exceeded 200,000 subsidized commodities, are distributed over five main types - rice, flour, milk, pasta, and cooking oil. Cooking oil and milk are the most prominent commodities targeted by smugglers and the largest in size when seized.

The total value of the materials seized annually exceeds one million dinars. The General Administration of Customs issues seizure reports in this regard according to urgent instructions, and refers them to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to take the necessary action regarding them and protect them from damage.

In view of the many attempts to smuggle subsidized supplies out of the country in violation of the law, the Director General of General Administration of Customs Suleiman Al-Fahad issued instructions in September to raise the fine for violating customs smuggling to three times the value, which is



Al-Qabas photo

Seized subsidized food commodities.

the maximum according to the Unified Customs Law.

According to the administration’s reports, customs inspectors made 500 seizures last year, including food supplies and other illegal items that were being attempted for smuggling abroad.

Customs sources explained that the highest rate of attempts to smuggle food supplies is made through the Sulaybiya and Shubra al-Khader customs outlets, where 226 commercial smuggling attempts were seized during the past year, which is an increase from the 197 attempts made in the year 2021.

Subsidized

The subsidized food items that the Ministry of Commerce and Industry provides to citizens on a monthly basis are considered to be of distinct nutritional and financial value and are competitive with those offered in cooperative societies and parallel markets. Some take advantage of the state’s support for 74 different commodities, and they smuggle them abroad to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, and other countries. It is popular in the markets and offered at prices that are four times the subsidized price.

For example, the value of a bag of Kuwaiti subsidized rice (weighing 50 kg) in the Saudi market amounts to 350 Saudi Riyals (KD 28.62), while it is bought in Kuwait for only KD 6 (74 Saudi Riyals). One kilogram of it is sold for 8 riyals, while Kuwait offers it to the beneficiaries for only 1.4 riyals.

As for milk powder, Kuwait provides it to its beneficiary citizens at a value of KD 1.050, while it is sold in the Saudi market for 60 riyals (about KD 5), which constitutes more than

three times the real purchase price.

Numbers and data from the ration card system -

- 2.1 million registered in the ration card system
- KD 210 million annual cost to cover supplies
- 49 percent of the population benefits from the catering system

In this regard, the Head of the Consumer Protection Department Mishaal Al-Mana called for tougher penalties for smugglers of subsidized food supplies and those who help them smuggle them abroad.

He stressed the need to increase vigilance and complete auditing and inspection at land outlets.

Al-Manea said, “The blame for the supply distribution operations is firstly with the cooperative societies, as they did not benefit from the experience of the Kuwaiti retirees and did not employ them to control the supply management. Failing to allocate a reasonable salary to workers in the supply department is one of the reasons for the decline in oversight, in addition to the citizens who benefit from the supply have been assigning others to obtain the rations without checking the quantities spent and the extent of the real need.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has an automated system for the supply of goods and exchange, but the main problem is in how to control and tighten it, as there must be a balance between the administrative part and the commercial value and control of the volume of exchange, through internal control and educating the person concerned to attend to obtain shares and verify the value of payments.”

Egyptian teacher’s death sentence cut to 10 years

KUWAIT CITY, May 6: The Court of Appeals overturned the death sentence of an Egyptian Islamic Studies teacher accused of kidnapping and molesting a foreign child, and then sentenced him to 10 years in prison with hard labor, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

The accused is implicated in a number of similar cases, which are pending in the judiciary and no final ruling on these cases has been issued so far.

Meanwhile, the Public Prosecution demanded upholding the prison sen-

tences for judges and others who are accused of bribery, forgery, and money laundering during the appeal which came for hearing before the Court of Cassation ‘in the second Iranian Salehi case’, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

The daily learned from an informed source that the Court of Cassation has set its first session for July 6, when the curtain is expected to come down on this case.

The Court of Appeals had sentenced defendants to imprisonment, while re-

ducing prison sentences from 10 years to 7 years for others, and also canceled convictions against some and refrained from punishing them and ordered the cars received by them they as gifts to be impounded, while one judge was acquitted.

The court also put behind bars for various terms male and female employees of the Ministry of Justice, dismissed them from work, imprisoned businessmen and other defendants, and acquitting some of them.

Municipality gets over 1K ‘complaints’

KUWAIT CITY, May 6: The Kuwait Municipality announced that the Transportation Control of the General Services Department received 1,359 complaints via WhatsApp and the direct line from all governorates according to a statistic issued by the department, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The Municipality sources pointed out that the reports area about garbage and used furniture dumped in front of residential buildings and open areas. The Municipality blamed the residents of some areas of indiscriminate dumping of rubble which cause hindrance to roads users and add to this the abandoned cars and boats.

The daily added, 235 complaints were received from the Al-Jahra Governorate, 226 from Mubarak Al-Kabeer, and 204 from Farwaniya, 220 from Hawalli Governorate, and 202 from the Capital.

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‘Prosecution orders re-probing 50 disability files forgery cases’

Docus forged to obtain financial benefits unlawfully: official

KUWAIT CITY, May 6: Official spokesperson and Legal Affairs Department Director at the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA) Mubarak Al-Baddah said the Public Prosecution has ordered the re-investigation of 50 disability documents forgery cases, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Al-Baddah informed the daily that the documents were forged in a bid to obtain financial benefits unlawfully, stressing that the authority is not complacent in recovering the amounts disbursed illegally. He disclosed the recovery is done amicably by requiring those involved to pay the full amount or in monthly installments or by filing lawsuits. He said the authority has so far filed 299 such lawsuits, pointing out that a large amount has been recovered and the rest is in the process of being collected through lawsuits filed by

the authority in coordination with the Legal Advice and Legislation Department.

He explained the authority usually determines the amounts that must be recovered and verifies them through the financial and legal departments, then it contacts the debtors – the disabled person or the one charge of his care or the heirs, if the disabled person is deceased – to return the illegally obtained amounts because they are public funds that are inviolable.

He added that one of the important tasks of his department is following up such cases, in coordination with its legal advice and legislation counterpart. He revealed the total number of cases filed by or against the authority reached 7,968 as at the beginning of February and 3,522 of these cases were filed against the authority, which are still in courts.



Al-Baddah

He stated the total number of final rulings on cases filed by the authority reached 4,147 and 2,866 of which were in favor of the authority and 1,281 against it. He pointed out these figures mean the winning rate reached 70 percent – a high percentage which refutes the allegation that the authority is working against the interest of the disabled.

Regarding the cases filed against the authority, Al-Baddah indicated that the most important is the cancellation of an administrative decision rejecting the resolutions of medical committees to reduce the degree of disability or removing someone from the disabled category.

He cited the ruling of the Court of Cassation, which was used as precedent in similar cases against the authority; confirming that the competent medical technical committee in the concerned authority has the power to determine the type and degree of disability as per Handicapped Law number 8 of 2010.

He also confirmed that the adoption of a new mechanism for issuing disability certificates largely addressed the issue of lack of appointments, especially for children and the elderly.

MoCI’s request for car parks project gets Al-Hajri’s nod

MECC’s bid for ‘water injection’ project lowest

KUWAIT CITY, May 6: MEED magazine reported that the Mechanical Engineering and Contracting Company submitted the lowest bid for a water injection system project in southeastern Kuwait, in favor of the Kuwait Oil Company, according to information obtained by MEED Projects, reports Al-Rai daily.

It added that the contract focuses on the giant Burgan field, which is a wider area around Burgan, the largest sandstone deposit in the world, with a total area of about 1,000 square kilometers and includes 3 productive sub-fields -- Burgan itself, Al-Maqwa, and Al-Ahmadi.

Among the companies that submitted bids for the contract included the Mechanical Engineering and Contracting Company, Nasser Al-Baddah and Partner General Trading and Contracting Company, Mark Technologies Company, Integral

Services Company, Heavy Industries Engineering and Ship Company, Gulf Speak General Trading and Contracting Company, Al-Ghanim International General Trading and Contracting Company, Jerah Company, Chinese Oil and Gas, and Apex Group International.

Meanwhile, the Higher Committee for Partnership decided in a recent meeting chaired by Finance Minister Manaf Al-Hajri to accept the request of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to put forward a project to establish car parks in partnership with the public and private sectors, reports Al-Rai daily quoting informed sources that

The same sources indicated that it was decided to form a committee whose task will be to deal with offering the expected automobile project in the northern region (Al-Salmi Road) to consulting offices, to prepare a feasibility study of the project

and the expected cost.

The sources pointed out that it was agreed that if the cost of the project reaches 60 million dinars or less, the ‘Car Haraj’ project will be offered for implementation through a strategic investor, who will be contracted in accordance with the requirements of the partnership law between the private and public sectors, as it is expected that the implementation of the project will be on build-operate-transfer (BOT) system.

In the event that the investment value of the project exceeds 60 million, a government company will be established, of which 50 percent will be offered for public subscription by citizens, with a share allocated to a strategic investor, often at 26 percent of the company’s capital, led by the Kuwait Investment Authority, as usual, with a share of 14 percent.



A ward for Kuwaiti patients in Montefiore Hospital in New York being inaugurated.



KUNA photos
Consul General in New York and head of the Kuwaiti health office in Washington with Kuwaiti patients.

‘Move to boost health cooperation further’

Montefiore Hospital in New York opens ward for Kuwaiti patients

NEW YORK, May 6, (KUNA): Kuwait’s Consul General in New York Azzam Al-Asfour and head of Kuwait health office Dr. Faisal Al-Safi inaugurated a ward for Kuwaiti patients in Montefiore Hospital in New York late Friday.

The hospital’s initiative was made in appreciation of the strong relations with Kuwait, and Kuwait’s continuous trust in the hospital for treating Kuwaiti patients, Montefiore President Dr. Philip Ozuah told KUNA.

On his Part, the Kuwaiti Consul General said New York is a center for specialized

and experienced hospitals where Kuwaiti patients tend to receive medical care.

Al-Asfour voiced deep appreciation to the hospital for opening a specialized ward for Kuwaiti patients, noting that this step would certainly enhance health cooperation further between the two sides.

Meanwhile, head of the Kuwaiti health office in Washington Dr. Faisal Al-Safi affirmed that the office is always cooperating with the best hospitals across the US, as well as sharing medical research experience with the best centers in the country.

Ministry of Info mourns late broadcaster Obaid Al-Otaibi

KUWAIT CITY, May 6, (KUNA): The Ministry of Information mourned the late broadcaster Obaid Al-Otaibi, who passed away on Saturday after a long struggle with illness.

In a statement, the ministry’s spokesperson Anwar Murad con-

veyed the Minister of Information Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi’s condolences to the deceased family.

Murad said that the deceased was a creative journalist and distinguished by his dedication to media field.

Sixty-one sign

Continued from Page 1

He said the ministry allocated a special room with a podium and equipment for the candidates and journalists to conduct presentations and release press statements in order to prevent ambush interviews with candidates, during which strange questions are raised; thereby, distorting the democratic process. He added the ministry issues licenses to media institutions to conduct election polls.

Meanwhile, work is already underway at the election registration department to issue coverage permits for journalists who will report about the upcoming parliamentary polls.

The process is conducted in coordination with the Ministry of Interior, said Lafi Al-Sebayee, the assistant undersecretary at the Ministry of Information.

Speaking during a visit to the press center at the registration department, Al-Sebayee said that there was an agreement with the MoI to allocate jurisdictions of arrangements inside the press center to the Ministry of Information.

MoI personnel, according to the agreement, will oversee the process outside the center.

The Department of Elections Affairs at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior started Friday morning receiving applications for the National Assembly elections for the 17th legislative term.

On Thursday, the Ministry of Interior announced it would commence receiving male and female candidates to parliament elections 2023 as of Friday, with the process lasting until the 14th of May.

Candidacy will remain open for 10 days including public holidays from 7.30 am to 1:30 pm (local time), after the Official Gazette (Kuwait Al-Youm) published the decree calling for parliamentary elections.

The Kuwaiti cabinet on Wednesday approved a draft decree calling for parliamentary elections on June 6, 2023.

Minister of Information, Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi on Thursday issued two ministerial decisions regulating media and tourist activities and settings terms for the media coverage and advertisement for the upcoming parliamentary and municipal elections.

The ministry, in a statement, called upon the media, electronic media and the press to abide by the Ministerial Resolution 17/2023 with respect of the terms and rules governing the media coverage, the advertisement and promotion of the National Assembly and Municipal Council’s elections.

The ministry official spokesperson said the decision includes amendments to the Ministerial Resolution 833/2022 regarding the regulation of permits for the media activities and the fees.

The permit applicant must admit that he (or she) had not been stripped of the

license in the past.

Murad indicated that the decision included rules regarding the permits for conducting statistics, public opinion surveys regarding the elections, where the permit would remain valid for two weeks after final declaration of the elections’ results.

Regarding the Ministerial Resolution 17/2023, Murad said it tackled terms of media coverage and promotion for the parliamentary and municipal polls, where the relevant rules would be in force during the duration as off publishing the decision or decree calling for the election in the official Gazette until final declaration of the elections’ results.

He affirmed that the minister’s decision is intended to safeguard the electoral process and penalizing any wrongdoer.

Meanwhile, Lafi Sbayee, the assistant undersecretary for the press and publications, said there would be a special center for the media personnel in front of the elections affairs headquarters to facilitate issuance of the permits and statements related to the process.

Charles III

Continued from Page 1

To the crowds gathered under rainy skies - thousands of whom had camped overnight - it was a chance to be part of a historic occasion.

But to millions more, the day was greeted with a shrug, the awe and reverence the ceremony was designed to evoke largely gone.

And to a few, it was reason to protest. Hundreds who want to see Britain become a republic gathered to holler “Not my king.” They see the monarchy as an institution that stands for privilege and inequality, in a country of deepening poverty and fraying social ties. A handful were arrested.

As the day began, the abbey buzzed with excitement and was abloom with fragrant flowers and colorful hats as the congregation of international dignitaries, nobles and other notables arrived. Among them were U.S. First Lady Jill Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, eight current and former British prime ministers, judges in wigs, soldiers with gleaming medals, and celebrities including Judi Dench, Emma Thompson and Lionel Richie.

During the traditional Anglican service slightly tweaked for modern times, Charles, clad in crimson and cream robes, swore on a Bible that he is a “true Protestant.”

But a preface was added to the coronation oath to say the Church of England “will seek to foster an environment where people of all faiths and beliefs may live freely,” and the epistle from the King James Bible was read by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, Britain’s first Hindu leader.

May

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‘Partnership will enable it to play greater role in cementing cooperation among Asian countries’

Kuwait signs MoU to join Shanghai Cooperation Organization as dialogue partner

NEW DELHI, May 6, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait signed an MoU to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as a dialogue partner.

The signing took place on the sidelines of the meeting of SCO foreign ministers meeting held on May 4-5 in Panaji city of western Indian state of Goa.

In an exclusive statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Kuwait Ambassador in New Delhi Jassim Al-Najem said that Kuwait’s joining of SCO as a dialogue partner is the first step towards joining the organization as a full member in the future.

This move is in line with Kuwait’s key foreign policy objectives, because trade, economic cooperation, global supply chain and food and energy security are among the areas that Kuwait attaches great importance to.

He stressed that the accession of some Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries as dialogue partners to the SCO confirms the growing importance of the organization. Kuwait’s joining in the SCO will enable it to play a greater role in cementing cooperation among Asian countries.

He stated that Kuwait’s goals in enhancing internal and external security are in line with the goals of the SCO and it seeks to benefit from the experience of the organization’s members to address global issues, and it is keen to participate in anti-terrorism strategies.

He added that Kuwait stresses the role of institutions and individuals around the world in enhancing food secu-



Kuwait Ambassador to India Jassim Al-Najem with SCO leaders.

KUNA photo

rity and stopping hunger in various countries.

As part of Kuwait’s contribution to alleviating the disruption of global supply chains and the food and energy insecurity that humanity faces due to the Covid pandemic and regional conflicts, Kuwaiti leadership has worked and is still working with a group of partners in the region to build flexible supply chains and address food and energy crises, he said.

Ambassador Al-Najem thanked Secretary-General of the SCO Zhang Ming in a speech he delivered after signing the MoU and granting Kuwait the status of a dialogue partner in the organization, explaining Kuwait’s aspiration to work with SCO to achieve security and stability in the region.

The SCO is an intergovernmental organization established in Shanghai on June 15, 2001 and currently consists of eight member states including Russia, China, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and India, and four observer states including Afghanistan, Iran, Belarus and Mongolia.

It is the largest regional organization in the world in terms of area and population. It aims to build a multi-centric global system consistent with the rules of international law and the principles of mutual respect that meet the interests of each country and taking into account their mutual needs and aspirations.

The UAE, the Maldives and Myanmar have signed MoUs to join the organization as dialogue partners.

Ci-Net system to inquire about bounced cheques

Move increases ability of banks to mitigate customers’ risks

KUWAIT CITY, May 6: The Credit Information Network Company “Ci-Net” has finally completed the preparation of a system for inquiring about bounced cheques, which increases the ability of banks to mitigate customers’ risks arising from this window, reports Al-Rai daily.

In this regard, relevant sources explained that the company has recently expressed its readiness to launch the bounced cheques system for banks, through which it will provide a list of its subscribers that includes data of clients who have three bounced cheques.

According to the instructions of the Central Bank of Kuwait regarding the central inventory system for clients whose accounts were closed in local banks due to bounced cheques based on lack of balance, Ci-Net finished preparing a new window to inquire about bank customers, this time not related to providing a database of defaulting borrowers, but the data of bounced cheque holders for customers inquired about in the commercial credit facilities portfolio.

The new inquiry system will be launched for actual application after the completion of its regulatory approval procedures from the Central Bank of Kuwait. Its information provided on the company’s inquiry system will include the data of every customer who was returned to the issuer cheques during the year due to lack of balance with a maximum of three cheques, or whoever the bank sees to have bad faith, which will result in not cashing the cheque.

It is expected that the client’s name will continue to be included

in the blacklist on the “Ci-Net” query system for a period of one year, after which his name will be removed from the list.

During the listing period, no bank may open new cheque accounts or issue new cheque books for clients on the list, with the knowledge of any of the banks. Banks must ask clients whose accounts have been closed for this reason to handover the unused cheques to the bank.

Each bank is also required to supervise the closure of the account of any customer included in the list with the knowledge of other banks, in the event that one cheque drawn on his account with the bank is returned due to lack of funds.

Provide

Banks are also obligated to provide the “Ci-Net” system, through the direct communication line with the system, with the data of customers whose accounts are closed due to bounced cheques on the day of closing the account itself.

The sources indicated that banks should start taking the necessary measures to prepare the database required to provide the bounced cheque list system on the Ci-Net website, as part of the policy of dealing with bounced cheque clients whose accounts in local banks were closed due to dud cheques.

The went on to explain that the launch of the database of bounced cheques for inquiries comes within the control moves that enhance the safety of using bank cheques, and reduce the increase in dud cheques, which establishes confidence in the cheques as a tool for fulfillment and leads to avoiding the negative effects of misuse of cheques on transactions.

This also comes within the

framework of enhancing financial inclusion in the financial system, and contributes to the development of the information system currently used among local banks, in addition to achieving an appropriate level of unification and information organization between banks in the field of counting customers whose accounts were closed in local banks due to dud cheques.

As a result, this system guarantees the sustainability of financing areas and indicators for measuring the risk of default, which is reflected in the credit indicators of Kuwait with the credit and financial institutions of international banks, and enhances their financial inclusion.

It is worth highlighting that, according to statistics by the Central Bank of Kuwait, the total number of cheques presented in Kuwait during 2022 amounted to about 4.18 million cheques from about 148.8 thousand customers, with a value of approximately KD 26.93 billion. This is down by 0.5 percent from what it was in 2021 when it reached KD 4.2 billion.

The number of cheques returned during 2022 due to lack of balance amounted to about 3,962 cheques, with a total of KD 59.8 million, issued by about 2,587 customers. This has reduced in value by about 47.1 million, or 44 percent, compared to about KD 106.9 million in 2021.

The statistics showed an increase in the value of cheques that caused accounts to be closed during 2022, by about 64.8 percent, reaching KD 30 million, compared to 18.2 million in 2021. The number of those cheques last year amounted to 1.89 thousand, and the number of accounts closed because of them reached 608 accounts.

Youth Min. heads Kuwait’s delegation at GCC meeting

Committee commends plans to develop youth work

KUWAIT CITY, May 6, (KUNA): Information Minister and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi headed Thursday Kuwait’s delegation in the 36th meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Ministerial Committee for Youth Affairs and Sports, which was held in the Omani capital of Muscat.

During the meeting, importance of strengthening joint youth work between the GCC states was emphasized in addition to the need to develop it to achieve aspirations of Gulf youngsters.

Emphasis was also placed on planning for youngsters to innovate and excel by organizing joint programs, ac-

tivities and youth forums to exchange expertise and experiences.

The committee commended the proposals submitted by Kuwait to develop youth work, as they chose Kuwait to chair the Coordination and Follow-up Committee where they show the committee’s strategic plan to draw joint plans and policies to promote Gulf youth programs and activities.

