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# Kuwait warns against delayed wages

## PAM flags violations

**KUWAIT CITY, May 2: The Acting Deputy Director of the Public Authority for Manpower for Workforce Protection Sector Affairs, Dr. Fahd Al-Murad, emphasized the seriousness of private sector business owners and companies failing to pay workers' monthly wages on time, reports Al-Jarida daily.**

This violation can lead to the suspension of the employer's file and allow workers to transfer to another employer. Al-Murad made these remarks during the Authority's celebration of International Labor Day, where they set up a booth at the Avenues Mall in cooperation with the Chamber of Industry and Commerce and the General Union of Kuwaiti Workers.

Al-Murad highlighted the Authority's commitment to monitoring business owners' compliance with wage payment regulations,

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## Kuwait reports no new side effects from Covid vaccines

**KUWAIT CITY, May 2, (KUNA):** The Ministry of Health has said that no side effects of the Covid-19 vaccines, other than the previously expected ones, had been detected in Kuwait.

The available vaccines in Kuwait had been approved and recommended by international specialized medical organizations; they are flexible in countering the new variants of coronavirus, according to a press release from the Ministry.

The statement came in response to recent reports that a certain Covid-19 vaccine has resulted in rise in blood

clots since 2021.

The benefit of vaccination is far bigger than the rare side effects, particularly when it comes to times of pandemic climax and cases of most vulnerable people such as the elderly and those with weak immune system, the statement explained.

In other news, the Ministry of Health has removed the Coronavirus vaccination status feature from the Kuwait Mobile ID smartphone application. This decision comes several years after the global struggle with COVID-19.



Photo by lehab Qurtal

South Korea's folk ballet group 'Little Angels' perform at the AbdullHussain AbdullRedna Theater in Salmiya to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Energy Cooperation between the Republic of Korea and the State of Kuwait. - See Page 10

## Day by Day

IN the end, the thieves must inevitably meet their downfall. Regardless of their cunning, they succumb to the consequences of their actions, and justice prevails in its demands.

Chasing down thieves has become straightforward, thanks to international agreements ensuring no evasion from the grasp of justice. Despite their wits, thieves face a grim fate.

Throughout the world, there exist individuals who have pillaged and plundered within their own nations and beyond. Yet, ultimately, they find themselves ensnared in perpetual imprisonment and relentless pursuit, disrupting not only their own lives but also those of their accomplices and families who aided their illicit endeavors and attempted to legitimize them.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

## NewsWatch

**KUWAIT CITY:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Wednesday sent a cable to UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan, voicing sincere and heartfelt condolences over the passing of Sheikh Tahnoon bin Mohammad Al Nahyan, Abu Dhabi Ruler's Representative in Al Ain Region.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir prayed to Allah Almighty to shower the deceased with His vast mercy, dwell him in paradise, and grant Al Nahyan Family patience and solace.

His Highness the Caretaker Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah on Wednesday also sent a cable to UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan, voicing sincere and heartfelt condolences over the passing of Sheikh Tahnoon bin Mohammad Al Nahyan, Abu Dhabi Ruler's Representative in Al Ain Region. (KUNA)

**KUWAIT CITY:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Thursday sent a cable to Chinese President Xi Jinping, voicing sincere condolences over victims of the collapsed road in China's Guangdong province.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the injured a swift recovery.

His Highness Caretaker Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah on Wednesday also sent a cable to Chinese President Xi Jinping, voicing sincere condolences over victims of collapsed road in China's Guangdong province. (KUNA)

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**ANKARA:** The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) wrapped up its humanitarian aid mission in Armenia Thursday, distributing relief materials to 1,500 individuals in need.

In a phone call with KUNA, Khaled Al-Mutairi, head of KRCS' field team, reported that aid was distributed in the areas of Shirak, Sevan, and Yerevan, in collaboration with the Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS). (KUNA)

**RIYADH:** Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman met Wednesday with visiting Secretary General of the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) Dimitri Kerentzes in Riyadh. During the meeting, they discussed the kingdom's preparations and arrangements to host Expo 2030, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported. (KUNA)

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# Kuwait in for steamy week of heat and humidity



KUNA photo

The skyline of Kuwait is punctuated by impressive skyscrapers, contributing to the nation's allure and grandeur.

## Consulates in UAE closed due to bad weather

but at night the heat will settle at 20-22 degrees.

On Saturday, Al-Qarawi added that it would be hot and partially cloudy, along with the dampness, while the heat will wobble between 36 and 28 degrees. At night, it will be moderate and the temperature will range between 22 and 24 degrees.

In other news, Kuwait Consul General in Dubai Ali Al-Thaydi called on the Kuwaiti students and nationals living in the United Arab Emirates to be wary on the unstable weather and stay indoors until weather improves.

Speaking to KUNA on Wednesday, he said the Kuwaiti consulates general in Dubai and the northern emirates of the UAE will close

down Thursday due to bad weather.

Al-Thaydi urged the Kuwaiti national to abide by the safety precautions outlined by the competent UAE authorities, expressing trust in the UAE authorities' ability to address the current difficulties in a professional way and protect the safety of everybody.

He called on the Kuwaiti nationals who might face any difficulty to seek help via the consulate's emergency phone number: 971563651212.

Earlier, the UAE National Emergency and Crisis and Disasters Management Authority raised the alert level nationwide in anticipation of bad weather in the coming two days.

## Kuwait joins observance of World Press Freedom Day

- Details Page 2 -

## Call for accountability

## Kuwait legal team files ICC suits against Israel

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

**KUWAIT CITY, May 2:** According to a recent announcement by a Kuwaiti legal team called "Kuwait Lawyers for Gaza", it has filed four lawsuits with the International Criminal Court against the massacres committed by Israel in the Palestinian territories.

The team demanded the arrest and punishment of Israeli political and military officials for the crimes they committed in violation of the international customs and treaties.

During a press conference held yesterday morning at the Kuwait Bar Association, Head of the "Kuwait Lawyers for Gaza" team Lawyer Dr. Mohammad Al-Moqatei said he formed a team of 24 male and female lawyers who began their work in November 2023 silently and deliberately.

He explained that the team formed six committees for coordination, communication and preparation. It met 13 times and was keen on documentation and accuracy in its work, in addition to obtaining full knowledge of the procedural aspects with the aim of properly filing claims. The team was also keen to obtain powers of attorney from Palestinian victims and affected persons, and succeeded in obtaining four powers of attorney. The cases related to these powers had been submitted, and other reports would be submitted in due course.

The first report is related to the bombing of the Baptist Hospital, the second to the mass killing of 107 people in the Gaza Strip, the third to the killing of three people in the Jenin camp, and the fourth to the destruction of private properties, treatment degrading to human dignity, and physical and mental harm.

Continued on Page 5



Photo by Mahmoud Jadede

His Excellency Miguel Moro Aguilar, Ambassador of Spain to the State of Kuwait and Bahrain, inaugurates the new premises of BLS, the visa application collection service provider for Spain. - See Page 2

## KFAED cites sustainability

## Gulf power interconnection project 75 percent complete

**KUWAIT CITY, May 2, (KUNA):** Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) announced on Thursday that the Gulf electrical interconnection expansion project with Kuwait has reached 75 percent of completion, and is expected to be completed next December.

In a press release, KAFED said that this project is one of the most important infrastructure projects that was approved by the GCC to reduce the required electrical reserve in member states, provide joint coverage in emergency situations, benefit from the surplus, and reduce the electrical energy production costs.

It pointed out that the implementation of this project comes as part of the Gulf interconnection expansion projects through by constructing Al-Wafra Station, which will connect the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority's (GCCIA) network to Kuwait's through four voltage circuits (400 kilovolts), with the total cost of USD 270 million.

It noted that this project with Kuwait will ensure continued sustainability of electrical energy at all times, pointing out that Kuwait "will be the largest beneficiary of

Continued on Page 5

## KRCS builds makeshift Gaza hospital for Palestinian relief

**GAZA, May 2, (Agencies):** Kuwait Red Crescent Society announced on Thursday that a fully-equipped hospital has been installed in Al-Mawasi region in Gaza to offer medical care for the Gazans in cooperation with the Palestinian and Egyptian Red Crescent associations.

KRCS Chairperson Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer said in a telephone contact with KUNA that the makeshift field hospital was erected in the coastal region in Gaza as part of the State of Kuwait's efforts to soothe the hardships of the Palestinian brothers.

