



AMIR, EGYPT'S SISI PUSH FOR GAZA TRUCE, PALESTINIAN RIGHTS Kuwait, Saudi share Durra field: statement



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, after his state visit, was seen off by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi on Wednesday as he departed for Kuwait.

Border solutions sought

CAIRO, May 1, (KUNA): During his first state visit to Egypt, His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah held summit talks with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi on Tuesday.

Both leaders highlighted the importance of reaching an agreement between the Israeli occupation authorities and the Palestinian groups on durable ceasefire in Gaza Strip and ensure unhindered delivery of relief aid to the Palestinian people under the UN Security Council Resolution 2720.

They stated opposition to the ongoing Israeli military operations in Gaza and the plans for expanding the operations to Rafah city, southwest Gaza, according to a joint statement released following the summit talks.

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Vaccine status removed from 'Kuwait Mobile ID'

KUWAIT CITY, May 1: The Ministry of Health has deleted the Coronavirus vaccination status from the Kuwait Mobile ID smart phone application, reports Al-Rai daily.

The ministry took this step some years after the whole world grappled with Corona. The vaccination status used to be linked to the civil identification mobile app, where it appeared in green for those who had completed the vaccination doses.

In addition, two ministry applications – 'Immune' and 'Shlonik's Immunity' – were discontinued as well.

Opinion

What does Washington want from its Middle Eastern allies?

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THE US Ambassador to Kuwait Karen Hideko Sasahara and I met at my office in Al-Seyassah Press House. The meeting, which lasted for more than an hour, was attended by officials from Al-Seyassah. We engaged in a very long discussion covering a variety of topics.

There is no doubt that Ambassador Sasahara is a treasure of information in international politics. This is because she has held many positions both in the United States and abroad, which qualified her to assume diplomatic missions in more than one country.

During this lengthy meeting, there were some important questions that I posed to Her Excellency. They were - What does the United States want from the Middle East? What do we in this region want from the United States, especially in light of the constant change of American presidencies, and the changing faces and convictions of officials in the administration in Washington?

I presented my opinion that the allies sometimes feel uncomfortable with some American policies, as there is no fairness in them. Sometimes the president's personality dominates the relations, so they are very sensitive, and there is a lot of evidence in this regard. This is therefore reflected in the decisions, either on the part of the allies or the Washington administration.

Eras change due to the nature of the president residing in the White House. Eisenhower's personality was different from Roosevelt. Truman also had a vision different from those who preceded him, as did John Kennedy and Obama. Depending on the positions of the party he represented, Trump was different.

Likewise, Biden currently has approaches to the Middle East that are not consistent with what they were during the era of Clinton, Reagan, or Carter.

In summary, the personal nature of the ruler of the White House has its own peculiarity even in formulating his administration's policy. Therefore, there is a constant question among the rulers of the Middle East - What does Washington want from our capitals?

There is no doubt that the American relations with major countries are stable at a certain pace. They are with Russia, but not at the same level with its ally France, or its competitor China, as they are with the United Kingdom.

The same applies to other countries, as their natures are comprehended, and there is nothing new in them, because they revolve around certain matters, and there is no room to enumerate them in this haste.

However, the problem remains with the allies in the Middle East who do not know the direction of the American administration's winds, especially with the rapid developments in the region, and what it imposes on some surprising American decisions, sometimes among the leaders of the region but specifically the allies among them.

Her Excellency the Ambassador responded to these questions using sophisticated language, and with a deep

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Kuwait's skyline veiled in dark clouds. The Meteorological Department forecasts a gradual improvement in weather conditions starting Thursday morning, with decreased cloud cover and lower chances of rain. Yet, there's a chance of fog developing in the evening, with the potential for rain to return on Friday, particularly in northern and coastal regions.

Bid to develop healthcare workforce

Kuwait, Oman ink nurse training agreement

KUWAIT CITY, May 1, (KUNA): The Ministry of Health (MoH) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Oman College of Health Sciences (OCHS) to train nursing staff in various fields and enhance the quality of healthcare as part of an initiative to develop the healthcare workforce and establish a training project aimed at improving the skills of nursing personnel.

In a press statement Wednesday, the ministry stated that the MoU, signed in the presence of the Deputy Minister Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, and Director of Nursing Services Dr. Eman Al-Awadi, along with representatives from the Omani side, is a vital step in line with the ministry's commitment to implementing a capacity development project within the government's action plan.

MoH emphasized the importance of the memorandum considering the prepara-

tions of the Nursing Services Department, with support and supervision from the Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadi, for the development and overseeing training programs and the preparation and implementation of specialized training programs.

It clarified that the objective is to train as many nursing staff as possible in various fields to develop clinical and technical skills, enhance healthcare communication skills, and improve management and leadership skills, as trained teams attending the training programs will subsequently train new teams in their workplaces.

The course focuses on training nursing staff in providing care for critical cases, developing and enhancing clinical skills, and utilizing advanced medical technology in intensive care, which in turn improves nurses' understanding of healthcare principles in intensive care.

KRCS aids Gaza's health sector with 75,000 meals

GAZA, May 1, (KUNA): Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) provided 75,000 hot meals to Gaza healthcare sector on Tuesday, including food parcels and meats to all areas, in support of the steadfastness of the Palestinian people and in cooperation with (Wafa) Foundation for Development in Palestine.

Muhaiesn Atawneh, Wafa Director General and the relief project implementer, told KUNA that several meals were distributed in the Gaza Strip, including provisions for doctors and healthcare workers at various hospitals.

These included the Kuwaiti Hospital in Rafah, the Nasser Complex, The European Hospital in Khan Yunis, and Shuhada Al-Aqsa Hospital in the central area of the strip.

Atawneh also confirmed that hot meals will continue to be distributed to doctors for a full month due to food shortages resulting from the ongoing war in Gaza, extending support to the northern areas of the strip as well.

Atawneh also reported that 22 tons of meat were distributed to North Gaza, along with 10,000 food parcels distributed to all governorates, in addition to tons of medicines and medical devices were delivered to hospitals.

Wafa, also in cooperation with KRCS has provided "Iftar meals" throughout the holy month of Ramadan.

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: Myanmar's Ambassador to Kuwait U Chan Aye acclaimed on Wednesday Kuwait Red Crescent Society's (KRCS) efforts in supporting humanity and relief works around the world.

This came in a statement for KUNA after his meeting with Deputy Chairman of KRCS Anwar Al-Hasawi, saying that KRCS is a pioneer in providing relief services for many parts of the world, expressing his appreciation for these exceptional efforts to relief those affected by natural disasters and humanitarian crises. (KUNA)

CAIRO: The Arab League criticized the blatant bias of Western media often citing legitimate right of self-defense while overlooking the horrendous criminal acts of Israeli occupation forces.

The league, in a statement issued on Wednesday on occasion of World Press Freedom Day falling on May 3, commented on the flagrant violation of international law stipulations, asserting necessity of ensuring safety of reports in aggravated areas. (KUNA)

WASHINGTON: Senior delegations from the United States and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) met recently in the Pentagon for the annual US-UAE Joint Military Dialogue (JMD) and signed a deal to boost technology security cooperation.

The US Defense Technology Security Administration (DTSA) Director, Michael R. Laychak, and the UAE Assistant Undersecretary for Support and Defense Industries, Major General Mubarak Saeed Al-Jabri, formalized a bilateral technology security partnership with the signing of the Cooperative Technology Security Program (CTSP) Execution Plan, the US Defense department said in a statement. (KUNA)

Ambassador launches 'Sudan aid' campaign

KHARTOUM, May 1, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Ambassador to Sudan Fahad Al-Thafeeri launched on Wednesday a humanitarian campaign in partnership with Kuwait's Patient Helping Fund Society and Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRC), aimed at helping displaced people in Sudan's eastern Red Sea State.

Al-Thafeeri said in his remarks to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that this is part of Kuwait's responsibility towards assisting Sudan and its people in the bigger campaign which was launched after the war and successfully sent 18 aid planes carrying hundreds of tons of medical supplies and essential human aid.

The aid will flow in accordance with priorities and needs that were designated by Sudan's authorities after holding meetings with the Kuwaiti embassy, said Al-Thafeeri.



Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs Sheikh Jawaher Al-Sabah speaks at a seminar organized by Sheikh Saud Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute on International Workers' Day.

Kuwait committed to workers' rights

KUWAIT CITY, May 1, (KUNA): Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs Sheikh Jawaher Al-Sabah affirmed on Wednesday, Kuwait's endeavor in protecting workers right and providing them with the best opportunities.

Sheikha Jawaher stated to KUNA, after a seminar organized by Sheikh Saud Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute on International Workers' Day, in cooperation with the Department of Human Rights Affairs, the UN Resident Coordinator Office, International Labor Organization and the UN International Organization for Migration, with the presence of top diplomatic officials.

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Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:41 Asr 15:21
 Sunrise .. 05:07 Maghrib .. 18:24
 Zohr 11:45 Isha 19:47

Local

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

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Rather hot, cloudy to partly cloudy and relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 10-40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

Weather

By Night: Mild and cloudy and relatively humid especially over coastal areas with light to moderate southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 10-35 km/h with a chance for scattered rain over northern areas.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	30	25
Kuwait Airport	30	22
Abdaly	29	22
Jahra	31	23
Salmiyah	28	25
Nuwaisib	28	22
Wafra	30	22

Systematic destruction of Gaza by IDF condemned

Doha Declaration welcomes Kuwait hosting of 3rd strategic dialogue '25



KUNA photo

Participants of the Arab Economic and Cooperation Forum.

DOHA, May 1, (KUNA): The Doha Declaration issued by the Third Session of the Arab Economic and Cooperation Forum with the countries of Central Asia and the Republic of Azerbaijan welcomed Tuesday the invitation by Kuwait to host the third ministerial meeting of the strategic dialogue between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the countries of Central Asia in 2025.

In a statement, the declaration emphasized "the historical relations, religious and cultural ties between the two sides, and the prospects for economic cooperation, including the enormous natural resources and promising investment opportunities in the fields of energy, mining, petrochemical industries, tourism, and others."

The statement stressed the need to support consensual political solutions to resolve the crises faced by some countries in the Arab region by encouraging comprehensive dialogue and national reconciliation, rejecting any interference in the internal affairs of countries, and committing to respecting their sovereignty and independence and ensuring their unity and territorial integrity in accordance with the Charter and principles of the United Nations and international law.

The declaration condemned the continuation of Israeli occupation crimes against the Palestinian people in all cities, villages and camps, and the deliberate targeting of more than 100,000 Palestinian civilians, including subjecting the Palestinian people to famine and the deadly siege that cuts off all means of life from Gaza Strip, and the systematic destruction of residential neighborhoods, hospitals, schools, universities, mosques and churches.

The declaration called on the Security Council to adopt a binding resolution to stop the Israeli occupation's aggression, shooting, forced displacement against the Palestinian people, and to ensure the flow of relief aid to the entire Gaza Strip, enforce the temporary measures contained in the order of the International Court of Justice, implement the relevant Council decisions, and restore life to normal in Gaza Strip.

Conference

The declaration also called for convening an international peace conference as soon as possible from which a credible peace process would be launched based on approved international references within a specific time frame and with international guarantees that would lead to an end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, condemning the systematic attacks and campaigns carried out by the occupation against the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Refugees (UNRWA).

Forum on electoral reform held

Quraifa hearing put off till May 8

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
 Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 1: The Criminal Court has postponed until May 8 the hearing on the case of 2024 National Assembly election candidate and political activist Musaed Al-Quraifa who is currently in detention for the political views he expressed during the campaign period.

The court also rejected the request of Al-Quraifa's lawyer to release him. It then affirmed that the officer who conducted investigations into the case will be summoned in its next session.

A huge crowd of individuals and public figures gathered at the court to support Al-Quraifa, including former MP Musalam Al-Barrak who wondered why Al-Quraifa is accused of coup attempt although he began his speech stressing his full loyalty to the Al-Sabah Family. He pointed out



Al-Quraifa

Earlier, an economic forum bringing together countries from the wider Arab region, including Kuwait, and central Asia kicked off in the Qatari capital Doha in a bid to propel bilateral relations to greater levels.

The gathering, in which Azerbaijan is also a participant, is tantamount to a message conveying the "solidity and depth" of relations between the two regions, Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman said in a speech, cherishing the event as a platform to push forward more cooperation given their "joint economic interests."

Tantamount

The gathering, in which Azerbaijan is also a participant, is tantamount to a message conveying the "solidity and depth" of relations between the two regions, Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman said in a speech, cherishing the event as a platform to push forward more cooperation given their "joint economic interests."

He spoke of "limitless challenges" that are prevalent in both regions and the world alike, which behooves Arab countries and their Central Asian partners to ratchet up cooperation to keep such hardships at bay, which would subsequently usher in a "new era" of prosperity and development, the minister underlined.

Through its hosting of the gathering, Doha aims to set in motion a raft of joint investment projects covering a wide array of fields, including clean energy and the environment to healthcare and education, he said, expecting these endeavors to pay dividends in bolstering economic development.

In his speech, Arab League chief Ahmad AbulGheith spoke of the Cairo-based bloc's goals of reaching out to the international community, citing some notable deals it had clinched with a number of countries with Asian nations such as Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan as part of its efforts to bring that goal to fruition.

He described the hardships facing the two regions as "intertwined," saying these obstacles can only be solved with "collective action" given their complexity, citing rampant conflicts in countries such as Syria, Sudan and Libya as cases in point, in addition to Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which he said was chief among these challenges.

The GCC's Secretary General Jasssem Al-Budaiwi said in a statement, that the two regions could form an economic conglomerate effective both regionally and globally, that would see an increase in trade exchange and investments in the energy and manufacturing sectors.

Al-Budaiwi praised Qatar's contribution to reinforcing international cooperation and communication through its initiative to host forums and conferences that aim to find creative and lasting solutions to improve economic cooperation and strengthen relations in other fields.

He also voiced his appreciation for the Arab League in organizing the preparatory meeting, which is held in Qatar.

'Govt must take urgent steps to curb looming energy crisis'

'Need to build new power stations, procure electricity'

KUWAIT CITY, May 1: Official sources have confirmed that the Council of Ministers had previously recognized the severity of the country's energy shortage and issued clear directives to the Ministry of Electricity and Water to devise appropriate solutions, reports Al-Qabas daily.

However, despite Decree No. 207 of 2023 and Cabinet Resolution No. 995 of 2023 urging the purchase of energy from international developers, the Ministry of Electricity has yet to finalize the necessary procedures or make decisions to avert the impending energy crisis.

Sources lamented the unjustifiable delay in establishing and approving procurement procedures, emphasizing the urgent need to swiftly engage international developers to mitigate the worsening energy shortage anticipated in the coming years.

They stressed that purchasing energy from international developers through an independent supplier system represents the quickest and most efficient solution, as evidenced by the practices of Gulf nations and other countries worldwide.

The sources urged for immediate, exceptional measures to be taken to procure energy from international developers, alongside expediting the enactment of legislation to establish the General Electricity and Water Corporation.

The ministry indicated that many international investors to build and operate electricity and water production stations and sell electricity and water have submitted offers at prices lower than the current production cost, but the Ministry of Electricity and Water has not taken any decision regarding these initiatives yet, including:

- Energy generators of different sizes, with a maximum capacity of 450 megawatts per generator, which can supply at least 900-1000 megawatts.
- Mobile gas generators with a capacity of 500 megawatts or more, distributed in several places.
- Energy storage systems with a capacity of 400 megawatts or more.
- Building solar power plants with a capacity of 200 to 1500 megawatts through several developers.
- Generating stations with a capacity of not less than 1,000 megawatts within a year and a half to two years.
- Power stations from several Chinese and international companies over a period of 3 years.
- Implementing an advanced water desalination plant.
- A station to remove salts from water resulting from desalination operations, which contributes to preserving the marine environment from the increase in salinity of the Arabian Gulf.

Funded

The sources confirmed all these and other initiatives are fully funded by international developers/investors and at no cost to the state, so that energy or water is purchased through the independent supplier system approved by the Council of Ministers by Resolution No. 995 of 2023 and Decree No. 207 of 2023. These initiatives are also characterized by speed.

Meanwhile, the electricity crisis in the country is worsening due to the lack of decisions to construct new power stations or procure energy from international developers. Sources highlight that what was once an anticipated shortage is now a certainty, with projections extending beyond 2027, posing a grave threat to energy security and causing significant economic losses, particularly in vital sectors like oil and industry.

Poor planning, inadequate follow-up, and delays by authorities have compounded the crisis, akin to other infrastructure challenges faced by citizens. One of the primary reasons behind the escalating shortage is the failure to effectively plan and monitor projects for electricity and water generation plants, coupled with the absence of alternative contingency plans in case of project delays.

Moreover, challenges persist in completing and executing electricity and water projects, including overlapping responsibilities between the Partnership Authority and the Ministry of Electricity and Water, alongside prolonged bureaucratic processes. The Audit Bureau previously cautioned the Ministry about its inability to meet current and future energy demands, with projects postponed for up to 25 months in 2019.

While several ministerial committees have been formed to address the crisis and propose solutions, practical action remains elusive, leaving a void in clear, approved strategies to avert future shortages. The Ministry's temporary plan for the summer of 2024 includes rationing campaigns and power cuts to certain entities, potentially resulting in financial losses.

Despite reliance on the Gulf interconnection to alleviate the shortage, the Ministry has yet to secure a contract for energy purchase, heightening the risk of scheduled outages in the coming summer months. Statistical estimates indicate a steady increase in electricity shortages over the next few years, exacerbated by delays in annual maintenance work and the aging of existing production plants.

Former Minister Dr. Jassim Al-Astad commissioned an independent committee to investigate the root causes of the crisis, underscoring the need for accountability and procedural reforms based on the committee's findings. The Partnership Authority's inadequate contribution to addressing rising demand underscores systemic shortcomings, with planned projects like the Al-Khairan station facing prolonged delays since 2014 without implementation.



Photo by Ihab Qurtal

The Belgian Ambassador to Kuwait Christian Dooms (center) with other dignitaries at the event.

I will work for strong EU-GCC ties: Dooms

Belgium and Kuwait celebrate 60 years of bilateral relations

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 1: Belgium and Kuwait celebrated a significant milestone in their diplomatic relations, marking 60 years of bilateral ties between the two nations.

Over the past six decades, Belgium and Kuwait have forged a strong and enduring partnership, characterized by mutual respect, cooperation, and shared interests.

Commemorate

As they commemorate this milestone, both countries reflect on the progress made in their diplomatic, economic, and cultural exchanges, while also looking towards the future with a commitment to further strengthen their relationship.

This anniversary serves as an opportune moment to celebrate the achievements of the past and reaffirm the commitment to deepen collaboration across various domains for the benefit of both nations and their people.

Speaking on the occasion, HE Christian Dooms, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to the State of Kuwait said, "It is a great pleasure and honor for me to welcome you here tonight, to celebrate together the 60th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between the State of Kuwait and the Kingdom of Belgium."

He went on to say, "I would like to extend a special word of gratitude to Essa Dashti, a dedicated history researcher, for his tireless efforts in producing two insightful booklets that shed light on Kuwaiti-Belgian relations through captivating photographs. Dashti's commitment has also played a pivotal role in organizing a successful exhibition showcasing Kuwaiti-Belgian relations at the National Library of Kuwait, which

took place just two days ago.

"I highly recommend reading these booklets, which are available at the 'Residence'." "The diplomatic ties between Kuwait and Belgium," the Belgian envoy said, "were officially established in 1963. In 1964, His Excellency Ambassador Willy Stevens presented his credentials to the then His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, becoming the Kingdom of Belgium's inaugural ambassador to Kuwait.

He added, in 1985, the State of Kuwait opened its embassy in Belgium. From the beginning, the two countries supported and developed these relations in the best interest of their citizens and ensured their continuity. The celebration of the 60th anniversary of our diplomatic relations is a festive event, which I am glad to share with you.