The committee stressed its keenness to intensify activities and programs provided to young people, under the directives of the leaders of the GCC countries on the need to support youth in all fields.

Fund presented \$2.6 mln grant

KFAED visits to developmental project for Syrian refugees at Arbat Camp, Iraq

KUWAIT CITY, May 6, (KUNA): A delegation from Kuwait’s Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) visited Thursday a project site in Iraq’s northern province of Kurdistan.

The project, of restructuring the water system, aims to better the living conditions of Syrian refugees in Arbat camp.

The delegation was invited to attend the inauguration of a refugee enlistment center at Bahrka municipality and services around 160,000 refugee, read a statement issued by the fund.

The project, part of Kuwait’s vows at the third Brussels’ conference, aims to raise capacity of water storage, enhance the distribution system.

The statement further detailed that projects comes as part of prior agreement with The UN’s general commission, through which the fund presented a USD 2.6 million grant.

The statement reported on behalf of the fund’s director, Waleed Al-Bahar, as saying that Kuwait has been extending a helping hand to those afflicted all over the globe, especially Syrian refugees, to ease their suffering, provide them with urgent aid and ensure a better lifestyle.

Camp director Bayan Salam, voiced his appreciation for the delegation, spoke briefly on the camp and its facilities, and presented the camp’s most pressing needs as it houses more than 9,000 refugees.

At the end of the visit, the fund’s director honored Salam, and other officials for their extensive efforts.



KUNA photo

KFAED pays visit to developmental project for Syrian refugees at Arbat Camp, Iraq.

Kuwait ‘reaffirms’ relentless support to Palestinian cause

BRUSSELS, May 6, (KUNA): Kuwait’s Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium and the head of its missions to the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Nawaf Al-Enezi affirmed Kuwait’s relentless support to the Palestinian cause, describing the position as “principled and firm.”

In a statement, Ambassador Al-Enezi’s position came according to the Kuwaiti embassy’s statement during his participation in the meeting of the Liaison Committee on Palestine at the level of senior officials in Brussels earlier today.

Ambassador Al-Enezi affirmed that the State of Kuwait “did not hesitate in its duty to extend a helping hand to

the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority to enable it to carry out its duties towards its people.”

He added that the State of Kuwait donated USD 5.21 million through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) to ensure that the vital educational, health and social services provided by the Agency to millions of Palestinian refugees would not be interrupted.

He stressed the importance of strengthening the Palestinian economy and institutions, including working to preserve the gains that have been achieved and push forward the process of building the Palestinian state.

TEC signs Memorandum of Agreement for development of waterfront & Blajat Beach

KUWAIT CITY, May 6: The Tourism Enterprises Company has signed memorandums of agreement for the development of the waterfront and Blajat Beach projects that will reflect the cultural face and heritage of the State of Kuwait, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The CEO of the Touristic Enterprises Company, Fadel Al-Dosari, said in a press statement that the signing of these memorandums spells the desire of the political leadership and support provided by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmed Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Al-Dosari added that the waterfront project, which is 9.7 kilometers long, includes all basic services for visitors to the waterfront and beaches, and includes more than 60 commercial and investment opportunities for Kuwaiti companies.

He mentioned that the waterfront project also includes sports activities, swimming areas, a bicycle path, a walking path, and recreational sites for children, and said this project was designed to serve the people.

For her part, Alia Al-Humaidhi, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Tourism Projects Company, said the Blajat Beach project, which covers an area of 230,000 square meters, includes recreational activities and events

that will happen throughout the year and explained that the opening of the first phase of the project will be in August.

Al-Humaidhi added that the Blajat Beach project includes sports activities, swimming areas, children’s games, and of all basic services for beachgoers, in addition to providing more than 50 commercial and investment opportunities.

The statement stated that the

waterfront development project will be carried out by “Dar SSH” and “Al-Ahmadiyah Contracting and Trading” companies, while “Season Group” will implement the development of part of the Blajat Beach project.

The Touristic Enterprises Company was established in 1976 as a wholly state-owned company concerned with the operation and management of tourism and entertainment facilities in the country.



During the signing of the memorandum of agreements

oil up

The Kuwaiti oil price went up by 45 cents to USD 75.65 pb on Friday against USD 75.20 pb on Thursday, the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) announced on Saturday.

Comparatively, at international markets, forward Brent crude contracts rose by USD 2.80 to USD 75.30 pb, and the West Texas Intermediate crude went up by USD 2.78 to USD 71.34 a barrel. (KUNA)

Lebanon's finance minister questioned

A European judicial team questioned Lebanon's caretaker finance minister on Friday in an investigation related to corruption probes of the country's Central Bank governor, officials said.

The questioning is part of a probe by a delegation from France, Germany, and Luxembourg, now on its third visit to Lebanon to interrogate suspects and witnesses in the case. Central Bank Governor Riad Salameh is being investigated abroad over several financial crimes and the laundering of some \$330 million.

During Friday's session, caretaker Finance Minister Youssef El Khalil was questioned about his work as a close associate of Salameh while working at the Central Bank, before he became a Cabinet minister, officials said. They spoke on condition of anonymity because of the ongoing probe.

El Khalil worked for the Central Bank from 1982 until he became finance minister nearly two years ago and was last the executive director of its financial operations department. (AP)

Millions pledged for oil transfer from tanker

Donors pledged an additional \$5.6 million Thursday that will enable the United Nations to start transferring more than 1 million barrels of crude oil from a rusting tanker off the coast of war-torn Yemen that poses a major environmental threat, but the U.N. said nearly \$24 million is still needed to off-load all the oil.

A large vessel called the Nautica, which was purchased by the U.N. Development Program in March to take on the oil from the FSO Safer, is expected to arrive in the region in the coming days and the transfer

operation is expected to start before the end of the month, U.N. deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said. The UNDP said Egypt, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, South Korea, the United Kingdom and private company Octavia Energy and its subsidiary Calvalley Petroleum announced pledges totaling almost \$8 million, of which \$5.6 million represents new funding.

With the new pledges, the U.N. has now raised \$105.2 million for the operation to remove the oil from the Safer, with an addition \$23.8 million still needed, UNDP said. (AP)

Market Movements

06-05-2023

		Change	Closing pts			Change	Closing pts		
↑ JAPAN	- Nikkei	+0.12	29,157.95	↓ UAE	- DFM	-0.21	3,583.09		
	PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	+0.35		42,241.98	EGYPT	- EGX 30	-0.03	17,295.27
	PHILIPPINES	- PSEi	+0.02		6,685.66				
	SAUDI	- Tadawul	+0.41		11,118.77				

Business

Asia mixed after Wall St sinks

Apple-juiced rally closes bruising week

NEW YORK, May 6, (AP): Apple was at the head of a widespread rally on Wall Street Friday after the market's most influential company reported a better profit than expected. Stocks of beaten-down banks also leapt to recover a smidgen of their sharp losses from a brutal week.

The S&P 500 jumped 1.8%, though it still turned in a modest loss for the week that was its worst in nearly two months. The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 546 points, or 1.7%, while the Nasdaq composite rallied 2.2%.

Treasury yields jumped in the bond market after a report showed hiring accelerated across the economy by much more than expected last month. The U.S. government's jobs report also showed workers won bigger pay raises in April than expected.

While that's good news, particularly when many economists fear a recession may arrive this year, the data also raises worries inflation may stay high and push the Federal Reserve to keep interest rates higher. That in turn would keep the pressure up on an already slowing economy.

The data did little to narrow the extremely wide range of possibilities for the economy that investors are forecasting for the economy, from a painful recession to a soft landing, said Bill Northey, senior investment director at U.S. Bank Wealth Management.

"Today's jobs report likely gave both the bulls and the bears something to anchor around," he said.

High interest rates have already caused cracks in the U.S. banking system, and

fears about what may be next to fall have rocked the industry. This week began with regulators seizing First Republic Bank, which became the third large U.S. bank failure to hit since March.

Investors have been hunting for the next possible weak link in the system and driving down stock prices for those seen at risk of a sudden exodus by customers. That's even as banks protested that they were seeing deposit levels stabilize or strengthen. Several of the hardest hit recovered some of their steep losses Friday, adding to the ebullient mood.

PacWest Bancorp. soared 81.7%, though it still lost 43.3% for the week. Western Alliance Bancorp. jumped 49.2% to trim its loss for the week to 26.8%.

The worry is falling stock prices for banks could create a vicious cycle that causes customers to lose faith and pull their deposits, which then raises more fear for the system.

Apple didn't rise as much as those banks Friday, but its moves pack a more potent punch. Apple is the most valuable stock on Wall Street, which gives its moves outsized weight on the S&P 500 and other indexes.

Its 4.7% gain made it the biggest force by far lifting S&P 500. The iPhone maker reported a drop in earnings and revenue, but the results nevertheless topped analysts' muted expectations.

The story has been similar across the broader market for results during the first three months of the year. Analysts came into this earnings reporting season with low expectations given high interest rates and a slowing economy, but the majority

of companies have done better than feared.

Asia

Asian stock markets were mixed Friday after Wall Street sank on worries about the health of U.S. banks that are under pressure from interest rate hikes.

Shanghai declined while Hong Kong and Sydney advanced. Markets in Japan and South Korea were closed for holidays. Oil prices advanced.

The Shanghai Composite Index shed 0.7% to 3,326.18 while the Hang Seng in Hong Kong gained 0.6% to 20,063.58.

Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 rose 0.3% to 7,213.90. New Zealand and Southeast Asian markets declined.

Oil

In energy markets, benchmark U.S. crude rose 43 cents to \$68.99 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract fell 4 cents on Thursday to \$68.56. Brent crude, the price basis for international oil trading, added 47 cents to \$72.97 per barrel in London. It advanced 17 cents the previous session to \$72.50.

Currencies

The dollar declined to 134.01 yen from Thursday's 134.14 yen. The euro gained to \$1.1042 from \$1.1016.



Traders work on the floor at the New York Stock Exchange in New York, Wednesday, May 3, 2023. Stocks are drifting ahead of what Wall Street hopes will be the last hike to interest rates for a long time. (AP)

Dubai Industrial City signs key strategic partnerships with MoIAT, MOCCAIE, EDB

Bid to promote and grow UAE manufacturing sector

Anghami 'unveils' AI personalized podcast revolutionizing the way we consume news

DUBAI, UAE, May 6, (AP): Dubai Industrial City, a member of TECOM Group PJSC, signed three major strategic partnerships with the Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology (MoIAT), the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MOCCAIE), the Emirates Development Bank (EDB) and Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism (DET), to stimulate growth in the UAE's manufacturing industry with the aim to strengthen the UAE's position as a sustainable, attractive global industrial hub.

The signing ceremony at Jumeirah Emirates Towers in Dubai on 3 May 2023 was attended by high-ranking officials and VIPs including His Excellency Omar Al Suwaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry Industry and Advanced Technology; His Excellency Eng. Mohammed Alameeri, Assistant Undersecretary for the Food Diversity Sector at the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment; Ahmed Al Naqbi, CEO of Emirates Development Bank; Hadi Badri, CEO of Dubai Economic Development Corporation - Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism; Abdulla Belhouli, Chief Executive Officer of TECOM Group; and Saud Abu Alshawareb, Executive Vice President of Industrial Leasing - TECOM Group.

Agreements

The agreements are in line with the long-term goals of the Operation 300bn, 'Make it in the Emirates' the 'National Food Security' and the UAE Net Zero by 2050 strategies to develop the UAE industrial sector and raise its in-country value and global exports as well as Dubai Economic Agenda 'D33' to promote sustainability, innovation and foreign investments in the local manufacturing sector.

The agreements will amplify local and regional opportunities for industrial growth through Dubai Industrial City's purpose-built ecosystem, creating a multi-pronged approach that fosters collaboration between the public and private sectors to address economic priorities such as advanced manufacturing, sustainability and food security.

Commenting on the partnership, His

Excellency Omar Al Suwaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry Industry and Advanced Technology said: "MoIAT is proud to support the Make Brilliance campaign, which is synergised with the objectives of the Make it in the Emirates initiative - one of the key pillars of our industrial sector and a vital contributor to the UAE's economic growth and diversification. Through the Make it in the Emirates initiative, we are forging a robust industrial community of local and international companies who are all contributing to the UAE's economic growth and diversification.

"Our partnership with Dubai Industrial City will further strengthen this community and its ties with international stakeholders, helping to reinforce the UAE's reputation as a global destination for industries of the future. MoIAT is committed to working alongside partners to support our national reputation as a global destination for manufacturing. The Make it in the Emirates Forum this month will be a key platform for our national enterprises to connect with international partners to discuss opportunities and advance conversations around sustainable industrial development. We look forward to introducing more enablers and incentives as well as highlighting the UAE's unique value proposition."

Following the signing ceremony, Saud Abu Alshawareb, Executive Vice President of Industrial Leasing - TECOM Group, said the agreements would pave the way for Dubai

sonalization, users can select their preferred voices, choose from a variety of languages including English, Arabic and French and customize their own podcast. Anghami's AI then crafts a podcast specifically tailored to their interests, providing a unique and unparalleled experience - a significant shift in how we receive daily updates.

Launching today, is a groundbreaking daily news podcast produced solely by Artificial Intelligence, without human intervention. The unconventional podcast autonomously researches and curates relevant topics, delivers concise summaries, and records content in multiple languages, thus acting as its own editor. Fresh episodes are released every morning on Anghami, recapping the news from the previous day. Anghami is also leveraging its existing algorithms that identify popular and emerging songs, feeding that information to the AI system to generate a music news segment that offers listeners the latest updates in the music industry.

The new feature is powered by Ope-

nAI's GPT models, utilizing a diverse array of trusted sources from both regional and international outlets. "We are excited to introduce this cutting-edge feature enabling users to personalize their daily content and curate a unique audio journey. This is a testament to our ongoing commitment to innovation and delivering exceptional user experiences," said Elie Habib, Co-Founder of Anghami. "Our use of AI technology allows us to deliver accurate news updates in multiple languages tailored to our audience. This is a significant milestone for Anghami and the audio streaming industry in the MENA region."

By introducing its latest innovative additions, Anghami aims to showcase the capabilities of AI, especially when used in audio-content generation. The platform is committed to constantly pushing the boundaries of what is possible, not only by offering users a new way to stay on top of updates, but also by providing a remarkable and personalized experience that is tailored to their interests.

Industrial City to secure pathways for expanding the industrial and logistics sectors in Dubai and the UAE.

Growing

"Growing the industrial and logistics is essential to the UAE's growth strategy. Dubai's logistics network and business-friendly legislation have made it an attractive industrial hub. As one of the region's largest industrial ecosystems, we aim to take the sector to the next level, unlocking core market value and attracting international investors in line with Operation 300bn, 'Make it in the Emirates' and Dubai Economic Agenda 'D33'. Partnerships with key government entities like MoIAT, MOCCAIE, EDB and Dubai's DET will ensure our efforts strengthen the UAE's position as a global industrial hub, encouraging future investments," added Alshawareb.

Growing a national manufacturing industry

Dubai Industrial City is building on its longstanding partnership with MoIAT and EDB to promote the 'Make it in the Emirates' initiative under Operation 300bn, which invites investors, innovators and developers to participate in the national industrial and advanced manufacturing sectors with a view to exporting UAE products to new global markets.

As part of a tripartite agreement signed during the event, MoIAT, EDB and Dubai Industrial City will collaborate to strengthen the UAE's reputation as a global destination for

future industries. MoIAT will bring on Dubai Industrial City as a private sector partner to collaboratively advance the economic priorities of 'Make it in the Emirates' at local, regional, and international levels.

These joint efforts to grow the UAE's manufacturing and industrial sectors will be strengthened by Dubai Industrial City's renewed partnership with EDB to secure AED1 billion in financing for its customers. Both entities will support the growth of advanced and sustainable manufacturing and logistics in the UAE by providing innovative financing and banking solutions to small- and medium-sized enterprises.

Commenting on the agreement, Ahmed Al Naqbi, CEO of Emirates Development Bank, said: "The signing of this MoU today underscores EDB's vital role in strengthening the economic resilience and competitiveness of the UAE. In 2022, EDB approved AED513.4 million towards financing projects and businesses based in Dubai Industrial City.

"We are proud to be a part of Dubai Industrial City's #MakeBrilliance campaign, which reinforces the UAE's commitment to innovation and excellence in industrial manufacturing. Our commitment to providing AED1 billion for businesses based in the district in the next three to five years represents a significant increase in available capital, heralding a new era in industrial financing to help deliver innovative products made in the UAE.

Oil-producing countries not ready

Is it the time for 'yuan' to enter the oil trade?!

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

The Chinese currency is moving to capture some of the oil deals with oil-producing countries, as well as other forms of energy including gas and other trades. It is still too early, but it seems the time has come; considering the positive signs towards achieving the objective -- capturing some deals no matter how small is the world trade volume.

Today, the yuan is ranked below the four major currencies in the world. After the US Dollar and the Japanese Yen, the Yuan is ranked fourth globally. In 2016, the World Bank approved the Chinese currency as part of the international reserved currency, along with the major currency.

Given the momentum, it is encouraging as it is opening doors for countries under the heavy burden of the US currency like Argentina to trade in Yuan. It is freeing itself from the burden of increasing the US Dollar reserve and switching to another currency.

It seems that other countries will follow suit like Brazil and Turkey. Oil-producing countries, especially the Gulf states, are the attractions for China. Soon, these countries would have to switch to another currency and use the Yuan to deal with the second largest economy in the world. As the second largest consumer of oil with 16 million barrels of consumption, it is so attractive for Saudi Arabia and Russia, making a fierce competition between them with 17 and 18 percent respective share of the oil market in China.

Without hesitation, Saudi Aramco is bound to move ahead with overall energy investments. It is the future consumer in every sector. Perhaps,



Al-Harami

it will exceed the joint venture of major US oil companies in Saudi Aramco; with China gearing toward offshore relationship, while keeping politics out of the picture. Definitely, it will take a long time for the Yuan to be freely tradable and acceptable. It depends on China in terms of freeing its currency, without any government interference.

For the time being, the main four major currencies are traded freely, considering their availability in any consuming country in the world of major economies. We cannot say the same for the Yuan, which will take hard work to be accepted and available in the markets. Maybe, the volume is not yet enough for the currency to be exchanged and traded, and to ensure stable exchange rate -- another time-consuming mission. At present, the Hong Kong Dollar is the currency used in trading in China's stock markets; thereby, gaining global confidence.

It is interesting to note that oil exporting countries are not yet ready to switch to another currency as their total income are in US Dollar. In addition, most of their sovereign wealth is invested in the USA and smaller portions are distributed to other matured markets. There is some movement towards China and Kuwait is one of the Gulf countries that succeeded in investing in Chinese stock markets.

The Chinese currency has three percent share of global payments, which is nothing compared to the four major international currencies -- US Dollar, Euro, Sterling Pound and Yen. Perhaps, the Gulf oil exports to China should be the core of attention. The recent agreement with Saudi Arabia is an example of what the future holds. The gas agreements with Qatar and Abu Dhabi reflect future intentions as well, while Venezuela is selling some of its oil products in Yuan through long-term arrangements. Therefore, the list of those trading or paying in Chinese currency is getting longer.

Email: naftikuwait@yahoo.

Ninety One appoints Dr. Khalid Alsweilem as Chairman of new Saudi Arabian entity

LONDON, May 6, (AP): Ninety One has announced the appointment of Dr. Khalid Alsweilem to the position of Chief Global Sovereign Funds Advisor and Chairman of the firm's new Saudi Arabian entity, which is currently under formation and subject to approval from the Saudi Arabia Capital Market Authority.

Dr. Alsweilem said: "I am pleased to be taking on this role to help steer and develop Ninety One's business in Saudi Arabia and Middle East more broadly. This is a time of great transformation and opportunity for the region as Saudi Arabia implements its Vision 2030 programme. As a global investment manager with expertise in emerging market

equities, natural resources, Asia and Mainland China equities, energy transition and infrastructure debt, Ninety One is well positioned to capitalise on the major economic developments taking place throughout the region. Their roots in emerging markets give them a keen sensitivity to how investment capabilities should serve Saudi Arabia and the

region's needs."

Hendrik du Toit, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Ninety One, said: "Dr. Alsweilem is the right person to help guide our growth in Saudi Arabia and the region, given his unique knowledge of the investment industry and environment. Ninety One has had an active presence as an investor

of international capital in the region for many years and is experienced in developing investment businesses with local relevance. The creation of a formal entity in Saudi Arabia is our next step in a productive journey to even greater engagement and service of clients."

Dr. Alsweilem is a world-renowned

expert on sovereign wealth funds and their connection to the real economy. He is one of the longest-serving and most successful sovereign fund practitioners, having previously served as Chief Counsellor and Director General of Investment at SAMA, the Central Bank of Saudi Arabia, where he held senior positions since 1991.