The makeshift hospital, set up on a 750 square meter plot of land, contains operation rooms, intensive care wards and sections for patients' admittance. It also includes baby incubators, X-ray units, a pharmacy and a laboratory.

Kuwait will carry on with the humanitarian missions and will spare no effort in offering help to mirror a bright picture of the country under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Dr. Al-Sayer stated.

For his part, the director general of the Palestinian Red Crescent in Gaza Bashar Murad said it was crucial to build the hospital in the strip due to the difficult conditions, and the severe shortage of medical supplies and medications.

Continued on Page 5



KRCS photo

The image depicts the Kuwait Red Crescent Society constructing a temporary hospital in the Al-Mawasi region of Gaza.

## Prayer Timings

Fajr .....	03:40	Asr .....	15:21
Sunrise ..	05:06	Maghrib ..	18:25
Zohr .....	11:45	Isha .....	19:48

# Local

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

## Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

**By Day:** Rather hot, humid especially over coastal areas and partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind to light variable wind later on, with speeds of 10-45 km/h with a chance for scattered rain.

**By Night:** Mild, partly cloudy and humid especially over coastal areas with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind changing to northeasterly wind, with speeds of 08-42 km/h and a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	29	19
Kuwait Airport	30	19
Abdaly	30	19
Jahra	32	19
Salmiyah	27	19
Nuwaib	31	21
Wafra	31	19

## 'Kuwait press enjoys substantial freedoms'

Homeland's integrity or interests priority: top Kuwaiti journalists

By Sara Al-Mkhaizeem

**KUWAIT CITY, May 2, (KUNA):** Top Kuwaiti journalists have affirmed that the national press enjoys substantial freedoms, noted that national personnel observe self-censorship and cautioned against misuse of the freedoms in the profession.

The journalists expressed their opinions in an interview with KUNA on World Press Freedom Day, falling on Friday, under the motto, "A press for the planet: Journalism in the face of the environmental crisis."

UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, had adopted May 3 as the day for observing the international press freedom day. It was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1993 upon a recommendation forwarded by the UNESCO General Assembly in 1991.

The freedom of the press is a foundation for democracies worldwide and plays a crucial role for social progress and full-scale development.

Abdulatif Al-Nisef, the chief editor of the mass circulation Al-Qabas, said the press's main goal, 30 years after the UNGA declaration, has remained freedom of information dissemination.

Al-Nisef affirmed the necessity of safeguarding the freedom of the profession and noted the dedication of personnel who have sacrificed their souls while serving the profession.

Kuwait is at the forefront in the Gulf with respect to the freedom of the press, he said, touting the Kuwaiti press for adhering to objectivity throughout the years.

He affirmed the necessity of adhering to the freedom of the press and resisting "attacks" against some media outlets, aimed at jeopardizing their independence and paid tribute to the profession martyrs who have fallen in various hot spots across the globe including Gaza.

The press in Kuwait has been solid for a long time and has taken forefront positions in tackling major local, national and internal issues, Al-Nisef said. It is distinguished with self-consciousness of the red-line matters or issues that legally cannot be published or contradict the principles of the Constitution.

He also affirmed the media personnel's right to freedom of expression, freedom of the research and free access to information, in addition to the necessity of combating

false and misleading information, according to the criteria set by the Kuwaiti constitution and laws, based on the international human rights principles.

On the standards of the freedom of the press, Al-Nisef has said that they are not constant, indicating that the World Press Freedom Index depends on records of specialized organizations that monitor freedoms in this sector worldwide and authorities' respect for the profession.

Al-Nisef added that there are certain restraints on the press in all countries of the world.

As for Kuwait, the number of the topics that cannot be published has been lowered from 11 to five.

Media personnel cannot be creative without sufficient freedom and an adequate work environment, he said. "The quest for the truth is an avenue to enrich knowledge and constitutes a moralistic basis to refresh the free, critical thinking and expressing the opinion and discussing public affairs.

The chief editor of Al-Jarida daily newspaper, Khaled Hilal Al-Mutairi, has said that Kuwait, since hun-

drreds of years back, has enjoyed wide margins of freedom of expression. The Kuwaiti constitution has maintained these freedoms with non-controversial provisions.

Al-Mutairi called for adhering to the bounty of freedoms however he cautioned that freedoms cannot be without limits and must be regulated, citing prohibited matters such as publishing materials detrimental to the homeland interests, breaching individuals' dignity and personal freedoms.

Any scoop turns devoid of value if it comes at the expense of the homeland's integrity or interests, he said.

Yusuf Khaled Al-Marzouq, the chief editor of the daily newspaper Al-Anba, said the Kuwaiti press is one of the manifestations of democracy and a basic part of the vitality and efficiency of the country's life at the political, economic, social, and sports levels.

Al-Marzouq has added that the national press has contributed to the country's renaissance and has proven a suitable arena for employing digital technology.

His peer of Al-Rai, Walid Jassem Al-Jassem, said the International Freedom of the Press reminds some governments of the importance of the freedom of the press and putting limits for their excessive intervention in its tasks.

Some of the press basics are the opinion expression on public affairs, he said, calling for abstention from misusing the freedoms and indicating that some constraints on the Kuwaiti press are positive and others are negative.



Al-Mutairi



Al-Nisef



Al-Marzouq



Al-Jassem

## Women's union to join Asian forum in Uzbekistan

**KUWAIT CITY, May 2, (KUNA):** The Kuwait Union of Women's Associations is set to partake in the Asian Women's Forum due in Samarkand City in Uzbekistan between May 13-14.

After welcoming Uzbekistan Ambassador in Kuwait Ayoub Khan Younusof, the union's Chairwoman Sheikhha Fadiha Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah said in a press statement that participation in the forum came at the invitation of Uzbekistan's Chief Senator Tanzila Narbayaeva.

She elaborated that the gathering would explore women's involvement in science, education and creative activities, digital technologies and the fight against poverty by enabling women to join the global economy, entrepreneurship, leadership and innovation.

For his part, Uzbekistan Ambassador in Kuwait Ayoub Khan Younusof said he is so pleased to see bilateral relations remarkably growing in all domains.

He added that this year coincides with Kuwaiti-Uzbekistani celebrations marking 25 years since their diplomatic relations were forged.

On May 13-14 of this year, the Asian Women's Forum will be held in the city of Samarkand on the topic "Regional approach to issues of economic, social and political rights of women and empowerment".



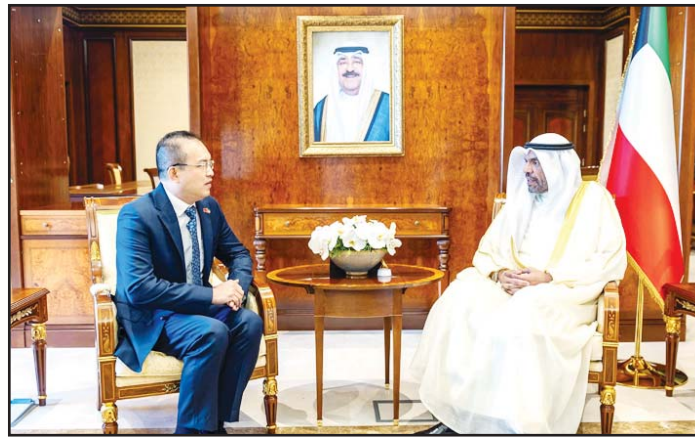
KUNA photo  
Sheikha Fadiha Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah welcomes the Uzbekistan ambassador.

The aim is to harness the creative potential of women leaders across the region and facilitate the exchange of experiences to enhance their involvement in government, society and economy.

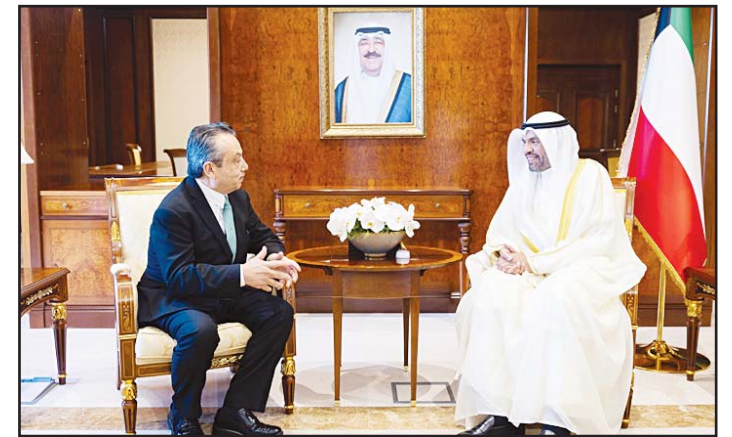
The forum is expected to welcome women parliamentarians, heads of government, representatives from government bodies and civil society institutions, businesswomen, political scientists, social activists, scientists, and representatives from various eco-

conomic sectors. Participants will hail from East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Central Asia.