Since Belgium is a founding member of the European Union, "I am particularly proud to host this reception as part of the celebrations during Europe month. Belgium and Kuwait share a lot of common values, and are both keen to strengthen the multilateral environment, based on international law," he said.

Contribute

Belgium will actively contribute to strengthening the EU-GCC ties and holding currently the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, my country will spare no effort to foster diplomatic dialogue and to seek peaceful solutions to the crises in the region.

"As for the bilateral relations," he said, "my team and myself will work hard to deepen our relationship and we brace ourselves for laying the groundwork for the next 60 years of relations of friendship and cooperation."

'Administrative deportation' tarnishes reputation abroad

"THERE is no doubt that the state has the right to deport any resident on its territory when he does not abide by the law and commits crimes, or exposes the country's security to danger, but this right must not be abused in a way that leads to injustice being imposed on individuals who have made mistakes or committed minor violations and are deported." Through administrative decisions, which causes the expatriate to lose his job and cut off his source of livelihood. People have been deported for reasons of fights between them or as a result of traffic violations," columnist Dr **Khaled Mohammad Boudi** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.



Mohammad Boudi

"In an interview with **Al-Qabas** newspaper on October 3, 2017, the labor advisor at the Kuwaiti Society for Human Rights, Abdul Rahman Al-Ghanim, pointed out "the lack of controls determining the reasons for administrative deportation," pointing out that "the absence of the deportee's right to file a grievance or resort to the judiciary or a neutral body is considered an injustice to his right."

"He stated that "administrative deportation" has become one of the easiest decisions, even including minor violations, such as traffic violations or fishermen's violations, and finally quarrels in which all parties, whether the perpetrator or the victim, were deported without investigation, because there is no list of specific reasons that lead to deportation. Content with it being an absolute right of the state, noting that "the expatriate has become the weakest link in Kuwait."

"Undoubtedly, the state possesses the authority to deport residents from its territory when they violate laws, commit crimes, or pose a threat to national security. "However, this authority should not be wielded unjustly, resulting in the unfair expulsion of individuals who have erred or committed minor infractions, thus depriving them of their livelihoods. Instances of deportation stemming from fights, traffic violations, or other minor offenses underscore the need for clear guidelines governing administrative deportation.

"To address these concerns, all deportation cases should be subject to judicial review, ensuring fair treatment for expatriates. This process should be expedited, mirroring the efficiency of judicial deportation conducted in accordance with the law. Instances where deportation arises from disputes between citizens and expatriate employees further highlight the need for judicial oversight, preventing abuse of power by employers seeking to silence grievances.

"The prevalence of administrative deportation tarnishes Kuwait's reputation in the realm of human rights and exposes individuals to injustice without valid justification. While not all administratively deported individuals may be innocent, the lack of judicial scrutiny leaves room for error or abuse.

"A regulatory framework requiring judicial review for all deportation cases is imperative to uphold fairness and protect individuals' rights. "In 2022, thirty thousand expatriates were deported, with only a fraction undergoing judicial deportation, according to **Al-Hurra** website. While acknowledging that some deportations may be justified, it's crucial to ensure that every case receives proper judicial consideration, distinguishing between deserving penalties and unjust expulsion."

Also:
"The resounding call for truth echoed triumphantly, heralding a victory for freedom, the application of justice, and a staunch rejection of aggression within university campuses. Traditionally regarded as bastions of truth and catalysts for societal change, American academic institutions bore witness to a series of protests in solidarity with the Palestinian cause, condemning the relentless Zionist aggression," columnist Dr **Modhi Abdulaziz Al-Hamoud** wrote **Al-Qabas** daily.

"This aggression, marked by the wanton destruction of homes, conversion of hospitals into graves, and the deprivation of basic necessities from Gaza's defenseless populace, persisted unabated despite international condemnation and even Security Council resolutions. "Amidst this backdrop of turmoil, the cry against injustice emanated from the heart of American universities, resonating with global demonstrations, while some in the Arab

world vacillated between apathy and condemnation, lacking decisive action.

"This clarion call was championed by a multitude of students and their allies, including professors, researchers, and university staff, sparking a chain reaction of protests that swept through esteemed institutions, numbering forty universities at the time of writing.

"This movement was mirrored in Britain, Canada, Sydney, Australia, and beyond.

The collective voice of these universities, akin to the resilience of Palestinian resistance, played a pivotal role in reshaping the geopolitical landscape, not only within the embattled region but across the globe. It galvanized international consciousness regarding the long-standing Zionist aggression against a people whose ancestral lands had been forcibly taken.

"A thousand academics and researchers added their voices to an academic outcry by signing a letter addressed to the president of Columbia University, expressing protest against the summoning of police to disband demonstrators advocating for Palestinian rights and condemning their government's support of aggression.

"This document, penned with the ink of enlightenment, symbolized the enduring flame of academic freedom that must illuminate scholarly discourse in a tranquil and civilized manner, championing truth wherever it resides and opposing aggression wherever it rears its head.

"In recognition of Kuwait's steadfast support for the people of Gaza and Palestine during their tribulations, heartfelt commendations are extended to the Kuwaiti leadership, populace, and government. A special tribute is offered to the Kuwaiti medical teams whose selfless dedication and sacrifices on the front line have made a tangible impact.

"May God safeguard them and Kuwait, while granting victory to the people of Gaza and Palestine. Indeed, He is the Hearer of prayers and the Granter of triumph."

□ □ □

"Leave creation to the Creator... Allah Almighty said: 'You do not have to account for anything for them.' Allah is responsible for His servants. If each of us is distracted from correcting the behavior and faults of people, everyone would be at ease. Yesterday, the issue of the Kuwaiti broadcaster surfaced and it became the story of the season or the talk of people everywhere. The enormity of 'schadenfreude' is truly surprising, as well as the greater scale of gloating in and outside the country. So, why all this? Is it hatred, malice or something else?" columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"There is no power but from Allah Almighty. One of us speaks as if he is flawless and has never committed a mistake in his life, or as if he is safe from being afflicted in the coming days with something more difficult than what the broadcaster was afflicted with, and thus he becomes the talk of the people! In the past, it was said that if you do not want circles to revolve around you, do not gloat over a misfortune, do not mock someone who is afflicted, and do not reveal what is hidden!

"We are not a judicial body here. We have no right to convict an innocent or acquit a convict. The Court of Appeals may have a different opinion, followed by a ruling of the Cassation Court. With all the strength we have, we warn against gloating. Let us leave creation to the Creator. We must stop delving into people's honor, making accusations and gloating. No matter what she is, she is a woman, a mother and we all make mistakes. We are all vulnerable to making mistakes.

"Our mistakes may have been much greater than what we realize, had it not been for Allah Almighty's protection. Allah Almighty covers us. We expose people intentionally, forgetting that the worst of Allah's creation is the one who rejoices over the misfortune of others, except that the cycles of days are quick, and the one who gloats becomes infected with what he gloats about.

"Stop delving into people's honor and avoid this dangerous slippery slope. Who among us does not enjoy the protection of Allah Almighty?"

"One of the Gospels narrates the story of a woman who was accused of adultery and they wanted to stone her. They wanted to embarrass Jesus Christ (Peace be Upon Him) by urging him to participate in the stoning or to object to the principle of stoning. He told them: 'Let him who is without sin among you cast a stone at her.' Then, they backed out and not a single one threw a stone at her, as they said to themselves: 'Who among us is without sin?'"

— **Compiled by PFX Fernandes**



The military delegation with health officials.

Plan to train recruits on healthcare skills

CUWAIT CITY, May 1: Major General Ahmad Awad, leading a delegation from the National Military Service Authority, recently visited the Ministry of Health, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

The delegation was received by Abdul Rahman Al-Faris, Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative Affairs.

The primary agenda of the meeting centered on fostering cooperation between the Authority and the Ministry.

Discussions revolved around the development of comprehensive training plans designed to equip recruits with essential knowledge and skills in healthcare.

These initiatives aim to prepare recruits to provide valuable support to the Ministry of Health when required in the future. By nurturing collaboration between the two entities, they seek to enhance their ability to address health-related challenges effectively.

Kuwaitis, expats bought four tons of gold in 1st quarter '24

Slight dip in purchases witnessed

CUWAIT CITY, May 1: Purchases of gold in Kuwait saw a slight decrease in the first quarter of 2024. According to the World Gold Council, Kuwaiti citizens and expatriates bought a total of 4 tons of gold in the first three months of the year.

This includes both gold bullion and jewelry. The slight decline is attributed mainly to a decrease in bullion purchases, while demand for gold jewelry remained steady, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The data shows that overall purchases dropped by 2.44% compared to the same period in 2023. Gold bullion purchases, in particular, saw a 10% decline, down from 1.1 tons in 2023 to 1 ton in 2024. Jewelry purchases, however, remained stable at 3 tons, the same level as in the first quarter of 2023.

In the broader Middle East region, the World Gold Council reported a 15% decrease in demand for gold bullion and coins, with total purchases reaching 25.6 tons in the first quarter of 2024. This decline is likely due to the high base of comparison from the first quarter of 2023. Despite this, demand in the region is still 35% higher than its 5-year average.

Interestingly, in Turkey, which is not counted within the Middle East region by the World Gold Council, investment in gold bullion and coins was robust, reaching 44 tons, representing a 50% increase over the last quarter. However, this was a 12% decrease from the record demand in the first quarter of 2023.

In other parts of the Middle East, demand showed mixed results. Saudi Arabia's gold demand rose by 5% to 3.8 tons in the first quarter of 2024, up from 3.6 tons in the last quarter of



A view of the gold market in Kuwait City.

2023. The United Arab Emirates saw a 10% drop in gold demand, as investors seemed to be waiting for a correction in gold prices. Despite the dip, there are strong reasons for continued demand, given the region's emphasis on gold as a safe investment.

In summary, while there was a slight decrease in gold purchases in Kuwait, demand for jewelry remained consistent, suggesting a steady market despite the fluctuations in bullion purchases.

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KSE sees modest rise: The Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) saw a modest increase for the third consecutive session, with the general market index, premier market index, and main market index all recording gains, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

The general market index rose by 0.12 percent to close at 7,051.05 points, with trading volume reaching 52.2 million dinars. Similarly, the premier market index gained 0.12 percent to close at 7,691.50 points, with a trading volume of 40.3 million dinars. The main market index also saw an increase of 0.11 percent, closing at 5,919.77 points, with a trading volume of 11.9

million dinars. Trading activity at Boursa Kuwait began with significant liquidity, with record purchases on various stocks such as Agility, National Real Estate, and smaller stocks. Notably, Unicap and Argan stocks experienced significant gains during the session. Future Kids stock continued its upward trend, albeit with limited growth compared to previous rises. Other small stocks, including Arabian Real Estate, also saw movement.

Among leading stocks, gains were observed for small and medium banks like Boubyan and Burgan, as well as National Bank. Investment stocks achieved significant growth, while cables also saw a rise, albeit smaller. Declining stocks included EVA, National Real Estate, Agility, and KFH, likely due to profit-taking following previous gains.

In the GCC market, there was variation in indices, with declines seen in the Saudi, Dubai, and Qatar markets, while increases were observed in Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Muscat, and Bahrain. Additionally, both oil and gold prices experienced a decline of close to one percent.

Teacher beats, insults student

CUWAIT CITY, May 1: A woman, in her 20s, filed a complaint at a police station on behalf of her father, stating that a teacher beat and insulted her brother inside a school in the Capital Governorate, in addition to uttering hurtful words against him, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

A security source told the daily that the community police were informed about the complaint and they listened to the statements of the student who confirmed that he was beaten and injured in school.

The source confirmed that the teacher was summoned, detained and then referred to a psychiatrist.

On the other hand, two citizens accused each other of beating the other. Strangely, this incident happened in the same school where the student was bullied, while the reasons behind the fistfight remain unknown.

Two cases of assault, beating and insulting were filed.

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'No dispute': A citizen, in his 30s, suffered from a gunshot wound on his shoulder when a bullet hit him while jogging, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Detectives were dispatched to the location immediately after the Operations Unit at the Interior Ministry received information about the incident.

A security source revealed that the citizen, who was born in 1988, gave his statement to the police while he was at Jahra hospital. He said an unknown person fired a gun and one of the bullets hit him on the shoulder, indicating his doctor informed him that the bullet came from an air gun. He does not suspect anyone as he has no dispute with anyone who might have thought of firing a gun at him.

Kuwaiti 'held' in terror case

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud**
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

CUWAIT CITY, May 1: The Public Prosecution ordered the detention of a Kuwaiti citizen on charges of joining a banned organization and planning terrorist acts inside the country.

The prosecution said in a statement that the accused published visual and audio recordings of the organization's activities and news on social media in support of it. He also learned how to make explosives, and incited other defendants to do the same with the aim of blowing up camps belonging to the US Armed Forces.

The Public Prosecution interrogated the accused and confronted him with the charges against him, to which he confessed. It also ordered the arrest of other accused. Investigation procedures are being completed.

Vandalism case May 29

Court upholds death ruling in friend's kill

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud**
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

CUWAIT CITY, May 1: The Court of Appeals, presided over by Judge Abdullah Al-Othman, upheld the death sentence issued against a 32-year-old Kuwaiti citizen who stabbed his friend to death and buried his body near the Eighth Ring Road. The court also upheld the verdict issued against the defendant's brother to sentence him to two-year imprisonment for burning the victim's phone.


According to the case file, the 32-year-old citizen had stabbed his 33-year-old friend several times and killed him, after which he carried his body and buried it near the Eighth Ring Road project. He then set his vehicle on fire. After this, he went to the Umm Al-Hayman police station to surrender himself.

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Vandalism case adjourned: The Criminal Court has adjourned to May 29 the case filed against the son of a former Prime Minister and others who are accused of burning a car and the fence of Judge Sultan Boursli's house.

During the court session yesterday, the former Prime Minister's son denied the charges leveled against him, and his defense team also requested a deadline to present the defense.

The first and second defendants were charged with possession of drugs, weapons, and ammunition, and of burning the house and vehicle of Judge Sultan Boursli, but they denied the accusations leveled against them. The third defendant, who is the son of a former Prime Minister, was charged with inciting the first and second defendants to carry out the act in exchange for a sum of money.



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Al-Mutairi and other officials with the participating students.

Al-Jarida photo

'Students abilities being developed'

Educational official emphasizes importance of reading contests

KUWAIT CITY, May 1: Mutlaq Al-Mutairi, the Superintendent of Educational Technologies and Libraries and Director of the Educational Activities Department in the Capital Educational District, highlighted the significance of educational competitions centered around reading. He emphasized that such competitions foster a spirit of healthy competition and academic excellence among students, underscoring their benefits in developing students' abilities and reading skills, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Al-Mutairi made these remarks during his attendance at the second qualifiers for the Arab Reading Challenge competition organized by

the "Al-Asimah Educational Corporation." The event saw the participation of over 150 students from 90 schools who had successfully passed the initial qualifiers. The competition was supervised and organized by Afrah Al-Mututeh, the general supervisor of the challenge, and attended by Muhammad Karashi, the primary stage monitor.

Al-Mutairi expressed his gratitude to Mansour Al-Daihani, the district director, for his significant support for the competition. He wished all participating students success and victory in their quest to become champions of the challenge at both the local and Arab world levels.

MoH launches anti-smoking campaign to protect children

'Daily smoking prevalence notably higher among men'

KUWAIT CITY, May 1: The Ministry of Health has announced the commencement of the National Anti-Smoking Program's awareness campaign, running from tomorrow until June 30, under the theme "Protecting children from the interference of the tobacco industry." Dr. Abeer Al-Bahwa, Director of the Health Promotion Department, revealed that smoking prevalence in Kuwait stands at 20.5 percent, with men's smoking rate approximately 12 times higher than that of women (39.2 per-

cent compared to 3.3 percent), reports Al-Jarida daily.

Highlighting age-specific trends, Dr. Al-Bahwa emphasized that the highest percentage of smokers falls within the 30 to 44 age group, constituting 23 percent, followed closely by the 18 to 29 age group, also at 23 percent.

Daily smoking prevalence is notably higher among men, reaching 35.4 percent compared to 2 percent among women. However, there's a declining trend in daily smoking with increasing age after thirty, especially among men.

Furthermore, Dr. Al-Bahwa underscored that 87.9 percent of current smokers indulge in daily smoking, with the average age of smoking initiation at 17.1 years. Men typically start

smoking at 16.9 years, while women begin at 21.2 years on average.

Focusing on legal awareness, the campaign, in collaboration with relevant authorities, aims to educate individuals about the criminal penalties for smoking in workplaces and causing harm to others.

It also strives to safeguard current and future generations from the multifaceted risks associated with tobacco use, including social, environmental, and economic consequences. Notably, the campaign addresses the concerning rise in e-cigarette usage among 13 to 15-year-olds, highlighting studies indicating a threefold likelihood of cigarette use in their later lives. Additionally, exposure to e-cigarettes during pregnancy is shown to adversely impact fetal health and growth.



Kuwait's second medical team being received in Gaza.

KUNA photo

Kuwait's 2nd medical team in Gaza

The second medical delegation of the Kuwait Relief Society arrived in Gaza, Tuesday, via the Rafah crossing, carrying seven tons of aid to support the Palestinian health system in the Strip.

The Vice President of the Society Omar Al-Thuwaini said that the medical team arrived at the Rafah land crossing and consisted of 17 people, including 14 of the Kuwaiti national medical staff, including a consultant, specialist and nurse in several delicate and urgent medical and surgical specialties, in addition to the person in charge of the team and two relief coordinators.

Al-Thuwaini noted that the Kuwait Relief Society team arrived with seven tons

of necessary medical equipment and supplies, to contribute to supporting the health system in the Gaza Strip and to provide the necessary tools for surgical operations, medical care, and medications, especially for some critical cases and chronic diseases.

He also affirmed that the Kuwaiti team is to perform a number of important surgical operations in some surgical specialties, in addition to implementing some other relief projects, most notably food and shelter projects.

Since the beginning of the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip, various Kuwaiti delegations and aid have arrived via air bridges to support the Palestinian people. (KUNA)

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Other Voices

The role & impact of Int'l Criminal Court in pursuit of global justice

By Abdulaziz Abdullah Alhusainan
Lawyer

THE International Criminal Court (ICC), established in 2002, stands as a pivotal institution in the global pursuit of justice for the most heinous crimes known to humanity: war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and the crime of aggression. Operating under the principle of complementarity, the ICC steps in when member states are either unwilling or unable to prosecute these crimes themselves, ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable regardless of their nationality or the location of the crimes.



Alhusainan

The Court's current caseload is a testament to the widespread impact of these crimes. Investigations span across continents, from the conflict-ridden regions of Ukraine and various African states like Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Kenya, to complex situations in Venezuela, Myanmar, and the Philippines. Each investigation represents a meticulous process of gathering evidence, interviewing witnesses, and analyzing testimonies to build robust cases against alleged perpetrators.

Within the courtroom, the ICC's track record reflects its commitment to impartial justice. Since its inception, the Court has handled 31 cases involving individuals accused of grave crimes. These cases often involve multiple suspects, and the Court has issued a total of 42 arrest warrants, signaling its determination to bring fugitives to justice.

Notably, the ICC has detained 21 individuals who have appeared before the Court to face charges. However, challenges persist, with 17 suspects still at large, evading capture and trial. Additionally, the passing of seven accused individuals has resulted in dropped

charges, highlighting the complexities of achieving accountability in the face of mortality.

In rendering justice, the ICC has delivered 10 convictions and four acquittals. These verdicts, handed down by ICC judges, carry significant weight, signaling a global commitment to upholding the rule of law and ensuring accountability for the most egregious violations of human rights. It's important to note that while some convictions were for crimes like witness tampering, the core convictions—five in total—were for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

However, the pursuit of justice often intersects with political realities. The ICC's jurisdictional reach and authority have faced resistance from powerful nations like the United States, China, and Russia, who remain non-members. Concerns about potential politicization and selective prosecution have led these countries to maintain a skeptical stance toward the Court's operations.