ABK holds Q1 '23 analyst confab call

Group demonstrates positive results, added value for shareholders

KUWAIT CITY, May 6: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently held its analyst conference call pertaining to the financial results of quarter 1 of 2023. The digital meeting was organized by Arqam Capital and presented by Mr. Abdulla Al Sumait, Acting Group CEO, Mr. Shiamak Soonawalla, Group Chief Finance Officer, and Mr. Abdulaziz Jawad, Chief Strategy Officer. The discussion was moderated by Mr. Yaaqoub Al Mulla, Senior Manager of Investor Relations in Kuwait.

The call involved an extensive presentation of the Group's performance and financial indicators during the first quarter of the year and shed light on ABK's most prominent strategic plans.

Noteworthy Growth

Commenting on ABK's performance, Al Sumait said, "We have, once again, delivered noteworthy growth for our shareholders in quarter 1 of 2023. Our strong performance is a direct result of the hard work and dedication of our employees combined with our focus on delivering value to our customers and shareholders. We have continued to see growth in our key markets and are confident in our ability to keep momentum for the remainder of the year."

ABK has successfully persisted its sustainable approach in achieving growth and profits in most key performance indicators across its operations as well as demonstrated a continuous improvement in asset quality. Al Sumait shared that ABK has also maintained positive ratios in terms of profitability, Return on Average Assets (ROAA), Return on Average Equity (ROAE), improving asset quality ratios as well as coverage ratio.

Al Sumait said, "We are well above both our current 9.5% minimum CET1 and 13% minimum Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) - Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) requirement. Furthermore, the CAR was about 15.6% at the end of the first quarter of 2023."

He explained that the results of the first quarter demonstrate ABK's success in promoting operational growth, stressing his confidence in maintaining the same momentum for the remainder of 2023.

The Acting GCEO stated, "We have also continued to make significant progress in our digital transformation efforts which have enabled us to streamline our operations and provide a better customer experience. Looking ahead, we remain committed to driving innovation and growth in our business through the launch of an array of new services which contribute to strengthening our position amongst



Mr. Abdulaziz Jawad – Chief Strategy Officer



Mr. Abdulla Al Sumait – Acting Group Chief Executive Officer



Mr. Shiamak Soonawalla – Group Chief Finance Officer

competing banks in Kuwait."

Corporate Social Responsibility

Al Sumait concluded his participation in the call with an affirmation of the Group's ongoing dedication to corporate social responsibility where he emphasized that ABK continues to play a leading role in partaking in a series of social and humanitarian initiatives in both Kuwait and abroad.

Continued Growth

Soonawalla moved on to highlight that the results of the first quarter of 2023 reflect the success of the Group in achieving continued business growth. He pointed out, "The Group continues to benefit from its unique position amongst Kuwaiti banks in terms of geographical spread of operations. This diversification provides a strong competitive advantage and gives a significant degree of resilience to Group earnings."

He added, "The Group's geographical footprint supports revenue generation, loan distribution, and deposit collection. Our international operations, comprising the United Arab Emirates and our ABK-Egypt subsidiary contributes about 39% of operating income and 35% of total assets."

Soonawalla continued, "The Group has achieved a net profit of KD 10.8 million for the first quarter of the year, a 30% increase in the bottom line profit over the comparable quarter of 2022. Earnings per share for quarter 1 of 2023 reached 4 fils, an increase of 33% compared to 3 fils in the previous year."

Financial Indicators

The Group Chief Finance Officer shared that net operating profit increased by 5% to total KD 22.3 million. Furthermore, there was a 4% improvement in operating income to KD 43.2 million broken down to 50% in commercial banking, 43% in retail banking, and 7%

in treasury. The Non-Performing Loan (NPL) ratio stood at 1.45%, NPL coverage at 365% while loan provisions recorded KD 192 million.

Soonawalla stated that the Group continued to enjoy high liquidity levels at the end of the first quarter of this year with a Net Stable Funding Ratio of 108% and a liquidity ratio of 336%.

Net loans and advances exceeded that of the corresponding quarter in the previous period by 11.6% and witnessed a total assets increase of 4.1%. As a result, customer deposits in quarter 1 of 2023 remained strong at KD 4.1 billion.

He continued, the total interest income stood at KD 95.8 million in the first quarter of 2023, reflecting a strong growth of KD 40.3 million to 73% over the first quarter of 2022. Fees and commissions income contributed KD 7.9 million while other non-interest income sources contributed 8% (mainly investment and foreign exchange income).

Soonawalla said, "The Group's operating expenses reflect continued investments in key business initiatives, digital technologies and processes. This enables the Group to offer the best-in-class services to its customers and optimize resources to improve operational efficiency."

He claimed that the Group remains committed to its conservative approach in managing credit exposures and provisioning and continues to benefit from its unique position amongst Kuwaiti banks.

He added, "The Group total assets reached KD 6.1 billion in March 2023, a 4.1% increase compared to March 2022. Loans and advances and investment securities increased by 11.6% and 12.7% respectively compared to March 2022. The ROAE for the current quarter improved to 6.1% from 3.9% in the comparable quarter of 2022. Also, 15.6% the

total CAR remained strong and stable where interim profits are not factored in the computation of the 2023 quarter 1 CAR."

A Strong Brand

The Group Chief Finance Officer mentioned that the increase in retail deposits reflects the Group's sustained focus on the deposit-gathering aspects of the business thus leveraging ABK's longstanding ability to capitalize on the Group's strong brand, customer appeal and credit ratings.

Soonawalla expressed his optimism with regards to the continued improvement in ABK's operating environment for the remainder of the year. He said, "ABK's net interest income has generally benefitted in the rising interest rate scenario. That said, the timing and extent to which increases in local interest rates would follow international benchmarks remains to be seen."

Global Challenges

Jawad continued the meeting by providing updates on the overall global and regional macroeconomic and operating environment. He said, "So far this year, we have witnessed the failure of three American banks as well as a Swiss bank. This makes the global banking industry outlook slightly indefinite. This, accompanied by the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine and high inflation rates, have together declined demand and inclined the risk of a recession."

On the monetary policy front, Jawad stated that the Federal Reserve (Fed), along with other central banks around the world, were trying to defeat inflation by rapidly raising the interest rates. The Fed raised the target range for the Fed funds rate by 25 bps to 4.75%-5.00% in its March 2023 meeting. This has resulted in pushing borrowing costs to the highest level since 2007 whilst the Central Bank of Kuwait has raised its key discount rate by

50 bps to 4% in January 2023, bringing borrowing costs in Kuwait to the highest rate for the past decade.

The Chief Strategy Officer shared, "The impact of the sudden and unprecedented hike in interest rate, especially an increase of over 400 bps in a matter of less than a year, has not yet been fully priced into the markets as it is causing a shift in the funding mix, borrowers as well as depositors' behavior and appetite."

Potential Gulf Bank Combination

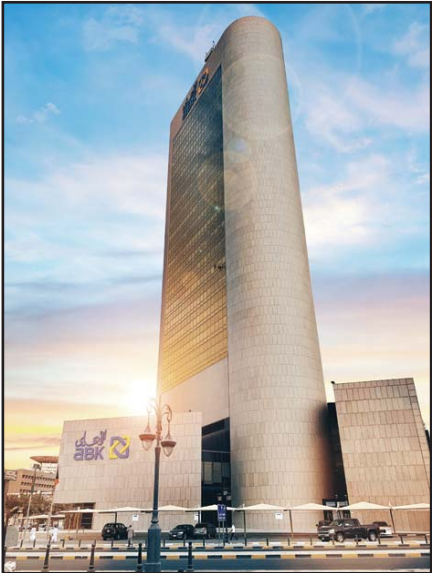
On the non-organic growth side, Jawad claimed that ABK is contemplating a potential combination with Gulf Bank Kuwait (GBK), in which either ABK or GBK will acquire the other, and the acquired entity will be converted into a Sharia compliant bank.

He said, "The transaction could unlock significant value and synergies through strengthening our position in the Kuwaiti market and entering into the Islamic segment. So far, a MOU was signed between the two banks and advisors are appointed and approved by the Central Bank of Kuwait in order to start working on the pre-feasibility study."

Five-year Plan and High Ratings

On the organic growth side, the Chief Strategy Officer stated that ABK's five-year plan is still in action. This is based on three pillars: (1) scale and create value; (2) sustain and de-risk; and (3) innovate and enable. These efforts have been translated into around 137 initiatives which are monitored on a monthly basis to ensure the successful execution of ABK's strategy.

He concluded that the Bank also continues to demonstrate strength through its credit ratings where, "Fitch has rated the Group an A grade with a stable outlook while Moody's granted the rating of A2."



ABK Building 1

Named Kuwait's Best Private Bank and ME Best for Investment Research'

Markaz sets foundation for solid yr with 3 award wins

KUWAIT CITY, May 6: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" announced that it has won three prestigious awards in the first quarter of 2023. Markaz was recently named the 'Best Private Bank in Kuwait' by Global Finance, as part of the magazine's eighth annual World's Best Private Banks Awards for 2023, which was held in New York City on March 16. The Company was also honored by Euromoney with two awards – the 'Middle East's Best for Investment Research' and the 'Best Domestic Private Bank in Kuwait', awarded at the Global Private Banking Awards 2023 ceremony, held in London on March 29. The awards honored institutions that best serve the needs of high-net-worth individuals as they seek to enhance, preserve and pass on their wealth. The judges select the winners with input from executives and industry insiders, information submitted by the institutions, and independent research. Markaz was praised for how it leverages its network of relationships to provide the best products and services for its clients. Its investment in technology, provision of customized solutions to clients and approach to ESG was also deemed notable.

Markaz's reception of the private banking awards underlines its commitment to creating bespoke and comprehensive investment roadmaps for individuals, corporations, family offices, quasi-government and government entities, supported by its robust research and consultation solutions, and a cadre of skilled wealth managers. With a dedicated mission to build and maintain legacies, create global trusts and endowments and manage governance structures and succession planning charters for family-owned businesses, Markaz has emphasized innovation as key to the Company's reception of awards.

The "Middle East's Best for Investment Research" award from Euromoney represents a well-deserved recognition for Markaz's outstanding achievements in producing well-grounded research as



Markaz representatives during one of the award ceremonies.

well as its broad product offering across asset management, investment banking, real estate investment and wealth management. With research being the bedrock of its performance, Markaz places a strong emphasis on delivering prudent information to guide its investment strategies.

Marmore MENA Intelligence, the research arm of Markaz, has been publishing research reports and providing consulting services for over a decade. It delves deep into the prevailing and projected trends in local and global economies and markets to derive in-depth insights. Markaz also collaborates with several global research institutes and experts in economic policies to publish research on various topics of interest addressing Kuwait and the region.

Commenting on the achievements, Abdullahif W. Al-Nusif, Managing Director of Wealth Management and Business Development at Markaz, said: "We take great pride in Markaz being recognized with the awards for the best private bank in Kuwait

by Euromoney and Global Finance. We are truly honored that our achievements and our strong track record in providing market-leading products and services for our clients to build and grow their wealth have been recognized internationally. Equipped with unmatched expertise in creating fully integrated wealth management plans, our teams work closely with our clients to understand their needs and financial goals, to design tailored portfolios and investment solutions locally, regionally and globally, across all asset classes"

"We are also delighted and honored that Markaz has been recognized for its industry-leading research capabilities. We have an unrelenting commitment to providing our clients with reliable and objective research and analyses that help them make informed investment decisions. These recognitions will motivate us to continue our pursuit of excellence across all our offerings," added Al-Nusif.

It is worth mentioning that in the 49 years since its initial estab-

lishment, Markaz has been recognized with over 70 prestigious industry awards for its continuous commitment to providing excellence to its clients.

About Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz"

Established in 1974, Kuwait Financial Centre K.P.S.C "Markaz" is one of the leading asset management and investment banking institutions in the MENA region with total assets under management of over KD 1.154 billion as of 31 December 2022 (USD 3.77 billion). Markaz was listed on the Boursa Kuwait in 1997. Over the years, Markaz has pioneered innovation through the creation of new investment channels. These channels enjoy unique characteristics and helped Markaz widen investors' horizons. Examples include Muntaz (the first domestic mutual fund), MREF (the first real estate investment fund in Kuwait), and Forsa Financial Fund (the first and only options market maker in the GCC since 2005), all conceptualized, established, and managed by Markaz.

Overall business improves

Apple posts quarterly revenue decline; sales of iPhones solid

WASHINGTON, May 6, (AP): Apple once again posted an, until now, rare revenue decline in its latest fiscal quarter, but said its overall business improved from the December quarter and sales of its iPhones were solid.

The results reported Thursday were better than Wall Street's muted expectations and Apple's stock rose in after-hours trading.

The latest numbers come after the Cupertino, California, company in February posted its first quarterly revenue drop in nearly four years after pandemic-driven restrictions on its China factories curtailed sales of the latest iPhone during the holiday season.

Apple said it earned \$24.16 billion, or \$1.52 per share, in the three-month period that ended April 1. That was down slightly from \$25.01 billion, also \$1.52 per share, a year earlier.

Revenue fell 3% to \$94.84 billion from \$97.28 billion.

Analysts, on average, were expecting earnings of \$1.43 per share on revenue of \$92.91 billion, according to a poll by FactSet.

For the current, fiscal third quarter, Apple said it expects revenue performance to be "similar" to the second quarter. Analysts are forecasting \$84.5 billion, which is well below what Apple is suggesting.

Apple said iPhone sales brought in \$51.33 billion in revenue in the first

quarter. Analysts expected a more modest \$48.66 billion. Revenue in its key services division was \$20.91 billion, slightly above Wall Street's estimates of \$20.66 billion.

CEO Tim Cook said in a conference call that Apple is seeing "ongoing challenges" related to the broader economic environment but the company continues to "manage for the long term."

Unlike many of its tech industry peers, Apple hasn't signaled any intention to resort to mass layoffs. Industry giants such as Google parent Alphabet, Microsoft, Amazon and Facebook parent Meta Platforms have announced plans to jettison tens of thousands of employees in recent months as they adjust to revenue slowdowns or downturns caused by people's lessening dependence on the digital realm as pandemic restrictions have eased.

Wedbush analyst Dan Ives said Apple delivered a "LeBron-like March," referring to the basketball star LeBron James.

"The iPhone beat was front and center," Ives said, adding that it's a clear indication that the company is continuing to gain market share in China.

The company said its board also approved a \$90 billion share buyback program and raised its regular quarterly dividend by 4% to 24 cents a share.

Apple's shares climbed about 2% in after-hours trading.

UK to start free trade with New Zealand and Australia

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, May 6, (AP): Britain's free trade agreements with New Zealand and Australia will come into force by the end of this month, the leaders from the three nations said Friday.

The announcement came while the prime ministers from the two Southern Hemisphere nations are in London for the coronation of King Charles III.

The deals are part of Britain's efforts to expand its economic ties after it left the European Union. Both deals were first agreed to in 2021.

New Zealand officials say its deal will help boost sales of products like wine, butter, beef and honey, and will increase the size of its economy by up to 1 billion New Zealand dollars (\$629 million).

New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins said it was a gold-standard agreement.

"The market access outcomes are among the very best New Zealand has secured in any trade deal," Hipkins said in a statement.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said the deal with New Zealand re-

flected the close relationship between the nations.

"This deal will unlock new opportunities for businesses and investors across New Zealand and the United Kingdom, drive growth, boost jobs, and, most importantly, build a more prosperous future for the next generation," Sunak said in a statement.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said it would mean more market access for its exporters.

"So for beef, for our sheep products, for our seafood, for our other products it will mean much greater access to the British market," Albanese told the Australian Broadcasting Corp. in an interview.

Albanese said it would also mean greater access for younger Australians to work in Britain and vice versa after the terms of a working holiday arrangement were expanded.

A similar scheme between New Zealand and Britain has also been expanded, increasing the length of working visas from two years to three years and the maximum eligible age from 30 to 35.

average food price rose slightly in April: FAO

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) announced Friday a slight increase in average prices of global basic food commodities in April 2023, affected by a rise in sugar prices to the highest level in 12 years.

In its monthly report issued Friday, the organization said the FAO-benchmark index of the average prices of the most traded food commodities rose in April to 127.2 points, an increase of 0.8 points, or 0.6 percent, compared with its level in March, to remain 31.2 points, or 18.7 percent, lower than its level in April 2022.

The FAO Food Price Index, which tracks monthly changes in the international prices of commonly-traded food commodities, averaged 127.2 points in April 2023, up 0.6 percent from March, the FAO said on its website.

The report noted that the FAO Sugar Price Index went up 22.4

points, 17.6 percent, it a fourth rise per month, reaching its highest level since October 2011.

The FAO Meat Price Index increased 1.3 percent in April, an increase of 6.1 percent, compared with its level in the same month in 2022, it elaborated.

The FAO Cereal Price Index dropped 1.7 percent last month and averaged 19.8 percent below its April 2022 value, according to the report. (KUNA)

Twitter alerts back on track for NYC subway

Service alerts for New York City's subway, commuter trains and buses were back on Twitter, a week after transit officials balked at paying to provide the information.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority lost access last week to Twitter's application programming interface to send out automated alerts about service changes and emergencies. The MTA decided last Thursday to

cease publishing service alerts to Twitter, saying it opposed the platform's recent decision to start charging for access to its programming interface.

In an about-face, Twitter said this week it has restored free access to the interface for verified government and "publicly owned" services so they can tweet alerts.

"Twitter got the message and reversed its plan to charge the MTA more than half a million dollars per year for these alerts, so now no transit agency will need to pay," read a prepared statement from Shanifah Rieara, MTA's acting chief customer officer.

The country's largest transportation network began providing service alerts on its Twitter accounts in time for the Thursday evening commute. (AP)

'Republican bill will cause 790,000 job losses next year'

Democrats pressure GOP on debt limit, spending cuts

WASHINGTON, May 6, (AP): Senate Democrats pressured Republicans on the debt ceiling impasse, focused in a hearing on what they say will be painful reductions in government services if a bill recently passed by the House becomes law.

No one expects that the House bill, which would importantly increase the nation's borrowing authority as well as cutting spending, will reach President Joe Biden's desk. The Democratic Senate won't let it.

Many Republicans admitted so when passing the measure. But they said action by the House was necessary to get Biden to the negotiating table with Republican Speaker Kevin McCarthy. A meeting at the White House with congressional leaders of both parties is set for next week.

Despite the legislation's certain demise, Democrats are eager to tie Republicans, particularly in swing districts and states, to various provisions in the bill. Those include one that would cap next year's spending

at 2022 levels and allow it to rise only 1% annually in ensuing years.

That change, which accounts for most of the projected \$4.8 trillion in savings, could have severe impacts on programs such as Head Start and Meals on Wheels, cancer research and veterans' health care, Democrats say.

"If Republicans won't level with the American people about their terrible bill, Senate Democrats are going to do it for them," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said.

It's just the latest jousting in Congress over the debt limit, a legal limit to government borrowing that has been raised repeatedly in recent years as the nation's debt has swelled past \$31 trillion. Urgency around the issue intensified this week as the Treasury Department announced that the "extraordinary measures" being used to avoid a devastating government default could run out on June 1 - giving lawmakers just a few weeks to find a solution.

Republicans describe the Democratic effort as a distraction that

Average long-term US mortgage rate slips to 6.39% this week

LOS ANGELES, May 6, (AP): The average long-term U.S. mortgage rate edged lower this week, a modest boost for homebuyers looking for relief as a stubbornly low inventory of properties for sale fuels bidding wars in many markets.

The average rate on the benchmark 30-year fixed-rate home loan fell to 6.39% from 6.43% last week, mortgage buyer Freddie Mac said. A year ago, it averaged 5.27%. The average rate fell for five straight weeks before rising the last two weeks of April.

This week's drop in mortgage rates is welcome news for prospective homebuyers, many of whom have been

pushed to the sidelines during the past year as the Federal Reserve cranked up its main borrowing rate in a bid to tamp down persistent, four-decade high inflation.

All told, the Fed has raised its benchmark rate 10 times since March 2022, including an increase this week that pushed it to 5.1%, the highest since 2007, from virtually zero early last year.

Shifts in the Fed's short-term lending rate don't directly affect mortgage rates, but they do influence the yield on 10-year Treasury bonds, which lenders use as a guide to pricing home loans. That's because higher rates push bonds

Biden hopes 'strong' job market means soft landing for economy



Construction workers install roofing on a high rise in Manhattan's financial district on Tuesday, April 11, 2023, in New York. (AP)

US adds a solid 253,000 jobs despite Fed's rate hikes

WASHINGTON, May 6, (AP): For President Joe Biden, the past few days have raised hopes that the U.S. economy can stick a soft landing-possibly avoiding a recession as the 2024 election nears.

Most U.S. adults have downbeat feelings about Biden's economic leadership, as high inflation has overshadowed a strong jobs market. It's long been economic orthodoxy that efforts to beat back inflation by the Federal Reserve would result in unemployment rising and the country sinking into recession.

But to the president and some economists, the April jobs report issued Friday challenged that theory with its 3.4% unemployment rate and 253,000 jobs gained.

The strong jobs report came after a Wednesday Fed meeting that suggested the U.S. central bank might pause on its rate hikes, the primary tool for cutting inflation from its still high 5% to something closer to 2%. Talks are also starting over the need to raise the debt limit - with Biden inviting congressional leaders to the White House for a Tuesday meeting in hopes of ultimately getting a commitment to avoid a default.