Participants will discuss issues of women's participation in science, education and innovation, as well as the use of digital technologies, poverty reduction through women's economic empowerment, involving them in entrepreneurship and innovation, and ensuring their leadership in the modern global economy.



KUNA photos  
Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya receives the new Vietnam Ambassador to Kuwait Nguyen Dok Thang.



KUNA photos  
Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya receives the new Mexican Ambassador to Kuwait Edward Haller.

## FM greets new Mexico, Vietnam envoys

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya on Thursday received a copy of the credentials of the new Ambassador of Mexico to Kuwait, Edward Haller. Minister Al-Yahya received the envoy's credentials during a meeting that took place at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he wished the new ambassador the best of success and praised the bilateral relations between Kuwait and Mexico.

### Vietnam

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received on Thursday credentials of the newly assigned Ambassador of Vietnam to Kuwait Nguyen Dok Thang. During a meeting at the Foreign Ministry,

Minister Al-Yahya wished the new ambassador success and development of bilateral relations.

### Meeting

Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah headed a meeting for the Council of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps on Wednesday.

The meeting took place at the headquarters of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the participation of Assistant Foreign Ministers and members of the council, discussing issues on the session agenda. (KUNA)



Photo by Mahmoud Jadedee  
The Spanish Ambassador to Kuwait Miguel Moro Aguilar with other officials at the opening of the new visa center.

## More Kuwaitis visit Spain yearly: Aguilar

## Spanish envoy inaugurates new BLS visa premises in Kuwait City

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

**KUWAIT CITY, May 2:** With the aim of enhancing and streamlining services for the more than 30,000 annual applicants for Spanish visas, His Excellency Miguel Moro Aguilar, Ambassador of Spain to the State of Kuwait and Bahrain, inaugurated the new premises of BLS, the visa application collection service provider for Spain.

The new BLS office, situated on the 6th floor of the KAMCO Invest building in downtown Kuwait City, replaces the previous location at Baitak Tower.

The Spanish envoy, following the inauguration of the new premises, said "This relocation comes at an opportune time, just ahead of the summer season campaign, traditionally the peak period for consular activity at the Spanish Embassy."

"Despite Kuwaitis and residents of Kuwait increasingly choosing Spain for travel throughout the year, rather than solely during summer vacations, Spain remains a favored destination and the embassy takes pride in witnessing the growing number of Kuwaiti visitors year after year."

He went on to say, "As of April this year, the Spanish visa section has already processed over 9,000 visa applications, nearly half of which are from Kuwaiti citizens. This suggests a busy summer ahead, especially with the recent European Union approval of five-year visas for all Kuwaitis, provided their passport validity allows for such an ex-

tended period on their Schengen visas."

During the upcoming summer of 2024, he said, the Embassy of Kuwait to the Kingdom of Spain anticipates receiving between 65,000 and 80,000 Kuwaiti tourists solely in the province of Málaga, located in southern Spain, a favored destination among Kuwaiti travelers during the summer months.

He added, given the significant number of Kuwaiti tourists in the region, the Embassy of Kuwait to the Kingdom of Spain opens a temporary office in the city of Torremolinos each year to provide consular services to Kuwaiti residents between June and September.

Meanwhile, in February 2024, the Embassy of Spain organized a successful promotional event in Kuwait in collaboration with the Municipality of Marbella and the Luxury Association of Spain. The event was attended by the Mayor of Marbella and representatives from some of the finest resorts on the Costa del Sol.

The opening of the new BLS location aims to enhance the experience for visa applicants to Spain, reflecting the embassy's commitment to meeting the high expectations of Kuwaitis regarding Spain.

As always, in anticipation of the busy summer period, applicants are strongly advised to plan their holidays adequately and apply for visas as early as possible, as visa applications can be submitted up to six months in advance. It is also recommended that applicants ensure all required documents are in order to avoid delays in visa processing, said the ambassador.

## Visa exemption backed

## Ties with Kuwait strong, solid: Swiss ambassador

**KUWAIT CITY, May 2:** Swiss Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Tiziano Balmelli has affirmed that the Swiss-Kuwaiti relationship is strong, solid and developing significantly at all levels and various areas of cooperation, reports Al-Anba daily.

In an exclusive interview with the daily, Balmelli pointed out that the public relationship between the two countries is older than the official relationship, as it began in the early 1930s. He said the Swiss Airlines had its first trip to Kuwait before the independence in April 1959, which reflects the depth of the historical ties between the two countries. He added the volume of trade exchange between the two countries reached around \$764 million in 2022, but the actual figure is much bigger.

He added the next round of annual political consultations between the two countries will be held in Switzerland and a date is being set for it, stating that his country's foreign affairs minister wants to visit the region -- two or three countries, including Kuwait. He said "there is also an invitation for Kuwait's foreign affairs minister to visit Switzerland and we are working to set the dates for both visits."

He confirmed that his country and Kuwait share the principles of respect for legitimacy and international law and belief in dialogue and exchange of support in international forums. He praised Kuwait's ambitious 2035 development vision, which he considers a qualitative leap towards the future and a positive step to bring more foreign investors and companies to Kuwait.

He said Switzerland is a suitable environment for foreign investments and is considered the land of major and pioneering investment opportunities due to its stability and distinctive legal system, as well as the facilities provided by the government to foreign investors and the great reputation enjoyed by Swiss companies. He pointed out that Switzerland is in first place among countries suitable for investment and wealth building, according to the Henley & Partners Index. He asserted that Kuwait has many important investments in Switzerland, indicating the Kuwaiti side has announced that the total volume of Kuwaiti investments in Switzerland reached \$15 billion.

He went on to say: "The new visa system for Kuwaitis (Cascade), which grants them multi-entry Schengen visa valid for five years, is an important step towards visa exemption. We support Kuwait's visa exemption file. I believe that it is only a matter of time and procedures. We hope this will happen soon and the next decision will be in the hands of the newly elected European Parliament. The regional consular center issues about 10,000 visas annually; but the number of Kuwaiti visitors is much higher."



Dr. Balmelli

## Other Voices

## No one has the right answer!

By Ahmad alsarraf

In a question to Al-Haidari, through video call that became very popular for well-known reasons, about the reason for the lack of success of democracy among the Eastern peoples, especially the Arabs, and its success in Western countries, he replied that there are no absolute answers, and that democracy needs awareness, along with its need for freedom of the press and civil society and fatwas have no role to play in it.

Taha Hussein had previously said, 100 years ago, that democracy succeeded in Greece because they had a civilization, while it failed with the Arabs because they had a nomadic civilization. As for Aristotle, he said: "The Eastern peoples" are barbaric, so how can democracy succeed there?

I do not agree with the words of Hussein Sa'adoun Al-Haidari, or with what he said regarding the lack of readiness of our societies for democracy, and that East Asian countries, such as China and Japan, do not have democracy?

Perhaps Brother Al-Haidari has forgotten that Japan has been considered one of the greatest democracies in the world since 1946, and nothing has affected it since that day. But how did he forget or neglect to mention dozens of other countries, outside the Western system, whether in Southeast Asia, Africa, or South America, such as South Africa, Brazil, Chile, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, and many others, which have enjoyed democracy for sixty years?

Questioning the validity of democracy here and its invalidity there is very similar to asking, to a large extent, the reason for the success of cultivating a certain product in this region and its failure in another region.

The answer is known and relates to the environment, including water, soil, temperature, experience, and other factors, but man has overcome all of them through "greenhouse" cultivation, which provides

a suitable environment for growing any product. Protected homes are equivalent in nascent democracies to good education, teaching the articles of the constitution, spreading the virtue of accepting difference, and raising future generations to coexist.

As for saying that democracy does not benefit our people just because we are Easterners, this is completely far from the truth.