In the case of Israel and the Palestinian Territories, the ICC's involvement underscores the complexities of prosecuting crimes in territories where geopolitical tensions run high. Despite Israel's non-membership status, the ICC has initiated investigations into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. This move has drawn both support and criticism from various quarters, reflecting the broader debate surrounding the ICC's role in addressing conflicts and atrocities worldwide.

Ultimately, the ICC stands as a beacon of hope for victims of the most egregious crimes, offering a pathway to justice and accountability in a world often plagued by impunity and injustice. Its ongoing efforts to prosecute perpetrators and deliver justice serve as a reminder of the international community's collective commitment to upholding human rights and the rule of law, even in the face of formidable challenges.

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SEED-2 poised to make significant impact

KOC to launch major soil treatment project

KUWAIT CITY, May 1: Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) is gearing up for a significant new processing endeavor with the impending launch of three packages by year-end. Marking the second phase of the Sustainable Environmental Economic Development Plan (SEED-2), the project will entail the treatment of four million cubic meters of soil, reports Al-Qabas daily.

According to MEED, the project will be financed within Kuwait Oil Company's budget, in contrast to previous initiatives which relied on funding from the United Nations budget for the Kuwait Environmental Remediation Program.

The upcoming project will be segmented into three distinct packages, each targeting different geographical areas: the northern

region, the western region, and the south-eastern region.

Originating as a pilot project in 2012, the Sustainable Environmental Economic Development Plan initially focused on remediating soil in the Burgan oil field. Recognized as the world's second-largest oil field and home to a significant portion of Kuwait's oil reserves, the project aims to address various pollutants within oilfield properties and restore soil ecological functions.

Projected outcomes include the treatment of approximately 0.9 million cubic meters of soil, 0.16 million cubic meters of sludge, and the recovery of 0.8 million barrels of free-phase oil by 2026. To facilitate these objectives, 25 test sites, averaging 45 thousand square meters in area, have been prepared for treatment.



Al MUSAIBEEH and Al WUHAIB award one of the winners.

What does

Continued from Page 1

understanding of reality through the information she collected from her work in Amman, Jerusalem, Sanaa, Beirut and Baghdad. She is familiar with the conditions and events of the region, and she was undoubtedly successful in her work, which qualified her for this position.

Despite the conversation that took place between us, and the answers we obtained from Her Excellency Ambassador Sasahara, the question still remains - What does the United States want from its allies in the Middle East?

Perhaps time will tell, after which there may not be any changes in the policies of the White House, and they will not be based on the personality of the president.

Kuwait, Saudi

Continued from Page 1

Both sides warned that the Israeli malpractices risk expanding the scope of the conflict to other parts of the Middle East, and jeopardizing the security of the region and the world peace.

They urged the international community to shoulder their responsibility for finding a fair settlement to the Palestine question based on the two-state solution and establishing the State of Palestine within the borders of June 4, 1967 with East Jerusalem as its capital.

They stated unequivocal rejection of the Israeli attempts to liquidate the Palestine cause and the Israeli serious violations of the international humanitarian law through forced displacement of the Palestinian people from their own land in Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

They reaffirmed support to the legitimate right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland pursuant to the UN General Assembly Resolution 194.

Both sides reiterated the vital role of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), called for supporting its budget and rejected the cynical witch-hunt attempts targeting the aid agency, according to the statement.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his brother the Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi held in-depth expanded talks in the presence of senior level officials from both sides.

They hailed the growing, deep-rooted, historical relationship between their two sisterly countries on the state-to-state and people-to-people levels, noting that this relationship featured reciprocal obligations, exchanged support and full solidarity at critical moments, which materialized shared commitment to protection of each other's interests and the joint Arab security at large.

The Kuwaiti side applauded the unprecedented development of Egypt in all areas, and commended the Egyptian efforts to improve the investment atmosphere.

On his part, the Egyptian President appreciated the care for the Egyptian community in Kuwait.

Based on shared desire to enhance the trade ties and joint investment, both sides tasked the competent agencies to arrange for the 13th session of the Higher Joint Commission on Cooperation, according to the joint statement.

Both sides commended the coordination and reciprocal support at international arenas, which gives momentum to the common interests, recalling Kuwait's backing to Dr. Khaled Al-Anani - the Egyptian candidate to UNESCO Director General, and Egypt's support to Kuwait membership at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) in 2024-2026.

Both sides hailed the close political coordination between them regarding regional and international issues of common concern, highlighting the importance of promoting the culture of peace, dialogue, development and coexistence, and favoring diplomacy as a means of resolution conflicts in the Middle East region.

Regarding Libya, the Egyptian and Kuwaiti leaders underscored the importance of respect for the sovereignty, territorial safety and unity of the Arab country, and stated opposition to all forms of foreign interference in its domestic affairs.

They reiterated support to the inter-Libyan dialogue aiming to reach a political settlement and arrange for presidential and parliamentary elections as early as possible in keeping with the provisions of the 2015 Khartoum political accord, the constitutional declaration and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

On the civil strife in Sudan, both sides rejected the foreign interference and stressed the need of Sudanese-led political settlement to the dispute away from any external dictates or pressures.

They urged protecting the national state institutions of Sudan from collapse in collaboration with regional actors such as the African Union and the Arab League.

They recognized the need of supporting the neighbors of Sudan, including Egypt, which were affected by the conflict and the ensuing influx of refugees, the joint statement noted.

His Highness the Amir of Kuwait reaffirmed full support to Egypt's right to water security as an integral part of the Arab water security, renewing solidarity with Egypt in whatever measures it might take to protect its interests against any unilateral moves to

plunder the River Nile waters.

Highlighting the importance of protecting the security and stability of maritime navigation under the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, both sides urged finalizing the delineation of the Kuwait-Iraqi maritime borders beyond the Mark 162 in keeping with the UNSC Resolution 833 (1993).

Today's talks also dealt with the Kuwait-Iraq agreement regulation navigation through Khor Abdullah waterway, which was signed on April 29, 2012 and came into force on December 5, 2013.

After being endorsed by Kuwait and Iraq, the document as well as the appended security protocol of 2008 and map were lodged to the UN on December 18, 2013.

Regarding Durra field, Kuwait and Egypt affirmed that the field lies entirely in the territorial waters of Kuwait and the hydrocarbon wealth in the adjacent submerged area is shared by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia away from any third party, based on signed agreements.

During the visit, President El-Sisi awarded His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah the Order of the Nile - the highest state order in Egypt, in recognition of his role in promoting the bilateral relations.

His Highness the Amir expressed gratitude to the Egyptian leader for the warm reception and hospitality offered to His Highness the Amir and his entourage.

On Wednesday, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah concluded his state visit to Egypt and departed from the country along with his accompanying delegation.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, Minister of Communications and Information Technology Amr Ahmad Samih Talaat, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Egypt Ghanim Al-Ghanim, and Kuwait permanent representative to Arab League Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi saw off His Highness the Amir.

The accompanying delegation included Minister of Finance and State Minister for Economic Affairs and Investment Anwar Ali Al-Mudhaf, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, and senior Amiri Diwan officials.

Earlier, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of thanks to President El-Sisi, expressing gratitude for the warm welcome and hospitality extended during the visit. He emphasized the significance of the visit in strengthening the cooperation between the two countries and peoples and thanked President El-Sisi for honoring him with the Order of the Nile.

Meanwhile, the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to Egypt on Wednesday, was the main focus of prominent Egyptian daily newspapers, being his first visit since assuming office.

The headline in the daily newspaper Al-Ahram highlighted the significance of the visit by His Highness the Amir to Egypt and his meeting with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi.

Al-Ahram titled the meeting between His Highness the Amir and the Egyptian President, as a "Summit of Solidarity and Strategic Partnership between Egypt and Kuwait", held at the Presidential Palace, Al-Itihadiya Palace.

On its front page, Al-Gomhuria newspaper stated, "President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi granted Amir of the State of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al Sabah, the Order of the Nile, the highest and most prestigious Egyptian Order" referring to the joint Kuwaiti-Egyptian statement issued following the talks between His Highness the Amir and President Al-Sisi.

Al-Gomhuria added that His Highness's visit to Egypt affirmed the two nations' alignment on several key issues related to the developments in the region.

Al-Akhabar newspaper featured photos of the meeting between His Highness the Amir and the Egyptian President on the front page, along with headlines, the most prominent of which was "Egyptian-Kuwaiti Summit in Cairo".

It also focused on the summit's agenda, which discussed ways to enhance bilateral relations, regional issues, and common Arab work files.

Al-Shorouk newspaper underscored the importance of His Highness's visit as his first to Egypt since assuming the office, given the critical timing amidst regional developments, especially those in the Gaza Strip.

The visit strengthened Arab effort to restore stability in the Middle East, coinciding with preparations for the 33rd Arab Summit scheduled to be held in Manama in May, Al-Shorouk added.

Al-Masry Al-Youm emphasized the importance of the talks between His Highness the Amir and the Egyptian President, particularly regarding the historical bilateral relations between the two nations, especially in economic, commercial, and investment aspects.

Kuwait committed

Continued from Page 1

She also added that this annual global celebration shows Kuwait's efforts in fighting for human rights, noting that the Kuwaiti constitution came out with several public and private sectors regulations aimed at protecting the rights and wellbeing of workers.

Kuwait's government has signed 21 memorandum of understandings with various countries to fight for workers' rights in different fields, as well as 19 agreements with a number of international organizations.



A group photo of the winners, mentors, and organizers.

Company awards winners of 3rd season of 'SpeakUp Kuwait'

Zain embraces young people, fosters their creative talents

KUWAIT CITY, May 1: Zain joined in awarding the winners of SpeakUp Kuwait, the training initiative that empowers young people to pursue their aspirations and fosters their creative talents. The company participated in the closing ceremony, held at Yarmouk Cultural Center, as part of its main sponsorship of the program for the third year running in collaboration with the Youth Public Authority.

The closing ceremony was attended by H.E. Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, Minister of State for Youth Affairs, and Minister of State for Communications Dawood Marafi, Acting Director General of the Youth Public Authority Nasser Al Shaikh, Zain Kuwait Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al Khashti, Zain Kuwait Corporate Relations Department Manager Hamad Al MUSAIBEEH, and

SpeakUp Kuwait Founder Dina Al Wuhab.

During the event, Zain joined the judges panel that evaluated and selected the winners after hearing the finalists' presentations. The company's participation came as part of its ongoing support to SpeakUp Kuwait since its inception three years ago, as it believes in the program's mission to empower Kuwait's youth by developing their creative skills, offering them an environment that embraces their talents, and encouraging them to pursue their passions and aspirations.

Throughout the program's third season that started late last year, the Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC) hosted all of SpeakUp Kuwait's training sessions. The program targeted students and fresh graduates, and offered them the space to express themselves, promote their ideas, and engage in

public speaking training sessions.

SpeakUp Kuwait worked to enhance and develop a wide range of personal skills that are equally important to technical skills in any successful career. The skills included public speaking, emotional intelligence, communication, along with social, management, business, and professional skills. The program featured mentors, experts, and influencers who shared their experiences with the students.

In its previous seasons, SpeakUp Kuwait achieved great success, having featured many notable talented names from the local community to share their experiences and skills with the young participants. Zain also took the opportunity to sit down with the students, listen to their thoughts, and inspire them to pursue their passions.

ESF hosts first-ever high school journalism/writing conference

British Ambassador Belinda Lewis delivers keynote speech

KUWAIT CITY, May 1: The English School Fahaeel (ESF) Oracle students hosted their first-ever high school journalism and writing conference on April 27, 2024, which proved to be a resounding success.

The event themed 'Voices Unveiled: Inspiring Tomorrow's Journalists/Writers in Kuwait and the Middle East' saw the participation of over 150 delegates from six British and American high schools from across Kuwait as well as other special guests which included the owners of the school, Mr and Mrs Shuhaiber.

The highlight of the conference was the keynote address delivered by the British Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Belinda Lewis, who emphasized the importance of responsible journalism in today's digital age.

The British ambassador's speech focused on the crucial role that responsible journalism plays in society. She highlighted the power of words and the impact they can have on shaping public opinion. The ambassador's rousing address set the tone for the rest of the conference, inspiring students to hone their writing skills while upholding ethical standards in their work.



Some of the students delegates.

Throughout the day, students had the opportunity to attend three different workshops aimed at enhancing their article writing skills and understanding the nuances of navigating social media and digital platforms. Led by lecturers (Dr. A. AlShallal, H. Mohammad and Dr. B. Kurambayev) from Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST), these workshops provided valuable insights into investigative journalism techniques and ethical considerations in reporting.

A dynamic panel discussion featuring students and professional women was a key highlight of the conference. The professionals were Mrs Claudia AlRashoud - photojournalist, author and social entrepreneur. Mrs Chaitali Roy - journalist, author and podcast host and Mrs Ashwak AlMudhaf -- civil engineer and entrepreneur.

Participants shared their personal journeys of overcoming obstacles and achieving success in the field of journalism and entrepreneurship. The discussion served as a source of inspiration for aspiring young writers, demonstrating that perseverance and determination are essential qualities for success in any career path.

The feedback received from delegates following the conference was overwhelmingly positive, with many praising the event for its informative sessions and engaging discussions. The support extended by GUST's Mass Communication department was instrumental in assisting with the success of the conference.

The ESF students were commended by a delegate from the New English School for their efforts in organising a "welcoming and enriching experience for all attendees".

The lead organizers of the conference David Warner - Principal and Ms Saffron Jackson were extremely delighted with the outcome and the positive response they have been receiving from delegates who attended their first conference. When asked if this will be an annual event, Ms Jackson confirms that they aim to host another one next year with delegates not just from Kuwait but the GCC too.

ESF's inaugural high school journalism/writing conference proved to be a ground-breaking event that brought together aspiring young writers from across Kuwait.

With insightful workshops, inspiring speakers, and engaging discussions, the conference served as a platform for students to enhance their writing skills and gain valuable insights into the world of journalism. The conference was sponsored by 5M International, Petra and Hilton Kuwait Resorts who all contributed to its success.



Some of the dignitaries at the event.



HE Belinda Lewis - British Ambassador



Hassan Mohammad, GUST lecturer



Dr Ahmed from GUST



ESF students participating in the conference.

World News Roundup

Europe

Kremlin parades Western equipment: An exhibition of Western military equipment captured from Kyiv forces during the fighting in Ukraine opened Wednesday in the Russian capital.

The exhibit organized by the Russian Defense Ministry features over 30 pieces of Western-made heavy equipment including a U.S.-made M1 Abrams battle tank and a Bradley armored fighting vehicle, a Leopard 2 tank and a Marder armored infantry vehicle from Germany, and a French-made AMX-10RC armored vehicle.



Putin

The exhibition, which will remain open for a month at a World War II memorial venue in western Moscow, also displays firearms, military papers and other documents.

Russian authorities have criticized supplies of Western weapons and military equipment to Ukraine, casting them as evidence of NATO's direct involvement in the conflict. At the same time, Russian President **Vladimir Putin** has repeatedly declared that Western military supplies to Kyiv wouldn't change the course of the conflict and prevent Russia from achieving its goals.

The exhibition comes as Russian forces have grabbed more land in eastern Ukraine, taking advantage of delays in U.S. military assistance to push back the under-gunned Kyiv forces.

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov has hailed the Moscow exhibition as a "brilliant idea."

"The exhibition of trophy equipment will attract great interest from Moscow residents, guests of our city, and all residents of the country," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. "We should all see the enemy's battered equipment." (AP)

Drone footage shows devastation in Chasiv Yar: Months of relentless Russian artillery pounding have devastated a strategic city in eastern Ukraine, new drone footage obtained by The Associated Press has shown, with barely a building left intact, homes and municipal offices charred, and a town that once had a population of 12,000 now left all but deserted.

The footage shows the community of Chasiv Yar - which is set amid green fields and woodland - pounded into an apocalyptic vista. The massive destruction is reminiscent of the cities of Bakhmut and Avdiivka, which Ukraine yielded after months of bombardment and huge losses for both sides.

The strategically important city has been under relentless attack by Russian forces for months. Capturing it would give Russia control of a hilltop from which it can attack other cities that form the backbone of Ukraine's eastern defenses.

Russia launched waves of assaults on foot and in armored vehicles at Chasiv Yar's outnumbered Ukrainian troops, who have run desperately short of ammunition while waiting for the US and other allies to send in fresh supplies. (AP)

Greece boosts special firefighting units: Skimming over miles of hills blackened by wildfires west of Athens, Fire Lt Col Ioannis Kolovos readies his elite fire crew crouched inside a helicopter.

The 10-member group from the 1st Wildfire Special Operation Unit bristles with tools needed to hold back fires: chainsaws, specialized rakes, weather gauges, computer tablets and earth-scorching drip torches to burn wildfire barriers into the hillside.

Greece's fire season officially starts May 1, but dozens of fires have already been put out over the past month after temperatures began hitting 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit) in late March - considerably higher than previous spikes recorded over the past decade.

This year, Greece is doubling the number of firefighters in specialized units to some 1,300, and adopting tactics from the United States to try and outflank fires with airborne units scrambled to build breaks in the predicted path of the flames. (AP)

Italy's League party picks candidate: He was fired by the defense minister after writing a book deemed offensive to women. He is under investigation by Rome prosecutors for allegedly inciting racial hatred. He set off a firestorm over suggestions that disabled children be taught separately at school.

And on Tuesday, Gen. Roberto Vannacci, one of Italy's most experienced army generals, joined Italy's deputy premier and leader of the right-wing League party, Matteo Salvini, as the League's headline candidate for upcoming European Parliament elections.

Salvini's gamble to put the provocative Vannacci out front for the June 6-9 vote is something of a ... pass for the League, which has hemorrhaged support in recent years to the more hard-right Brothers of Italy party of Premier Giorgia Meloni. (AP)

EU, UN reschedule launch of project: The European Union and United Nations abruptly rescheduled the launch of an anti-human trafficking program this week after being confronted with questions on the choice of venue: a Phnom Penh hotel owned by a Cambodian tycoon who has another property that has been used by human traffickers.

The launch of the EU-UN "PROTECT" project, which aims to help prevent violence against women and children, human trafficking and migrant smuggling, had been set to take place May 3 in Cambodia in the Phnom Penh Hotel. The facility is owned by L.Y.P. Group, a conglomerate entirely run by the family of tycoon Ly Yong Phat, a Cambodian senator with close ties to Prime Minister Hun Manet.

After being questioned by The Associated Press about the choice of an L.Y.P. Group hotel for the program launch, local offices of both the EU and UN agencies involved replied that they had decided to reschedule the event to a later date. The UN added that the event's location was "under review."

In Brussels, the European Commission refused to elaborate on the situation and referred all questions back to the EU delegation in Cambodia. (AP)

Dozens of protesters arrested in Georgia: Dozens of people have been arrested in Georgia after police in the capital used tear gas and water cannons to disperse protesters who rallied outside Parliament to protest a controversial bill which they argue limits media freedom.

Georgia's Interior Ministry said 63 people were arrested Tuesday while they took part in a demonstration in Tbilisi. Levan Khabeishvili, an opposition MP, posted a picture of himself on his social media accounts with a bloodied face and heavy bruising. Members of his party said he had been assaulted by police.

Those arrested were taking part in the latest in a series of protests against a bill which would require media and non-commercial organizations to register as "pursuing the interests of a foreign power" if they get more than 20% of their funding from abroad. The protesters have denounced it as "the Russian law" because Moscow uses similar legislation to stigmatize independent news media and organizations critical of the Kremlin. (AP)

17-year-old charged with attempted murder: A 17-year-old boy has been arrested on suspicion of attempted murder after three people were assaulted with a sharp object at a secondary school in northern England, South Yorkshire Police said Wednesday.

Two adults suffered minor injuries and an injured child was being examined, police said.