For a president seeking a second term, Biden struck a confident tone Friday when meeting with aides even as he pushed GOP lawmakers for a clean increase on the debt cap.

"We're trending in the right direction and I think we're making real progress," he said about the overall economy, telling Republican lawmak-

ers to not "undo all this progress" with the debt limit standoff.

The economy could still stumble. Several economists forecast a recession this year, considering the wild cards of the war in Ukraine, global tensions and the debt limit fight. But the steady job gains have suggested to some policymakers and economists that it's possible to curb inflation without layoffs.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell told reporters Wednesday that the current trends are going against history.

"It wasn't supposed to be possible for job openings to decline by as much as they've declined without unemployment going up," Powell said. "Well, that's what we've seen. There's no promises in this, but it just seems that to me that it's possible that we will continue to have a cooling in the labor market without having the big increases in unemployment."

Heidi Shierholz, president of the Economic Policy Institute, a liberal think tank, said there are currently no signs of a recession and if one erupts it will be due to Fed overreach.

"We are in the middle of a soft landing right now - we have shown we can bring down wage growth, bring down inflation," she said.

But that doesn't mean voters are pleased with the economy. Inflation remains a persistent irritant as Biden has begun the process of launching his reelection campaign. GOP lawmakers have used the high prices in the wake of the pandemic as a political cudgel, with House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., insisting on spending cuts as part of a debt limit deal in order to reduce inflation. The debt limit deals with spending obligations that the United States has already incurred and not future spending.

Just as Biden trumpets the solid job

market, Fed officials could interpret the hiring as evidence that they need to raise rates higher and that could cause more pain for the economy and the Democratic administration.

"The starting point is the fact that inflation remains stubbornly high and politically troublesome," said Douglas Holtz-Eakin, a former director of the Congressional Budget Office and president of the center-right American Action Forum. "The Fed would like to get it down. The data don't just seem to behave. The Fed could very well hike again in June - and that would cause the financial markets to lose their collective mind."

There is also the possibility that lawmakers fail to avert a default. Or, there could be so much drama over getting to a debt limit deal that the economy gets weaker this summer. The Treasury Department has forecast that its accounting maneuvers to keep the government running could be exhausted by early June, at which point an agreement would need to be in place.

The White House released estimates showing that brinkmanship over the debt limit - even if a deal comes together - could still cost the economy 200,000 jobs.

Nor are all economists convinced the U.S. economy has escaped the gravitational pull of a recession.

Meanwhile, America's employers added a healthy 253,000 jobs in April, evidence of a labor market that still shows surprising resilience despite rising interest rates, chronically high inflation and a banking crisis that could weaken the economy.

The unemployment rate dipped to 3.4%, matching a 54-year low, the Labor Department said Friday. The jobless rate fell in part, though, because 43,000 people left the labor force, the first drop since November, and were no longer counted as unemployed.

In its report Friday, the government noted that while hiring was solid in April, it was much weaker in February and March than it had previously estimated. Job gains for those months was downgraded by a combined 149,000. And hourly wages rose last month at the fastest pace since July, which may alarm the inflation fighters at the Federal Reserve.

April's hiring gain compares with 165,000 in March and 248,000 in February and is still at a level considered vigorous by historical standards. The job market has remained durable despite the Fed's aggressive campaign of interest rate hikes over the past year to fight inflation. Layoffs are still relatively low, job openings comparatively high.

Job growth was particularly strong last month among health care companies, restaurants and bars and a broad category that includes managers, administrators and technical support workers.



President Joe Biden speaks during a meeting with his 'Investing in America Cabinet,' in the Roosevelt Room of the White House, Friday, May 5, 2023, in Washington. (AP)

Failures could create financial contagion

Regional bank shares sink in a sign crisis not yet over

NEW YORK, May 6, (AP): Uncertainty continues to pummel the banking industry, despite assurances from financial regulators and bankers such as Jamie Dimon this week that the worst of the recent crisis is over and the health of the banking system remains strong.

Bank shares have sold off on Wall Street this week following the government seizure and subsequent sale of First Republic Bank to JPMorgan. It was the second-largest bank failure in U.S. history and the third failure of a midsize lender in two months.

While many thought the sale of First Republic "would stop the 'who's next?' conversations, investors are clearly continuing to focus on remaining players that are deemed the weakest" analysts at UBS wrote in a note to clients.



A sign for a First Republic Bank location is shown in San Francisco, Tuesday, April 25, 2023. (AP)

The bigger worry is that the bank failures might lead to doubts about relatively healthy banks, creating a financial contagion that could impact the wider economy. Averting that scenario was the reason the U.S. put tighter restrictions on major banks following the financial crisis 15 years ago.

Markets do not appear to have been reassured by prominent names in finance who say instability in the banking sector ended with the takeover Monday of First Republic Bank, the third bank failure in short order. JPMorgan's Dimon said Monday that he believed "this part" of the banking crisis was over. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell vouched for the health of the financial system on Wednesday.

A renewed sell-off Thursday focused on PacWest Bancorp and Western Alliance Bancorp, two smaller regional banks whose shares have been under pressure since Silicon Valley Bank failed in mid-March and set off the current crisis. PacWest fell 38% after acknowledging it was considering putting itself up for sale.

But there was a significant sell-off in numerous regional banks, including Zions Bancorporation, Comerica, Truist, KeyCorp and Huntington.

The KBW index of regional banks has fallen 13% so far this week. PacWest was targeted because of a high concentration of large, uninsured deposits from venture capital and tech clients, the same type of customers who triggered bank runs at Silicon Valley and First Republic. But even Midwest regionals such as Comerica and KeyCorp are down more than 20% this week. That could reflect concerns about large amounts of real estate loans, particularly in the office property market, which continues to suffer the effects of the pandemic.

PacWest, based in Los Angeles, and Western Alliance, in Phoenix, each issued a statement overnight saying they weren't experiencing any out-of-the-ordinary deposit withdrawals following the sale of First Republic, a classic bank run that was accelerated by social media and modern technology. Both saw significant withdrawals following the failure of Silicon Valley Bank, but the banks say deposits have increased since March 31.

Western Alliance issued a separate statement Thursday morning denying a story in The Financial Times that said the bank is considering a sale. Its shares were down 26% in afternoon trading, but had tumbled 40% earlier.

Investors may fear that PacWest's fate could mirror that First Republic, which spent weeks looking for a buyer before failing. First Republic had already received a government-orchestrated rescue package of \$30 billion from 11 banks in hopes of shoring up its balance sheet, but that wasn't enough. It's unclear what action if any

federal regulators would take to support PacWest.

"The underlying issue, particularly at these banks, is their asset and deposit mix isn't sustainable. Deposits keep running out the door or banks are having to pay hefty prices for them," said Chris Caulfield, a banking industry consultant with West Monroe who has worked with many of the regional banks in trouble.

Healthier banks have been reluctant to step in to buy struggling lenders. All assets of Silicon Valley, Signature and First Republic were bought after regulators seized them and the remnants were transferred to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

In another sign of potential trouble, a major deal in the banking sector was called off Thursday. TD Bank Group and First Horizon Corp. said they called off a planned merger, citing regulatory hurdles. Toronto-Dominion Bank had said in February that it was buying regional bank First Horizon in a \$13.4 billion all-cash deal.

The Federal Reserve's fight against inflation has played a key role in the banking turmoil. The Fed on Wednesday raised its key interest rate by a quarter-point to the highest level in 16 years as part of that campaign, its tenth consecutive rate hike.

The higher rates have prompted depositors to move money into higher-paying certificates of deposit and money market funds. They also played a role in the slowdown in the tech industry, which had major implications for West Coast banks such as Silicon Valley.

Chair Jerome Powell said the Fed would monitor several factors, including the turmoil in the banking sector, in deciding its next move on rates.

The Fed chair stressed his belief that the collapse of three large banks in the past six weeks will likely cause other banks to tighten lending, and that would help the Fed in its inflation fight. The Fed's rapid rate hikes over the past year have started to slow the economy, and a number of economists expect a recession late in 2023 or in early 2024.

Powell also said he agreed with the conclusions of a Fed report issued last week that said lapses in supervision contributed to the demise of Silicon Valley Bank, and recommended stricter regulation of the banking industry.

JPMorgan anticipates bank stocks will continue to be pressured due to regulatory and economic uncertainty, among other factors.

"Regulatory concerns primarily would translate into how much banks need to add to capital, liquidity, and debt, all of which would strengthen them longer term but hurt (earning per share)," analysts said in a note.

Alia shines at Met gala in Malabar jewellery

Making her debut appearance at the iconic MET Gala in New York, Alia Bhatt, the brand ambassador of Malabar Gold & Diamonds dazzled fashionistas across the globe in stunning handcrafted diamond jewellery from Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

Organised by the fashion magazine Vogue, the MET Gala is an annual fundraising gala held for the benefit of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute in New York City.

It is widely regarded as the world's most prestigious and glamorous fashion event. Personalities who are perceived to be contemporaneously relevant to society from various professional spheres are invited to attend this highly exclusive event.

In line with the night's theme, 'In honour of Karl', a tribute to the legendary German designer Karl Lagerfeld, the diamond ring that Alia wore was designed by the celebrated jewellery designer Alice Cicolini. Painstakingly

handcrafted by master artisans from Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the ring bore a 2.21 ct rose-cut solitaire at the center, surrounded by hundreds of diamonds and a tassel of pearls. Alia wore a shimmering white bridal gown enlaced with pearls, designed by Prabal Gurung to the event.

The Malabar Gold Company was established in the year 1993. The company has more than 310+ showrooms across 10 countries at present which makes it one of the largest

chains of jewellery retailer in the world. The company also owns a network of luxury watch boutiques across India, which operates under the name Malabar Watches.

The Malabar Group has been on an expansion since 2000 and more showrooms are expected to be opened in India, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and in the United States. The brand is mainly committed to India, the Gulf and Far East markets.

Alia Bhatt wore handcrafted diamond jewellery from Malabar Gold at Met Gala

Highest monthly expected returns

KIB reveals winners of ‘Al Dirwaza’ account’s fourth draw

KUWAIT CITY, May 6: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the names of the winners in the fourth Al Dirwaza account monthly draw, based on customers' April deposits. The draw was held in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as well as representatives from the Bank. In this draw, Mariam Hussain Al-Kandari won KD 10,000, whilst the KD 1,000 prize was awarded to 10 winners in total: Bader Saleem Salem Alrasheedi, Alaa Ali Hussain AlHamad, Mohamed A M Metwaly, Ali Hussain Abdullah Aljazzaf, Ahmad Abdulmohsen Ahmad Alnaser, Bader Mukhtar Hasan Al Shatti, Mohamed Shaker Hasan Ameen Alawadhi, Mohamad Shaker Mahmoud Behbehani, Zainab Ali Behbehani, Asem Mohammad Abdulhameed Ali.

Speaking about the draw, Ali Al Sane, Manager - Product Development, Digital Transformation & Innovation at KIB, said "We would like to extend our congratulations to our esteemed customers who were the lucky winners in this fourth Al Dirwaza Account draw. We also wish the rest of Al Dirwaza account holders the best of luck in the upcoming monthly draws." He added: "At KIB, we are committed to continue rewarding our customers and account holders, while ensuring their satisfaction and loyalty towards our products and services. As part of efforts to establish a closer bond with our customers, the Bank has been keen on offering premium banking products and the greatest benefits to help them meet their banking needs and aspirations, while catering to their modern lifestyles."

Moreover, Al Sane noted that KIB recently relaunched its campaign designed to enable its customers to open an Al Dirwaza account digitally through the bank's digital platforms, whether via KIB Online or the KIB Mobile application.

It serves to note that Al Dirwaza account is a savings account for individual customers, based on the Wakala investment principle, launched by KIB as one of its banking products for individuals. The account is currently the best of its kind in the sector, with annual expected profits up to 2% disbursed on monthly basis where the customer gets an expected profit of 2% for the first 3 months from the account opening date and up to 1% expected rate onward. The expected profits are automatically deposited into the customer's account within the first day of the beginning of each month.

Al Dirwaza is a draw account as well, whereby 11 winners will be announced every month, receiving prizes of KD 20,000, along with a grand prize at the end of the year of KD 100,000. Al Dirwaza account holders are eligible to enter the monthly and mega draws on the condition of maintaining at least KD 100 in their accounts. For the monthly draws, each KD 1 completed a full month's cycle in the account will count for one chance and chances are calculated based on the lowest monthly balance preceding the draw. As for the mega draw, chances are calculated for each KD 1 that completes two months cycle in the account – based on the lowest two monthly balances prior to the draw.

Al Dirwaza account is also in compliance with the provisions of Islamic Sharia and approved by the KIB's Sharia Board. Furthermore, the account comes with a wide range of benefits, including the ease of opening the account, which doesn't require a salary transfer, and the customer's ability to open it remotely without visiting a branch through KIB Online on the Bank's website or KIB Mobile application on smartphones.

Additionally, Al Dirwaza account automatically grants customers instant issuance of an ATM card, with a KD 2,000 ATM daily withdrawal limit, as well as the ability to issue credit cards against the cash collateral in the account. To open the account and participate in its draws, a minimum of KD 100 is required and can only be withdrawn upon account closure.



Gulf Bank introduces competition to youth.

Registration open until May 9

Gulf Bank urges youth ages 14 to 18 yrs to ‘participate’ in Datathon Competition

KUWAIT CITY, May 6: Gulf Bank will be closing registrations for the second Gulf Bank "Datathon" competition on May 9, to prepare the final list of participants for the competition that is set to happen on May 12, 2023, at Al Shaheed Park, Phase Two (Multi-Purpose Hall).

In cooperation with INJAZ Kuwait, the Bank has introduced the competition to youth segments aged 14-18 years for the first time in Kuwait, with the aim of teaching the students how to use Google Analytics through a workshop, and to participate in a five-hour competition.

The bank will offer three valuable prizes to the winning projects, where the Data Modeling and Visualization category winners will receive a prize of KD 1,000 (all ages), the Data Visualization category winners will receive a prize of KD 500 (all ages), and the Digital Analytics category winners will receive a prize of KD 500 – which is specifically designated for youth aged 14 to 18 years.

The Chief Data & Innovation Officer at Gulf Bank, Mai Bader Al-Owaish, commented saying: "At Gulf Bank, we believe that by providing this distinguished data platform, we will contribute to encouraging digital innovations – enabling specialists and interested parties to actively participate in the innovation of new technologies. This also contributes towards providing the best digital experiences to the Kuwaiti society."

Al-Owaish indicated that the competition provides a wonderful platform for data enthusiasts to learn and apply their skills in data science. Considering that the "Datathon" is one of the many steps that contribute to providing society with a new set of skills and challenges, aimed at helping the next generations of digital content creators in the country. The competition also contributes towards enhancing the national economy through data and digital services.

And as part of its preparations to visit the following website <https://e-gulfbank.com/datathon> or scan the QR code.



Mai Bader Al-Owaish

launch the second "Datathon" competition, Gulf Bank recently organized a Datathon Event Series entitled "Paths To A Career In Data Science", in cooperation with Coded Human Recourses Development Company, which was moderated by Mai Bader Al-Owaish.

The seminar discussed the paths available for young people looking to pursue a career in data science, as well as Gulf Bank's role in helping students and graduates build their career paths. Through providing them opportunities to directly communicate with data science pioneers and professionals and benefit from their expertise.

Furthermore, the workshop will witness the participation of Assistant Professor of Computer Engineering at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, Dr. Ahmad Al-Baqsmi, and Gulf Bank's Manager of the Digital Analytics Unit, Najla Al-Meshari as well as Data Scientist, Mariam Bazzi.

The "Datathon" is a competition open to all participants who seek to learn and apply data science tools and techniques, and work to towards finding solutions with innovative concepts and ideas.

Those wishing to register, please

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

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

Gulf Bank is one of the largest leading banks in Kuwait with a broad offering of consumer banking, wholesale banking, treasury, and financial services. The Bank was founded in 1960, registered as a bank with the Central Bank of Kuwait and was listed as Gulf Bank (GBK) on the Kuwait Stock Exchange (Boursa Kuwait) in 1984.

Gulf Bank has a large network of 58 branches, with total assets of KD 6 billion (US\$19.8 billion) for year ended 31 December 2018. The Bank is currently ranked 'A' by four leading international credit rating agencies; a Long-term Issuer Default Rating of "A+" with a "Stable" Outlook by Fitch Ratings, an Issuer Credit rating at "A-/A-2" with a "Stable" outlook by S&P Global Rating, a Long-Term Deposits Rating of "A3" with a "Positive" Outlook by Moody's Investor Services and a Long-term Foreign Currency Rating of "A+" with a "Stable" Outlook by Capital Intelligence Ratings.

Al-Lanqawi added that the platform combines the latest technology and the Bank's experience in the market and allows clients to modify it according to their preferences, as well as benefiting from the most competitive prices and valuable data to help them make their decisions. A team of experts in treasury, trading and structuring supports the clients to help them deal with market changes and hedge fundamental risks.

He pointed out that Warba Bank is constantly looking forward to pioneering banking digitization and always striving to adopt the latest solutions and keep pace with technological development to create added value.

Warba Bank is one of the banks that has achieved great successes in a short period of time, as it occupied a leading position in the field of retail Islamic digital banking services and is one of

Best financial technology services

Warba Bank launches platform for e-foreign currency trading

KUWAIT, May 6: Warba Bank launched a platform for electronic foreign currency trading, to enhance the Bank's business activities, develop its position in the local and international foreign exchange markets, provide the best financial technology services and to achieve its pioneering vision in digital transformation in the Kuwaiti banking sector.

Abdullah Mahmoud Al-Lanqawi, Chief Treasury Officer at Warba Bank, stated that the platform presents a quantum leap in keeping pace with the best standards of global markets in local and foreign transactions, which would enhance the available solutions and provide the best experiences for the Bank's clients. This further elevates the Bank's position and extends its network while also contributing to the growth of its business activities in the field of foreign exchange trading.

Al-Lanqawi explained that the Warba Bank platform for electronic trading of foreign currencies provides the possibility of immediate display of exchange rates, as it enables clients to complete transactions electronically and instantly, thus reducing the risks of volatile foreign exchange markets and ensuring the best currency exchange rates. This platform targets companies and institutions that are consistently active in the FX market. Parties interested in registering to the service may contact the Bank's call center via the number 1825555.

Efforts

He continued by saying: "We at Warba Bank are proud of this launch, which is an essential step towards banking digitization, which was the fruit of the commendable efforts of various departments of the Bank. We always strive to achieve the best for the banking sector in general and improve solutions for clients in particular."

Al-Lanqawi added that the platform combines the latest technology and the Bank's experience in the market and allows clients to modify it according to their preferences, as well as benefiting from the most competitive prices and valuable data to help them make their decisions. A team of experts in treasury, trading and structuring supports the clients to help them deal with market changes and hedge fundamental risks.

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Al-Lanqawi



Borgan Bank's card offers highest cashback in the market.

Diverse benefits

Borgan launches 3 cashback cards ‘offering’ up to 15 pct

KUWAIT CITY, May 6: Borgan Bank announced the launch of a new series of Cashback cards, the best of their kind in Kuwait, supported by a wide range of diverse benefits designed to meet the needs of customers locally and globally. This step comes in line with the Bank's strategy aimed at rewarding its customers and providing the best banking products and services that suit their daily lifestyle.

The innovative proposition from Borgan Bank comes in 3 variants of Cards- Two credit cards and one Prepaid card built with top-of-line Cashback benefits.

The new series of Cards will provide customers with a more rewarding purchasing experience, through highest cashback in Kuwait, of up to 15% when using MasterCard World variant, 10% when using MasterCard Platinum variant, and 5% when using MasterCard Prepaid variant card to pay for their "daily spends" which would include selected top merchant categories such as dining, health, and beauty spends including spa, salons and cosmetics, online purchases and utilities payments whether inside Kuwait or while traveling.

Commenting on the Cashback cards launch, Naser Al Qaisi, Chief

Retail Banking Officer at Borgan said, "As part of our cards' strategy, we make continuous efforts to best understand our customers' requirements and elevate their banking experience with us. Today, we launch the most powerful Cashback cards in the local banking market-based in line with the changing expectations of customers.

Al Qaisi added: "The launch of this latest product comes following a run of very well-received promotions and added value benefits on our card offerings, all of which resulted in amazing feedback from our customers and increasing demand for our cards. Any and all new offerings we introduce – whether limited-time promotions or permanent additions to our suite of solutions – are designed to offer our customers a best-in-class banking experience."

It is noteworthy that Borgan Bank remains committed to being a leading service provider in the banking services sector in Kuwait. The Bank continues to launch banking products and services that provide added value and a signature, elevated banking experience for its customers, featuring various benefits and exclusive rewards throughout the year.

the largest local banks in the number of its shareholders. This is one of the most important elements that make the Bank close to all members of society, in addition to that, Warba Bank is considered among the 50 largest banks in the Middle East in terms of market value for the year 2023 - Forbes Middle East classification.