Some have several objections to Kuwait democracy, and the number of these people is increasing with its repeated failure, but it is an artificial failure that is in the interest of specific and well-known groups whose temperament or bank balances democracy does not suit.

It means freedom, and it means oversight, accountability, and interrogation. Therefore, it was always wonderful to repeat the leadership's emphasis on adherence to democracy in all circumstances, this is our choice, and this is our destiny.

Imagine with me, if the government had begun, with the first parliamentary elections, seeking to spread, teach, and consolidate the culture of democracy among the various groups of society, through school curricula and all media, would the image or reputation of democracy and its practices be this bad?

If successive governments had sought, through all the means, power and money they had and still have, to prevent factionalism, regionalism, tribalism and sectarianism, would we have reached this point of fragmentation?

There is still plenty of time, and it may be the last opportunity to adjust the situation, through a set of measures, which may be unacceptable to some and painful to others, but in the end, they will be in the interest of the nation, and that means in the interest of everyone.

If the path to achieving true democracy is long, it must be taken immediately. If the time has not come to implement it in our country, when will this time come?

What is funny, or confusing, is that almost everyone does not want democracy! Everyone hates dictatorship and the oppression and arbitrariness that accompany it! But almost no one has any idea what the best alternative is!

□ □ □

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# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## 'Time to let wheel of progress move forward ... be a Kuwaiti'

"THE political landscape in the country remains fraught with uncertainty and apprehension. The dissolution of the last National Assembly in 2023, as outlined in decree No. 16 of 2024, was attributed to the breach of constitutional principles, particularly regarding respect for high office and the use of inflammatory language," columnist **Dr Mohammad Makatei** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"Despite efforts to learn from past mistakes, certain elected members persist in flouting constitutional norms, even during their electoral campaigns and subsequent tenure in the National Assembly.



Al-Makatei

"These individuals, though a minority, continue to engage in political machinations that threaten stability and sow confusion. Whether driven by misguided enthusiasm, reckless challenges, or electoral gain, they seek to evade accountability for their actions. However, their actions, whether intentional or influenced by external factors, will ultimately lead to confrontation and repercussions, both legally and politically.

"In response, it is imperative for the collective parliamentary body to take decisive action. This may include removing errant members and implementing disciplinary measures in accordance with internal regulations.

"Such measures could range from censure to the revocation of membership, particularly for violations of constitutional articles 91 and 108.

"Additionally, the government must assert its authority vis-à-vis the National Assembly to prevent undue interference in its affairs. The Prime Minister should resist attempts at political manipulation and utilize constitutional mechanisms to maintain balance and uphold proper parliamentary conduct.

"Repeated dissolution of the National Assembly only serves to undermine the state and its institutions, impeding progress and jeopardizing the welfare of the people. Instead, concerted efforts are needed to ensure stability and continuity in governance. The responsibility lies with all stakeholders to prioritize the nation's interests and heed the warnings issued by leadership.

"Let us collectively reject destructive tendencies and work towards safeguarding the country's identity and integrity. It is incumbent upon us to uphold the rule of law and preserve Kuwaiti nationality against all forms of tampering and fraud. The message is clear – it is time to act in the best interests of our nation and its future."

### Also:

"We have consistently emphasized the importance of an active and engaged government spokesperson. However, if the spokesperson remains silent, their presence becomes meaningless. In today's era of rapid information dissemination, where news and rumors alike spread swiftly, it is crucial for the government to communicate openly and directly with the public," columnist **Asrar Johar Hayat** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Unfortunately, we are witnessing a concerning trend of government silence with each new ministerial formation. Many ministers come and go without making a single public statement or appearance in the media. This silence is particularly perplexing in an age of fast-paced and modern media.

"We do not advocate for ministers to appear in the media merely for the sake of visibility or self-promotion. Rather, their presence serves two vital purposes. Firstly, it enables them to respond to false news and rumors circulated by unreliable sources. Correcting misinformation should be the responsibility of the government, not left to other entities.

"Secondly, ministers should communicate decisions and projects directly to the public, especially controversial ones. By explaining the rationale behind these decisions, their benefits, and potential consequences, ministers can garner public support and prevent unnecessary backlash fueled by misinformation.

"It is essential for ministers to engage with the media and the public, not to shield themselves from scrutiny, but to fulfill their duty as public servants. We urge the ministers in this government to be vocal, transparent, and accessible, as their role is ultimately to serve the people."

"Expatriate transfers... A press release stated that the remittances of expatriates amounted to about KD4 billion in 2023! Health and well-being for the heart of those who work to please Allah," columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The government utterly refused to impose a fee on these transfers despite the growing demand for such step, while it imposes austerity on the citizen and the development projects that the latter needs like the 'Derwazat Al-Abdul Razzaq' tunnel, which was not completed until a bank donated the remaining amount. As for the billions transferred go abroad, there is no fee or tax.

"The government dispenses with the fee because it bullies only us, the citizens. The important thing is that our demand is not difficult. We demand that the government should monitor money transfers seriously. May you live long. How can an employee, whose salary is KD200 per month, transfer double this amount to his country monthly? No one asks him: Where did you get the money? The remittance amount multiplied, not doubled, yet no one asks.

"The other matter is that violators of

the Residency Law -- all of them -- transfer money to their countries every month. They do not hold valid civil identification cards, yet no one stands in their way, checks on them or includes them in inspection campaigns. Most of them are transferred from unofficial offices, which carry out their work in the dark. It is as if the competent authorities are prohibited from approaching transfer offices, both official and unofficial. Is this reasonable?!"

"The key solution to the Residency Law violators issue is modifying the demographic composition, along with arresting the cable thieves and those stealing cars, as well as eliminating the residents of transformers who live in cemeteries in their countries and are engaged in illegal work.

"The exchange offices must be regulated. It is necessary to tighten control over them, check the auditors, and impose a fee on the transfers according to an official receipt that is verified by the authorities, then the situation will be fixed. At the moment, everything is chaotic and the door to transfers is wide open. Thus, there is no good or bad tomorrow."



"Shut up, you don't exist. Shut up, shut up, shut up, don't talk, don't write, don't address anyone. What do you want to say? We are aware of what is in your chest -- the chattiness and chatter that you want in order to stand out socially and to be different from us. We are the group, we are the origin and the basis, and you defend those who are intruding upon us ... Why?" columnist **Khaled Helal Al-Mutairi** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

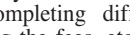
"Don't you fear for our identity and culture... We are the kings of the earth whether we are the minority or not... Don't you feel a threat to this authentic identity? They changed it, they ruined it. Yesterday, we were making inter-continental missiles, thanks to our great geniuses. We were singing, 'Hollow on Deck' ... What happened today?"

"Today we are hanging out in the markets and singing, 'Al-Mulu' and 'You are Welcome.' Shut up, shh... Have the topics of creation ended until you wrote and published Bedoun literature? Who are the Bedouns? Who are they? They have stuck themselves with us. Do not ask us how... We do not know. They are the fungal seed that sprouted for no reason. Perhaps, there is a reason, but we do not want to know it.

"There is no 'Bedoun'. They are without identity. Those without identity do not deserve to be human. This is what our son Descartes said: 'I am without permission, I don't exist.' Again, for the second and third time, be silent, meaning, shut up. How do you speak and demand equality with these intruders who dared attack our system and our political and social security?"

"We know that they have the highest nationality, but this does not mean they are like us... We are the 'others'. How we can be the 'others'? We do not know, but we are certain that we are the 'others'. Our identity is other than them. They do not know and they are produced by NASA. We have been 'killing' ourselves for so long, working hours at 'Nsina' agencies, which bring us abundant goodness... How do you demand equality with them?"

"They 'increased the generation' and challenged our systems and security. Have you lost your mind? You want them to talk like us... Oh my goodness... This is how Zarathustra spoke to Youssef Wehbe. We are the law... We are the institutions... We are the customs... We are the oil. We wake up and sleep on ostrich feathers. We wash our hands before and after eating... We are everything in a space where there is nothing... Shh, do not speak, do not respond. ... You do not exist."



"Domestic workers and infectious diseases... I heard that some friends, who hired domestic workers, were surprised after the medical examination as some of the workers tested positive for hepatitis. Here lies the problem, because these workers must return to their countries," columnist **Major General M. Faisal Al-Jazzaf** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"After completing difficult procedures, paying the fees, etc., the citizen does not benefit at all. The worker was in the house of the citizen while waiting for the medical test results. Let us just imagine that this worker with a contagious disease mingles with the household members. It is a disaster for the household as the worker is a carrier of the contagious virus. This actually happened to some citizens.