The incident occurred at The Birley Academy, formerly known as Birley Community College, in the city of Sheffield in central England.

The suspect was in custody. (AP)

2 police officers remain hospitalized: Two London police officers remained hospitalized on Wednesday, a day after suffering "horribly serious" injuries as they rushed to stop a sword-wielding attacker on a suburban street, the city's police chief said.

Details about the attack emerged a day before London voters go to the polls in local elections where crime and the performance of the capital's police force are major issues. (AP)



US Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, R-La., (center), joined from left by Rep. Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y., chair of the House Republican Conference, House Small Business Chairman Roger Williams, R-Texas, House Majority Leader Steve Scalise, R-La., and House Majority Whip Tom Emmer, R-Minn., meets with reporters following a closed-door GOP strategy session, at the Capitol in Washington on April 30. (AP)

Politics

Democrats to save Johnson's job

Dems retain NY congressional seat

BUFFALO, NY, May 1, (AP): Democratic state Sen Timothy Kennedy won a special election Tuesday for the New York congressional seat vacated by Democrat Brian Higgins.

Kennedy easily defeated Republican Gary Dickson for the upstate New York seat, helped by a 2-to-1 Democratic registration advantage in the district, which includes Buffalo, Niagara Falls and several suburbs.

Kennedy has been in the state Senate since 2011. Describing Washington as "chaotic and dysfunctional," he said he would focus in Congress on reproductive rights, immigration and stronger gun laws like those passed in New York after a 2022 mass shooting at a Buffalo supermarket.

Victory

"We need to elect pro-democracy, anti-MAGA candidates all around the country this November," Kennedy said in a victory speech, "and it starts here in this room in Buffalo, New York, tonight."

Registration wasn't Kennedy's only advantage. The Democrat raised \$1.7 million as of April 10, compared with Dickson's \$35,430 total, according to campaign finance reports. Kennedy spent just over \$1 million in the off-season election, compared with \$21,000 for Dickson as the candidates worked to remind voters to go to the polls.

Kennedy will serve in Congress for the rest of the year. He is on the ballot, along with Republican attorney Anthony Marecki, for the general election. On Tuesday, former town supervisor Nate McMurray, who planned to challenge Kennedy in a Democratic primary in June, said in a social media post that elections officials had removed him from the ballot because of insufficient signatures.

Earlier this year, the GOP's slim House majority was narrowed in a closely contested Long Island-area special election that followed New York Republican George Santos' expulsion from Congress. That race, won by Democrat Tom Suozzi, was viewed as a test of the parties' general election strategies on immigration and abortion.

Cruces, authorities said.

First responders said 10 of the injured in Tuesday's crash were taken to hospitals for treatment and a 67-year-old woman

was critically injured and died.

The 69-year-old woman who was driving the SUV was not injured, Las Cruces police said. Her name wasn't immediately

released.

The woman apparently was trying to park her vehicle and stepped on the accelerator instead of the brakes, police said. (AP)



A Russian soldier guards an exhibition of tanks, APCs and guns of Ukrainian armed forces captured during the fighting displayed near the World War II museum on Poklonnaya Hill in Moscow, Russia on April 26. An exhibition of Western military equipment captured from Kyiv forces during the fighting in Ukraine opened May 1 in the Russian capital. (AP)

Bus-train collision injures 55: At least 55 people were hurt, two seriously, when a Metro light rail train and a University of Southern California shuttle bus collided Tuesday along a busy thoroughfare in downtown Los Angeles, officials said.

The crash happened shortly before noon along Exposition Boulevard, near the USC campus and Natural History Museum, according to the LA Fire Department.

Two victims were hospitalized with serious injuries and 16 others were transported in fair condition, the department said. Another 37 people were treated at the scene.

Dave Sotero, a spokesperson for LA Metro, said the bus crossed into the path of an E Line train. The light rail line runs from East Los Angeles to downtown Santa Monica mostly along streets, and not all of the crossings have gates.

Genesis Hernandez was transferring from a Metro bus to catch the E Line to Santa Monica, where she attends college when "all of a sudden I just saw a bunch of ambulances going by," she recalled. (AP)

Lat/Am

Ecuador defends raid

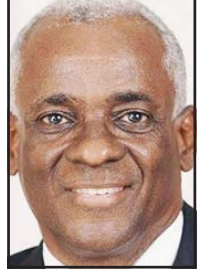
Haiti council names new prime minister

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, May 1, (AP): A surprise announcement that revealed Haiti's new prime minister is threatening to fracture a recently installed transitional council tasked with choosing new leaders for the gang-riddled Caribbean country.

Four of seven council members with voting powers said Tuesday that they had chosen **Fritz Bélizaire** as prime minister, taking many Haitians aback with their declaration and unexpected political alliance.

The council members who oppose Bélizaire, who served as Haiti's sports minister during the second presidency of René Préval from 2006 to 2011, are now weighing options including fighting the decision or resigning from the council.

A person with direct knowledge of the situation who did not want to be identified because negotiations are ongoing said the council's political accord had been violated by the unexpected move and that some council members are considering other choices as potential prime minister.



Bélizaire

The council on Tuesday was scheduled to hold an election and choose its president. But two hours and a profuse apology later, one council member said that not only a council president had been chosen, but a prime minister as well. Murmurs rippled through the room.

Powers

The Montana Accord, a civil society group represented by a council member with voting powers, denounced in a statement late Tuesday what it called a "conspiracy" hatched by four council members against the Haitian people "in the middle of the night."

"The political and economic mafia forces have decided to take control of the presidential council and the government so that they can continue to control the state," the Montana Accord said.

Haitian politics have long been characterized by secretive dealings, but many worry the country cannot afford further political instability as gangs lay siege to the capital of Port-au-Prince and beyond.

"People change parties (like) they're changing their shirts," said François Pierre-Louis, a professor of political science at Queens College in New York and former Haitian politician.

He spoke during an online webinar on Tuesday evening.

Like others, he said he believed that Jean-Charles Moïse, a powerful politician who was a former senator and presidential candidate, was behind Bélizaire's nomination.

"Interestingly, Moïse, of all the politicians there, is the one calling the shots," Pierre-Louis said.

Moïse, however, does not sit on the council. His party, Pitit Desalin, is represented by Emmanuel Vertilaire, who is among the four council members who support Bélizaire.

Reached

The others are Louis Gérard Gilles, Smith Augustin and Edgard Leblanc Fils, the council's new president. They could not be immediately reached for comment.

Fils represents the January 30 political group, which is made up of parties including PHTK, whose members include former President Michel Martelly and slain President Jovenel Moïse. Meanwhile, Augustin represents the EDE/RED political party, founded by former Prime Minister Claude Joseph, and Gilles represents the Dec. 21 agreement, which is associated with former Prime Minister Ariel Henry, who recently resigned.

A document shared with The Associated Press and signed by the four council members who chose the new prime minister state they have agreed to make decisions by consensus. The document is titled, "Constitution of an Indissoluble Majority Bloc within the Presidential Council."

Henry was on an official visit to Kenya to push for the U.N.-backed deployment of a police force from the East African country when gangs in Haiti launched coordinated attacks starting Feb. 29.

Also:

THE HAGUE, Netherlands: Ecuador on Wednesday defended its storming of the Mexican Embassy in Quito last month, telling judges at the United Nations' top court that it acted to take in "a common criminal" - Ecuador's former vice president - who was holed up inside the diplomatic post.

The statement by lawyers for Ecuador was part of hearings in a case filed by Mexico at the International Court of Justice that accuses Quito of blatantly violating international treaties by storming the embassy to arrest former Vice President **Jorge Glas**.

The April 5 raid, hours after Mexico granted asylum to Glas, further fueled tensions that had been brewing between the two countries since the former vice president, a convicted criminal and fugitive, took refuge at the embassy in December.

Leaders across Latin America condemned the raid as a violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

"Mexico, for months misused its diplomatic premises in Quito to shelter a common criminal" who had been convicted twice of corruption and other offenses, the leader of Ecuador's legal team at the International Court of Justice, **Andres Teran Parral**, told judges on Tuesday.

BOGOTA, Colombia: Colombian President **Gustavo Petro** said Tuesday that hundreds of thousands of pieces of ammunition have gone missing from two military bases in the South American country.

In a brief statement, Petro said that an inspection this month by the army found that hundreds of thousands of bullets, thousands of grenades and 37 anti-tank missiles were stolen from a military base in the center of the country and another near the Caribbean coast.

Petro, the country's first left-wing president, said the ammunition might have ended up in the hands of Colombian rebel groups, or may have been sold illegally to criminal groups overseas, including Haitian gangs.

"The only way to explain these missing items is that there are networks made up of people within the armed forces who are involved in the illegal arms trade," Petro said.

Petro said that inspections of military bases would continue in order to "separate the armed forces from any type of criminal organization."



This photo taken on May 1, 2024 shows the site of an expressway collapse accident on the Meizhou-Dabu Expressway in Meizhou, south China's Guangdong Province. (Xinhua)

24 dead after road collapse in south China's Guangdong

The death toll has risen to 24 after part of an expressway collapsed in south China's Guangdong Province, causing 20 vehicles to plunge, on early Wednesday morning, local authorities said.

Another 30 people are receiving hospital treat-

ment, with none in life-threatening condition, according to the government of the province's Meizhou city.

The incident happened around 2:10 a.m. on the Meizhou-Dabu Expressway in Meizhou. The col-

lapsed section is 17.9 meters long and covers an area of 184.3 square meters, officials said.

Aerial photos show one side of the expressway caved in, causing vehicles to roll down a slope. (Xinhua)

Asia

Australia ministers won't comment on media reports

SKorea mulls participation in AUKUS

MELBOURNE, Australia, May 1, (AP): South Korea is considering sharing advanced military technology with the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia through the so-called AUKUS partnership, South Korean Defense Minister Shin Won-sik said.

Shin said the possibility was discussed during two days of meetings between South Korea and Australia's defense and foreign ministers that ended in the Australian city of Melbourne on Wednesday.

The United States and the United Kingdom agreed in 2021 to provide Australia with a fleet of submarines powered by US nuclear technology under the AUKUS agreement to counter a growing military presence from China. AUKUS is an acronym for Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Range

The countries could become involved in cooperation on a wider range of security technologies including artificial intelligence, electronic warfare and hypersonic systems through what is known as AUKUS Pillar 2.

Shin welcomed South Korea's invitation from the three AUKUS partners.

"We do welcome that AUKUS members are considering Korea as an AUKUS Pillar 2 partner and Korea's defense science and technology capabilities will contribute to the peace and stability of the development of AUKUS Pillar 2 and regional peace," Shin said through a translator.

Japan is also moving toward formal talks to become part of AUKUS Pillar 2's technology development and sharing.

Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles welcomed South Korean efforts to build on its relationship with Japan, which along with Australia, the United States and India form a security dialogue known as the Quad.

"We see this is a very, very positive step forward in the strategic land-

scape of the region and represents a huge opportunity for Australia to engage with both Korea and Japan," Marles told reporters.

"Korea and Australia are working together to uphold the rules-based order within our region and, in fact, within the world," Marles added.

Also:

MELBOURNE, Australia: A senior Australian government minister said Wednesday the bilateral relationship with India was good and had improved in recent years, but declined to comment on reports that two Indian spies were secretly expelled from Australia four years ago.

Treasurer **Jim Chalmers** was asked during a television interview whether India could be considered Australia's friend after Australian news media and The Washington Post reported the two intelligence operatives' quiet expulsion.

Chalmers told Australian Broadcasting Corp., "I don't want to get into those kinds of operational issues in any way."

"We've got a good relationship with India and with other countries in the region, it's an important economic relationship, it's become closer in recent years as a consequence of efforts on both sides, and that's a good thing," Chalmers said.

Prime Minister **Anthony Albanese** and Foreign Minister **Penny Wong** deflected questions Wednesday at press conferences about India's reported spying, using the government's standard line that they did not comment on intelligence matters.

MELBOURNE, Australia: Australian Prime Minister **Anthony Albanese** announced new funding on Wednesday to help women escape domestic violence and a crackdown on misogynistic online content in reaction to an uptick in homicides committed by current and former male partners that he described as a national crisis.

Albanese said his government

would invest 925 million Australian dollars (\$599 million) over five years to financially support women and children escaping violence.

The government also proposed new measures to tackle factors that it says exacerbate violence against women, such as violent online pornography and misogynistic content targeting children and young people.

The measures would include legislation to ban deepfake pornography and more funding for an Australian regulator to pilot age-assurance technologies to protect children from harmful online content.

MANILA, Philippines: Chinese coast guard ships fired water cannons at two Philippine patrol vessels Tuesday near a disputed shoal in the South China Sea, damaging both in the latest flare-up in an increasingly tense territorial conflict.

There were no immediate reports of injuries in the incident off Scarborough Shoal, one of two hotly disputed areas where confrontations between China and the Philippines have flared on and off since last year.

A Philippine coast guard ship and an accompanying fisheries vessel were patrolling the waters off Scarborough Shoal when four Chinese coast guard ships, backed by six suspected militia ships, executed dangerous blocking maneuvers, Philippine coast guard spokesperson Commodore Jay Tarriela said.

A Chinese coast guard ship used a water cannon against the fisheries vessel, the BRP Bankaw, and two other Chinese coast guard ships hit the Philippine coast guard ship, the BRP Bagacay, simultaneously on both sides, damaging part of its deck railing and a canopy, Tarriela added.

"China's coast guard and maritime militia vessels harassed, blocked and rammed vessels of the Philippine coast guard and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources," a Philippine government task force dealing with the territorial disputes said.



A man retrieves belongings from a flooded river in the Mathare slums in Nairobi, Kenya, on April 30. Heavy rains pounding several parts of Kenya and devastating flash floods have left 169 people dead, a government official said. (Xinhua)



Saïed



Bozizé

Africa

Court seeks arrest of Bozizé: An internationally backed court in the Central African Republic issued an international arrest warrant Tuesday for the country's exiled former president **François Bozizé** for human rights abuses from 2009 to 2013, a spokesperson said.

The Special Criminal Court was set up in the capital, Bangui, to try war crimes and other human rights abuses committed during the coups and violence that the country has experienced since 2003.

Court spokesperson Gervais Bodagy Laoulé said the warrant was for crimes committed under Bozizé's leadership in a civilian prison and at a military training center in the city of Bossembélé where many people were tortured and killed.

The warrant covers crimes from 2009 to 2013 by the presidential guard and other security forces, Laoulé said. (AP)

'Free political prisoners': Tunisia's main opposition coalition said Tuesday it won't take part in the North African country's upcoming presidential election unless President **Kais Saïed**'s political opponents are freed and judicial independence is restored.

More than 20 political opponents have been charged or imprisoned since Saïed consolidated power in 2021 by suspending parliament and rewriting the country's constitution. Voters weary of political and economic turmoil approved his constitutional changes in a 2021 referendum with low turnout.

Saïed is widely expected to run in the presidential election, likely to take place in September or October. It is unclear if anyone will challenge him.

The National Salvation Front, a coalition of the main opposition parties including once-powerful Islamist movement Ennahdha, expressed concern that the election wouldn't be fair, and laid out its conditions for presenting a candidate. (AP)

Over 7m to face food insecurity: Over 7 million people in South Sudan are expected to face acute food insecurity or worse during "the lean season" between now and July, the UN Food and Agriculture Organizations said in a report Tues-

day. The FAO said the highest prevalence of acute hunger, ranging between 65% and 75% of the population, is reported in

northern Unity, Upper Nile and Jonglei states, in the Pibor area in the east near the border with Ethiopia, and among South Sudanese returning from war-torn Sudan.



Judge Nawaf Salam (center), presides at the International Court of Justice, or World Court, in The Hague, Netherlands on May 1. Mexico is taking Ecuador to the United Nations' top court on Tuesday accusing the nation of violating international law by storming into the Mexican embassy in Quito on April 5, and arresting former Ecuador vice president Jorge Glas, who had been holed up there seeking asylum in Mexico. (AP)

The Rome-based agency expressed special concern about the 79,000 people facing the highest catastrophic levels of food insecurity and starvation. It said 11,000 are in the Pibor area, 40,000 are in Northern Bahr el Ghazal state's Aweil East County, and 28,000 are South Sudanese who fled the year-long conflict in Sudan and are spread across the country.. (AP)

SAfrica probes MK party: South African police were investigating Tuesday if former president Jacob Zuma's new political party forged supporters' signatures to register for national elections next month.

The MK Party, which has been highly critical of the ruling African National Congress he used to lead, has been embroiled in legal cases over whether it and Zuma are eligible to contest the May 29 national and provincial elections. They could be the most pivotal in South Africa in the last 30 years.

The MK Party had its registration last year rejected by the Independent Electoral Commission before a second attempt was successful. Zuma was ruled ineligible to stand as a candidate for Parliament because of his criminal conviction for contempt of court and prison sentence in 2021, but an appeal was successful and a final Constitutional Court ruling comes next month. (AP)

Abu Dhabi-backed fund pulls out of deal to take over UK's Telegraph newspaper group

Britain's Telegraph newspaper group is back up for sale Tuesday after a United Arab Emirates-backed consortium pulled out of a takeover bid following strong opposition from the U.K. government.

Abu Dhabi-backed investment fund RedBird IMI said it was withdrawing from the proposed acquisition of the Telegraph Media Group, which owns the right-leaning Daily Telegraph and Sunday Telegraph newspapers and The Spectator magazine.

The takeover faced a backlash from Britain's government, which voiced concerns about the impact on freedom of expression and accurate presentation of news. Last month the government said it was bringing forward

legislation to block foreign state ownership of British newspapers and magazines. Officials also launched a probe into the proposed deal's potential impact on freedom of speech. Ofcom, the media watchdog, raised concerns that the proposed takeover could influence "the accurate presentation of news and free expression of opinion" in the publications.

The Telegraph papers are closely allied to the governing Conservative Party. The investment group said Tuesday its plan was "no longer feasible."

"We continue to believe this approach would have benefited the Telegraph and Spectator's readers, their journalists and the U.K. media landscape more widely,"

the fund said in a statement. "Our focus now is on providing certainty to the employees and readers of The Telegraph and The Spectator, and securing best value for the assets, which remain highly attractive."

RedBird IMI is backed by U.S. financial firm RedBird Capital Partners and Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, a member of Abu Dhabi's royal family and the UAE's vice president. It is run by former CNN chief Jeff Zucker.

The fund reached an agreement last year with the Barclay family, the media group's previous owners, to provide loans to them and ensure that the family's debts, worth some 1 billion pounds (\$1.25 billion), are paid.

The deal included an option to turn the loans into equity, which would give it ownership control of the newspaper and magazine.

Britain's Culture Secretary Lucy Frazer said she will monitor the orderly transition of the media group, "with a view to taking any further regulatory action as required."

"The free press is a cornerstone of our democracy and we cannot take it for granted," she said. "We are acting to ensure that we retain the ability to step in where necessary to protect the integrity and independence of these publications, given the unique role they play in our democracy." (AP)

Warba Bank and LSEG in collaboration to achieve a milestone success with Electronic Trading Platform

KUWAIT CITY, May 1: Warba Bank, in collaboration with London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG), a global leader in financial market data and infrastructure, celebrates the remarkable success of its Electronic Trading Platform since its launch in July 2023. This strategic partnership has propelled Warba Bank to the forefront of banking digital transformation, showcasing the power of innovation and collaboration in the financial sector.

The Electronic Trading Platform has witnessed unprecedented growth, with Warba Bank swiftly surpassing the USD 2.6 billion trading volume milestone since inception, a testament to the platform's efficiency and effectiveness, underscoring its pivotal role in facilitating seamless Foreign Exchange transactions for clients while optimizing internal operations.