To consolidate Islamic banking and confronts challenges

KFH participates in AAOIFI annual Shari’a board conference

KUWAIT CITY, May 6: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Group is participating as the main sponsor in AAOIFI Annual Shari'a Board Conference, organized by the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI) in cooperation with the Central Bank of Bahrain, to be held in Bahrain on May 7 and 8.

KFH's participation stems from its keenness to develop the Islamic banking industry and to continue supporting the advancement of financial products and services in accordance with Shari'a, as the conference is one of the most prominent gatherings of Shari'a scholars and decision-makers to discuss various topics and developments in the Islamic financial industry worldwide.

The conference gathered scholars, leaders, and experts in the Islamic financial industry as well as senior officials of central banks and supervisory authorities. Through six panel discussions, the conference will discuss the Shari'a aspects related to the Islamic financial industry within the framework of Shari'a governance for its institutions.

Dialogue

It will also feature several live and virtual dialogue sessions over two days, in which a group leaders of the Islamic financial industry will present their visions for the development of Islamic banking, navigating challenges to uphold Shari'a principles in transactions, while addressing the issues at hand.

KFH Group's participation in the conference represents an opportunity to exchange ideas, visions, and concepts with leaders' specialists in the Islamic banking industry, and to review the most important issues and topics in Islamic banking that require practical solutions and applications, especially that

the Islamic banking sector needs continuous research and development efforts to address various issues facing its development.

Established in 1991 in the Kingdom of Bahrain, AAOIFI is one of the leading international non-profit organizations supporting Islamic financial institutions, with significant professional achievements, mainly the issuance of 100 standards to date in the fields of accounting, auditing, business ethics and governance.



KFH headquarters.

Minnesota settles lawsuit against Juul

Minnesota announced a settlement in its lawsuit against Juul Labs and tobacco giant Altria — the first of thousands of cases against the e-cigarette maker to reach trial — just ahead of closing arguments. It comes only days after Juul announced its biggest settlement ever over the way it marketed its highly addictive products.

The terms will be kept confidential until formal papers are publicly filed with the court in 30 days, Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison said in a statement. If it's like Juul's other settlements, the Minnesota settlement could include a multimillion-dollar payment and various restrictions on the marketing, sale and distribution of the company's vaping products. Ellison said ahead of the trial that he was seeking more than \$100 million in damages.

"After three weeks of trial highlighting and bringing into the public record the actions that JUUL and Altria took that contributed to the youth vaping epidemic, we reached a settlement in the best interest of Minnesotans," Ellison said.

Juul said it would work with the state to finalize the details over the coming weeks. (AP)

Moderna tops 1Q forecasts; vaccine sales plunge

Sales of Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine plunged in the first quarter and some expenses soared, but Wall Street expected this and the drugmaker topped expectations.

Moderna said Thursday that revenue from its Spikevax vaccine tumbled to \$1.83 billion in the quarter from nearly \$6 billion a year ago. Rival Pfizer also reported a steep sales drop for its COVID-19 shot, Comirnaty, earlier this week. The vaccine makers are shifting to commercial sales this year after selling to the government through huge contracts.

Vaccine sales are expected to sink further in the second quarter, as governments use up their inventory of shots.

Moderna said Thursday that it still was on track to deliver more shots through \$5 billion in signed advance purchase agreements for 2023. It also said it was making progress with drugstores, hospitals and government agencies on vaccine contracts for the fall. The Spikevax vaccine is Moderna's main source of revenue, but the company also is developing other vaccines. They include a potential flu shot and a vaccine for the respiratory illness known as RSV. Moderna's research and development expenses doubled in the first quarter to \$1.1 billion, as the drugmaker spent money on clinical trials for those potential vaccines. (AP)

Detour System provides fully percutaneous femoropopliteal bypass

Endologix wins ‘medical device engineering breakthrough’ award

IRVINE, Calif., May 6: Endologix LLC, a privately held, global medical device company dedicated to providing disruptive therapies for the interventional treatment of vascular disease, has announced today that its Detour™ System has been selected as the winner of the “Medical Device Engineering Breakthrough” award in the 7th annual MedTech Breakthrough Awards. This program is conducted by MedTech Breakthrough, an independent market intelligence organization that recognizes the top companies, technologies and products in the global health and medical technology market.

Percutaneous Transluminal Arterial Bypass (PTAB) with the Detour System is a unique therapy that provides a fully percutaneous femoropopliteal bypass that is routed through the femoral vein. The Detour System, currently an investigational device with FDA Breakthrough Device Designation, uses the Endocross™ Device and TORUS™ Stent Graft and is designed to treat patients with moderate to severe peripheral arterial disease with long blockages of the superficial femoral artery (SFA).

The current “gold standard” for treating patients with long SFA blockages is open femoropopliteal bypass, which is an invasive procedure. Endovascular techniques used for these long blockages have high rates of complications. The Detour System may provide patients with a new treatment modality, combining the best aspects of both open and endovascular procedures.

tour System will offer a fully percutaneous femoropopliteal bypass and will provide a disruptive, innovative therapy for the treatment of long-segment SFA disease, thereby expanding the treatment options available for these patients.”

The mission of the MedTech Breakthrough Awards is to honor excellence and recognize the innovation, hard work and success in a range of health and medical technology categories, including Telehealth, Clinical Administration, Patient Engagement, Electronic Health Records (EHR), Virtual Care, Medical Devices, Medical Data and many more. This year's program attracted more than 4,000 nominations from over 17 different countries throughout the world.

Standard

“While open surgery is still technically the gold standard for long-term durability, the reality is that not every patient is a candidate for that procedure and it can carry more risk for the patient,” said James Johnson, managing director, MedTech Breakthrough. “The Detour System has the potential to introduce a minimally invasive alternative for patients in need of a femoropopliteal bypass. The breakthrough solution may offer the best of both worlds: a durable, minimally invasive endovascular solution with the patency of open femoropopliteal bypass. The low MAE rate, coupled with good primary patency, provides supportive evidence for the feasibility of this new technology in a challenging patient population. Congratulations to the Endologix team on being for our 2023 ‘Medical Device Engineering Breakthrough’ award.”

Endologix LLC is a California-based, global medical device company dedicated to improving patients' lives by providing innovative therapies for the interventional treatment of vascular disease. Endologix's therapeutic portfolio includes a variety of products in various stages of development that are designed to treat diseases that currently have clinically relevant unmet needs. These products are designed to treat a wide spectrum of vascular disease from abdominal aortic aneurysms to lower limb peripheral vascular disease. Endologix's current commercial EVAR products include the AFX®2 Endovascular AAA System and the ALTO® Abdominal Stent Graft System. On October 1, 2020, Endologix became a private company, wholly owned by Deerfield Management, an investment management firm committed to advancing healthcare through investment, information, and philanthropy. In April 2021, Endologix completed the acquisition of PQ Bypass, Inc., a privately held medical technology company, adding the DETOUR System and TORUS Stent Graft to the Company's product pipeline. The Detour System and the TORUS Stent Graft have not been approved for sale by any regulatory body. The Detour System is an investigational device, limited by United States law to investigational use.

Success

The Detour2 Investigational Device Exemption (IDE) study reported* a 12-month primary patency of 72.1% in SFA lesions with a mean length of 32.7cm. Importantly, the trial demonstrated technical success of 100% in 202 patients with a 30-day Major Adverse Event Rate of 7%, a composite outcome consisting of death, CD-TLR, amputation of the target limb, symptomatic deep vein thrombosis (DVT), pulmonary embolism (PE), and the need for transfusion of packed red blood cells (PBRC) at the index procedure. The average length of the hospital stay was only 1.1 days.

“This award from MedTech Breakthrough is another strong validation of our strategy to expand our product portfolio into the large peripheral vascular market opportunity. Patients with long SFA blockages face tradeoffs with current treatment options. We know that open surgery of any kind is associated with complications that can negatively affect patient quality-of-life,” said Matt Thompson, MD, President and CEO of Endologix. “What makes PTAB with the Detour System truly unique is that, as demonstrated in our IDE study's 12-month results, it offers a minimally invasive therapy with comparable patency to open surgery while avoiding many of the complications associated with more invasive procedures. Once approved, the De-



A photo of DHAMAN's Ahmadi Hospital

Firm to set up modern, advanced health system

DHAMAN signs lease agreement with MoF, to get land for its third hospital in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, May 6: Health Assurance Hospitals Company (DHAMAN) announced the signing of a contract with the Ministry of Finance represented by the Assistant Undersecretary for State Property Affairs, Legal Affairs and State Property Real Estate, Mr. Abdul Rahman Khudair Al-Khamis to receive the third land allocated as part of the for the DHAMAN's health network as stipulated in the bid document to build and develop the third hospital in Dajeej area in Farwaniya Governorate.

DHAMAN said that the signing of the third land contract represents a great addition to the company in order to expand its health network, maximize and increase its health services, and diversify sources of income in the future. The company will now commence the necessary engineering design process for its third hospital building, which has an area of approximately 50,000 square meters, in addition to establishing an additional number of primary healthcare centers in different regions of Kuwait, bringing the total number of DHAMAN's facilities to three hospitals and twelve primary healthcare centers.

On this occasion, DHAMAN's CEO, Mr. Thamer Arab, said that the Ministry of Finance has an important role in supporting economic diversification through the state property law and building sustainable development through the partnership

between the public and private sectors law. Mr. Arab added that DHAMAN, being one of the most important projects of the healthcare pillars in the New Kuwait 2035 Vision, aims to raise healthcare indicators through preventive health and achieve a quantum leap for the healthcare sector in Kuwait by restructuring health services and establishing a modern and advanced health system administratively and medically. Providing nearly 7,000 job opportunities for Kuwaitis and others in the medical sector. Adding that the signing of the contract for the third land stipulated in the bidding document, which is considered one of the special approvals granted to DHAMAN by the government is an indication of the keenness of the government to support this national developmental and economic project and to support the health sector.

Basic

Mr. Arab indicated that the new hospital will include a wide range of basic medical specialties in hospitals along with outpatient clinics, and all related pharmacies, laboratories and radiology services. Mr. Arab added that the first step now, after receiving the land from Kuwait Municipality, is to make the engineering designs for the hospital, followed by obtaining the necessary approvals from Kuwait Municipality and other relevant authorities. Then comes the stage of qualifying

and selecting the main contractor who shall start the construction operations, and it is expected that these stages will take a period ranging from 3 to 4 years as a maximum.

Mr. Arab concluded that DHAMAN has, since its inception, possessed a pioneering vision for healthcare and the future directions of this vital sector, aiming to build a healthier society through the implementation of sustainability programs, especially in the healthcare pillar, as the future issuer of the assurance certificate for compulsory healthcare for expat employees working in the private sector and their families, who number more than 1.8 million people through a network of health facilities distributed in the various governorates of Kuwait.

The company has currently completed two hospitals in the Ahmadi and Jahra governorates with a capacity of 660 beds, in addition to equipping and operating five primary healthcare centers distributed in different governorates, which are currently operating as private centers, ready to receive those wishing to obtain healthcare in family medicine, dental and pediatric clinics, in addition to radiology and laboratory services. All in preparation for the opening of the DHAMAN network and receive the main beneficiaries of its services, the residents working in the private sector and their families.

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Singer to perform ‘Subtract’ album on Apple Music Live

Jury finds Ed Sheeran didn’t copy Marvin Gaye classic

NEW YORK, May 6, (AP): A federal jury in New York concluded Thursday that British singer Ed Sheeran didn’t steal key components of Marvin Gaye’s classic 1970s tune “Let’s Get It On” when he created his hit song “Thinking Out Loud.”

As the jury answered the single question of whether Sheeran proved he didn’t infringe upon the copyright in the affirmative, the crooner briefly put his hands over his face in relief before standing and hugging his lawyer.

As jurors left the courtroom, Sheeran quietly mouthed “thank you” in their direction. He then spoke for about 10 minutes with the plaintiffs, including the daughter of Ed Townsend, who co-created the 1973 soul classic with Gaye. They hugged and smiled with each other.

Sheeran later addressed reporters outside of the courthouse.

“I am obviously very happy with the outcome of this case, and it looks like I’m not going to have to retire from my day job, after all. But at the same time, I am unbelievably frustrated that baseless claims like this are allowed to go to court at all,” the singer read from a prepared statement.

He also said he missed his grandmother’s funeral in Ireland because of the trial, and that he “won’t get that time back.”

The verdict came after a two-week trial that featured a courtroom performance by Sheeran as the singer insisted, sometimes angrily, that the trial was a threat to all musicians who create their own music.

Sheeran sat with his legal team throughout the trial, defending himself against the lawsuit by Townsend’s heirs. They said “Thinking Out Loud” had so many similarities to “Let’s Get It On” that it violated the

song’s copyright protection.

At the trial’s start, attorney Ben Crump told jurors on behalf of the Townsend heirs that Sheeran himself sometimes performed the two songs together. The jury saw video of a concert in Switzerland in which Sheeran can be heard segueing on stage between “Let’s Get It On” and “Thinking Out Loud.” Crump said that was “smoking gun” proof he stole from the famous tune.

When Sheeran testified, he repeatedly picked up a guitar resting behind him on the witness stand to demonstrate how he seamlessly creates “mashups” of songs during concerts to “spice it up a bit” for his sizeable crowds.

The English pop star’s cheerful attitude on display under questioning from his attorney, Ilene Farkas, all but vanished under cross examination.

“When you write songs, somebody comes after you,” Sheeran said during his testimony as he explained that the case was being closely watched by others in the industry.

Similarities

He insisted that he stole nothing from “Let’s Get It On” when he wrote his tune.

Townsend’s heirs said in their lawsuit that “Thinking Out Loud” had “striking similarities” and “overt common elements” that made it obvious that it had copied “Let’s Get It On,” a song that has been featured in numerous films and commercials and scored hundreds of millions of streams spins and radio plays in the past half century.

Sheeran’s song, which came out in 2014, was a hit, winning a Grammy for song of the year. His lawyers argued that the songs shared versions of a similar and unprotectable chord progression freely available to all songwriters.

Townsend, who also wrote the 1958 R&B doo-wop hit “For Your Love,” was a singer, songwriter and lawyer who died in 2003. Kathryn Townsend Griffin, his daughter, testified during the trial that she thought Sheeran was “a great artist with a great future.”

She said she had hoped the lawsuit would not result in a trial, “but I have to protect my father’s legacy.”

Sheeran will put his new album on full display with the help of Apple Music.

The music streaming service announced Friday that Sheeran will kick off the second season of Apple Music Live on May 10. The British pop star performed his fifth studio album “Subtract” for the first time at Eventim Apollo in London.

Sheeran hit the stage in a pre-recorded show alongside a 12-piece band that includes The National’s Aaron Dessner, who produced “Subtract,” which released Friday. The four-time Grammy winner’s performance of his 14-track album will also be streamed on Apple TV+.

“I’m delighted to share my ‘Subtract’ album show with you,” Sheeran said in a statement Friday. “I was really nervous on the day, as it was my first time performing the new album tracks. The show was brought to life by Aaron and the incredible band, and it was an honor to stand beside them. It was an emotional night, but I’m so pleased we got to document it.”

Variety



This image released by Sony Pictures Classics shows Melissa Barrera in a scene from the film ‘Carmen.’ (AP)

Film

Barrera hopes film shows human side at the border

In ‘Carmen,’ quest for freedom, safety

LOS ANGELES, May 6, (AP): Before taking on a new role, Melissa Barrera asks herself, “What is the message that I’m trying to send out into the world with this?”

The Mexican actor and singer is intentional with the projects she selects, including her latest movie, “Carmen,” the feature directorial debut of “Black Swan” choreographer Benjamin Millepied.

It’s a musical love story loosely inspired by the 1875 George Bizet opera. The modern-day retelling, now showing in theaters, is set both in the desert along the US-Mexican border and in gritty Los Angeles.

Barrera - best known to US audiences, perhaps, for the “Scream” series and the film adaptation of “In the Heights” - stars here as Carmen, a young Mexican woman. She crosses paths near the border one night with Aidan (portrayed by Oscar nominee Paul Mescal), a Marine with PTSD who is working as a volunteer border patrol guard. A series of dangerous events forces them to go on the run together.

Barrera says that building chemistry with Mescal was easy, since they spent hours in dance rehearsals together.

“When you’re dancing with someone, you get to know their body and you get to know how they move, and you make a fool of yourselves together, and you laugh and you fail and you fall,” she said. “And it’s a very complete way of getting to know another human being very quickly.”

Millepied takes audiences on a visually poetic journey as the two make their way to Los Angeles. Carmen reunites there with her late mother’s best friend, Masilda - portrayed by Rossy De Palma - and finds comfort in dance and her growing love for Aidan.

The film’s score is composed by Nicholas Britell, with Julieta Venegas, Taura Stinton and Tracy “The Doc” Curry.

When Barrera first heard of the project, she did

not know what the story was about. “I just saw Benjamin Millepied is making his feature debut, and it’s going to be an adaptation of ‘Carmen.’ That’s all I got,” said the actor.

It was not until months later, when she received the script, that she realized it was a story featuring an immigrant woman fleeing the cartel. That’s a theme that Barrera had been trying to avoid since she began her crossover acting career in the United States. When she first moved here, she said, she would only get calls to be part of immigrant storylines or cartel-related roles.

“And we (Latinos) are always the victims, and we’re always painted in an ‘aye pobrecito’ (oh, you poor little thing) light,” said the actor.

Immigrant

While she knows that immigrant stories are real and important, Barrera prefers to “fight for other spaces where they don’t see us, and try and get us in there.”

As she kept reading the script, however, her initial hesitation began to disappear.

“I was like, OK, this is different. This is kind of beautiful and romantic and poetic, and it’s going to be told through movement and dance sequences,” she said.

Millepied’s “Carmen” is a surrealist fever dream with avant-garde symbolism woven throughout. Each song and each dance sequence features Barrera, Mescal or De Palma.

When asking herself “What is the message?” in this case, Barrera said, it’s “the plight of this woman who is like many women that are at the border right now, who is running from danger and trying to find a better life and find freedom and safety and love, which is what all human beings want.”

She hopes the movie will humanize the individuals at the border who are waiting for asylum, create conversation and “get through to another type

of audience.”

Barrera said she worked closely with Millepied, who was born and grew up in France, to approach the story with sensitivity.

“It was a very collaborative experience, and I always felt like my opinion mattered and my voice mattered. And it was the first time that I ever felt like that on a project,” she said.

Barrera’s career began in Mexico on popular telenovelas, and she appeared in Netflix’s “Club De Cuervos.” In the US, she quickly landed a television crossover role in Starz’s “Vida,” as Lyn. She went on to star as Vanessa in Jon M. Chu and Lin Manuel Miranda’s film “In the Heights,” among other projects.

When taking the role of Sam in “Scream,” Barrera said, the message she wanted to send is “we (Latinos) belong in franchises... We can be the lead of a franchise.”

“I like to just keep working and keep knocking on those doors and keep auditioning for things that aren’t meant for me but change people’s minds, and be like, ‘Oh, actually, it can be someone like you,’” she said.

Barrera will soon be starring in an untitled monster thriller directed by “Scream VI” directors Tyler Gillett and Matt Bettinelli-Olpin. Audiences can also watch her on Netflix’s “Keep Breathing.”

Also:

LOS ANGELES: In “A Man Called Otto,” **Tom Hanks** stars as a despondent and ornery widower whose suicide plans keep getting foiled by the needs of his neighbors. When it played in theaters in December, the Sony Pictures release proved the rare adult-oriented success at the box office, and grossed more than \$100 million globally. **Marc Forster**’s adaptation of **Fredrik Backman**’s best-seller and remake of the 2016 Swedish film “A Man Called Ove” arrives Saturday on Netflix.

into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2004. (AP)

OLD BRIDGE, NJ: Authorities in a central New Jersey town say they are no longer noodling over the mystery of how hundreds of pounds of pasta were dumped near a stream.



Henry



Prince

Old Bridge Mayor **Owen Henry** said Friday that the pasta, including spaghetti and macaroni, was cleaned up last week by public works crews, shortly after officials learned about the oodles of noodles that quickly drew national attention when photos of the pasta were posted on social media.

The estimated 500 pounds (225

kilograms) of pasta were apparently raw when it was dumped, but subsequent heavy rains softened the food and made the mounds look like they had been cooked, officials have said. It’s unclear who dumped the pasta there or why, but it’s not believed the pasta had been at the site for long before it was discovered.

Henry said the pasta did not cause any environmental damage or health issues and he considers the matter closed.

“It certainly shouldn’t have ended up in the woods — putting in or near the stream bed was not the best idea — but I certainly hope our police are not putting more time into this” he said. (AP)

People & Places

Music

A complete musician

Conductor Stutzmann debuts at Met Opera

NEW YORK, May 6, (AP): While singing on the world’s great stages, Nathalie Stutzmann thought about blond lager.

“In Europe it’s very common to have the conductor getting a drink right backstage. I was so thirsty when I came offstage after a performance, I was always dreaming: It would be nice to be a conductor and get them,” she said with a laugh.