"I think it has become important and necessary to fortify society by taking community security measures in all aspects, especially in such cases. Therefore, the procedures for verifying the worker in his country before coming to Kuwait must be repeated. There should be a mechanism for health security; hence, the need to change the procedures in the Ministry of Health, embassies and countries sending domestic workers to Kuwait.

"This is in addition to examining workers in the private sector in order to protect the health of employers and their families, as well as reducing costs for the State, because it incurs losses for conducting examinations here, especially for infectious diseases. Public health is a red line and the concerned authorities must shoulder their responsibility to maintain the safety of society.

"We ask Allah to protect Kuwait and its people under the leadership of His Highness the Amir, may Allah protect him.

"May Allah have mercy on our righteous martyrs."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

## Poll results 'contested'

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: The Constitutional Court adjourned to May 21 the ruling on the appeal filed by the Fourth Constituency candidate **Abdullah Fahad Al-Enezi**, through lawyer **Abdullah Al-Kandari**, against the election results in the Fourth Constituency.

The court also authorized the appellants to submit submissions within a week.

During the court session yesterday, the appellant's defense lawyer **Abdullah Al-Kandari** challenged the election results in the Fourth Constituency and demanded that the actual results be announced.

It is worth highlighting that the Constitutional Court appointed judges to the National Assembly to review the election records.

The Constitutional Court, presided over by Judge **Fouad Al-Zwaid**, reserved 11 electoral petitions for ruling on May 21.



KUNA photos

Top and above: National Guard personnel trained on multiple jobs in time of emergencies.

## 'Jahiz' drill has achieved goals of preparedness

KUWAIT CITY, May 2, (KUNA): The military drill ('Jahiz' or 'Ready') has achieved its goals in terms of preparedness of administrative support units to offer backing to the state's vital agencies perfectly, Undersecretary of National Guard Lt. Gen. **Hashem Al-Refaie** said on Wednesday.

In a news statement following attending the drill's activities, **Al-Refaie** said the National Guard is the first support apparatus for all state agencies, under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir **Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah**, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

The drill achieved the goals perfectly in terms of dealing with any emergencies and evaluating benefits gained by the trainees, he added.

The drill came in line with a cooperation protocol signed between the State's institutions and ministries, and the National Guard, in implementation of the directives of the political leadership and in accordance with the 2025 guidance document goals, he noted.

He commended those tasked with the drill, and conveyed greetings and appreciation of His Highness the Chief of the National

Guard **Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah** and Deputy Chief of National Guard **Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah**.

Meanwhile, Assistant for Administrative Support in the National Guard, Major General Engineer **Issam Nayef** said the drill was implemented over three days during which support was offered through trained teams of some agencies included in the protocol.

He extolled the ability of those teams to carry out missions tasked with in a professional manner, referring that they implemented the measures of safety and security to ensure the success of exercise.

## Power to 13 homes cut, block on 64 properties

Bachelors face new crackdown

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: **Engineer Muhammad Al-Mutairi**, Director of the Capital Governorate Municipality, stated that following the directives of **Engineer Saud Al-Dabbous**, the Director-General of the Kuwait Municipality, the municipal teams assigned to address the issue of single individuals living in family-oriented areas were given full support, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

This effort aimed to curb the negative impact on infrastructure and services caused by this practice.

The municipality has cut off electricity to 13 properties in the governorate to address this issue, after completing all required legal procedures in cooperation with the Singles' Housing Committee, which includes representatives from several governmental bodies like the Ministry of Interior, the Environment Public Authority, the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, the Public Authority for Manpower, and the Ministry of Public Works.

**Al-Mutairi** noted that these actions were taken in response to complaints from citizens, totaling 236. The municipality issued 236 warnings under Decree No. 125 of 1992, which prohibits non-families from living in private and model housing areas. The municipality found that 54 properties were occupied

by single individuals, while 197 were occupied by families. There were 54 official records of single housing, 50 instances of electricity being cut off, 85 evictions, 13 records of building violations under Ministerial Resolution No. 206 of 2009, 34 cases of voluntary removal of building violations, and 64 properties with blocks placed on them.

**Al-Mutairi** commended the efforts of the committee and the field teams and encouraged the public to report any cases of single individuals living in private or model housing areas through the municipality's website ([www.baladia.gov.kw](http://www.baladia.gov.kw)), WhatsApp (24727732), the Kuwait Municipality's e-baladia app, or by visiting the citizen service department at the Capital Governorate building in the Shuwaikh Industrial Area.

**Drug dealer held:** Ahmadi security forces arrest an expatriate in Fahaheel for selling drugs with 15 packs of Shabu that are ready for sale in his possession, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

During the initial investigation, the expatriate admitted to trading in narcotic substances. He was referred to the concerned authorities, along with the confiscated drugs

**Car catches fire:** A salon vehicle was engulfed in flames, giving rise to heavy smoke, in front of the Al-Riqqa area, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Firefighters from Shuwaikh swiftly responded to the scene, managing to extinguish the blaze. An investigation has been launched to ascertain the cause of the fire, including the possibility of an electrical short circuit or other factors.



Municipality inspectors entering a bachelors accommodation in a model housing area for families.

## 'Clear Miskan island'

## Plan to open 8 more mental health clinics

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Director of the Primary Health Care Central Department at the Ministry of Health **Dr. Dina Al-Dubaib** has unveiled a plan to open eight mental health clinics in primary health care centers; thereby, increasing the total number of such clinics in the country to 68, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

In a statement to the daily, **Al-Dubaib** affirmed the department is keen on providing these clinics in all primary care centers in residential areas to facilitate access to services and reduce the treatment gap; considering their importance at the individual and societal levels.

She also confirmed the conclusion of the progressive mental health course, which is held annually to train and qualify family doctors in the field of mental health. She said the course aims to integrate mental health services into the services provided in primary health care centers and expand them, in order to raise the awareness of citizens and expatriate on the provision of integrated health care for them. She stressed this is in implementation of the highest international standards and recommendations regarding primary health care services, which are considered the first gateway to receiving patients. She clarified the course is part of the Mental Health Program -- one of the important primary health care programs.



**'Clear Miskan island':** Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and acting Minister of Interior **Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah** has instructed the Coast Guard to remove the makeshift houses of Egyptian and Asian fishermen who set up these structures on Miskan island and resided there, reports **Al-Qabas** daily quoting a security source.

The source disclosed that as per the minister's directive; the concerned authorities removed the houses, while the specialized teams are currently cleaning the waste and rubble and removing damaged boats from the island in coordination with the Coast Guard and other concerned authorities.

The source clarified that those staying on the island have valid residence permits and their sponsors were summoned and informed that they should not establish houses on the island because it is prohibited to reside there. He added the minister's directive includes zero tolerance policy in the demolition of illegal structures on the island.



**Injuries in fight:** A citizen filed a report to **Al-Naseem** Police Station, stating that eight individuals beat his two sons and two nephews without explaining the reasons behind the fistfight that happened in **Al-Naseem**, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

During investigations, the citizen's sons and nephews disclosed that they sustained injuries after eight young men assaulted them. Both parties submitted medical reports to substantiate their claims.

A case was registered and investigations are ongoing



**Kuwaiti man robbed:** An unknown person, who claimed to be an employee of a famous domestic labor recruitment company, stole KD528 from a citizen, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The citizen submitted a report to the police station, indicating the suspect contacted him and offered to provide him with a housemaid at a cost of KD528. Tempted by the low price, the citizen agreed to send the suspect a link for KD528 only to find out later that he got scammed.

The deputy public prosecutor ordered the registration of a bank forgery case against the suspect and investigations are underway to arrest him



**Shooting probe begins:** The Ministry of Interior has started investigations into the shooting of a 30-year-old man in **Saad Al-Abdullah**, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The man, who suffered from a gunshot wound on the left side of his back, was rushed to **Jahra Hospital**.

The deputy public prosecutor issued a directive to register an attempted murder case against one of the victim's relatives as initial investigations revealed the latter fired the gun.