This achievement highlights Warba Bank's unwavering commitment to embracing cutting-edge technology and leveraging strategic partnerships to drive innovation and enhance cus-



Abdullah Allangawi – Chief, Treasury

tomers experiences. By harnessing best-in-class technologies the market has to offer, Warba Bank has set a new standard for excellence in Islamic banking, positioning itself as a pioneer in the

Poland is still not ready to adopt the euro: Finance minister

WARSAW, Poland, May 1, (AP): Twenty years after joining the European Union, Poland is still not ready to adopt the euro currency, the finance minister in the pro-European Union government said.

Andrzej Domański, finance minister in the Cabinet of Prime Minister Donald Tusk, said in an interview on TVN24 on Monday that Poland joining the eurozone, the currency union of 20 EU members, is not justified at

this time.

He said he believed that having its own currency, the zloty, helped Poland avoid recession during the global financial crisis and to weather other shocks.

On Wednesday, Poland and nine other countries will mark the 20th anniversary of joining the EU, on May 1, 2004. Under the terms of membership, Poland committed itself to replacing the zloty with the single European currency.

digitalization of financial services.

As the banking industry continues to evolve, Warba Bank remains dedicated to adopting the power of technology to deliver superior solutions and meet the evolving needs of its clients. The success of the Electronic Trading Platform underscores Warba Bank's position as a leader in the digital transformation of Islamic banking and reaffirms its commitment to driving innovation and excellence in the financial sector.

The unprecedented success of our electronic trading platform is a testament to Warba Bank's unwavering

commitment to delivering innovative digital solutions to our partners and clients," Abdullah Al Allangawi Head of Treasury at Warba Bank. "We are not just facilitating transactions; we are paving the way for a digital future where our clients' financial success is at the forefront of our efforts. Our collaboration with LSEG is just the beginning of more custom, cutting-edge solutions we plan to introduce."

"In the rapidly evolving world of FX trading, our solutions at LSEG are designed to provide unparalleled effi-

ciency and innovation. Our platforms not only meet the current needs of our clients but also anticipate future trends in the financial markets," said Nadim Najjar, Managing Director, Central and Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa, LSEG. "This collaboration with Warba Bank is a prime example of how strategic partnerships can drive significant advancements in the digital banking landscape."

LSEG's electronic trading solutions provide a comprehensive suite of tools and platforms designed to enhance the FX trading experience. With its focus

on automation, efficiency, and regulatory compliance, LSEG's platforms like FXall and Electronic Trading offer a flexible and powerful environment for banks and financial institutions.

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

SA sees robust growth of trade

China's trade with BRICS members up 11.3% in Q1

BEIJING, May 1, (Xinhua): China's trade with other BRICS members hit 1.49 trillion yuan (about 209.7 billion U.S. dollars) in the first quarter, up 11.3 percent year on year, according to customs authorities.

The trade value accounted for 14.7 percent of the nation's total foreign trade value during the same period, said the General Administration of Customs (GAC).

Among BRICS members, China's exports to Brazil and imports from it rose 25.7 percent and 30.1 percent year on year, respectively, in the first quarter.

Trade between China and Russia continued to expand during the period, featured by growth in traded products such as energy, automobiles, as well as general machinery and equipment, according to the GAC.

Trade between China and India grew 8.5 percent in the first quarter, marking growth for five consecutive quarters.

Meanwhile, as China's largest trading partner in Africa for 14 consecutive years, South Africa saw robust growth in its trade with China. During the first quarter, China's exports to South Africa totaled 35.11 billion yuan, while its imports from the African nation stood at 66.46 billion yuan, said the GAC.

Customs data showed that China has maintained good coop-

eration with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in the field of energy trade. The two countries were among the top 10 sources of energy products imported into China in the first quarter.

China also carried out practical cooperation with Egypt and Ethiopia in the field of infrastructure, while in the first quarter, China's export of contracted projects to the above two countries achieved rapid growth, according to the GAC.

Meanwhile, Chinese-manufactured goods were popular in Iran, with China's exported goods purchased by the Iranian market growing 15.2 percent year on year in the first quarter, the data shows.

Lyu Daliang, director of the GAC's Department of Statistics and Analysis, said that the value of goods trade among BRICS countries accounted for about 20 percent of the world's total.

There remains great potential for trade to grow among BRICS nations and the bloc is expected to become an "accelerator" for global economic recovery and trade development, the official said. BRICS is the acronym for an emerging-market cooperative mechanism that initially featured Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. On Jan. 1, 2024, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Iran and Ethiopia joined BRICS.

Eurozone economy rebounds in Q1 of 2024 amid easing inflation

Restrictive monetary policy by the ECB working

BRUSSELS, May 1, (Xinhua): The economic output in the eurozone rose by 0.3 percent in the first quarter on a quarterly basis, the statistical office of the EU said on Tuesday.

The latest data released by the EU point to a stronger-than-expected rebound and an end to the recession.

As the restrictive monetary policy by the European Central Bank (ECB) is working its way through the system, inflation is gradually coming down, paving the way for an economic recovery which is not on a strong footing yet.

Strong bounceback

The eurozone economy in the first quarter was 0.3 percent, which is larger than the fourth quarter last year. On a year-on-year basis, the euro area GDP grew by 0.4 percent, according to a release by European statistics (Eurostat).

The growth in the first quarter marked a turnaround from the previous quarter when the economy shrank by 0.1 percent after a quarterly contraction of 0.1 percent in the third quarter of 2023.

The bounceback was mainly attributed to the strong performance of the top economies in the block.

The growth of Spain continued into the first quarter with an increase of 0.7 percent, the same pace as the fourth quarter last year.

Germany registered a rebound with an increase of 0.2 percent on quarterly basis, reversing the contraction of 0.5 percent in the fourth quarter of 2023. As the largest economy in the euro-



The European Central Bank is reflected in the river Main in Frankfurt, Germany, March 21, 2024. Europe's economy perked up slightly at the start of the year, recording 0.3% growth in the January-March quarter as the inflation burden on consumers eased and the stagnating German economy, the continent's biggest, started to show modest signs of life. (AP)

zone and the EU, Germany was one of the worst performers in terms of economic growth.

France's GDP also ticked up by 0.2 percent, slightly higher than the fourth quarter of 2023.

Italy's economy expanded by 0.3 percent, beating the growth rate of 0.1 percent in the previous quarter.

The rate at which the euro area grew in the first quarter has been the fastest since the third quarter of 2022, according to data released by Eurostat.

Stable inflation

The ECB has been keeping interest rates at historically high levels after

lifting them by 450 basis points in a little more than one year in a bid to tame surging prices in the euro area.

The interest rates, as restrictive as they are, keep the borrowing cost high, dampen the demand, and weigh on the economic growth in the euro area.

Inflation and private consumption will likely determine the pace of the recovery in the euro area, a report published by consultancy firm Deloitte in April said.

In a separate release on Tuesday, the Eurostat unveiled that the euro area inflation in April was 2.4 percent, flat with March, according to a flash esti-

mate.

The core inflation, or inflation excluding food and energy, went down to 2.7 percent in April from 2.9 percent in March.

There are signs of recovering domestic demand in the euro area, which may make inflation linger longer, said Bert Colijn, a senior economist at ING Bank, in a note.

As energy prices continue to drop and food price pressure eases, stickier core inflation in which wages and prices set by firms play a critical role, according to the Deloitte report.

Fragile recovery

Job availability in Japan falls for the 1st time in 3 yrs in FY 2023

TOKYO, May 1, (Xinhua): Japan's job availability ratio declined for the first time in three years in fiscal year 2023, the government said in a report on Tuesday.

For the year through March, the job-to-applicant ratio fell 0.02 point to 1.29 from the previous year, as employers slashed job offers because soaring materials prices weighed on earnings, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare said.

For March, the job availability ratio was up 0.02 point from

February to 1.28, meaning there were 128 jobs available for every 100 people seeking them, data showed.

The uptick was attributed to fewer people looking for new jobs as they anticipate pay rises in their current positions, according to the ministry.

Sectors with fewer jobs openings in March included the manufacturing sector, down 10.8 percent, while the lifestyle and entertainment services sector and the education sector both fell 10.5 percent.

and cufflinks, said the Hong Kong Gifts & Premium Fair was a good platform to help her and her colleagues find the right suppliers. Hong Kong's stable and secure environment makes them feel safe to do business here.

From April 20 to April 30, a number of lifestyle products and creative trade events were held in the city by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, including the Hong Kong Gifts & Premium Fair, the Hong Kong International Printing & Packaging Fair, Home InStyle, Hong Kong International Licensing Show

and the Asian Licensing Conference. At these trade events, product suppliers and buyers worldwide regarded Hong Kong as an ideal exhibition platform.

A French company that sells kitchenware and home accessories is a regular visitor to Hong Kong. For more than a decade, they have visited trade shows in Hong Kong as a buyer every year, except during the pandemic.

"People here are friendly and helpful," Amandine, a member of the French company, said, adding that she finds it convenient to do business

in Hong Kong.

Since 2016, Filipino buyer Benedict has visited Hong Kong almost every year in search of business opportunities. He and his business friends in the Philippines are optimistic about Hong Kong's business environment.

Cristian from Romania was very interested in the new products at the show Home InStyle which featured traditional crafts, kitchenware, and accessories. "I wanted to find new partners in Hong Kong and connect with them," he said, adding that the

trip was fruitful.

First-time buyers Emelie Rosen and Stephanie Bjork from Sweden said that after completing their work in Hong Kong, they would do sightseeing and explore the city.

At the trade events, exhibitors actively promoted their latest products to buyers. A Thai company that sells household goods has been a regular participant in Hong Kong exhibitions since 2000. Surachai, a manager from the company, said there are many business opportunities in Hong Kong, and it is worth continuing to explore

business in the city.

At the Hong Kong International Licensing Show, a Japanese company displayed a variety of cultural and creative products, including stickers and coasters. This was their first exhibition outside Japan.

A representative of the company said Hong Kong is a very international city, which is conducive to product promotion and provides a platform to meet with buyers from around the globe. Meanwhile, Hong Kong's safe environment makes overseas people feel at ease doing business.

Overseas businessmen show confidence in Hong Kong's business environ

HONG KONG, May 1, (Xinhua): A number of trade exhibitions were held in Hong Kong in April, attracting visitors worldwide who expressed their confidence in the business environment of Hong Kong.

"Hong Kong is a very nice place. We are always happy to come," Belgian businesswoman Isolde Hanson said, adding that this was her first visit to Hong Kong after the pandemic. She had been to Hong Kong more than ten times before.

Hanson, who runs a company that sells metal products such as brooches

HR manager extends congratulations and appreciation to ABK employees

ABK celebrates excellence and achievements of employees in Grand Gala ceremony

KUWAIT CITY, May 1: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently hosted a much-anticipated employee gala ceremony, bringing together esteemed members of the Executive Management and dedicated employees from various divisions. The event served as a token of appreciation for their exceptional performance throughout 2023 and as an opportunity to celebrate the Bank's most notable achievements over the past year.

The ceremony was marked by the recognition of outstanding ABK employees, exemplifying the Bank's commitment to acknowledging and celebrating the contributions of its workforce. The convivial atmosphere depicted ABK's spirit of unity and camaraderie.

On this occasion, Loai Muqames, CEO-Kuwait at ABK, said, "As we celebrate the achievements of our colleagues, it is imperative to recognize the invaluable contribution of each employee.

Together, we have not only met but exceeded our goals, setting new benchmarks for excellence in the banking industry."

Furthermore, Muqames elaborated on the Bank's commitment to fostering relationships and bolstering job satisfaction among employees. He mentioned, "ABK organizes various employee events outside the work environment, such as awareness seminars, workshops, and different sports tournaments. We also hold regular meetings between employees and the Executive Management to strengthen relationships and help them face the challenges in the banking sector in the best possible way."

On her part, Afrah Alarbash, General Manager of Human Resources at ABK, said, "I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all our employees and express my gratitude for their relentless efforts in driving our success."

She continued, "We remain committed to nurturing a culture that values and empowers our employees, enabling them to thrive and contribute to our collective growth. Your commitment to excellence is truly commendable."

ABK actively works on organizing numerous training programs in collaboration with various local and regional specialized entities to keep pace with the ever-evolving banking sector. This coincides with the Bank's keenness to attract and retain the best talents.

The ceremony not only celebrated individual and collective successes but also underscored ABK's unwavering commitment to excellence, innovation, and service delivery.



Loai Muqames



Afrah Al Arbash



ABK celebrates success of the work team.

Dr. Angela Ross addresses teenage parenting challenges

Burgan Bank resumes Burgan Talk series featuring guest speaker Dr. Angela Ross

KUWAIT CITY, May 1: In a sustained effort to uphold its committed human capital development strategy, Burgan Bank continued its Burgan Talk series of events with a new talk, entitled "A Guide for Working Professionals to Nurturing Healthy Teenagers". This latest edition was delivered by guest speaker, Dr. Angela Ross from Anara Center, a licensed clinical psychology specialist with over 15 years of experience and holder of a PhD in Counseling Psychology from Auburn University, USA. The event took place under the umbrella of Burgan's ongoing initiatives designed to promote its employees' emotional, and psychological health and well-being, both inside the workplace and outside of it.

Commenting on the engaging and fruitful talk, Ms. Zahra Boarki, Senior Manager - Culture and Employee Engagement at Burgan Bank, said: "At the Human Resources Department, we aim to utilize our collective expertise to create a healthy and positive work environment for Burgan's staff, whom we consider to be one of our top priorities. We are proud of the diverse program of initiatives that we continue to offer our employees, with the aim of supporting them along their journeys of professional development and personal growth. We also firmly believe in the importance of investing in our people's welfare and holistic well-being, ensuring that they are able to enjoy their time at the workplace and outside it and that they are also able to contribute creatively and efficiently to the workplace, which ultimately reflects on the overall success of our institution."

"Among the primary challenges that face many of the working Burgan parents and their ability to maintain optimal overall health is balancing between their responsibilities as parents and as professionals. These challenges can be especially accentuated in the case of parenting teenagers who



Ms. Zahra Boarki, Senior Manager - Culture and Employee Engagement at Burgan Bank.

may require more attention, patience, and presence than other age groups," added Boarki. "We understand that these challenges call for additional effort from the parents to guarantee meeting their teenage children's needs and comprehending their emotional swings and changing social behaviors. That's why we continue to do all that is in our power to support Burgan parents in their efforts to remain psychologically healthy."

During the Burgan Talk, Dr. Ross presented valuable information on the most effective self-care means for working parents, especially with regard to mental health, as well as acquiring advanced skills that enable them to balance their responsibilities at home and the workplace. She also tackled some of the top challenges that parents face with raising teenagers, underscoring the importance of building safe and open channels of communication between parents and children, especially



Dr. Angela Ross, licensed clinical psychology specialist at Anara Center.

in light of the modern challenges posed by social media platforms and their influence on teenagers' morale and perceptions of themselves and the world. These difficulties are often topped with the financial strain that comes with raising a family, which Dr. Ross dedicated the time to discussing and sharing practical tips on how to handle efficiently.

It serves to note that Burgan Bank seeks to remain an employer of choice within Kuwait's banking sector, sparing no effort to develop its human capital by consistently launching and maintaining initiatives that aim to hone employees' personal and professional skills and abilities. The Bank's Burgan Talk series is set to continue well into 2024 with an agenda of topics that respond directly to the employees' needs and aspirations for personal and career growth, confirming Burgan's commitment to fostering an environment of development and innovation.

HR Hub promotes environmental sustainability & remote accessibility

Gulf Bank launches HR Hub for enhanced employee experience

KUWAIT CITY, May 1: To keep pace with the successful digital transformation journey, which has encompassed all services within and beyond the bank, Gulf Bank has launched HR Hub, a Human Resources system, aiming to provide its employees with an advanced and user-friendly platform.

On this occasion, Ms. Salma Al-Hajjaj, the General Manager of Human Resources at Gulf Bank, stated, "HR Hub stands out as a centralized system for all services, equipped with extensive features to streamline workflow and improve efficiency across all employee transactions. This saves time and effort, which positively influences the quality of services they provide to customers. Additionally, it is available in both Arabic and English to promote inclusivity and ensure that employees of various nationalities can access the necessary services."

She emphasized that the new system offers considerable flexibility and customization options, allowing employees to adapt features according to their preferences for a more personalized and efficient experience. Furthermore, it supports the bank's efforts to promote environmental sustainability principles by reducing paper usage, and eventually eliminating it altogether.



Salma Al-Hajjaj - General Manager of Human Resources

Al-Hajjaj noted, "The system allows for uninterrupted access to vital Human Resources services at any time, and from any place, whether employees are in the office or working remotely; ensuring they are always well informed and connected to all updates. We are committed to providing an ideal work environment for our employees and helping them develop and achieve."

She noted that the new system provides employees with immediate access to essential HR documents and

resources, as well as the latest bank announcements and news. Additionally, it offers self-service options, including viewing salary details and making leave requests, along with managerial services like approving leaves, reviewing team details, and assigning tasks to other employees.

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.

Digital communications manager comments on campaign success

NBK honors Digital Communications team for 'Let's Be Aware' campaign

KUWAIT CITY, May 1: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK)'s executive management honored Digital Communications team in appreciation of their efforts to promote the "Let's Be Aware" banking awareness campaign, after NBK was named first in promoting the campaign in 2023 by the Central Bank of Kuwait, outperforming all other local banks.

CBK's recognition demonstrates NBK's leading role in promoting financial literacy and inclusion and raising awareness among different segments of society, thus enhancing confidence in the Kuwaiti banking sector and economy.

The honoring was presented by Mr. Isam J. Al-Sager, Vice-Chairman and Group CEO of National Bank of Kuwait to Digital Communications team, in a ceremony held at NBK HQ.

Through this recognition, NBK aims to appreciate employees and motivate them to go the extra mile and promote cooperation, as the executive management commended the dedicated efforts and commitment of the "Let's Be Aware" team, praising their one-team spirit, which is always the main driver of the bank's successes, and continued leadership, locally and regionally.

Commenting on this recognition, Farah Bastaki, Manager at Digital Communications, said: "Over the past year, NBK has intensified its efforts to promote and develop the content of the "Let's Be Aware" campaign, by publishing educational material and awareness content related to the campaign across all its social media platforms as well as other digital channels. The bank was able to achieve 15 million views for the campaign's posts in 2023, and more than 250,000 interactions by customers."

"NBK implemented monthly social experiments throughout the year at various locations across all areas in Kuwait, targeting a wide range of audience and touching on various topics that helped spread financial culture among different segments, in order to educate them on the latest fraud techniques and required precautions," she added.

Bastaki mentioned that the activities included field tours at cooperative societies, shopping malls, the American University of Kuwait (AUK), and parking lots, where the bank's team presented various innovative ideas to promote financial awareness and famil-



Farah Bastaki

Bastaki: Engagement with the campaign reached 15 million views, and over 250,000 interactions from customers

■ The "Let's Be Aware" NBK implemented monthly social experiments all year round at various locations across all areas in Kuwait

■ The team conducted field tours and presented various innovative ideas to spread financial awareness and familiarize the public with fraud techniques

■ NBK posted 60+ video clips across its different platforms to ensure the widest exposure for the campaign

■ NBK is a key supporter and partner in all CBK's initiatives that aim to promote financial awareness among different segments of society

■ CBK's recognition of NBK demonstrates the bank's leading role in enhancing confidence in the Kuwaiti banking sector and the economy

sharing personal banking information with anyone, especially sensitive information such as debit/credit card numbers, PINs or OTPs.

The "Let's Be Aware" team was also present at cinemas and reached out to customers via SMS and newsletters to educate them on fraud techniques and methods, protection of passwords and banking information. It also warned against using public Wi-Fi whether in cinemas, coffee shops or restaurants, or using these networks in any banking transactions, being unsafe, while emphasizing the necessity to adhere to the campaign's instructions and bulletins published on all the bank's channels.

NBK also had multiple radio presences throughout the year representing NBK and KBA. These included guests and experts in anti-fraud techniques and legal consultants giving advice to customers on how to act quickly and effectively should they fall victim to fraud.