Minutes after a successful New York Philharmonic podium debut in February, Stutzmann had a drink in hand even before reaching her dressing room.

“That’s the best drink ever, the one you get as a conductor right after the performance,” she said.

Stutzmann gave up a quarter-century career as a contralto to become a conductor. She took over as music director of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra last fall and made her Metropolitan Opera debut in a new production of Mozart’s “Don Giovanni” on Friday night, a day before her 58th birthday. On July 28 she becomes only the second woman to conduct at the Richard Wagner Festival in Bayreuth, Germany.

“She deals personally with familiar texts as a great singer would, but can transfer it to a large group of musicians,” said conductor Simon Rattle, one of Stutzmann’s mentors. “Nathalie is such a complete musician that our conversation is more to do with the psychology of dealing with orchestras, how to ask for more without discouraging. For me her expected strength is breathing, phrasing naturally and instinctively finding musical solutions. Unexpected: How deeply she can rethink so-called standard repertoire and make it sound new without exaggeration or point-making.”

A daughter of musical parents, soprano Christiane Stutzmann and bass Christian Dupuy, Nathalie learned piano when she was young, then cello and bassoon. She studied at the Paris Opéra’s Ecole d’Art Lyrique and sang her first concert at Paris’ Salle Pleyel in 1985.

Mentor

“I tried to enter the conductor class when I was a teenager,” she recalled during an interview between Met rehearsals. “It was not forbidden for a girl, but the teacher was very misogynistic, so I was never able to conduct the orchestra.”

She won first prize at the Bertelsmann Foundation’s Neue Stimmen (New Voices Competition) in 1987, made her US singing debut in 1995 at a recital at Lincoln Center’s Walter Reade Theater and her Carnegie Hall debut two years later in a Mahler Second Symphony with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Rattle. She sang at Carnegie in 1988 with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Seiji Ozawa, who also became a mentor and provided a technical foundation.

“Because I started to sing so young, I achieved almost all my dreams as a singer,” Stutzmann said, “I pushed the limits of this contralto voice to the maximum. I explored the maximum of repertoire.”

She began to think about switching to conducting in the early 2000s, after perceived attitude changes.

“You can’t really fight all the time against the mentality of the society,” Stutzmann said. “People were starting to speak more about of what is equality, why a woman couldn’t do this and that. So, I thought, maybe it’s time for me to try. And also I wanted to give a try when I was still at the top of my vocal career to avoid that anyone could say: She started conducting because she has no more voice.”

Stutzmann approached Jorma Panula, a Finnish conductor and teacher who is now 92.

“All he says is about two words a day maximum,” she explained. “But those words are very important. He never shows you how to conduct. So, first of all, if he takes you, he thinks you have a natural talent. He takes only instinctive natural conductor. He films you conducting an orchestra. And then you sit with him, and he criticizes - lots of ‘That’s bad.’”

Stutzmann founded the chamber orchestra Orfeo 55 in 2009 and led it during its decade-long existence. She became principal guest conductor of the RTE National Symphony Orchestra in Dublin, Ireland, in September 2017 and chief conductor of Norway’s Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra the following year.

She was hired as principal guest conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra in 2021 and last fall succeeded Robert Spano as music director in Atlanta, becoming only the second woman to head a major American orchestra, after Marin Alsop with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra from 2007-21.

Stutzmann also is to conduct Mozart’s “Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute)” at the Met starting May 19.

“Nathalie brings particular attention to the quirks and idiosyncrasies of Mozart in a natural manner. It’s effervescent and light, but not dainty or stuffy,” Met concertmaster Benjamin Bowman said. “She thrives on extremes, and her attitude toward the music seems to be anything but lukewarm. She conducts with sensitivity and yet is quite demanding of the singers, in ways that perhaps only a singer could be!”

The Met believes Stutzmann became the first conductor to lead two new productions in a debut season since Rafael Kubelík in 1973-74.

“She can demonstrate how she wants a line to be sung. She can actually show us the feeling and the phrasing,” said soprano Erin Morley, Stutzmann’s Pamina. “It’s, first of all, just a delight to hear her sing sometimes in rehearsal, but it’s also informative. I get a direct feeling of what she wants.”

Stutzmann still sings - in the shower, and while rehearsing.

Also:

MILAN: Italian conductor Riccardo Muti plans to visit Syrian musicians living in the vast Zaatarî refugee camp in **Jordan** on the sidelines of his annual Roads of Friendship concert series that aims to use music to build bridges and help those affected by war.

Muti will conduct Italian and Jordanian musicians in concerts set in ancient Roman amphitheaters in **Jerash, Jordan**, on July 9 and the Pompeii archaeological site on July 11, for the 27th Roads of Friendship concert series.

The concerts will pay homage to the “generosity of the Jordanian people” for taking in millions of Syrian refugees fleeing civil war in the neighboring country, the Ravenna festival announced Thursday.

While in Jordan, Muti plans to visit the Zaatarî camp, a symbol of the long-running Syrian refugee situation and home to about 80,000 refugees nearly 11 years after it was set up near the Syrian border.



This image released by the Metropolitan Opera shows Peter Mattei as Don Giovanni, (left), and Ying Fang as Zerlina in Ivo van Hove's new production of Mozart's 'Don Giovanni' opened at the Metropolitan Opera in New York on May 5. (Karen Almond/Met Opera via AP)

Opera

New depiction may shock Met audiences

Van Hove’s Giovanni ‘unredeemable’

LOS ANGELES, May 6, (AP): When Ivo van Hove first discussed his “very dark” vision of Mozart’s “Don Giovanni” with his cast at the Metropolitan Opera, the leading man had doubts.

“He said, ‘But is there no hope?’” the Belgian director recalled of his conversation with Peter Mattei.

“And I said, ‘Yes, but only when you’re dead,’” van Hove added. “Once you’re dead, then the world can start anew.”

He said Mattei “listened to it and absorbed it, and then he started to work with it. He’s that kind of opera singer.”

The Swedish baritone has sung the title role all over the world (including nearly 40 times at the Met), often in productions that portrayed the Don as a charming albeit amoral rake.

Van Hove is having none of that.

“There’s such a misunderstanding that was created in the 19th century that Don Giovanni is a romantic hero,” he said. “But in the first seven minutes of the opera you have a rape attempt and a murder happening. When a woman screams for her life and tries to escape, there’s no fun, no joy about it.”

The opera opens with the Don attempting to force himself on Donna Anna and then killing her father, the Commendatore. The libretto calls for the older man to die in a duel, but van Hove turns the Don into a cold-blooded killer who casually shoots his opponent.

“The original title was ‘Il dissoluto punito ossia il Don Giovanni,’ (The Libertine Punished, or Don Giovanni),” van Hove pointed out. “Mozart couldn’t have been clearer about his intention.”

Depicting the Don as a “sociopath” may surprise Met audiences who are used to a somewhat more appealing portrayal, but general manager Peter Gelb thinks it will resonate.

“His confident take on the unredeemable Giovanni seems just right for the times in which we live,” Gelb said.

The director allows just one hint of something better in the Don’s nature, and that’s when he encounters the peasant girl Zerlina and woos her in the famous duet “La ci darem la mano” (“There you will give me your hand.”) “There’s a beautiful scene where he gets intimate with her,” van Hove said. “I have directed it as tender, not like a rape. It’s a moment you think, oh, this could be a man who could be in a normal relationship with a woman.”

Inspired

“But that also goes wrong pretty quickly,” he said. “He cannot hold back his real urge, like a predator.”

Set and lighting designer Jan Versweyeld - van Hove’s partner and longtime collaborator - has framed the action on a street shadowed by buildings inspired by brutalist architecture.

“The houses have very rough skin, and they are drained of color,” van Hove said. “It’s kind of as if you enter into a very dark place which reminds you perhaps of hell.”

A more explicit version of hell appears at the opera’s climax. Van Hove has reserved his most spectacular effect for the scene in which Don Giovanni is condemned to an eternity of agony by the ghost of the Commendatore.

“It’s kind of a surprise, I think,” he said. “Let’s not spoil it.”

The production, which originated in Paris in 2019, marks van Hove’s US debut directing opera, but he is well-known to New York theater audiences for productions such as Arthur Miller’s “The Crucible” and “A View from the Bridge,” as well as the musical “West Side Story.”

If the “Don Giovanni” production seems a bit conservative for a man known for his inventive use of video and projections, his next Met assignment promises to be different. He’s opening the new season in September with the company premiere of Jake Hoggie’s “Dead Man Walking.”

Gelb said that production “utilizes Ivo’s signature live camera work, so in that sense it will more closely resemble some of his other stage works.”

“Don Giovanni” opened May 5 for eight performances, with the May 20 matinee to be broadcast in movie theaters live in HD. Besides Mattei, the singers include sopranos Federica Lombardi as Donna Anna, Ana Maria Martinez as Donna Elvira and Ying Fang as Zerlina. Tenor Ben Bliss is Don Ottavio, bass-baritone Adam Plachetka is Leporello, bass-baritone Alfred Walker is Masetto and bass Alexander Tsymbalyuk is the Commendatore.

The orchestra is conducted by Nathalie Stutzmann, who is making her Met debut. She is also conducting a new production of another Mozart opera, “Die Zauberflöte,” which opens just two weeks after “Don Giovanni.”



Priyanka Chopra Jonas, (left), Sofia Barclay and Sam Heughan attend a special screening of Screen Gems’ ‘Love Again’ at AMC Lincoln Square on May 3, in New York. (AP)



Davis



Ashgar

Variety

NEW YORK: A debut novel by the poet and screenwriter **Fatimah Ashgar** has won the inaugural Carol Shields Prize for Fiction, a \$150,000 honor named for the late Pulitzer Prize-winning writer and given for outstanding work by a woman or non-binary person in the US or **Canada**.

Ashgar’s “When We Were Sisters,” the story of three Muslim-American siblings, was praised by judges for weaving “narrative threads as exacting and spare as luminous poems, their fragility a mere guise for their complete, unflinching indestructibility.”

Ashgar is known for the poetry collection “If They Come for Us” and as the co-creator of the Emmy-nominated web series “Brown Girls.”

Shields, who died in 2003 at age 68, was an American-born author who spent much of her life in Canada. She won the Pulitzer in 1994 for her novel “The Stone Diaries.” The Shields prize is overseen by the Carol Shields Prize Foundation, which provides grants and other forms of assistance to women and non-binary writers. (AP)



NEW YORK: Fox News is opposing a renewed effort by three news organizations to unseal documents related to its recently settled defamation lawsuit, saying it would do nothing but “gratify private spite or promote public scandal.”

The Associated Press, The New York Times and National Public Radio asked a **Delaware** judge earlier this week to reveal mostly private text messages and conversations between Fox employees shortly after the 2020 presidential election. The information was uncovered during the Dominion Voting Systems lawsuit.

Fox lawyer **Katharine L. Mowery**, in a letter sent to Delaware Superior Court Judge **Eric Davis** and accepted by the court, said much of the material its

competitors sought wasn’t relevant to the issues of the lawsuit.

Some material from the vast trove of evidence that Dominion gathered has already been released and proved newsworthy, showing that Fox hosts and executives didn’t believe the false allegations about Dominion’s voting equipment but still continued to air them.

Some messages revealed former Fox host **Tucker Carlson**’s scorn for former President **Donald Trump**, including one text where he declared, “I hate him passionately.”

“They have not been shy about sharing the communications with the most potential to grab headlines,” Mowery wrote of the media challenging the sealed



Ed Sheeran performs at the 2023 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival on Saturday, April 29, 2023, at the Fair Grounds Race Course in New Orleans. (AP) — Details Page 11

documents.

One of the reasons Fox agreed to settle the case was to “buy peace and bring an end to the media spectacle,” she wrote.

David McCraw, senior vice president and deputy general counsel at The New York Times, said the newspaper was disappointed by Fox’s continued opposition.

“Fox’s lawyers argue that unsealing the court documents will harm journalism and undermine the First Amendment, when in fact the best interests of the public and journalism are served by judicial transparency, not secrecy,” McCraw said.

While it’s standard for journalists to want as much information as possible to be made public, it’s also not surprising Fox would want to keep it under wraps, said **Lucy Dalglish**, dean of the Philip Merrill College of Journalism at the University of **Maryland**.

“I’d be shocked if Fox said, ‘sure, let me give it to you, have fun,’” Dalglish said.

Fox may be concerned that some of the hidden information might be fodder for other legal action, she said, and wouldn’t want to release it unless under a court order. Fox has said much of the material was redacted because it contained proprietary information about the company.

The material’s continued relevance was evident this week, when an article in the Times quoted a racist text message from Carlson saying that a group of Trump supporters beating a protester was “not how white men fight.” (AP)

Science

DNA discovery twist

Gene study shows all we share with animals

NEW YORK, May 6, (AP): By comparing the genetic blue-prints of an array of animals, scientists are gaining new insights into our own species and all we share with other creatures.

One of the most striking revelations is that certain passages in the instructions for life have persisted across evolutionary time, representing a through line that binds all mammals - including us.

The findings come from the Zoonomia Project, an international effort that offers clues about human traits and diseases, animal abilities like hibernation and even the genetics behind a sled dog named Balto who helped save lives a century ago.

Researchers shared some of their discoveries in 11 papers published Thursday in the journal Science.

David O'Connor, who studies primate genetics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, said the studies tackle deep questions.



O'Connor

"It's just the wonder of biology, how we are so similar and dissimilar to all the things around us," said O'Connor, who wasn't involved in the research. "It's the sort of thing that reminds me why it's cool to be a biologist."

The Zoonomia team, led by Elinor Karlsson and Kerstin Lindblad-Toh at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, looked at 240 species of mammals, from bats to bison. They sequenced and compared their genomes - the instructions organisms need to develop and grow.

They found that certain regions of these genomes have stayed the same across all mammal species over millions of years of evolution.

One study found that at least 10% of the human genome is largely unchanged across species. Many of these regions occur outside the 1% of genes that give rise to proteins that control the activity of cells, the main purpose of DNA.

Species

Researchers theorized that long-preserved regions probably serve a purpose and are likely what they call "regulatory elements" containing instructions about where, when and how much protein is produced. Scientists identified more than 3 million of these in the human genome, about half of which were previously unknown.

Scientists also focused on change within the animal kingdom. When they aligned genetic sequences for species and compared them with their ancestors, Karlsson said, they discovered that some species saw a lot of changes in relatively short periods of time. This showed how they were adapting to their environments.

"One of the really cool things about mammals is that at this point in time, they've basically adapted to survive in nearly every single ecosystem on Earth," Karlsson said.

One group of scientists looked for genes that humans don't have but other mammals do.

Instead of focusing on new genes that might create uniquely human traits, "we kind of flipped that on its head," said Steven Reilly, a genetics researcher at Yale University.

"Losing pieces of DNA can actually generate new features," Reilly said.

For example, he said, a tiny DNA deletion between chimps and humans caused a cascade of changes in gene expression that may be one of the causes of prolonged brain development in humans.

Another study focused on the fitness of one well-known animal: Balto.

Scientists sequenced the genome of the sled dog, who led a team of dogs carrying a lifesaving diphtheria serum to Nome, Alaska, in 1925. His story was made into a 1995 animated feature film and a statue of the pup stands in New York's Central Park.

By comparing Balto's genes to those of other dogs, researchers found he was more genetically diverse than modern breeds and may have carried genetic variants that helped him survive harsh conditions. One of the authors, researcher **Katherine Moon** of the University of California, Santa Cruz, said Balto "gives us this guide through comparative genomics," showing how genetics can shape individuals.

O'Connor said he expects Zoonomia to yield even more insights in the future.

"To have these tools and to have the sort of audacity to ask these big questions" helps scientists and others "learn more about life around us," he said.



The discovery of DNA's double helix structure 70 years ago opened up a world of new science - and also sparked disputes over who contributed what and who deserves credit.

Much of the controversy comes from a central idea: that **James Watson** and **Francis Crick** - the first to figure out DNA's shape - stole data from another scientist named **Rosalind Franklin**.

Now, two historians are suggesting that while parts of that story are accurate - Watson and Crick did rely on research from Franklin and her lab without their permission - Franklin was more a collaborator than just a victim.

In an opinion article published Tuesday in the journal Nature, the historians say the two different research teams were working in parallel toward solving the DNA puzzle and knew more about what the other team was doing than is widely believed.

"It's much less dramatic," said article author **Matthew Cobb**, a zoologist at the University of Manchester who is working on a biography of Crick. "It's not a heist movie."

The story dates back to the 1950s, when scientists were still working out how DNA's pieces fit together.

Watson and Crick were working on modeling DNA's shape at Cambridge University. Meanwhile, Franklin - an expert in X-ray imaging - was studying the molecules at King's College in London, along with a scientist named **Maurice Wilkins**.

Structure

It was there that Franklin captured the iconic Photograph 51, an X-ray image showing DNA's criss-cross shape.

Then, the story gets tricky. In the version that's often told, Watson was able to look at Photograph 51 during a visit to Franklin's lab. According to the story Franklin hadn't solved the structure, even months after making the image. But when Watson saw it, "he suddenly, instantly knew that it was a helix," said author Nathaniel Comfort, a historian of medicine at Johns Hopkins University who is writing a biography of Watson.

Around the same time, the story goes, Crick also obtained a lab report that included Franklin's data and used it without her consent.

And according to this story, these two "eureka moments" - both based on Franklin's work - Watson and Crick "were able to go and solve the double helix in a few days," Comfort said.

This "lore" came in part from Watson himself in his book "The Double Helix," the historians say. But the historians suggest this was a "literary device" to make the story more exciting and understandable to lay readers.

After digging in Franklin's archives, the historians found new details that they say challenge this simplistic narrative - and suggest that Franklin contributed more than just one photograph along the way.

The proof? A draft of a Time magazine story from the time written "in consultation with Franklin," but never published, described the work on DNA's structure as a joint effort between the two groups. And a letter from one of Franklin's colleagues suggested Franklin knew her research was being shared with Crick, authors said.

Taken together, this material suggests the four researchers were equal collaborators in the work, Comfort said. While there may have been some tensions, the scientists were sharing their findings more openly - not snatching them in secret.



A penumbral lunar eclipse is seen through clouds during the early hours of Saturday in Srinagar, Indian controlled Kashmir, May 6. (AP)

1st lunar eclipse of 2023 dims full moon ever so slightly

Stargazers in Asia and Australia had the best seats for the year's first lunar eclipse.

The four-hour eclipse got underway late Friday or early Saturday, depending on the location, as the moon slipped into the fringes of Earth's shadow.

In what's known as a penumbral lunar eclipse, the full moon passed within the outer part of Earth's shadow, causing the moon to dim only slightly. Such an eclipse isn't as dramatic as a partial lunar eclipse or a total lunar eclipse when the moon, Earth and sun are perfectly aligned.

The eclipse was visible from beginning to end, weather permitting, as far west as Saudi Arabia and Africa's western coast, as far east as Japan and New Zealand's South Island, and from the South Pole to Siberia. Almost all of Europe also got in on some of the action.

The Virtual Telescope Project showed a livestream of the moon rising over the countryside in Tuscany, Italy.

"Even subtle astronomical events like this one make me excited and happy to share them," astro-

physicist Gianluca Masi, the project's founder, said in an email. The next lunar eclipse in October will put on a better display.

The eastern portions of both Americas will get to see at least part of a partial lunar eclipse, when some but not all of the moon passes through the Earth's dark, central shadow. Asia, Africa and Europe will be treated to the whole show.

A total lunar eclipse isn't on tap until 2025 with North America and the western half of South America in front-row seats. (AP)

Health

No longer emergency

WHO downgrades COVID pandemic

GENEVA, May 6, (AP): The World Health Organization said Friday that COVID-19 no longer qualifies as a global emergency, marking a symbolic end to the devastating coronavirus pandemic that triggered once-unthinkable lockdowns, upended economies and killed millions of people worldwide.

The announcement, made more than three years after WHO declared the coronavirus an international crisis, offers some relief, if not an ending, to a pandemic that stirred fear and suspicion, hand-wringing and finger-pointing across the globe.

The UN health agency's officials said that even though the emergency phase was over, the pandemic hasn't finished, noting recent spikes in cases in Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

WHO says thousands of people are still dying from the virus every week, and millions of others are suffering from debilitating, long-term effects.

"It's with great hope that I declare COVID-19 over as a global health emergency," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

"That does not mean COVID-19 is over as a global health threat," he said, warning that new variants could yet emerge. Tedros noted that while the official COVID-19 death toll was 7 million, the real figure was estimated to be at least 20 million.

Tedros said the pandemic had been on a downward trend for more than a year, acknowledging that most countries have already returned to life before COVID-19.

Misinformation

He bemoaned the damage that COVID-19 had done to the global community, saying the pandemic had shattered businesses, exacerbated political divisions, led to the spread of misinformation and plunged millions into poverty.

The political fallout in some countries was swift and unforgiving. Some pundits say missteps by President Donald Trump in his administration's response to the pandemic had a role in his losing reelection bid in 2020. The United States saw the deadliest outbreak anywhere in the world - where more than 1 million people died across the country.