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# No programmed electricity cuts during summer of '24: Al-Asousi

Ministry signs MoU with KOC

**KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Eng. Maha Al-Asousi has assured the public that there will not be any planned electricity cuts during the summer of 2024, reports Al-Jarida daily.**

This announcement comes amidst preparations for the summer season and efforts to ensure the stability of the country's energy supply. Al-Asousi emphasized that the ministry is fully prepared to meet the energy demands of the upcoming summer, with energy production stations operating at full capacity to cover the country's needs and

conduct necessary maintenance.

Eng Al-Asousi highlighted the importance of citizens' cooperation in reducing energy consumption to alleviate the strain on the power grid. He emphasized that rationalizing energy consumption must become a common practice among the population to manage energy loads effectively.

The senior official expressed optimism that with responsible energy usage and favorable weather conditions, the summer of 2024 will pass smoothly, similar to the previous year.

Regarding renewable energy initiatives, Eng Al-Asousi outlined the objectives of the memorandum of understanding signed with Kuwait Oil Company.

The agreement aims to achieve carbon neutrality in power plant emissions by 2050 and to increase renewable energy production to 30 percent of total energy production. The agreement includes plans for a new station with a capacity of 1 gigawatt, with additional projects in the pipeline to meet these renewable energy targets.

Ahmed Al-Eidan, CEO of Kuwait Oil Company, reiterated the company's commitment to environmental and international standards. He emphasized the company's strategy to transition towards renewable energy sources to reduce carbon emissions. Al-Eidan outlined a roadmap for integrating renewable energy into oil production operations, which includes establishing renewable energy stations and utilizing the latest technology to enhance energy efficiency.

The memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy and Kuwait Oil Company builds upon previous co-operation efforts, such as the Sidra 500 project. This project involved the installation of a solar photovoltaic energy station with a capacity of 10 megawatts, which contributes renewable electricity to the national grid and supports oil production operations in Kuwait.

Overall, these initiatives reflect Kuwait's commitment to sustainable energy development and reducing carbon emissions in line with international agreements and environmental goals.



The Indian ambassador with Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser.

## Indian envoy calls on new Farwaniya Governor

The Indian Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Dr Adarsh Swaika paid a courtesy call on HE Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah, the new Governor of Farwaniya.

The Indian envoy conveyed felicitations to the Governor on his appointment and thanked him for the welfare of the large Indian community in his Governorate.

## Egyptian Coptic Church to receive well-wishers on Saturday, Sunday

**KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Patron of the Egyptian Coptic Orthodox Church in Kuwait Archbishop Anba Bishoy Bigol announced that the Egyptian Coptic Church will receive well-wishers on Saturday, May 4 from 9:00pm on the glorious Resurrection Day, in the presence of part of the Divine Liturgy, reports Al-Seyassah daily.**

He indicated that the church will also receive well-wishers the next morning (Sunday, May 5) from 9:00am to 1:00pm at the reception hall.

Archbishop Anba Bishoy praised the spirit of love and tolerance that prevails in Kuwaiti society, describing it as a spirit rooted in the country since ancient times.

He said, "Our life in Kuwait is a beautiful story of tolerance and brotherhood. The State of Kuwait deserves to be described by societies as a good land that embraces large numbers of nationalities and where everyone enjoys peace and tolerance. These are values that are always sponsored by their

distinguished rulers and the honorable Sabah family. This spirit is thriving in our current time under the patronage of His Highness the Amir of the country Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah."

Archbishop Anba Bishoy expressed his sincere appreciation and gratitude to the agencies that participate in securing the celebrations, led by the leaders and officers of the Ministry of Interior in all its agencies, sectors and branches.

He also thanked the governorates of Hawally and Ahmadi and all state agencies and media.

Archbishop Anba Bishoy expressed great pride in all the congratulatory hearts that constantly express a great outpouring of love and affection while carrying the authenticity and nobility of humanity.

He wished the people of Kuwait and Egypt development and prosperity, thanks to the wisdom of their great leaders.



KUNA photo

GCC ministers of commerce and industry meeting in Doha.

## Intra-GCC talks vital: Kuwait's minister

Kuwait's Commerce Minister Abdullah Al-Jou'ayan on Wednesday underlined the significance of gatherings that join him with his Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) counterparts, saying such talks are instrumental in pushing forward economic cooperation within the bloc.

Efforts to bolster "economic cooperation and integration"

in the Gulf Arab region are supported by Kuwait given their significance in bringing common visions and aspirations to fruition, the minister told KUNA after a trio of meetings he had with his GCC counterparts.

Hailing the "positive outcome" of these talks, Kuwaiti Public Authority for Industry acting chief Mohammad Al-

Adwani cited a number of initiatives recently approved, chief among them a plan to establish a pan-Gulf Arab industrial center.

The Kuwaiti commerce minister led his country's delegation to three separate ministerial-level talks, all of which aimed to ratchet up economic cooperation within the six-member GCC bloc. (KUNA)

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KUNA photo

The KU team wins the award for best robot construction in the international VEX competition in Texas.

## 'First Arab and ME university team'

## Kuwait University team wins best robot award in 'VEX' competition

By Ahmad Al-Mazyad

**WASHINGTON, May 2, (KUNA):** Kuwait University's team won Wednesday the best robot award as part of the VEX Robotics World Championship held in US Texas, to be the first Arab and Mideast university team that got this international award.

Speaking to KUNA, Nada al-Daihani, head of Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity said "we have a promising Kuwaiti generation".

He expressed his delight as the team of Faculty of Science's Computer Department managed to snatch this award, one of 15 awards given by the competition in which 120 teams are participating from across the world.

Meanwhile, Dr. Noura al-Jarri, supervisor of the team, said building a scientific approach of training on international competi-

tions has proven its success, saying that she looks forward to preparing several students to take part in the coming year's contests.

The Kuwaiti team's design was professional and paid great attention to details to withstand the intense competition, she added.

The competition is organized by World Robot Olympiad Association, in cooperation with Kuwait University, Ministry of Education, and in coordination with Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity and Zain.

The contest is being organized, in Texas State, from April 25 until May 4 that aims at encouraging youth to pay attention to science and technology through holding training workshops and competitions between school and university teams to design robots able to carry out complicated challenges.

## MoH urged to accelerate fingerprint integration

## CSC's new mechanism for job applicants

**KUWAIT CITY, May 2:** The Civil Service Commission (CSC) requires citizens applying for jobs in government agencies to pass the personal interview, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources who affirmed the CSC is exerting tremendous efforts to nominate citizens with specializations that match the manpower needs of the agencies.

Sources clarified the CSC cannot prevent any government agency from requiring an interview for the candidates sent to them, given the nature of their work and some of them require evaluation.

Sources asserted an applicant has the inherent right to write down several government agencies as preferred workplaces according to the nomination mechanism, explaining it is not permissible to force him to work in a certain agency. Sources denied the allegation that researchers are being forced to work in an agency. They stressed that the CSC can neither advise nor discourage researchers from writing down many desired workplaces. They added that sometimes, the CSC re-nominates citizens, who refused to work in a government agency, to the same agency as other entities do not need their specializations.

In another development, sources revealed that the CSC has informed the Ministry of Health about the need to expedite the completion of the automated link for the fingerprint attendance system with its

integrated systems as per CSC Resolution No. 2/2024.

Sources told the daily that the Information Systems Sector at the CSC and the ministry have been coordinating their efforts to complete the automated link in accordance with the decisions and circulars on the official working hours.

Sources confirmed that the data and fingerprints of about 54,000 employees in the ministry have been submitted to the CSC, except the doctors and dentists who are exempted from the fingerprint attendance system due to the nature of their work.

**Plots distribution via lots:** The Public Authority for Housing Welfare has announced the distribution of the thirteenth batch of N4 government plots in the South Saad Al Abdullah City project, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This batch comprises 261 plots, each spanning an area of 400 square meters, designated for individuals who were allocated these plots until September 21, 2005.

The distribution will be conducted through a lottery system scheduled for next Wednesday, May 8. Cards for participation in the lottery were to be distributed today (Thursday), and next Sunday, while reserve cards will be distributed the following Monday.

# Institute of Banking Studies honors graduate trainees for 2022/2023

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: The Institute of Banking Studies celebrated the graduation of its trainees for the year 2022/2023 on March 6, 2024, at the Regency Hotel, Maha Hall. The ceremony honored graduates of accredited training certificate programs and was attended by local bank officials, institute employees, and human resources and training managers from local banks, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The event featured two main guests, Abdul Majeed Al-Shatti, Chairman of the Board of Directors and former Managing Director of the Commercial Bank of Kuwait, and Ali Abu Al-Hassan, co-founder and CEO of TAP Company, who congratulated the graduates and shared their success stories.