Furthermore, the bank organized competitions to educate people on the latest fraud techniques both online on social media and offline in our various events and sponsorships giving away prizes of up to KD 500.

NBK also posted over 60 awareness videos throughout the year on all its digital platforms, which are the most popular among all Kuwaiti banks, to ensure the widest exposure of the campaign. The videos touched on a variety of key topics including (fraudulent apps, e-mail phishing, multi factor authentication, website addresses, investment fraud, online shopping, AI phishing, loans, credit card security, password strength & security, cyber security, fake links & QR codes, and security tips).

As the leading financial institution in Kuwait, the bank frequently organizes various activities to raise people's awareness on all topics related to the banking sector, as well as many training courses to educate them on combating fraud and financial crime.

It is worth mentioning that NBK is a key promoter and participant in all CBK's campaigns and initiatives to increase financial and banking awareness among different segments of society. The bank also employs its strong customer communication capabilities as well as all its digital channels, to support the Central Bank's endeavors to protect customers and the national economy.

ize the public with fraud techniques and required precautions. This included placing a QR code at a parking lot advertising a free car wash to advise the public to never scan unverified QR codes offering suspicious deals.

The team also approached shoppers and asked them to deposit cash for other people, aiming to highlight that they should never deposit cash for others without verifying their identity. It also warned shoppers against



Recognition of the Digital Communication Management Team by Mr. Isam J. Al-Sager, Vice-Chairman and Group CEO of National Bank of Kuwait, in a ceremony held at NBK HQ.

Al Habtoor Group brings TV channel to Beirut, sets studio city

Television

DUBAI, UAE, May 1. (Agencies): Al Habtoor Group, in a major expansion of its business portfolio, unveiled further details of its highly anticipated television channel set to broadcast from Beirut, Lebanon. Promising to offer extensive job opportunities and serve as a beacon of positivity in the media landscape, the channel is poised to initially create about 300 jobs in fields including journalism, production, art, and more, with additional jobs expected to be added as the project expands.

Khalaf Ahmad Al Habtoor, Founding Chairman of Al Habtoor Group, expressed his enthusiasm for the new venture "The resilience and spirit of the Lebanese are truly inspiring. We aim to harness this energy to spread hope, happiness, and positivity through our new channel. Our commitment is not only to establish a channel but also to foster a thriving media environment for professionals."

He continued, "This venture is more than just broadcasting. We are dedicated to empowering the local workforce and contributing positively to Lebanon's economic revival."

The initiative has received encouraging feedback and support from the Lebanese government, ensuring a smooth licensing process and a hospitable environment for this transformative project.

Moreover, Al Habtoor Group is developing a studio city in Lebanon on a plot of 100,000 (square meters), which is set to become a vibrant hub for film and TV production, thereby boosting the country's attractiveness as a prime location for international filmmakers.

Emerging from years of global hardship, the mission of the new TV channel is clear: to inject positivity into the daily lives of its audience, with a focus on uplifting content ranging from cultural showcases and social discussions to sports, entertainment, and health awareness. "Our programming is crafted to inspire and motivate not only the youth in Lebanon but also people around the world, encouraging them to embrace positivity and pursue their dreams," concluded Al Habtoor.

programming is crafted to inspire and motivate not only the youth in Lebanon but also people around the world, encouraging them to embrace positivity and pursue their dreams," concluded Al Habtoor.



Al Habtoor

Dan Rather returned to the CBS News airwaves for the first time since his bitter exit 18 years ago, appearing in a reflective interview on "CBS Sunday Morning" days before the debut of a Netflix documentary on the 92-year-old newsman's life.

After 44 years at the network, 24 as anchor of the "CBS Evening News," Rather left under a cloud following a botched investigation into then-President George W. Bush's military record. Rather signed off as anchor for the last time on March 9, 2005, and exited the network when his contract ended 15 months later.

With continued enmity between him and since-deposed CBS chief Leslie Moonves, Rather essentially became a nonperson at the news division he dominated for decades.

"Without apology or explanation, I miss CBS," Rather told correspondent Lee Cowan in the interview that aired Sunday. "I've missed it since the day I left."

Rather escaped official blame for the report that questioned Bush's Vietnam War-era National Guard service but, as the anchor who introduced it, was identified with it. CBS could not vouch for the authenticity of some documents upon which the report was based, although many people involved in the story still believe it was true.

city of some documents upon which the report was based, although many people involved in the story still believe it was true.

In the documentary "Rather," debuting Wednesday on Netflix, Rather said he thought he would survive the incident, but his wife, Jean, told him, "You got into a fight with the president of the United States during his reelection campaign. What did you think was going to happen?"

Rather did not retire after leaving CBS, doing investigative journalism and rock star interviews for HDNet, a digital cable and satellite television network. Over the past few years, he has become known to a new generation as a tart-talking presence on social media.

This past week, he posted on X during former President Trump's hush money trial: "Is it just me or did today seem sleazy even for Donald Trump?"

"You either get engaged and you get engaged in the new terms ... or you're out of the game," Rather said in the CBS interview, filmed at his home in Texas. "And I wanted to stay in the game."

The Netflix documentary traces his career from coverage of President John F. Kennedy's assassination, the Vietnam War and Watergate, through his anchor years and beyond. It includes some of the then tightly-wound Rather's odder incidents, including an assault in New York City by someone saying, "What's the frequency, Kenneth," then later appearing onstage with R.E.M. when the group performed its song of the same name.

In both the documentary and in the CBS interview, Rather bypasses his career when talk turned to his legacy.

"In the end, whatever remains of one's life — family, friends — those are going to be the things for which you're remembered," he said.

Variety

Features



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Ryan Gosling in a scene from 'The Fall Guy.' (AP)

Film

A delightful blend of action, comedy and romance

Gosling, Blunt great fun in 'Fall Guy'

By Lindsey Bahr

One of the worst movie sins is when a comedy fails to at least match the natural charisma of its stars. Not all actors are capable of being effortlessly witty without a tightly crafted script and some excellent direction and editing. But Ryan Gosling and Emily Blunt seem, at least from afar, adept at that game. Just look at their charming press tour for "The Fall Guy." Theirs is the kind of fun banter that can be a little worrisome — what if their riffing is better than the movie?

It comes as a great relief, then, that "The Fall Guy" lives up to its promise. Here is a delightful blend of action, comedy and romance that will make the audience feel like a Hollywood insider for a few hours (although there are perhaps one too many jokes about Comic-Con and Hall H).

Loosely based on the 1980s Lee Majors television series about a stuntman who made some extra cash on the side bounty hunting, Gosling takes up the mantle of said stunt guy, Colt Seavers.

Colt is a workaday stunt performer and longtime go-to for a major movie star, Tom Ryder (Aaron Taylor-Johnson). Tom is the kind of deeply egotistical and self-conscious A-lister who tells everyone he does his own stunts and worries out loud about Colt's jawline being distractingly softer than his. I think the word "potato" is thrown around as a descriptor. Taylor-Johnson has quite a bit of fun playing up all his eccentricities that you hope, and fear, are at least somewhat inspired by real horror stories of stars behaving badly.

The film comes from director David Leitch, the Brad Pitt stuntman and stunt coordinator who helped bring "John Wick" to the world and directed "Atomic Blonde" and "Bullet Train." He's a guy who not only has the vision and know-how to bring the best in stunts to films and make them pop, but also has a vested interest in putting them in the spotlight. Forget the Oscar, how about just any acknowledgement? Perhaps "The Fall Guy" is just one tiny step on the path to making audiences more aware of some of the behind-the-scenes people who really make movies better and risk it all to do so.

It's revealing that the movie starts with Colt suffering

a terrible injury on a set. The stunt that goes wrong is one he's just done and doesn't seem remotely nervous about. The film cuts to his recovery and semi-reclusive retirement until he gets a call from Tom's producer Gail (a delightfully over-the-top Hannah Waddingham) begging Colt to come back for a new film.

They need him, she pleads, as does his longtime crush Jody (Blunt), who is making her directorial debut. She waits to inform him that Tom is missing and he's the one who has to find him. On the quest, Colt encounters tough-guy goons, enablers, a sword-wielding actress, and a dead body on ice that all lead up to something big and rotten. And like a selfless stunt guy, he does it all out of sight of Jody — trying his best to save her movie without giving her something extra to worry about. Nothing about it is particularly plausible, but it's not hard to get on board for the ride, and much of that is because of Gosling.

Attraction

While he's not quite underappreciated for his comedic timing, especially after "Barbie," it's fun to get to see him really embrace and lean into the goofiness — whether it's crying and singing along to Taylor Swift's "All Too Well" or quoting movie lines to his stunt coordinator pal (Winston Duke, always a good addition) in the midst of an actual fight.

There is something very juvenile and sweet about Jody and Colt's will-they-won't-they romance, with its mix of attraction, banter, misunderstandings and hurt feelings. It was a genius stroke to cast these two opposite each other and it leaves you wanting more scenes with the two.

Working with a script from Drew Pearce ("Hobbs & Shaw"), Leitch packs the film with wall-to-wall action, in both the film's movie sets and its real world. And with the self-referential humor, the industry jokes and the promise of a little romance, it feels like one of those movies we all complain they don't make anymore.

"The Fall Guy," a Universal Picture release in theaters Friday, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for "action and violence, drug content and some strong language." Running time: 126

minutes. Three stars out of four.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Ridley Scott's "Alien" is back in theaters for its 45th anniversary and to get audiences excited about the new installment coming in August.

The Alien franchise has sunk its teeth into different genres over the years, but for "Alien: Romulus," filmmaker Fede Alvarez wanted to take it back to its roots: Horror.

"It's a return to form," Alvarez told The Associated Press. "At its core, at its heart, it's a horror thriller."

The original two films were formative for Alvarez, known for the 2013 "Evil Dead" reboot and the 2016 horror "Don't Breathe." He recalled a "primal memory" of watching them on VHS and feeling like he was watching an R-rated Star Wars.

"It was a world that felt familiar, that I thought I knew, but it was going into way more adult and scary places," he said.

Though he was a bit too young to see "Alien" in its first run, he got a peek at the new print coming to theaters and said it looks "incredible." Showings will also include a conversation between Alvarez and Scott.

The new film (opening Aug. 16) is set around the time of "Alien" and "Aliens," focusing on a group of 20-somethings, including Cailee Spaeny, David Jonsson and Isabela Merced, looking to escape their dull lives in a mining colony. But of course, it comes with some complications from that terrifying creature who likes to lurk in the corners.

He enlisted a lot of the behind-the-scenes creatives and concept artists who worked on the Scott and James Cameron films to help get the look right. Sometimes, they were excited to use new technologies that weren't available in the 1970s and 80s. And other times, they realized the old school way is still the best way. Case in point: Alvarez set a big question was how they were going to get the set to melt when it's hit with the alien's blood.

"It's not an easy CG thing to create," he said. "Its like it has to be practical."

Luckily, special effects expert and creature creator Alec Gillis was there to help. (AP)

MADRID: Marjane Satrapi, the acclaimed Iranian-French filmmaker and cartoonist, has won the 2024 Princess of Asturias Foundation award for communication and humanities, the Spanish organization announced Tuesday.

The foundation said Satrapi was "an essential voice in the defense of human rights and freedom." The judges described her as "a symbol of civic engagement led by women."

"Due to her audacity and artistic production, she is considered one of the most influential people in the dialogue between cultures and generations," they added.

Satrapi is best-known for her monochrome autobiographical comic book and film "Persepolis," a coming-of-age tale set against the Islamic Revolution in her native Iran.

Her graphic novels also include "Broderies" ("Embroideries") and "Poulet aux prunes" ("Chicken with plums"), which was also adapted into a film. As a filmmaker, she has directed several works, including "La Bande des Jotas" ("The Gang of Jotas") and "Radioactive" ("Madame Curie"), a biography about the Polish physicist Marie Curie.

"Persepolis" won the Film Critics Grand Prix at the Cannes Festival in 2007 and the César Award for Best Adapted Screenplay in 2008, in addition to being nominated for Best Animated Feature at the 2008 Oscars. (AP)

NEW YORK: Harvey Weinstein is due back in a New York courtroom Wednesday for his first appearance since an appeals court last week overturned his 2020 rape conviction and ordered a new trial.

The preliminary hearing in Manhattan is expected to include discussion of evidence, scheduling and other matters, according to Weinstein's attorney, Arthur Aidala.

Aidala said Weinstein will attend the hearing, despite the 72-year-old having been hospitalized since shortly after his return to the city jail system on Friday from an upstate prison. He has said Weinstein, who has cardiac issues and diabetes, was undergoing unspecified tests due to his health issues.

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg's office has said it is determined to retry the case

against Weinstein. Legal experts say that may be a long road and come down to whether the women he's accused of assaulting are willing to testify again. One of the women, Mimi Haley, said Friday she was still considering whether she would testify at any retrial.

Aidala said Saturday that he plans to tell the judge that he be-



Weinstein



Satrapi

lieves a trial could occur any time after Labor Day.

The once-powerful studio boss was also convicted in Los Angeles in 2022 of another rape and is still sentenced to another 16 years in prison in California. (AP)

BEIJING: Japanese animated

comedy "Spy x Family Code: White" topped the box office in the Chinese mainland on Tuesday, data from the China Movie Data Information Network showed.

The film grossed 35.24 million yuan (about 4.96 million US dollars) on its release day on the mainland.

It was followed by "Howl's

Moving Castle," a restored version of the 2004 masterpiece by Japanese animation guru Hayao Miyazaki. It raked in 17.93 million yuan on Tuesday.

Hong Kong action crime thriller "Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In" came in third with a daily earning of 17.55 million yuan in box office revenue. (Xinhua)

New study reveals cancer-like features in atherosclerosis

Start mammograms at 40 to tackle cancer rates at younger ages

NEW YORK, May 1, (Agencies): Regular mammograms to screen for breast cancer should start younger, at age 40, according to an influential US task force. Women ages 40 to 74 should get screened every other year, the group said.

Previously, the task force had said women could choose to start breast cancer screening as young as 40, with a stronger recommendation that they get the exams every two years from age 50 through 74.

The announcement Tuesday from the US Preventive Services Task Force makes official a draft recommendation announced last year. The recommendations were published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

"It's a win that they are now recognizing the benefits of screening women in their 40s," said Dr. Therese Bevers of MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. She was not involved in the guidance.

Other medical groups, including the American College of Radiology and the American Cancer Society, suggest mammograms every year - instead of every other year - starting at age 40 or 45, which may cause confusion, Bevers said, but "now the starting age will align with what many other organiza-

tions are saying."

Breast cancer death rates have fallen as treatment continues to improve. But breast cancer is still the second-most common cause of cancer death for U.S. women. About 240,000 cases are diagnosed annually and nearly 43,000 women die from breast cancer.

The nudge toward earlier screening is meant to address two vexing issues: the increasing incidence of breast cancer among women in their 40s - it's risen 2% annually since 2015 - and the higher breast cancer death rate among Black women compared to white women, said task force vice chair Dr. John Wong of Tufts Medical Center in Boston.

"Sadly, we know all too well that Black women are 40% more likely to die from breast cancer than white women," Wong said. Modeling studies predict that earlier screening may help all women, and have "even more benefit for women who are Black," he said.

Here are more details on what's changed, why it's important and who should pay attention.

Age 40 is when mammograms should start for women, transgender men and nonbinary people at average risk. They should have the X-ray exam every other year, according to the new guidance. Other groups recommend

annual mammograms, starting at 40 or 45.

The advice does not apply to women who've had breast cancer or those at very high risk of breast cancer because of genetic markers. It also does not apply to women who had high-dose radiation therapy to the chest when they were young, or to women who've had a lesion on previous biopsies.

It's not clear whether older women should continue getting regular mammograms. Studies rarely include women 75 and older, so the task force is calling for more research.

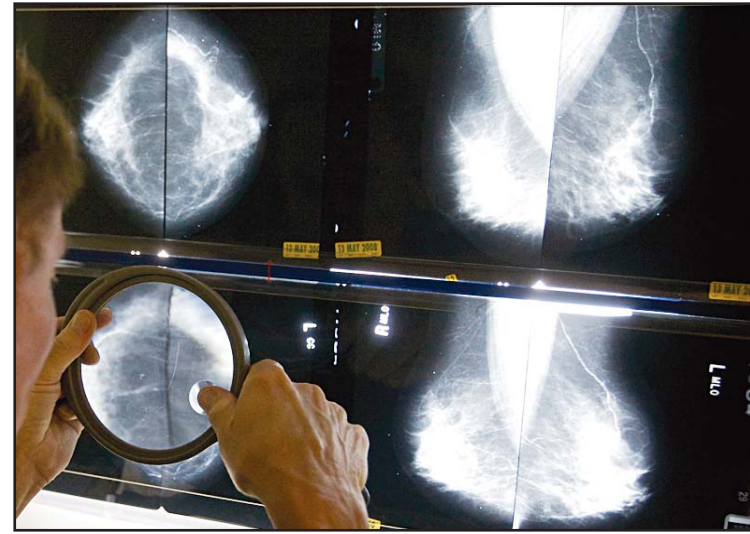
Bevers suggests that older women talk with their doctors about the benefits of screening, as well as harms like false alarms and unnecessary biopsies.

Mammograms don't work as well for women with dense breasts, but they should still get the exams.

The task force would like to see more evidence about additional tests such as ultrasounds or MRIs for women with dense breasts. It's not yet clear whether those types of tests would help detect cancer at an earlier, more treatable stage, Wong said.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: US researchers have discovered that the smooth muscle



A radiologist uses a magnifying glass to check mammograms for breast cancer in Los Angeles, May 6, 2010. An influential US task force now says women should get screened for breast cancer every other year starting at age 40. (AP)

cells that line the arteries of people with atherosclerosis can change into new cell types and develop traits similar to cancer that worsen the disease, according to the US National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Atherosclerosis is characterized by a narrowing of arterial walls and can increase risk of coronary artery disease, stroke, peripheral artery disease, or kidney disorders.

The findings could pave the way for

the use of anti-cancer drugs to counteract the tumor-like mechanisms driving the buildup of plaque in the arteries, the major cause of cardiovascular disease, NIH said on Tuesday.

"This discovery opens up a whole new dimension for our understanding about therapeutic strategies for the prevention and treatment of atherosclerosis," said Ahmed Hasan, program director in the Division of Cardiovascular Sciences at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, part of NIH.

"Previous research has suggested that atherosclerosis and cancer may share some similarities, but this association has not been fully described until now," Hasan said.

Using a combination of molecular techniques in mouse models and tissue samples taken from patients with atherosclerosis, the researchers of the new study characterized the molecular mechanisms that drive the smooth muscle cells to transition into cancer-like cell types.

The researchers found increased rates of DNA damage and genomic instability - two hallmarks of cancer - in the converted smooth muscle cells of atherosclerotic plaque when compared to healthy tissue, according to the study.



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, workers open the capsule of the Shenzhou-17 manned spaceship after it lands successfully at the Dongfeng landing site in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Tuesday, April 30, 2024. (AP)

NASA, Boeing set for ISS launch

Chang'e-6 lunar 'probe' set for historic launch on May 3

WENCHANG, Hainan, May 1, (Xinhua): The Chang'e-6 lunar probe is scheduled for launch on May 3, according to the China National Space Administration (CNSA) on Wednesday.

The probe is set to collect samples from the far side of the moon, making this mission the first of its kind in human history.

At present, preparations for the mission are progressing steadily at the Wenchang Space Launch Site in south China's Hainan Province, and the Long March-5 Y8 carrier rocket will soon be refueled with propellant, the CNSA said.

As there is a narrow launch window on the two consecutive days, with only 50 minutes for each day, the mission's rocket team has designed a total of 10 trajectories, the CNSA added.

The Wenchang Space Launch Site on Wednesday conducted a final rehearsal for the launch, covering all relevant systems comprehensively.

The site's meteorological system has strengthened its monitoring and analysis processes to ensure a successful launch.