Dr. Michael Ryan, WHO's emergencies chief, said it was incumbent on heads of states and other leaders to negotiate a wide-ranging pandemic treaty to decide how future health threats should be faced.

Ryan said that some of the scenes witnessed during COVID-19, when people resorted to "bartering for oxygen canisters," fought to get into emergency rooms and died in parking lots because they couldn't get treated, must never be repeated.

When the UN health agency first declared the coronavirus to be an international crisis on Jan. 30, 2020, it hadn't

NEW YORK, May 6, (AP): Dr. Rochelle Walensky, the head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, submitted her resignation Friday, saying the waning of the COVID-19 pandemic was a good time to make a transition.

Walensky's last day will be June 30, CDC officials said, and an interim director wasn't immediately named. She sent a resignation letter to President Joe Biden and announced the decision at a CDC staff meeting.

Walensky, 54, has been the agency's director for a little over two years. In her letter to Biden, she expressed "mixed feelings" about the decision and didn't say exactly why she was stepping down, but said the nation is at a moment of transition as emergency declarations come to an end.

"I have never been prouder of

anything I have done in my professional career," she wrote.

The World Health Organization said Friday that COVID-19 no longer qualifies as a global emergency, and the U.S. public health emergency declaration will expire next week. Deaths in the US are at their lowest point since the earliest days of the coronavirus outbreak in early 2020.

The CDC, with a \$12 billion budget and more than 12,000 employees, is an Atlanta-based federal agency charged with protecting Americans from disease outbreaks and other public health threats.

Walensky, previously an infectious-diseases specialist at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital, had no experience running a government health agency when she was sworn in on the first day of the Biden administration.

yet been named COVID-19 and there were no major outbreaks beyond China.

More than three years later, the virus has caused an estimated 764 million cases globally and about 5 billion people have received at least one dose of vaccine.

In the U.S., the public health emergency declaration made regarding COVID-19 is set to expire on May 11, when wide-ranging measures to support the pandemic response, including vaccine mandates, will end. Many other countries, including Germany, France and Britain, dropped most of their provisions against the pandemic last year.

Spread

When Tedros declared COVID-19 to be an emergency in 2020, he said his greatest fear was the virus' potential to spread in countries with weak health systems.

In fact, some of the countries that suffered the worst COVID-19 death tolls were previously judged to be the best-prepared for a pandemic, including the U.S. and Britain. According to WHO data, the number of deaths reported in Africa account for just 3% of the global total.

WHO doesn't "declare" pandemics, but first used the term to describe the outbreak in March 2020, when the virus had spread to every continent except Antarctica, long after many other scientists had said a pandemic was already underway.

WHO is the only agency mandated to coordinate the world's response to acute health threats, but the organiza-

tion faltered repeatedly as the coronavirus unfolded.

In January 2020, WHO publicly applauded China for its supposed speedy and transparent response, even though recordings of private meetings obtained by The Associated Press showed top officials were frustrated at the country's lack of cooperation.

WHO also recommended against mask-wearing for the public for months, a mistake many health officials say cost lives.

Numerous scientists also slammed WHO's reluctance to acknowledge that COVID-19 was frequently spread in the air and by people without symptoms, criticizing the agency's lack of guidance to prevent such exposure.

Tedros was a vociferous critic of rich countries who hoarded the limited supplies of COVID-19 vaccines, warning that the world was on the brink of a "catastrophic moral failure" by failing to share shots with poor countries.

Most recently, WHO has struggled to investigate the origins of the coronavirus, a challenging scientific endeavor that has also become politically fraught.

After a weeks-long visit to China, WHO released a report in 2021 concluding that COVID-19 most likely jumped into humans from animals, dismissing the possibility that it originated in a lab as "extremely unlikely."

But the UN agency backtracked the following year, saying "key pieces of data" were still missing and that it was premature to rule out that COVID-19 might have ties to a lab.

endangered list in 2007.

"The bald eagles do migrate in and out of the state quite a bit now," Arkansas Game and Fish Commission spokesperson Randy Zellers said. "We do have nesting bald eagles in the state. But we (also) see an influx of bald eagles every winter, primarily with the waterfowl migration. When the waterfowl come south, a lot of eagles will follow them down (to prey on)." (AP)



A man gets his routine COVID-19 throat swab at a coronavirus testing site in Beijing, Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2022. The World Health Organization downgraded its assessment of the coronavirus pandemic on Friday, May 5, 2023, saying it no longer qualifies as a global emergency. (AP)

Discovery

Fanged fishes found: Several scaleless fish with fanged jaws and huge eyes that can be found more than a mile deep in the ocean have washed up along a roughly 200-mile (322-kilometer) stretch of Oregon coastline, and it's unclear why, scientists and experts said.

Within the last few weeks, several lancetfish have appeared on beaches from Nehalem, in northern Oregon, to Bandon, which is about 100 miles (161 kilometers) from the California border, Oregon State Parks said on Facebook. The agency asked beachgoers who see the fish to take photos and post them online, tagging the agency and the NOAA Fisheries West Coast region.

Lancetfish live mainly in tropical and subtropical waters but travel as far north as areas like Alaska's Bering Sea to feed. Their slinky bodies include a "sail-like" fin, and their flesh is gelatinous - not generally something humans wish to eat, according to NOAA Fisheries.

Ben Frable, a fish scientist who manages the Marine Vertebrate Collection at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California San Diego, said it's not uncommon for lancetfish to wash up on beaches, particularly in California and Oregon and in other parts of the north Pacific.

It's unclear what might be behind the deep-sea fish washing ashore, Frable said, calling it an area of "open research." He added that it's not clear if these incidents are happening more frequently or are just noticed more often in the social media age.

Reports of finding the "freaky looking" lancetfish on beaches date back to the 19th century, he said. The collection he manages includes lancetfish from beaches, including one that wound up on the beach near the institution in late 2021. (AP)



Find bald eagles shooter: Federal and state wildlife authorities are asking for the public's help in catching whoever might be responsible for the deaths of four bald eagles in Arkansas' Marion County earlier this year.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service last month put up a \$5,000 reward for tips that lead to the arrest and conviction of those who killed the federally protected birds discovered Feb 13 near Pyatt, the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette reported. Governor of Arkansas is Sarah **Huckabee Sanders**.

A joint investigation by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and the US Fish and Wildlife Service determined that the birds were shot between mid-January and mid-February. In addition to the eagles, authorities found red-tailed hawks, a domestic dog and white-tailed deer in the vicinity that had also been shot and killed.

"There's, I think, evidence that somebody probably shot (the birds) from the road, but I don't even know that they're 100% certain of that," said **Rob Finley**, the Arkansas Game and Fish commissioner for the area where the eagles were killed. "I know that they did set up a little

bit of an operation to see if ... the people ever came back, but never did."

Finley said that is when the US Fish and Wildlife Service took the lead on the investigation.

Bald eagles are federally protected and if killed, violators could face up to a \$250,000 fine and up to two years in federal prison if convicted. While protected, bald eagles are no longer considered endangered. They were removed from the



Finley

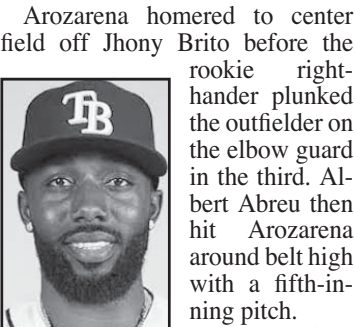


Sanders

Randy homers as Rays hold off Yanks

Red Sox earn seventh consecutive victory

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla., May 6, (AP): Randy Arozarena homered in the first inning and then was hit by pitches in his next two plate appearances, leading to Tampa Bay manager Kevin Cash being ejected as the MLB-best Rays beat the New York Yankees 5-4 on Friday night in the first meeting this season between the AL East rivals.



Arozarena

Arozarena homered to center field off Jhony Brito before the rookie right-hander plunked the outfielder on the elbow guard in the third. Albert Abreu then hit Arozarena around belt high with a fifth-inning pitch. An angry Arozarena walked slowly toward first base and whipped his bat in disgust toward the Rays' dugout. There was yelling between the benches, but no trouble on the field. The umpires gathered and issued warnings to both teams, which prompted Cash to rush out of the dugout to argue with crew chief and first base umpire Lance Barksdale. Wander Franco put the Rays up 5-4 with an RBI double off Jimmy Cordero (1-1) in the seventh. Kevin Kelly (3-0) pitched 1 1/3 scoreless innings for the win, and Jason Adam worked the ninth for his third save. The Rays (27-6) opened a 10-game lead over the last-place Yankees (17-16) in the AL East.

Red Sox 5, Phillies 3
In Philadelphia, Chris Sale struck out 10 in six innings, and Boston earned its seventh consecutive victory.

BASEBALL

The game was delayed for about 10 minutes in the first inning when a spectator fell over a protective railing and into the Red Sox bullpen while reaching for a baseball. Boston rookie Masataka Yoshida extended his hitting streak to 15 games. Kiké Hernández and Emmanuel Valdez each had two hits and drove in a run.

The 34-year-old Sale (3-2) was charged with three runs and seven hits. Kenley Jansen worked the ninth for his seventh save. Boston grabbed a 5-3 lead with two runs in the sixth against Zack Wheeler (3-2). The Phillies have dropped five in a row to fall three games under .500.

Padres 5, Dodgers 2
In San Diego, Fernando Tatis Jr. hit two home runs off Clayton Kershaw, and San Diego beat Los Angeles in the first meeting between the teams since the Padres eliminated the Dodgers in the NL Division Series. Yu Darvish (2-2) outpitched Kershaw (5-2), who was knocked out in the fifth inning in front of a loud, festive crowd on Cinco de Mayo. The division-leading Dodgers had their six-game winning streak snapped. It was the first matchup between the teams since Oct. 15, when the Padres beat the 111-win Dodgers 5-3 on a rainy Saturday night to advance to the NL Championship Series. Josh Hader pitched the ninth for his 11th save.

Orioles 9, Braves 4
In Atlanta, Anthony Santander homered from both sides of the plate, including a grand slam, and Cedric Mullins also went deep as Baltimore won for the 14th time in 17 games. Dean Kremer (3-1) allowed one run in six strong innings for the Orioles, who became the first team this season to go deep off Braves ace Max Fried. Fried (2-1) was charged with seven runs, five earned, in six-plus innings. His ERA climbed from 0.45 to 2.08. Hot-hitting Sean Murphy drove in all four Atlanta runs, three of them on an eighth-inning homer. Baltimore improved to 22-10, surpassing the Braves (22-11) for the second-best record in the big leagues.

Astros 6, Mariners 4
In Seattle, Kyle Tucker hit a two-run homer in the ninth inning off Matt Brash, and the Astros beat the Mariners in the first meeting between the AL West foes this year. Tucker and Yordan Alvarez provided all the offensive punch for the Astros. Alvarez continued to torment Seattle pitching with a three-run homer off Luis Castillo in the third. Brash (3-3) didn't get the call on a borderline 2-2 pitch from plate umpire Shane Livensparger that froze Tucker, and missed his spot on the 3-2 pitch. Tucker's homer was his sixth of the season. Seattle manager Scott Servais argued the non-strike call later in the inning during a pitching change and was ejected by Livensparger.



Gold medalist Abdul-Mohsen Al-Fouzan displays the national flag as he celebrates on the podium.

Al-Fouzan clinches gold

Kuwaiti triathlete Abdul-Mohsen Al-Fouzan won first place (gold medal) in the junior category of the International Triathlon Championship, which is currently being held in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Al-Fouzan raised the flag of Ku-

wait in the international forum – the first junior category participation in international tournaments. In a press statement, President of Kuwaiti Triathlon Club and Federation Rashid Al-Kandari congratulated the athlete on this great

achievement, which confirms the status of Kuwaiti champions and their ability to compete with world renowned triathletes. Al-Kandari pointed out that the Kuwaiti Triathlon Club and Federation are keen on equipping and pre-

paring the Kuwaiti athletes before participating in any Arab, continental or international championships, in order to be honorable and befitting representatives of Kuwaiti sports. He wished for the success of all local athletes in foreign competitions.

Hertha raise hopes of dramatic escape from relegation

Leipzig pip Freiburg to boost CL chances

FREIBURG, Germany, May 6, (AP): A solo goal from Kevin Kampl lifted Leipzig to 1-0 over Freiburg on Saturday that boosted Leipzig's hopes of qualifying for the Champions League from the Bundesliga.

While Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund tussle for the league title, Leipzig gained an edge on Freiburg and Union Berlin in a three-way fight for the last two Champions League spots.

Union Berlin's chances were hurt after losing at Augsburg 1-0 on a second-half volley from Dion Beljo. Union and Freiburg are aiming to qualify for Europe's top club competition for the first time.

Kampl's goal was down to skill and a slice of luck. The Slovenian dribbled into the penalty area and looked to play a pass which deflected off defender Manuel Gulde, leaving Kampl to collect the loose ball and score. It was the second time Leipzig beat Freiburg this week after a 5-1 rout in the German Cup semifinals on Tuesday.

Last-placed Hertha Berlin raised hopes of a dramatic escape from relegation after beating fellow struggler

Stuttgart 2-1. Hertha stayed last but cut the gap to 16th-placed Stuttgart, the first team outside the drop zone, to three points.

American coach Pellegrino Matarazzo took a big step closer to his goal of saving Hoffenheim from relegation after a 3-1 win over Eintracht Frankfurt.

Frankfurt coach Oliver Glasner was red-carded before halftime after disputing a contentious penalty for Hoffenheim. Frankfurt had a chance to come back when Stanley Nsoki was sent off for a dangerous challenge on U.S. player Paxten Aaronson, but could manage only a single goal from Mario Götze.

Bochum remained in the relegation zone in 17th after losing to Borussia Mönchengladbach 2-0.

Bochum's defeat could be costly given that four of the bottom six teams won their games this weekend, including Hertha, Augsburg, Hoffenheim and Schalke.

Cologne ended local rival Bayer Leverkusen's 14-game unbeaten run by 2-1, and relegation-threatened

Schalke earned a priceless win with a 102nd-minute penalty.

Ahead of Leverkusen playing Roma on Thursday in the Europa League semifinals, Davie Selke's two goals put an end to an undefeated run across all competitions which had lasted more than two months and hauled Leverkusen into contention for European places in the Bundesliga. Leverkusen was second to last when Xabi Alonso was

SOCCER

hired as coach in October.

Selke headed Cologne into the lead in the 14th minute but Leverkusen leveled in the 28th when Amine Adli was left unmarked to run onto a pass from Moussa Diaby and blast the ball past the goalkeeper. Selke restored the lead on the counter eight minutes later off a low cross from Jan Thielmann.

Cologne fans hurled dozens of tennis balls onto the field early in the second half, causing a brief stoppage, in what appeared to be a protest against the game being moved to Friday from

its original Sunday date.

The league moved the game to allow Leverkusen more rest before its semifinal against Roma, the furthest Leverkusen has been in a European competition since losing the 2002 Champions League final to Real Madrid.

Leverkusen is sixth in the Bundesliga and Cologne is 10th.

Schalke took a big step out of the relegation zone and up to 14th place after beating Mainz 3-2 on a dramatic and controversial penalty call after Mainz leveled twice.

Left back Aarón Martín equalized for Mainz for the second time with a direct free kick in the 70th, but the game changed again deep into stoppage time when video review caught Mainz defender Anthony Caci pulling Marius Bülter's shirt.

The clock was in the 102nd minute by the time Bülter stuttered in his run up and scored with a low shot to start wild celebrations with his teammates in front of the thousands of visiting Schalke fans. Defeat was a blow to eighth-placed Mainz's fading hopes of qualifying for European competition.

four-hitter.

Twins 2, Phillies 0

In Cleveland, Max Kepler hit a two-run homer for Minnesota, and Bailey Ober pitched seven innings in a combined three-hitter.

Ober (2-0) gave up three hits and a walk while striking out six. Jorge López worked a clean eighth and Joao Duran pitched the ninth for his seventh save.

Guardians starter Peyton Battenfield (0-3) did not allow a baserunner until Christian Vázquez singled with two outs in the sixth. Kepler followed with a 440-foot drive to right.

The Twins have homered in a franchise-record 17 consecutive games. Kepler has 15 home runs at Progressive Field since 2016, the most by a visiting player.

The game featured six total hits and was played in 2 hours and 11 minutes.

Athletics 12, Royals 8

In Kansas City, Brent Rooker and Ramón Laureano hit back-to-back homers, and the Athletics outslugged the Royals in a matchup between the bottom two teams in baseball.

Kyle Muller (1-2) became the first A's starter to earn a win in 33 games this year. The drought was the longest to begin a season in MLB history, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. Rooker and Ryan Noda each had three hits and three RBIs as Oakland improved to 7-26 with only its second victory by more than one run.

Nick Pratto homered for the Royals (8-25), who dropped to 2-15 at home. Brad Keller (2-3) gave up seven runs, six earned and 11 hits in 4 1/3 innings.

Cubs 4, Marlins 1

In Chicago, Justin Steele pitched seven effective innings, and the Cubs stopped a three-game slide.

Ian Happ hit a two-run homer for Chicago. Matt Mervis made his big league debut and drove in an insur-

MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, May 6, (AP): Results and standings from the MLB games on Friday.

Toronto	4	Pittsburgh	0
Chicago W. Sox	5	Cincinnati	4
Tampa Bay	5	NY Yankees	4
Minnesota	2	Cleveland	0
Boston	5	Philadelphia	3
Baltimore	9	Atlanta	4
Oakland	12	Kansas City	8
Detroit	5	St Louis	4
Houston	6	Seattle	4
LA Angels	5	Texas 10 inn	4
Chicago Cubs	4	Miami	1
NY Mets	1	Colorado	0
Arizona	3	Washington	1
San Diego	5	LA Dodgers	2
San Francisco	6	Milwaukee	4

American League

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	27	6	.818	—
Baltimore	22	10	.688	4-1/2
Boston	20	14	.588	7-1/2
Toronto	19	14	.576	8
New York	17	16	.515	10

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	19	14	.576	—
Detroit	14	17	.452	4
Cleveland	14	18	.438	4-1/2
Chicago	11	22	.333	8
Kansas City	8	25	.242	11

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Texas	18	13	.581	—
Los Angeles	19	14	.576	—
Houston	17	15	.531	1-1/2
Seattle	15	17	.469	3-1/2
Oakland	7	26	.212	12

National League

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	22	11	.667	—
New York	17	16	.515	5
Miami	16	17	.485	6
Philadelphia	15	18	.455	7
Washington	13	19	.406	8-1/2

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Pittsburgh	20	13	.606	—
Milwaukee	18	14	.563	1-1/2
Chicago	16	16	.500	3-1/2
Cincinnati	13	19	.406	6-1/2
St Louis	10	23	.303	10

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	19	14	.576	—
Arizona	18	14	.563	-1/2
San Diego	18	15	.545	1
San Francisco	14	17	.452	4
Colorado	12	21	.364	7

Al-Rashidi 'finishes' fourth in World Cup

CAIRO, May 6, (KUNA): Kuwaiti shooter Talal Al-Rashidi came fourth in the Trap men's competition of the International Shooting Federation World Cup which concluded in Cairo.

"This is a great achievement for Kuwaiti and Arab shooting sport," head of Kuwait's delegation to the championship Nedhal Omar told KUNA.

"The competition was ferocious and qualification for the final was not an easy task at all," he added.

For his part, Al-Rashidi said this achievement shows that Kuwaiti shooters are well prepared for the coming tournaments.

SHOOTING

He noted that the next goal is to book a seat at the Paris Olympic Games 2024 and grab a medal in it.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti shooter Al-Mudhaf, who ranked fourth at the qualifications rounds of the same competition, expressed pride of the achievement, noting that they competed world and Olympic champions.

He described Kuwait's winning of the fourth position in the World Cup as an honorable result for all Arab countries.

He pointed out that Kuwaiti shooters' qualification for the final was a "victory" itself.

"This achievement presents Kuwait as one of the best world countries in the shooting sport", he said.

Czech shooter Jiri Liptak won the gold medal, Italian shooter Massimo Fabbrizi grabbed the silver medal, while the bronze medal went to the Australian shooter James Willett.

ance run in the eighth with his first hit, a sharp single to right.

Steele (5-0) allowed one run and six hits while lowering his ERA to an NL-leading 1.45. Mark Leiter Jr. got three outs for his first save.

Luis Arraez had three hits for Miami in its fourth consecutive loss. Edward Cabrera (2-3) struck out eight while pitching five innings of three-run ball.

White Sox 5, Reds 4

In Cincinnati, Luis Robert Jr. and Elvis Andrus homered, helping Lance Lynn and the White Sox to the win.

Andrus erased a 3-0 deficit with a three-run shot in the fifth. Robert put the White Sox ahead to stay with a two-run drive against Hunter Greene (0-2) in the sixth.

Lynn (1-4) was charged with four runs and eight hits in 6 2/3 innings. Reynaldo López got three outs for his fourth save.