Director General Rana Abdullah Al-Nibari delivered a speech congratulating the graduates for obtaining accredited certificates and emphasized the institute's commitment to developing programs to meet sector needs. Al-Nibari highlighted the institute's partnerships with international institutions and organizations, such as the London Institute of Banking and Finance, and

its role as a center for internationally accredited professional certificates.

Al-Nibari acknowledged the support of the board of directors and the active role of human resources and training managers in local banks. She also thanked the trainers for their dedication to transferring their experience and skills to the trainees. Al-Nibari urged graduates to continue learning and acquiring skills to face global challenges in their field.

Graduate Laila Al-Sarraf praised the support of local Kuwaiti banks in developing young Kuwaiti cadres and emphasized the importance of investing in human capital. She highlighted the role of the institute in providing new opportunities and contributing to the enhancement of institutional performance and customer service.

The ceremony was sponsored by companies like The Wellness Hub, Dagla Company, and Chevrolet Alghanim. Prizes were awarded to three graduates through a drawing, sponsored by Mabaret Al-Yousifi. Al-Nibari concluded the ceremony by expressing gratitude to the attendees.



Some of trainee graduates who were honored.

Al-Jarida daily

## Kuwait warns

Continued from Page 1

as stipulated in Article 57 of Law 6/2010 regarding work in the private sector.

The Authority, he said, is actively coordinating with businesses to streamline the submission of documents proving wage transfers and has developed inspection mechanisms to accommodate the country's commercial expansion.

Moreover, the Authority is focused on raising awareness among business owners and workers about their rights and obligations. They participate annually in International Labor Day celebrations to underscore the importance of upholding labor laws and contractual agreements to protect everyone's rights.

Al-Murad stressed the Authority's role in promoting legal awareness and facilitating dispute resolution to ensure stability in the labor market and achieve justice between workers and employers.

Aseel Al-Mazyad, Director of the Public Relations and Media Department at the Authority, emphasized the importance of direct communication with workers and business owners to provide information about labor laws and procedures.

She highlighted the Authority's upcoming awareness campaign on the ban on working at noon and its commitment to addressing inquiries related to the labor market.

Yahya Al-Dosari, head of the Workers Union in the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Financial Secretary of the General Federation of Labor, reiterated the union's demand to designate International Labor Day as an official holiday in Kuwait, aligning with global practices.

Hussein Al-Tarkait, head of the Department of Industry and Labor at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, praised the Chamber's cooperation with the Authority and its rapid response to labor market issues. He emphasized the Chamber's commitment to supporting workers and business owners alike.

Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs, Ambassador Sheikh Jawaher Al-Sabah, reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to respecting workers' rights and providing them with decent work opportunities. She highlighted the significant contribution of expatriate workers, who make up 75 percent of the country's workforce, to Kuwait's economy.

## Kuwait legal

Continued from Page 1

The team reviewed previously-filed lawsuits in order to avoid flaws in them.

Lawyer Dr. Al-Moqatei insisted that the current lawsuits deserve the issuance of indictments and the arrest of war criminals in Israel.

Meanwhile, a team member Dr. Adel Behbehani said he was assigned to prepare civil lawsuits against political and military leaders who committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Palestinian territories.

He affirmed the keenness of the team to document and estimate the damages suffered by the plaintiffs in order to demand compensation for their severe damages.

Furthermore, a team member Dr. Nawaf Al-Sharhan stressed the keenness of the team to prove that Israel violated the relevant international agreements and laws, including the Geneva Convention, the Rome Statute, and the protocol on the right to self-determination before the occupier.

He affirmed that the International Court of Justice has jurisdiction over the communications submitted by the team, indicating that the court's public prosecutor will take the necessary action regarding them.

Dr. Al-Sharhan stressed that these crimes do not have a statute of limitations, even if investigations and legal measures continue for a longer period.

Also, a team member Dr. Abdul Salam Al-Suwaifan said the team is working collectively in an effort to condemn and punish those involved in the massacres.

He expressed his keenness as a Kuwaiti team member to defend this issue, as it is an Arab and Islamic issue.

Dr. Al-Suwaifan stressed the keenness of the team to prepare its cases with perfection from a legal and procedural standpoint, as well as to obtain data and information from official and reliable sources.

In this regard, a team member Lawyer Mashaal Abbas stated that supporting the Palestinian cause and the

brothers in Gaza deserves all the support from the Kuwaiti team.

He praised the Kuwait Bar Association's cooperation with them in this regard.

In addition, Secretary of the Kuwait Bar Association Lawyer Khaled Al-Suwaifan affirmed the association's support for the team and its initiative to prosecute Israel.

He spoke about the losses and defeats suffered by the invaders on the Palestinian lands, highlighting that the Palestinians have proven that they are among the best people in defending their land and dignity.

## KRCS builds

Continued from Page 1

He expressed gratitude to the State of Kuwait, His Highness the Amir, the government, and the people for helping to soften the people suffering in Gaza and praised the KRCS for presenting assistance to them.

Last month, the KRCS sent the first Kuwaiti medical team to Gaza where the doctors conducted surgeries and provided treatment to the ill.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Relief Society's Medical Team launched on Wednesday a campaign to fund and support Nasser Medical Complex and the Palestinian health care system in Gaza.

This came during Kuwait's second medical team's trip around the city of Khan Yunis which was completely destroyed by the Israeli occupation forces.

Deputy Chairman of the Society Omar Al-Thuwaini said to KUNA that the campaign started from Nasser Medical complex as residents attempt to rehabilitate the medical facility in order to make it functional again.

The medical complex, which served hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in southern Gaza, was subjected to an Israeli military offensive that has caused significant damage.

He added that the medical team distributed tons of medical equipment and supplies and provided the necessary tools for surgical operations, medical care, and medications, especially for some critical cases and chronic diseases.

Al-Thuwaini also said that they performed a number of surgeries in the European hospital and the Kuwaiti hospital, and carried out tests for hundreds of Palestinians.

The medical team consisted of 17 people, including a consultant, specialist and nurse in different specialties, in addition to a team leader and two relief coordinators.

In other news, Hamas on Thursday was considering the latest proposal for a ceasefire with Israel that the United States and other mediators hope will avert an Israeli attack on the Gaza town of Rafah. But chances for the deal are entangled with the question of whether Israel can accept an end to the war without reaching its stated goal of destroying Hamas.

The stakes in the cease-fire negotiations were made clear in a new U.N. report that said if the war in Gaza stops today, it will still take until 2040 to rebuild all the homes that have been destroyed by nearly seven months of Israeli bombardment and ground offensives in the territory. It warned that the impact of the damage to the economy will set back development for generations and will only get worse with every month fighting continues.

Hamas has insisted it won't sign onto the deal without assurances that, if it eventually releases all its hostages, Israel will end its onslaught in Gaza and pull its troops out of the territory.

The proposal that U.S. and Egyptian mediators have put to Hamas -- apparently with Israel's acceptance -- sets out a three-stage process that will bring an immediate six-week cease-fire and partial hostage release but also negotiations over a "permanent calm" that includes some sort of Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, according to an Egyptian official.

## Gulf power

Continued from Page 1

the project," which will raise the supporting capacity of the electricity network in Kuwait to about 3,500 megawatts.

The Gulf electrical interconnection project is considered one of the most important infrastructure projects approved by the GCC, with the goal to support energy in a sustainable manner in the Gulf countries and reduce the cost of energy production.

The Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) was established in 2001, with the purpose to create, operate and maintain the interconnection project.

# Discussions highlight benefits and challenges of AI implementation

Kuwait Int'l College of Law hosts 10th annual scientific confab

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: The Kuwait International College of Law recently hosted its tenth annual international scientific conference, focusing on the theme of artificial intelligence (AI) and its legal, scientific, and practical implications, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The following is the overview of the key points discussed during the conference:

Conference overview -- The conference, which spanned two days, brought together prominent jurists, researchers, and officials from various sectors. It featured discussions on 85 scientific papers submitted by participants, covering various aspects of AI in both Arabic and English.

Theme focus -- The conference aimed to delve into the applications of AI and its impact on higher education, particularly in the legal field. It highlighted the need for careful consideration of the ethical, legal, and educational implications of AI adoption.