Meanwhile, a Chinese spacecraft returned to Earth on Tuesday with three astronauts who completed a six-month mission aboard the country's orbiting space station.

The Shenzhou-17 craft carrying

Tang Hongbo, Tang Shengjie and Jiang Xinlin landed at the Dongfeng site in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in the Gobi Desert shortly before 6 p.m. It comes roughly four days after the Shenzhou-18 mission docked with the station with their three-member replacement crew.

China built its own space station after being excluded from the International Space Station, largely because of US concerns over the Chinese military's total control of the space program amid a sharpening competition in technology between the two geopolitical rivals. This year, the Chinese station is slated for two cargo spacecraft missions and two manned spaceflight missions.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: NASA and Boeing are set to launch a crewed flight test mission to the International Space Station (ISS) next Monday.

The mission will be the first crewed launch of Boeing's Starliner spacecraft as part of NASA's Commercial Crew Program.

The spacecraft is scheduled to launch aboard the United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket at 10:34 p.m. Eastern Time next Monday, May 6, from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida.

'Exposure to methylene chloride has devastated families'

US bans paint stripper chemical tied to cancer

WASHINGTON, May 1, (AP): The Environmental Protection Agency said Tuesday it has finalized a ban on consumer uses of methylene chloride, a chemical that is widely used as a paint stripper but is known to cause liver cancer and other health problems.

The EPA said its action will protect Americans from health risks while allowing certain commercial uses to continue with robust worker protections.

The rule banning methylene chloride is the second risk management rule to be finalized by President Joe Biden's administration under landmark 2016 amendments to the Toxic Substances Control Act. The first was an action last month to ban asbestos, a carcinogen that kills tens of thousands of Americans every year but is still used in some chlorine bleach, brake pads and other products.

"Exposure to methylene chloride has devastated families across this country for too long, including some who saw loved ones go to work and never come home," EPA Administrator Michael Regan said in a statement. The new rule, he said, "brings an end to unsafe methylene chloride practices and implements the strongest worker protections possible for the few remaining industrial uses, ensuring no one in this country is put in harm's way by this dangerous chemical."

Effects

Methylene chloride, also called dichloromethane, is a colorless liquid that emits a toxic vapor that has killed at least 88 workers since 1980, the EPA said. Long-term health effects include a variety of cancers, including liver cancer and lung cancer, and damage to the nervous, immune and reproductive systems.

The EPA rule would ban all consumer uses but allow certain "critical" uses in the military and industrial processing, with worker protections in place, said Michael Freedhoff, assistant administrator for the EPA's Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention.

Methylene chloride will continue to be allowed to make refrigerants as an alternative to other chemicals that produce greenhouse gases and contribute to climate change, Freedhoff said. It also will be allowed for use in electric vehicle batteries and for critical military functions.

Sleep apnea, low oxygen tied to epilepsy

US targets 'bogus' patents on drugs

WASHINGTON, May 1, (AP): Federal regulators are challenging patents on 20 brand-name drugs, including the blockbuster weight-loss injection Ozempic, in the latest effort by the Biden administration targeting pharmaceutical industry practices that drive up prices.

The Federal Trade Commission on Tuesday sent warning letters to 10 drugmakers, taking issue with patents on popular drugs for weight loss, diabetes, asthma and other reparatory conditions. The letters allege that certain patents filed by Novo Nordisk, GlaxoSmithKline, AstraZeneca and seven other companies are inaccurate or misleading.

Brand-name drugmakers use patents to protect their medicines and stave off cheaper, generic medicines. Most blockbuster drugs are protected by dozens of patents covering various ingredients, manufacturing processes and intellectual property. Generic drugmakers can only launch their own cheaper versions if the patents have expired or are successfully challenged in court.

"By filing bogus patent listings, pharma companies block competition and inflate the cost of prescription drugs, forcing Americans to pay sky-high prices for medicines they rely on," said FTC Chair Lina Khan, in a statement.

Ozempic is part of a class of drugs that were originally developed to treat diabetes but which have recently been approved to treat obesity, generating a surge in prescribing.

Epilepsy: Sleep apnea and low oxygen levels while sleeping are associated with epilepsy that first occurs after 60 years of age, known as late-onset epilepsy, according to a new study funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The link was independent of other known risk factors for late-onset epilepsy and sleep apnea including hypertension and stroke, NIH said on

Tuesday.

The findings may help to better understand the relationship between sleep disorders and late-onset epilepsy, as well as identify potential targets for treatment, according to NIH.

Researchers at Johns Hopkins University identified cases of late-onset epilepsy using Medicare claims and analyzed sleep data from more than 1,300 participants in a study of sleep-disordered breathing and cardiovascular disease.

They found that people whose oxygen saturation fell below 80 percent during sleep, a condition known as nocturnal hypoxia, were three times more likely to develop late-onset epilepsy compared to those who did not have similarly low oxygen levels.

In addition, participants with self-reported sleep apnea in later life were twice as likely to develop late-onset epilepsy as those without the sleep disorder, according to the study, published in Sleep.

Bird flu: The US Department of Agriculture will test ground beef for bird flu particles, though officials said Tuesday they're confident the nation's meat supply is safe.

Bird flu has been found in nearly three-dozen dairy herds across nine states. The new testing is the latest effort by the USDA to track and understand how the virus is spreading among livestock.

Two studies will test if particles of the bird flu virus, called Type A H5N1, is found in beef for sale in the states where dairy cows have tested positive or in the muscles of dairy cows sent to slaughter. A third will test how cooking meat at different temperatures affects the virus using a bird flu surrogate.

A week ago, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration confirmed it found non-infectious remnants of the bird flu virus in pasteurized milk. The particles are inactive and pose no threat to consumers, experts said.

Scientists say there's no evidence to

suggest people can get bird flu by consuming food that's been pasteurized or properly cooked.

Marijuana: The US Drug Enforcement Administration will move to reclassify marijuana as a less dangerous drug. The Associated Press has learned, a historic shift to generations of American drug policy that could have wide ripple effects across the country.

The proposal, which still must be reviewed by the White House Office of Management and Budget, would recognize the medical uses of cannabis and acknowledge it has less potential for abuse than some of the nation's most dangerous drugs. However, it would not legalize marijuana outright for recreational use.

The agency's move, confirmed to the AP on Tuesday by five people familiar with the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive regulatory review, clears the last significant regulatory hurdle before the agency's biggest policy change in more than 50 years can take effect.

Once OMB signs off, the DEA will take public comment on the plan to move marijuana from its current classification as a Schedule I drug, alongside heroin and LSD. It moves pot to Schedule III, alongside ketamine and some anabolic steroids, following a recommendation from the federal Health and Human Services Department. After the public comment period and a review by an administrative judge, the agency would eventually publish the final rule.

The proposal will be formally signed by Attorney General Merrick Garland, whose agency has ultimate oversight of the DEA, according to another person familiar with the process who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations. Garland's signature throws the full weight of the Justice Department behind the move and appears to signal its importance to the Biden administration.

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The 8-year consecutive champions UIS fought hard to defend title

IBA concludes annual basketball tournament with flourish

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 1: A long eight-day journey of basketball conducted by the Indian Basketball Association (IBA), Kuwait from April 18 to April 26 April ended successfully with a wholesome participation of more than 1,000 school athletes for the Thomas Chandy Ever Rolling trophy.

D.K. Dileep General Secretary IBA and all executive members of IBA and Chief Guest Dr. Betty Chandy released the annual souvenir - BASK-IN 24.

Approximately 200 athletes from 'Open' men and women category contested for the Susamma Elanjickal Memorial Ever Rolling Trophy and the Koshy Elanjickal Memorial Everrolling Trophy.

The basketball floodlight court of UIS echoed with the cheers and applause of athletes, braving the scorching heat as they aimed for slam dunks and layups. IBA has long been committed to nurturing budding athletes, instilling in them the fundamentals and intricacies of the game, and fostering a spirit of sportsmanship that extends beyond the court.

The school-level matches and the Open category men's and women's matches were fiercely contested in a league-cum-knock-out format to determine the champions in various categories. Every player gave their all, striving to taste the sweet victory of success. The 8-year consecutive champions UIS fought hard to defend their title.

The closing ceremony was graced by a distinguished array of guests, including Dr. Betty Chandy, Academic Vice Chairperson of the Group of Schools, Dr. Toby Chandy, Vice Chairman of Finance - Group of Schools, and Joel Jacob, Executive Administrator of Group of Schools, among others.

The final matches commenced with the Street Squad Men's team emerging victorious, with Crusaders as runners-up and DBO in third place. In the Women's category, DBO claimed the top spot, followed by Chosen Ones as runners-up and DBO (B) in third place.

Guests of honor, including Faisal Hamza, General Manager of Metro Medicals, and K.S. Varghese, MD of Gulf Advanced Trading, added to the festive atmosphere.

The IBA fraternity expresses gratitude to all those who supported the event, including medical support teams, food vendors, and generous sponsors like United Group of Schools, Metro Medicals, GAT, and others.

Special award winners:
Most Valuable Player Boys U10 - Biyon (UIS); Most Valuable Player Boys U12 - Jewel (IEAS); Most Valuable Player Boys U14 - Rayan (IEAS); Most Valuable Player Boys U16 - Ishan (UIS); Most Valuable Player Boys U19 - Nehal (UIS); Most Promising Player Boys U10 - Davis (UIS); Most Promising Player Boys U12 - Bosco (IEAS); Most Promising Player Boys U14 - Showin (IEAS); Most Promising Player Boys U16 - Thanmay (IEAS);



Top and above: some of the participants pose for the camera.

Most Promising Player Boys U19 - Jay (ICSK Sr); Most Valuable Player Girls U10 - Liyana (UIS); Most Valuable Player Girls U12 - Maame (IEAS); Most Valuable Player Girls U14 - Richa (UIS); Most Valuable Player Girls U16 - Shahina (IEAS); Most Valuable Player Girls U19 - Sydelle (IEAS); Most Promising Player Girls U10 - Jiya (UIS); Most Promising Player Girls U12 - Gabriella (IEAS); Most Promising Player Girls U14 - Benita (UIS); Most Promising Player Girls U16 - Yanichelle (IEAS) and Most Promising Player Girls U19 - Niorra (IEAS)

The following are the results of

schools standings in their respective categories:

Under 10 boys - UIS winner, UIS 'A' first runner-up; UIIS 'B' second runner-up, DPS third runner-up; Under 12 boys - IEAS winner, UIS first runner-up, ISEK second runner-up, UIS 'B' third runner-up; Under 14 boys - IEAS winner, UIS 'A' first runner-up, ICSK 'A' second runner-up, UIS 'B' third runner-up; Under 16 boys - IEAS winner, UIS first runner-up, ICSK 'Sr' second runner-up, IES third runner-up; Under 19 Boys UIS winner, ICSK 'Sr', Al-Amal second runner-up, IES third runner-up



An official receives a plaque of appreciation.



Some of the winners pose for a group photo after the awarding ceremony.



'MC' introducing the invited guests to the crowd.



Some of the winners.



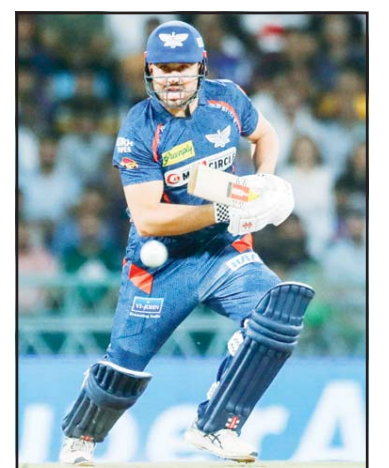
Some of the participating schools in action.

Lucknow rises to third in IPL

Indians stayed at No. 9 with only three wins

LUCKNOW, India, May 1, (AP): Lucknow Super Giants boosted their hopes for reaching the Indian Premier League playoffs with a four-wicket win over Mumbai Indians that was tempered by fast bowler Mayank Yadav's apparent injury.

Yadav, who was returning after missing Lucknow's last five games because of abdominal soreness, left the field in the penultimate over after claiming 1-31 off his 19



Lucknow Super Giants' Marcus Stoinis plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Lucknow Super Giants and Mumbai Indians in Lucknow, India. (AP)

CRICKET

balls, but Mumbai had lost its way inside the power play and was restricted at 144-7.

Marcus Stoinis continued his impressive all-round run with a composed 62 off 45 balls as Lucknow reached 145-6 in 19.2 overs for their sixth win in 10 games to reach No. 3 on the points table.

Mumbai stayed at No. 9 with only three wins and seven losses.

Mumbai had a disastrous start when it lost the Big 3 named to the T20 World Cup squad inside the first six overs. Rohit Sharma (4), Suryakumar Yadav (10) and captain Hardik Pandya (0) along with Tilak Varma's run-out saw them reeling at 27-4.

Sharma was brilliantly snapped by Stoinis at the covers while captain Lokesh Rahul, overlooked by the Indian selectors for the T20 World Cup, grabbed low catches of Yadav and Pandya before Varma couldn't beat the direct throw of Ravi Bishnoi. Yadav should have had the wicket

of Ishan Kishan in his first spell but Ashton Turner fluffed a regulation catch at deep mid-wicket in his first IPL game before the left-hander scrapped to 32 off 36 balls.

Yadav had Mohammad Nabi clean bowled in his return spell before he walked off the field with a suspected injury as Mumbai batters struggled on a sluggish wicket.

Nehal Wadhwa top-scored with 46 off 41 balls before Tim David's quickfire unbeaten 35 off 18 balls saved Mumbai from complete destruction.

Rahul (28) and Stoinis took charge of Lucknow's chase in the power play with a 58-run stand despite Nuwan Thushara getting impact player Arshin Kulkarni leg before wicket off his second ball.

Marsh to lead Australia

India recalls Rishabh Pant for T20 World Cup

NEW DELHI, May 1, (AP): Rishabh Pant was restored to the India squad for the T20 World Cup on Tuesday, 16 months after a near-fatal car crash.

Allrounder Shivam Dube, recalled by India last August after more than two years out, also made the cut, and star batters Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli were confirmed for the tournament in June in the Caribbean and the United States.

Pant was India's first-choice wicketkeeper across all three formats until December 2022 when he crashed and dislocated his right knee. He was pulled out by passersby before the car caught fire. Pant feared amputation. He returned to competitive cricket last month for the ongoing Indian Premier League and has proved himself.

Pant has 398 runs in 11 innings - good for fourth overall - at a strike rate of 158.56.

Dube has also lit up the IPL with 350 runs in nine innings at a strike rate

of 172.41.

Wrist spinner Yuzvendra Chahal, the only bowler to take 200 wickets in IPL history, was a surprise inclusion because he wasn't used at the Cricket World Cup that India hosted late last year. Chahal has 13 wickets in nine IPL games at an economy of 9.

CRICKET

India squad: Rohit Sharma (captain), Hardik Pandya, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant, Sanju Samson, Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj.

Meanwhile, Mitch Marsh will captain Australia at the Twenty20 World Cup next month, leading a national cricket squad that is missing ex-skip-

per Steve Smith and up-and-coming batter Jake Fraser-McGurk.

Marsh, who is recovering from an injured hamstring, was confirmed as T20 captain on Wednesday after sharing the duties on an interim basis since the retirement last year of Aaron Finch.

Smith's omission for the tournament starting June 1 in the United States and Caribbean means it'll be the first time since 2012 he's missed a World Cup in the limited-overs formats.

The 34-year-old Smith has signed for the Washington Freedom for the second season of Major League Cricket in the United States which starts July 4, four days after the T20 World Cup concludes.

Fraser-McGurk surged into selection calculations on the back of his 233.33 strike rate in the Indian Premier League, but it wasn't enough to replace Travis Head or the veteran David Warner at the global tournament.

Allrounder Marsh will likely bat at

No. 3 and Glenn Maxwell at No. 4 in the lineup, with Tim David likely to fill the finisher role further down the order.

"The batting options available allow a tailored approach to each venue and opponent," Australia's chief selector George Bailey said. "Steve Smith, Matt Short, Jason Behrendorff, Aaron Hardie, Spencer Johnson and Xavier Bartlett were all part of long conversations, along with several others, including Jake Fraser-McGurk who is yet to play T20 International cricket but continues to impress and is developing rapidly."

Bailey said Fraser-McGurk's form had been "great of late."

"But the way we're functioning at the top of the order with the three guys we've had there has been really strong as well," he said. "Ultimately, in that squad of 15, we're looking to get that balance we want in for each game with different opponents, different venues and different surfaces."

Al-Haili criticizes refereeing decisions

Al-Hilal edge Al-Ittihad in thriller to clinch King's Cup final berth



Al-Hilal players celebrate after qualifying for King's Cup final.

RIYADH, May 1: Al-Hilal booked their place in the King's Cup final with a thrilling 2-1 win against Al-Ittihad Jeddah in the tournament's golden square, marking their third consecutive appearance in the final match.

At the Radiant Jewel Stadium, an early goal scored by Al-Ittihad's Moroccan player Abdel Razzaq Hamdallah in the eighth minute was canceled due to offside after a review by the video assistant referee technology. Michael then capitalized on an opportunity in the 25th minute, netting the first goal for Al-Hilal with an assist from his teammate Malcolm.

However, Al-Hilal faced a setback just before halftime when their Serbian midfielder Sergej Milinkovic-Savic was shown a red card for a violent challenge against Ahmed Al-

SOCCER

Ghamdi, following a review by the video technology.

Al-Ittihad Jeddah managed to equalize in the 68th minute, courtesy of a goal by Abdul Razzaq Hamdallah assisted by Ahmed Al-Ghamdi. Despite being down to ten men, Al-Hilal secured the winning goal nine minutes before full time, with Saud Abdul Hamid finding the back of the net and securing his team's place in the final match.

This victory marked Al-Hilal's seventh win over Al-Ittihad this season, having previously defeated them in various competitions including the King Salman Cup for Arab Clubs, the AFC Champions League, the Diriyah Saudi Super Cup, and the Saudi Roshan League.

Following the match, Anmar Al-Haili, president of Al-Ittihad Club, criticized the refereeing decisions, particularly the controversial cancellation of Hamdallah's goal in the eighth minute. He questioned the validity of the decision, expressing frustration over its impact on the outcome of the match.

Sixers, Bucks stay alive, Cavaliers hold off Magic

Maxey makes his Madison Square Garden memory

NEW YORK, May 1, (AP): Tyrese Maxey made his Madison Square Garden memory, engineering a season-saving comeback with a rapid-fire flurry that evoked memories of Reggie Miller.

Not that he was thinking about his own legacy as those 3-pointers fell through the net.

The 76ers did. Now they're thinking about advancing.

Maxey saved Philadelphia from elimination with seven points in the final 25 seconds of regulation, finished with 46 and led the 76ers to a 112-106 overtime victory over the New York Knicks on Tuesday night in Game 5 of their first-round series.

The Sixers trailed by six points with 28 seconds left in regulation before Maxey pulled out a comeback that had team trainer Kevin Johnson talking to him about Miller's eight points in nine seconds for Indiana in an out-of-nowhere comeback at Madison Square

five points with under 30 seconds remaining.

Embiid, who has been ailing and missed shoot around with a headache, didn't score like usual after coming into the game with an NBA-leading 35 points per game in the playoffs. But Maxey picked up the load, making seven 3-pointers while adding nine assists.

Maxey had the most points by a Sixers player in a win to stave off elimination, surpassing Hall of Famer Allen Iverson's 44 in a Game 7 win against Milwaukee in the 2001 Eastern Conference final.

Maxey's last 3-point shot got the 76ers on the board in overtime after Brunson scored the first five points. That triggered a 9-0 run that Embiid capped with a three-point play with 1:40 remaining for a 106-102 lead, and after Brunson's 3 tied it at 106, Kelly Oubre Jr. made the tiebreaking basket with 1:02 to go and Tobias Harris followed with two free throws.