Jonathan India hit a solo homer for Cincinnati. Greene allowed five runs and seven hits in 5 2/3 innings.



Los Angeles Angels' Shohei Ohtani hits into a fielder's choice during the first inning of a baseball game against the Texas Rangers in Anaheim, Calif. Ohtani was safe at first on the play. (AP)

Hosts close in on ODI series sweep

Run machine Babar leads Pakistan to big ODI win over NZ

KARACHI, Pakistan, May 6, (AP): Run machine Babar Azam's 18th century made the difference as Pakistan defeated New Zealand by 102 runs on Friday and closed in on a one-day international series sweep.

Babar's 107 off 117 balls propped up Pakistan's 334-6, and New Zealand stumbled to 232 all out, its lowest total of the series.

The most lopsided win of the series lifted Pakistan to No. 1 in the ICC ODI rankings and a 4-0 lead. The fifth and last ODI is on Sunday.

"Credit goes to the entire team and support staff for becoming the No. 1 ranked ODI team," captain Babar said.

"We felt it was a 300-plus wicket and if you build a partnership you can get to that total. We wanted to give a proper run to every player and since there are big events coming up, we are happy to find 15-16 players."

Babar and Agha Salman revived Pakistan from 128-3 in the 25th over with a 117-run fourth-wicket stand. Their charge allowed Shaheen Shah Afridi and Mohammad Haris to smash 38 off the last two overs and put up an imposing total.

"Credit to the way they played, Babar played fantastically," New Zealand captain Tom Latham said. "We are trying to build partnerships and needed someone to bat through tonight, but a big partnership was missing."

New Zealand started well. Fast bowler Matt Henry removed Fakhar Zaman, who top-edged a pull to wicketkeeper Tom Blundell.

CRICKET

Shan Masood, who replaced Imam-ul-Haq, scored 44 at a brisk pace before he was stumped off Ish Sodhi, and Henry ran out Mohammad Rizwan off a direct throw from mid-on.

But that brought Babar and Salman together. Salman dominated the spinners with sweep shots as he hit 58 off 46 balls with four boundaries and two sixes.

Henry plucked a brilliant low one-handed catch off his own bowling to dismiss Salman, then Babar raised his century off 113 balls in another useful stand with Iftikhar Ahmed.

Babar holed out in the deep to give debutant fast bowler Ben Lister his first ODI wicket, but the world's top-ranked ODI batter completed 5,000 runs in his 97th inning, surpassing South African Hashim Amla's record of reaching the milestone in 101 outings.

New Zealand was in a similar position to Pakistan at the halfway stage, at 129-3 after 26 overs. Latham, who top-scored with 60, and Mark Chapman, with 46, tried to accelerate in the middle overs, but Latham's demise when he was caught behind off Shah Afridi triggered a collapse.



Pakistan's Babar Azam, (center), plays a shot as New Zealand's Tom Blundell watches during the fourth one-day international cricket match between Pakistan and New Zealand, in Karachi, Pakistan. (AP)

Colts release vet Foles to create roster space

INDIANAPOLIS, May 6, (AP): The Indianapolis Colts released veteran quarterback Nick Foles on Friday, saving about \$2 million in salary cap space while creating room for the 12 rookies it added last week in the draft.

Foles lost both of his starts in 2022, his only season with the Colts. He left the second game with injured ribs, then missed Indy's final game also because of injured ribs. The release was expected after the Colts selected former Florida quarterback Anthony Richardson with the No. 4 overall pick.

The Super Bowl 52 MVP started 58 of 71 career games during an 11-year career that took him from Philadelphia to St. Louis to Kansas City, Philadelphia again, Jacksonville, Chicago and finally Indy. Foles completed 1,302 of 2,087 passes for 14,227 yards with 82 touchdowns and 47 interceptions after the Eagles drafted the former Arizona star in the third round in 2012.

FOOTBALL

Indy cut longtime veteran Matt Ryan in March after the four-time Pro Bowler struggled with turnovers last season.

Those two moves leave Indy with three quarterbacks on the depth chart - Richardson, Gardner Minshew and Sam Ehlinger, who was one of three starters the Colts used last season - and assures the team of having a seventh consecutive season with a different opening-day starter.

Ehlinger is entering his third season with the Colts after starring at Texas. Ehlinger and Foles both attended Westlake High School in Austin, Texas.

Foles' release was the latest in a flurry of roster moves this week.

Indy also announced before its rookie minicamp began Friday that it has signed seven draft picks - cornerback Darius Rush, safety Daniel Scott, tight end Will Mallory, running back Evan Hull, defensive end Titus Leo, cornerback Jaylon Jones and tackle Jake Witt. Scott, Rush, Mallory and Hull were fifth-round picks, Jones went in the sixth and Witt was taken in Round 7.

The Black Caps lost their last seven wickets for 48 runs.

Mohammad Wasim (3-40) and leg-spinner Usama Mir (4-43), one of five changes Pakistan made after sealing the series 3-0 on Wednesday, ran through the middle and lower order.

Hurricanes take control of series against New Jersey



New Jersey Devils' Jack Hughes (86) tries to protect the puck from Carolina Hurricanes' Jalen Chatfield (5) during the second period of Game 2 of an NHL hockey Stanley Cup second-round playoff series in Raleigh, N.C. (AP)

Carolina goes up 2-0

RALEIGH, N.C., May 6, (AP): The Carolina Hurricanes are pushing past their injury-hit group of forwards through grit, relentless effort and scoring throughout the line-up.

It has allowed them to take early control of their second-round playoff series against the New Jersey Devils - convincingly, at that.

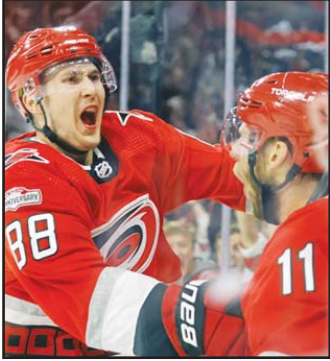
Jesper Kotkaniemi scored twice in a roughly 2 1/2-minute span during Carolina's four-goal second period, Frederik Andersen stopped 28 shots and the Hurricanes beat the Devils 6-1 on Friday night for a 2-0 lead in their second-round playoff series.

ICE HOCKEY

Jordan Staal and Martin Necas also scored in that blow-it-open second, which turned a scoreless game between the top two regular-season teams still alive in the playoffs into a romping Hurricanes win with the backing of another rowdy home crowd.

Throw in clinching goals by Jordan Martinook and Stefan Noesen in the third, and the Hurricanes have had nine different players find the net at least once through two games.

"No secret, we're missing some firepower, so where are you go-



Carolina Hurricanes' Jordan Staal (11) celebrates with teammate Martin Necas (88) after scoring during the second period of Game 2 of an NHL hockey Stanley Cup second-round playoff series against the New Jersey Devils in Raleigh, N.C. (AP)

ing to find it?" Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour said of injured scorers like Andrei Svechnikov, Teuvo Teravainen and trade acquisition Max Pacioretty. "Right now we're getting it up and down the lineup."

It also marked the second straight game the Hurricanes chased Devils netminder Akira Schmid. He lasted only a few minutes into the second period of the Game 1 loss, then took a seat after the second with his team down 4-0 in this one.

"That's been our style all year long," Staal said, "which is first and foremost give them nothing, and then just be tenacious on the puck and create turnovers and send it to

the net."

Miles Wood scored for the Devils early in the third, but Andersen was strong in his third straight postseason start for Carolina going back to the first-round clincher against the New York Islanders.

The Devils return home to host Game 3 on Sunday, facing an 0-2 hole for the second straight best-of-seven series. They lost the first two games at home by 5-1 scores in the first round against the New York Rangers before rallying to advance with Monday's Game 7 clincher.

This time, they've been outscored 11-2 through two games.

"What bothers me the most is we got outbattled again today," Devils captain Nico Hischier said. "It's the playoffs. Skill doesn't mean a thing. You've got to battle hard for your opportunities."

Kotkaniemi's first goal came when he took pass alone on the right side, fittingly after Carolina had kept possession along the boards. He skated in to the dot before firing a shot that went under Schmid's right arm and grazed his ribs before finding the net at the 1:35 mark.

Moments later, Martinook - whose activity had him in the mix all night on a line featuring Kotkaniemi and Jesper Fast - skated in to tangle up two Devils players in a possession chase near the boards. That helped jar the puck loose to skitter over to Kotkaniemi for the near-post putaway at 3:58.

The Hurricanes kept the pressure on. There was Jack Drury chipping

the puck in at the blue line for Staal, with the Hurricanes captain extending his 6-foot-4 frame to corral it behind him before going with the forehand-to-backhand finish and the 3-0 lead.

And finally, Martin Necas finished from the slot after Jacob Slavin caught the right post on a rush but Carolina again maintained possession.

"We're trying to grind them down," Martinook said. "We know how skilled this team is. If you're one-and-done and they're getting out clean, you're chasing them on the way back."

The Hurricanes dominated the opening period of Game 1, smothering the Devils to take away open ice while tallying more goals (two) than New Jersey had shots (one).

The Devils knew they couldn't repeat that effort and said as much Thursday, noting they had to get pucks on the net and use their speed to force Carolina to expend energy defending in its own end instead of rolling with its aggressive forecheck.

New Jersey carried play through the first 10-plus minutes, even with Dougie Hamilton ringing the post on an early power play that included 23 seconds of a 5-on-3 advantage.

But by end of this one, Carolina was celebrating a blowout with Martinook's breakaway score against Vitek Vanecsek followed closely by Noesen's putaway on a perfect 2-on-1 feed from Sebastian Aho.

Chennai routs Mumbai in return to winning ways

Gujarat spins out Rajasthan to edge closer to playoffs

JAIPUR, India, May 6, (AP): Gujarat Titans wrist spinners Rashid Khan and Noor Ahmad wreaked havoc as they routed Rajasthan Royals by nine wickets in the Indian Premier League.

The Afghanistan Twenty20 specialists shared five wickets for 39 runs in seven overs to help the defending champions and leaders edge closer to qualifying for the playoffs.

Gujarat consolidated its position atop the table, while Rajasthan remained fourth but suffered a serious dent to its net run-rate.

Khan picked up 3-14 in four overs and Ahmad took 2-25 in three overs in bamboozling Rajasthan to be all out for 118 runs in the 18th over at home.

In reply, Gujarat skipper Hardik Pandya smashed an unbeaten 39 off 15 balls as they reached 119-1 in only 13.5 overs.

After Rajasthan opted to bat, Jos Buttler was dismissed by Pandya for 8 and the in-form Yashasvi Jaiswal suffered in a mix up with skipper Sanju Samson. Samson didn't last long either, chipping an easy catch after scoring 30 off 20 balls.

Rajasthan was 60-3 in the seventh over and Khan and Ahmad spun out what was left of the batting lineup. Khan clean bowled Ravichandran Ashwin for 2, trapped Riyan Parag for 4, and Shimron Hetmyer for 7, breaking the middle order.

Ahmad collected Devdutt Padikal on 12 and hard-hitting Dhruv Jurel for 9. Rajasthan lost five wick-

ets for 36 runs across 44 deliveries. Trent Boult scored 15 off 11 balls to push the score past 100. It was never going to be enough.

Gujarat openers Shubman Gill, back again as an impact player, made 36 off 35 balls and Wriddhiman Saha made 41 not out off 34 balls. They put on 71 runs off 58 balls.

CRICKET

After Gill was stumped, Pandya hit three fours and three sixes to finish the game with 37 balls to spare.

Rohit Sharma earned a dubious record as Mumbai Indians lost to

Chennai Super Kings by six wickets in the Indian Premier League on Saturday.

Sharma was out for a record 16th duck, the most for a batsman in IPL history, as Mumbai struggled to get going and posted only 139-8 (20 overs).

Chennai, winless in three games prior, finished at 140-4 (17.4 overs) as Devon Conway led the chase with 44 off 42 balls.

Put into bat, Mumbai changed its batting order to help Sharma get off his poor run. The skipper has failed to reach double digits in his last three innings.

Ishan Kishan (7) and Cameron Green (6) opened the innings, but

both fell cheaply.

Tushar Deshpande bowled Green for six, while Kishan skied off Deepak Chahar (2-18) and was out caught.

Sharma, coming in at number three, then chipped to backward point for a three-ball duck as Mumbai was down to 14-3 in 2.5 overs.

Nehal Wadhwa played the rescue hand with his maiden IPL half-century off 46 balls. He put on 55 off 46 balls with Suryakumar Yadav (26), before Ravindra Jadeja bowled the latter in the 11th over.

Wadhwa scored 64 off 51 balls, hitting eight fours and a six, and put on another 54 off 42 balls runs with Tristan Stubbs (20), as Mumbai reached 123-5 in 17.3 overs.

But the final push for quick runs never came as Chennai bowlers etched out three more wickets in the space of seven deliveries.

Matheesha Pathirana finished with 3-15 in four overs bowling at the death.

In reply, Chennai got off to another solid start with openers Conway and Ruturaj Gaikwad (30) putting on 46 off 25.

Veteran wrist spinner Piyush Chawla (2-25) continued his fine form for Mumbai by picking another couple wickets. First he had Gaikwad caught behind, before trapping Ajinkya Rahane lbw for 21.

Conway, though, held on even as other batsmen hit out. Impact player Ambati Rayudu scored 12, before Shivam Dube helped finish things off in a hurry with 26 not out off 18 balls.



Chennai Super Kings' Moeen Ali delivers a ball during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians in Chennai, India. (AP)

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NEWS



Saleh Al-Shehri of Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal (left), and Ken Iwao of Japan's Urawa Red Diamonds (right), compete for the ball during the AFC Champions League final match between Japan's Urawa Red Diamonds and Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal at Saitama Stadium in Saitama, near Tokyo. (AP)

Sports

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Urawa edge Al-Hilal to win Asian CL title



Players of Japan's Urawa Red Diamonds celebrate their victory after the AFC Champions League final match between Japan's Urawa Red Diamonds and Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal at Saitama Stadium in Saitama, near Tokyo. (AP)

Carrillo scores own goal

SAITAMA, Japan, May 6, (AP): Urawa Reds beat Al-Hilal 1-0 on Saturday to win the Asian Champions League title for a third time.

Andre Carrillo's own goal gave the Japanese team a 2-1 aggregate win at Saitama Stadium a week after a 1-1 draw in the first leg in Riyadh.

SOCCER

Defending champion Al-Hilal, which was looking for a record fifth continental title, enjoyed most of the possession but was unable to create enough clear chances in the absence of the influential Salem Al-Dawsari. The Saudi Arabia international scored in the first leg before receiving a red card and suspension.

The Saudi Arabian team started strongly and in the fourth minute, Urawa's Danish defender Alexander Scholz cleared Odion Ighalo's shot from the line. Also in the first half, Mohamed Kanno shot over and Carrillo forced a flying save from Urawa goalkeeper Shusaku Nishikawa.

Urawa had little sight of goal but came close after 30 minutes when first-leg goalscorer Shinzo Koroki volleyed against the crossbar from close range.

Three minutes after the restart, the majority of the 53,574 fans were brought to their feet. Norwegian defender Marius Hoibraten headed a free-kick across the face of goal. Al-Hilal goalkeeper Abdullah Al-Mayouf missed the ball, swirling in the wind, and it bounced off Carrillo and into the net.

Urawa continued to create chances on the counter-attack as Al-Hilal



Leeds United's Patrick Bamford (left), and Manchester City's Rico Lewis jump for a header during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester City and Leeds United at Etihad stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

pushed forward. Tomoaki Okubo fired over with just the goalkeeper to beat and Atsuki Ito also went close.

Al-Hilal's best chance came in the 90th minute. Ighalo turned and twisted in the area to create space for a shot near the penalty spot that Nishikawa was just able to block to ensure that the Reds hung on for the triumph.

"It was a tough game but the players did a great job to come through against a team like Al-Hilal," Urawa coach Maciej Skorza said.

Al-Hilal coach Ramon Diaz pointed to the club's hectic schedule this year as a reason for the loss.

"We played better than in the first leg," the Argentine said. "We didn't have luck and there have been many physical demands on the players in this competition, in the league as well as the World Cup and the Club World Cup."

minute Saturday shortly after pulling up and clutching the top of his right thigh.

Milan nevertheless took the lead six minutes later. Lazio defender Nicolò Casale attempted to pass out from his area to teammate Marcos Antônio but Bennacer stole the ball and played a one-two with Olivier Giroud before firing past Ivan Provvedel.

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Milan doubled its lead in stunning fashion in the 29th minute as Hernández collected a pass inside his own area from goalkeeper Mike Maignan and raced almost the whole length of the field before unleashing a shot into the top right corner. Ante Rebić had a goal disallowed for Milan for offside seven minutes from time.

Wolves edge toward EPL survival; Chelsea halt free fall

Haaland fires blanks but Man City extend lead

MANCHESTER, England, May 6, (AP): While Sam Allardyce managed to stop Erling Haaland on Saturday, he could not halt Manchester City's relentless march toward the English Premier League title.

Two first-half goals from Ilkay Gundogan saw the defending champions beat Leeds 2-1 at Etihad Stadium and extend their lead at the top of the table to a third point.

But the relegation-threatened visitors, in new manager Allardyce's first game in charge, provided a late scare when substitute Rodrigo struck moments after Gundogan missed from the penalty spot.

Ultimately, City extended its unbeaten run to 20 games in all competitions and moved Pep Guardiola closer to a third straight league title.

With second-placed Arsenal facing a difficult trip to Newcastle on Sunday, City's lead could look even more commanding by the end of the weekend.

Leeds' sorry run stands at six games without a win, with the fight for survival becoming more desperate by the week.

Gundogan's goals in the space of eight first-half minutes put City on course for victory.

The home team was so dominant that it could even afford for its leading scorer to have an unusually off day as Haaland missed a host of chances to add to his 51 goals this season.

At one point, the Norway international laughed at himself as another scoring opportunity went by.

more reason to be upset when Rodrigo slipped a shot past Ederson.

Toti Gomes' goal sealed a 1-0 win for relegation-threatened Wolverhampton against Aston Villa.

Victory in the Midlands derby moved Wolverhampton 10 points above the drop zone, while also delivering a blow to Villa's hopes of qualifying for Europe.

Gomes' first goal for the club secured a fourth straight home win and saw the team recover impressively from being routed 6-0 by Brighton last week.

The winner came in the ninth minute when Toti crashed a header off the bar from Ruben Neves' corner.

It would now take an unlikely set of results to send Wolverhampton down, with the club 13th in the standings.

Villa was eighth, a point behind Brighton, having played three games more.

Villa's best chance of finding a leveller came with 19 minutes remaining when Douglas Luiz's free kick dropped for Tyrone Mings six yards out, only for

the defender to volley over.

Chelsea snapped a six-game losing streak by beating Bournemouth 3-1 to earn its first points since Frank Lampard returned as interim manager.

After first-half goals were traded, defender Benoît Badiashile put visiting Chelsea ahead in the 82nd minute when he redirected Hakim Ziyech's free kick past goalkeeper Neto. João Félix sealed it from close range four minutes later at Vitality Stadium.

Conor Gallagher opened the scoring in the ninth minute when he headed in N'Golo Kanté's cross. Matias Viña equalized 12 minutes later with a curler inside the far post after a buildup that sliced through Chelsea's defense.

Chelsea was in free fall after four straight league losses and two more in the Champions League quarterfinals - all on Lampard's watch since the Chelsea great was brought in to see out the season following the firing of Graham Potter.

The London club picked up one spot in the standings - moving to 11th place. The season is a major disappointment for Chelsea but Saturday's win at least prevents a total collapse toward relegation.

Bournemouth, which had won two in a row, slipped one spot to 14th with three games remaining.

Harry Kane's first-half header helped Tottenham to beat Crystal Palace 1-0 and keep alive their faint Europa League hopes.

Kane's 28th goal in all competitions settled a drab contest and moved him ahead of Wayne Rooney into outright second on the league's all-time leading scorer list with 209.

It was enough for Ryan Mason to secure a first victory in his second spell in charge of Spurs, who have jumped up to sixth. But seventh-placed Brighton has three games in hand and is two points behind the London club.

While most eyes pre-match were on the coronation of the King, Tottenham sprung a royal surprise with its lineup.

Emerson Royal started and Yves Bissouma was on the bench despite both being sidelined with injuries that were expected to keep them out for another couple of weeks. Also, Eric Dier was dropped for the hosts to go to 4-3-3.

Given both clubs were involved in seven-goal thrillers last weekend, action aplenty was anticipated but the majority of the first half was played at a subdued pace.

Cristian Romero hit the crossbar with a near-post header from Pedro Porro's 17th-minute corner, and Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg fired over on the turn from Kane's pass. Spurs were experiencing teething problems in their new system.

When Joachim Andersen scooped over for Palace under pressure from Ben Davies, it seemed the opening 45 would end goalless, but Kane had other ideas.



Phoenix Suns guard Devin Booker (left), drives as Denver Nuggets forward Michael Porter Jr. defends during the first half of Game 3 of an NBA basketball Western Conference semifinal game in Phoenix. (AP)