Harris had 19 points and Oubre scored 14.

Hart had 18 points and OG Anunoby 17 for the Knicks, who won Game 4 at Philadelphia and didn't appear like they were heading back there. But the Sixers' rally to win by six meant the No. 7 seeds have outscored the Knicks by two total points in the series.

Embiid was the target of the loud and long boos before the game even started. Knicks fans angry after his flagrant foul on Robinson in Game 3 in Philadelphia. They had plenty of chances to jeer him after Embiid also had nine turnovers in a sloppy performance.

But thanks to Maxey, Embiid might be playing in front of that MSG crowd one more time.

Embiid shuffled slowly through the locker room a little more than an hour before the game, resting his head in his hand while he briefly sat before going to warm up. He may have lacked energy, but the 23-year-old Maxey, the winner of the NBA's Most Improved Player award, seems to have a limitless amount.

Robinson returned after missing Game 4 with a sprained left ankle, but the Knicks announced before the game that Bojan Bogdanovic would miss the rest of the playoffs and have surgery on the left foot he injured in Game 4.

The Knicks, who have flourished when Embiid is resting in the series, started a 22-5 run while he was out in the second quarter and went up by 10 points in the period. They were ahead 70-69 going to the fourth.

Bucks 115, Pacers 92

In Milwaukee, Khris Middleton and Bobby Portis each scored 29 points and short-handed Milwaukee kept their season alive by routing Indiana in Game 5 of their Eastern Conference first-round playoff series.

Portis had the highest point total of his playoff career and added 10 rebounds to make amends two nights after he got ejected from a Game 4 loss. Middleton had his third straight game with at least 25 points, and he also contributed 12 rebounds and five assists.



Philadelphia 76ers' Joel Embiid (21) shoots over New York Knicks' Mitchell Robinson (23) and OG Anunoby (8) during the second half of Game 5 in an NBA basketball first-round playoff series in New York. (AP)

BASKETBALL

Garden in 1995.

The All-Star guard converted a four-point play with 25 seconds remaining to cut it to two, and after Josh Hart's free throw, pulled up from 35 feet to tie it at 97 with 8.1 seconds left in front of a stunned crowd that was set to celebrate the Knicks' second straight trip to the Eastern Conference semifinals.

Joel Embiid finished with 19 points, 16 rebounds and 10 assists for the Sixers, who will host Game 6 on Thursday night.

Jalen Brunson scored 40 points for the Knicks, who were thinking about a possible Game 1 of the second round at MSG on Saturday night. Instead, it could be Game 7 of this series, which seemed all but over.

It was the second desperate rally to avoid what seemed like certain defeat in what has been a razor-tight series between Atlantic Division rivals. The Knicks won Game 2 after trailing by

of dangerous forwards. If you take the ball away from them, they get nervous, they lose balance and they lose their shape.

"We'll have to play both phases perfectly because if they never lose, and, above all, have the heart to draw (many) games in the final few minutes then they have something special," De Rossi added. "They're unbeaten but there's no such thing as unbeatable."

Roma is aiming to qualify for its third consecutive European final after winning the Europa Conference League in 2022 and losing last year's Europa League final to Sevilla in a penalty shootout.

SOCCER

De Rossi and Alonso faced each other six times as players with their clubs and national teams, with Alonso on the winning side in four of those matchups.

"I fear everything about them but my Roma believes in itself," De Rossi said.

Atalanta has been surpassing expectations for years but the club from Bergamo is still missing a trophy and the Europa League provides one of two upcoming opportunities to crown its modern era along with the Italian Cup final against Juventus on May 15.

Gian Piero Gasperini's side was praised worldwide when it reached the Champions League quarterfinals in pandemic-hit 2020 - just as Bergamo became the epicenter of the coronavirus.

This season, Atalanta stunned Liverpool in the quarterfinals.

The only top-tier trophy that Atalanta has ever won was the 1963 Italian Cup.

Special Olympics Kuwait launches Youth Sports Program for children



Special Olympics Kuwait Youth Sports Program in progress.

KUWAIT CITY, May 1: The Young Players Program, launched by Special Olympics Kuwait, welcomes 75 male and female players from 8 educational institutions. Spanning 8 weeks, this initiative is designed to impart sports training and skills to children aged 2 to 7, including those with and without mental disabilities. The aim is to prepare them for future participation in private Olympic competitions once they reach 8 years of age.

Overseen by Mustafa Hassouna, Sports Officer, and Linda Jaber, Special Olympics Initiatives Officer, the program underscores the significance of introducing children to sports from an early age. Recognizing its profound impact on physical and psychological well-being, the emphasis lies on instilling a love for sports in young minds.

The curriculum focuses on teaching fundamental sports skills like running, kicking, and throwing, while also nurturing essential motor, social, and educational abilities. Through interactive sessions, children not only develop physical fitness but also learn teamwork and socialization, fostering a holistic approach to their growth.

Furthermore, the program provides a platform for families, teachers, and caregivers to actively engage with children, fostering a supportive environment conducive to learning and enjoyment.

With an overarching goal of promoting sports development and broadening the base of sports enthusiasts, this initiative aims to uncover talents across various sports disciplines, paving the way for a brighter future in sports participation.

Exams prompt postponement of Cup

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyasah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 1: The Basketball Association has opted to postpone the Federation Cup until the commencement of the upcoming season, citing the impending end-of-year examinations as the primary reason.

BASKETBALL

Mohsen Al-Sahmi, Vice President of the Basketball Association and Head of the Competitions Committee, explained that the decision to postpone was made to prioritize the academic commitments of the players and to afford them ample time to adequately prepare for their year-end tests.

The delay in concluding league competitions for the same categories, slated to wrap up next week, further contributed to the postponement.

With a shortage of available venues to host matches and a significant number of clubs unable to accommodate fixtures, the association faced logistical challenges.

Al-Sahmi disclosed that competitions at senior stages and first class levels are typically held across three venues: Kaifan, the Disabled Club, and the federation hall. However, these facilities are insufficient to accommodate all scheduled competitions.

Acknowledging the constraints, Al-Sahmi mentioned that the Competitions Committee will consider clubs' inability to host federation competitions and may opt to streamline matches, possibly condensing age-level competitions into single sections unless clubs commit to hosting matches in their own halls.

Looking ahead, Al-Sahmi announced plans for the Competitions Committee to convene with clubs in the near future to address various concerns and outline their strategy for the forthcoming season.



Mohsen Al-Sahmi, Vice President of the Basketball Association.

Best of the Rest

Estudiantes beat Boca: Uruguayan forward Mauro Mendez converted the decisive spot kick as Estudiantes advanced to the final of Argentina's Primera Division on Tuesday by beating Boca Juniors on penalties.

Miguel Merentiel put Boca ahead at Mario Kempes stadium in Cordoba with a 41st-minute strike after Luis Advincula's cross.

But the momentum swung following the dismissal of Cristian Lema, who received a second yellow card for hacking down Tiago Palacios inside the penalty area.

Colombian winger Edwain Centre converted the resultant spot kick to force the match into a shootout.

Edinson Cavani, Nicolas Fidalgo and Merentiel missed their respective penalty attempts while Eros Mancuso, Guido Carrillo and Mendez held their nerve for Estudiantes.

"We were patient when we needed to be and showed a lot of mental strength," Estudiantes manager Eduardo Dominguez said.

"In the second half we saw a team with ambition that wants to fight for titles and one that deserves to be in this final."

The result means Estudiantes will meet Velez Sarsfield in the title decider, to be played at Estadio Unico in Santiago del Estero on Sunday. (Xinhua)

Sounders edge Union: Raúl Ruidiaz scored two goals to help the Seattle Sounders beat the Philadelphia Union 3-2 on Tuesday night in a rescheduled match.

Seattle (2-5-3) won for the first time since a 5-0 victory over CF Montreal on April 6. Philadelphia (3-2-4) has lost back-to-back games at home for the first time since April 2021.

Ruidiaz launched a shot over goalkeeper Oliver Semmler from near midfield to open the scoring in the 13th minute.

Obed Vargas, an 18-year-old, doubled Seattle's lead in the 22nd with his first MLS goal in 43 appearances. Vargas curled in a shot from the corner of the 18-yard box, past a diving Semmler.

Vargas drew a penalty in the box in the 34th and Ruidiaz converted the penalty kick for a 3-0 lead. Ruidiaz has scored six of Seattle's 13 goals this season, with four coming on penalty kicks.

Philadelphia scored two goals in two minutes early in the second half as Jack McGlynn sent in a shot from the corner of the box and Daniel Gazdag headed in a cross.

It was Gazdag's 57th goal in all competitions with Philadelphia, passing Sébastien Le Toux for the all-time lead in club history.

Gazdag appeared to tie it at 3-3 in the 66th but it was overturned for an offside call.

The original matchup on March 9 was stopped in the sixth minute due to heavy rain. (AP)

Roma coach believes he has the plan to defeat Leverkusen

ROME, May 1, (AP): The Bundesliga title. The record 46-match unbeaten run. The 3-0 shutout of Bayern Munich.

Forget about all of that for now. Bayer Leverkusen has been thinking about its next opponent for an entire year.

The German club will be seeking revenge when it visits Roma in the first leg of the Europa League semifinals on Thursday - a rematch from last season at the same stage when Jose Mourinho's Giallorossi advanced to the final.

"We were so close to go to the final last season and we didn't like the way we went out," Leverkusen defender Jonathan Tah told The Associated Press in an interview. "So I was actually hoping to play against them again."

Last May, Roma beat Leverkusen 1-0 at the Stadio Olimpico in the first leg before a scoreless draw in Leverkusen. The loss in Rome was Leverkusen's last defeat in Europe and penultimate loss across all competitions before a 3-0 defeat to Bochum in the final round of last season's Bundesliga.

"From the first Europa League game against (Swedish team) Hacken, we spoke about our experience in Rome and now we're back in the same situation, semifinal vs. Roma," Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso said. "Hopefully we can use this experience well."

In Thursday's other semifinal, Atalanta visits Marseille. Leverkusen's streak of 46 games without a loss is a record across Europe's "big five" leagues.

But that hasn't stopped Daniele De Rossi - who replaced Mourinho in January as Roma's coach - from believing Leverkusen can be beaten again.

"We need to stretch them and move them out of position when they don't have the ball," De Rossi said. "They have very good players who pass the ball well and they have a lot



Orlando Magic center Wendell Carter Jr. (34) controls a rebound against Cleveland Cavaliers forward Isaac Okoro during the first half of Game 5 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series in Cleveland. Cavaliers won 104-103 to take 3-2 lead. (AP) — See Page 15

Sports

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Vinícius steals the show as Real hold Bayern

'Good result'

MUNICH, May 1, (AP): Vinícius Júnior scored twice for Real Madrid to draw 2-2 at Bayern Munich in the first leg of their Champions League semifinal.

Bayern dominated but Madrid survived, and the contest is still wide open ahead of the return leg in Madrid on May 8.

With the focus on England stars Harry Kane and Jude Bellingham, as well as Toni Kroos' return to his former team, Vinícius emerged as the decisive figure on a night when his bright green boots were often a blur.

The Brazil forward opened the scor-

ing against the run of play in the 24th minute and equalized with a coolly taken penalty in the 83rd after Leroy Sané and Kane had scored for Bayern.

"I think it's a good result," said Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti, who led Bayern to the Bundesliga title in 2017. "It gives us faith and confidence for the second leg. It's completely open."

Kane's goal, another penalty, was the England forward's 43rd goal in 43 games for Bayern this season.

"It felt like the goals were scored when the other team was better," Kroos said. "We're pretty sure that we'll advance at home."

Bayern had appealed to fans to wear red to the game and the visitors must have felt they were playing in a red



Real Madrid's Rodrygo (right), fights for the ball with Bayern's Konrad Laimer during the Champions League semifinal first leg soccer match between Bayern Munich and Real Madrid at the Allianz Arena in Munich, Germany. (AP)

SOCCER

cauldron as they were greeted by deafening whistles from the majority of the 75,000 in the stadium.

Fans in the "Südkurve" paid respect to deceased club great Franz Beckenbauer with a huge red-and-white choreography before kickoff. A giant banner sent a message to the players as they were warming up: "To honor the Kaiser Franz, give everything to reach the final!"

The winners of the two-leg semifinal will play in the final in London on June 1.

"Real Madrid does this to teams, so we should not be too disappointed," Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel said. "I think we will be able to create chances in the Bernabéu. This is one of the most difficult places to win, yes, but it's a challenge. That's the beauty of it."

Bayern totally dominated the opening stages on Tuesday. Sané had an effort saved by Andriy Lunin in the first minute and the hosts went on to miss

a slew of chances. "We didn't have enough intensity, especially in the first half," Ancelotti said.

Nearly 20 minutes elapsed before Madrid enjoyed a period with the ball.

Then Kroos spotted Vinícius' run and played a perfect through ball for the Brazilian to sweep the visitors' first real chance past Manuel Neuer in the

Bayern goal.

Bayern lost its early zest as the visitors saw more of the ball. Tuchel gesticulated wildly at his players to push forward, then threw his arms up in exasperation.

Kane went closest with a free kick before the break, awarded for a foul by Nacho on Jamal Musiala, who gingerly

rubbed his bandaged left leg. The Germany forward had only just recovered from a knee problem.

Sané equalized in the 53rd when he ran at the Madrid defense and cut inside Ferland Mendy before firing a fierce strike just inside the near post.

Kane made it 2-1 four minutes later with a penalty awarded after Lucas

Vázquez bundled over Musiala.

But it wasn't the last penalty as Kim Min-jae - who was beaten on Vinícius' first goal - brought down Rodrygo. Vinícius duly equalized from the spot.

"It was a back-and-forth game," Bayern midfielder Konrad Laimer said. "But yeah, it's Real Madrid, you can't let anything happen against this team."

Tunisia defeat Saudi Arabia for bronze

Kuwait lose to hosts Morocco in gripping final

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

CASABLANCA, May 1: The Kuwaiti youth handball team secured the second position in the Arab Youth Handball Championship recently concluded in Casablanca, Morocco. The thrilling final match against the Moroccan team ended in a penalty shootout, with a score of 4-5 in favor of the hosts.

The intense battle saw the first half ending 11-10 in favor of the Kuwaiti team before the regulation time ended in a 24-24 tie, leading to two additional periods. Even after these extensions, with the first ending 26-26 and the second 28-28, the teams proceeded to two more additional periods as per the game's regulations. The match finally concluded with penalty kicks favoring the Moroccan team.

Tunisia defeated Saudi Arabia 28-27 for bronze medal.

Iskandar Juffali from Tunisia claimed the top scorer title, while Qasim Al Turki from Saudi Arabia and Muhammad bin Hussein from Tunisia received the awards for the best player and best goalkeeper, re-



Moroccan sports officials console the Kuwaiti players after their final defeat.

HANDBALL

spectively.

The winning teams were honored by Fadel Al-Nimr, the President of the Arab Handball Federation, and Adly Al-Hanafi, the President of the Moroccan Handball Federation.

In another development, the twelfth round of the Handball League "Merge" is set to commence today, featuring three matches. Sulaibikhat, ranked seventh with 11 points, will face Al-Qurain, positioned tenth with seven points, followed by a match between Burgan, placed sixth with 12 points, and Al-Fahaheel, ninth with eight points.

The day's matches will conclude with a game between Khaitan, positioned twelfth with four points, and Kazma, ranked fourth with 16 points.

The league still has a final round with two postponed matches remaining. Following its completion, the top six teams will advance to compete in the Premier League, while the remaining teams will participate in the first division.

Al-Sagr & Al-Razihan head to Uzbekistan for 20th Asian Gymnastics Championship

KUWAIT CITY, May 1: The Kuwaiti national team is gearing up for the 20th Asian Rhythmic Gymnastics Championship, set to kick off in Uzbekistan. With a significant turnout of female athletes from across the Yellow Continent, the competition commences tomorrow.

Representing Kuwait in this prestigious event are Maha Al-Sagr and Nour Al-Razihan. The team's delegation arrived in Tashkent yesterday, led by Salah Askar, a

member of the Gymnastics Federation's General Assembly. Alongside Askar, coach Hana Sabotina accompanies the debutant players, Maha and Nour, making their first appearance in a continental championship.

GYMNASTICS

Al-Sagr, competing in the women's category, has diligently prepared for this tough competition, dedicating herself to daily training following her recent participation in the world championship held in Baku, Azerbai-

jan. Meanwhile, Nour Al-Ruzaihan will showcase her skills in the junior women's category, having honed her abilities through participation in the Sofia International Championship, recently held in the Bulgarian capital.

The Gymnastics Federation extends its best wishes to Al-Sagr and Al-Ruzaihan, expressing confidence in their abilities and dedication to delivering their best performances on this continental stage.



Maha Al Saqr intensifies training ahead of the championship.

Sheikh Mubarak Al-Faisal 'praises' the achievements of Al-Behbehani

KUWAIT CITY, May 1: Sheikh Mubarak Al-Faisal, Vice Chairman of the Kuwait Olympic Committee, reiterated his commitment to championing athletes across various sports and overcoming any hurdles in their path to excellence. This pledge was made during his meeting at the Olympic Committee's headquarters with martial arts champion boxer Hamzah Al-Behbehani, who is gearing up to compete for the World Professional Boxing Council (WBC) heavyweight belt in Bangkok next June.

Sheikh Al-Faisal commended the remarkable achievements of Kuwaiti athletes in both individual and team sports, expressing pride in their success at regional and international levels. He emphasized the Committee's unwavering support for athletes like Al-Behbehani, acknowledging their contributions to elevating Kuwait's sporting reputation globally.

In response, Hamzah Al-Behbehani expressed gratitude



Hamzah Al-Behbehani presents Sheikh Mubarak Al-Faisal with a memorial shield.

for the Kuwait Olympic Committee's steadfast support, underscoring the significance of such backing for athletes like himself. He conveyed his optimism for success in the upcoming competition and vowed to continue representing Kuwait with honor on the international stage.

Ratcliffe's new era takes shape

Man Utd make more executive changes

MANCHESTER, England, May 1, (AP): Manchester United announced more changes to its executive structure as the new era under co-owner Jim Ratcliffe continues to take shape.

Interim CEO Patrick Stewart and chief financial officer Cliff Baty will step down at the end of the season by mutual consent, the club said.

Jean-Claude Blanc, CEO of Ratcliffe's INEOS Sport, will take over as chief executive until former Manchester City executive Omar Berrada takes on the role on July 13.

Baty will be replaced by former INEOS Sport chief financial officer Roger Bell.

The billionaire owner of petrochemicals giant INEOS bought a 25% stake

As well as the appointment of Berrada, former City academy director Jason Wilcox has been hired as technical director. Newcastle sporting director Dan Ashworth is another target.

Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney have given an insight into their long-term ambitions for Welsh soccer team Wrexham, which they hope could eventually see the capacity of its Racecourse Ground stadium increase massively to 55,000.

The Hollywood pair have already transformed the fortunes of the historic but down-on-its-luck club through their \$2.5 million takeover in 2021 and the fly-on-the-wall documentary series "Welcome to Wrexham" that is streamed around the world.

After back-to-back promotions, Wrexham will play in the third tier of English soccer next season.

Currently the Racecourse only holds 12,600 fans, with plans to build a new 5,500-capacity stand in place. But Reynolds and McElhenney's vision is to build one of the biggest stadiums in English soccer.

"We have a plan in place right now that would eventually work from stand to stand, so eventually you get all four sides. It's hard to say for sure, but we think we could get between 45-and-55,000 people in there," McElhenney told entertainment website Collider.

SOCCER

in United in February, and his investment has already seen a host of major changes at the storied club.

Former CEO Richard Arnold stepped down in November and football director John Murtough left earlier this month. Ratcliffe's investment, which will eventually rise to a 27.7% stake, has seen him assume control of United's soccer operations.

INEOS director of sport Dave Brailsford and Blanc have joined the board of the soccer club.