Ethical considerations -- Presenters discussed the ethical considerations surrounding AI, emphasizing the importance of integrating AI into educational curricula while ensuring adherence to ethical principles and values.

Legal implications -- Sessions explored the legal implications of AI across different domains, including civil liability, criminal responsibility, and privacy rights. Participants examined challenges such as regulating AI technology, addressing criminal activities involving AI, and protecting digital privacy.

Educational integration -- Several sessions focused on the integration of AI into legal education, discussing topics such as skills development, curriculum design, and the use of AI tools in academic research.

Global perspectives -- Presenters provided insights from international perspectives, comparing legal frameworks and regulatory approaches to AI adoption in various countries and regions.

Industry applications -- The conference also addressed the practical applications of AI in sectors such as finance, trade, climate management, and maritime shipping. Discussions highlighted both the benefits and challenges associated with AI implementation in these domains.

Future outlook -- Participants emphasized the importance of developing comprehensive policies and regulations to govern AI adoption, ensuring its responsible and sustainable use while maximizing its potential benefits.

Overall, the conference served as a platform for interdisciplinary dialogue and knowledge sharing on the evolving role of AI in legal education, practice, and policy-making. It underscored the need for collaboration among stakeholders to navigate the complex ethical, legal, and societal implications of AI technology.



Top and above: Some photos from the launching of the Blood Donation campaign.

## 'Bangladesh-Kuwait golden jubilee celebration'

### Bangladesh Embassy launches Blood Donation drive

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: The Embassy of Bangladesh in Kuwait, in collaboration with the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) in Kuwait, proudly launched a "Blood Donation Campaign" at the Kuwait Blood Bank in Jabriya on May 2nd. This event commemorates the golden jubilee of the enduring relationship between Bangladesh and Kuwait. Brigadier General Md Ashsanhabib Khan (Retd.), Hon'ble Election Commissioner of Bangladesh Election Commission, inaugurated the campaign. Also present were H.E. Major General Md Ashikuzzaman, ndc, afwc, psc, G (Retd.), Ambassador of Bangladesh to Kuwait, and Ameerah H. Al-Hassan

(PhD), Head of Mission, UNH GCC Regional Office, along with other distinguished officials from the Embassy of Bangladesh, UN-Habitat, GCC & Kuwait, and the Kuwait Central Blood Bank.

This year marks fifty years of diplomatic ties between Bangladesh and Kuwait, which began when Kuwait officially recognized Bangladesh on November 4, 1973, following a historic meeting between Bangladesh's Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and Kuwait's head of government during the NAM-Summit in Algiers in 1973. Both nations established their diplomatic missions on a reciprocal basis in April 1974.

To celebrate this significant milestone in the Bangladesh-Kuwait relationship, the Embassy of Bangladesh has planned a series of programs and events throughout 2024. As part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations, the embassy, with the support of the Bangladesh community, has organized a blood donation campaign in collaboration with UN-Habitat for the Arab Gulf States and Kuwait. This campaign will span three months, during which members of the Bangladesh community will actively participate by donating blood.

The campaign will culminate in a grand event in the middle of August 2024, symbolizing the enduring friendship and cooperation between the two nations.

## News in Brief

**Outstanding students honored:** The College of Arts at Kuwait University held a celebratory event to honor its outstanding students for the academic year 2023-2024, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The event took place at the College's Southern Theater in Sabah Al-Salem University City and was attended by numerous faculty members, students' families, and college staff.

Dr. Iman Al-Sharhan, the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs, Graduate Studies, and Research, addressed the students, urging them to persist in their efforts as they represent the true wealth of the nation. She expressed her pride and happiness in honoring the students, acknowledging their hard work, and motivating them to strive for further achievements and successes.

**Co-op polls May 11:** Following a technical malfunction in the Internet servers during the recent elections for the Board of Directors of the Sulaibikhat and Doha Cooperative Society, the Ministry of Social Affairs has decided to reschedule the elections for Saturday, May 11, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This decision aims to ensure a fair and transparent electoral process for the approximately 9,600 eligible voters.

To address the issues encountered during the previous election, the Ministry has allocated more than 20 electoral committees to oversee the voting process. The duration of voting has been set according to Ministerial Resolution No. 189/T for the year 2022, with a 4-hour voting window starting from 5:00 pm until 9:00 pm.

## Bankruptcy Judge's Decision to Close Bankruptcy

Based on the decision of the Bankruptcy Judge issued by the Court of First Instance (Bankruptcy Department) on 14 / 4 / 2024 at the Bankruptcy Department in the Application/ Lawsuit No. (2 / 2023) Bankruptcy Declaration registered under the Automated No.: 230141130.

Accordingly, the Bankruptcy Judge Decided: to close the bankruptcy of the bankrupts/ Arkent International Group of Companies for General Trading and Contracting W.L.L. and Abdullah Fahad Mohammed Al-Hajri according to the final judgment issued in Lawsuit No. (5005 / 2018 Commercial Civil Plenary Governmental/5) due to the insufficiency of their funds. While each creditor has the right to take procedures and initiate individual lawsuits against the bankrupts, and the Bankruptcy Trustee shall be responsible for a period of one year from the date of the decision to close the bankruptcy for the documents handed over to him by the creditors. Provided that the Bankruptcy Department publishes the decision to close the bankruptcy in the Official Gazette, the Bankruptcy Trustee shall announce it in two local newspapers, one of which shall be in English, in accordance with the provisions of the Bankruptcy Law No. 71 of 2020 and its Executive Regulations. In addition, the Bankruptcy Department shall register it in its electronic register in accordance with the law.

Secretary  
Youssef Ahmed Al-Bakr

Bankruptcy Judge  
Imran Mohamed Ali Al-Kandari

## World News Roundup

## Europe

**Russian missiles hit Odesa, 14 injured:** Russia struck the southern Ukrainian port city of Odesa with ballistic missiles in a nighttime attack, injuring 14 people and starting a massive blaze, local officials and emergency services said.

The third attack on the city in a week hit a sorting depot belonging to Ukraine's biggest private delivery company, Nova Poshta. No staff were injured, the company said, but the strike started a major fire.



Zelenskyy

On Monday, six people were killed in a Russian missile strike on Odesa, and two days later three people died there when the Kremlin's forces targeted civilian infrastructure.

Long-range strikes have been a feature of Europe's biggest conflict since World War II, which mostly has focused on attrition. Kyiv officials have pleaded for more air defense systems from Ukraine's Western partners, but they have been slow in coming. Cities in Russia's crosshairs, including recent target Chasiv Yar in eastern Ukraine, are pulverized by Moscow's missiles, drones and glide bombs.

Russia has pushed Ukraine under the government of **Volodymyr Zelenskyy** onto the back foot on the battlefield as Kyiv grapples with shortages of troops and ammunition against a bigger enemy. Ukrainian forces are now racing to build more defensive fortifications.

Odesa, a key export hub for millions of tons of Ukrainian grain exports through the Black Sea, has been repeatedly targeted by Russia. Thursday was the 10th anniversary of clashes in the city between pro- and anti-Russia demonstrators that left 48 people dead. (AP)



**Russia proposes UN resolution:** Russia has circulated a UN resolution calling on all countries to take urgent action to prevent putting weapons in outer space "for all time" a week after it vetoed a U.S.-Japan resolution to stop an arms race in space.

The Russian draft resolution, obtained Wednesday by The Associated Press, goes further than the US-Japan proposal, not only calling for efforts to stop weapons from being deployed in outer space but for preventing "the threat or use of force in outer space," also "for all time."

It says this should include deploying weapons "from space against Earth, and from Earth against objects in outer space."

Russia's UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia told the Security Council when he vetoed the US-Japan draft that it didn't go far enough in banning all types of weapons in space.

The vetoed resolution focused solely on weapons of mass destruction including nuclear arms, and made no mention of other weapons in space.

It would have called on all countries not to develop or deploy nuclear arms or other weapons of mass destruction in space, as banned under a 1967 international treaty that the US and Russia ratified, and to agree to the need to verify compliance. (AP)



**US imposes new sanctions against Russia:** The United States on Wednesday imposed new sanctions on hundreds of companies and people tied to Russia's weapons development program, more than a dozen Chinese entities accused of helping Moscow find workarounds to earlier penalties, and individuals linked to the death of Kremlin opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

The actions by the departments of Treasury and State target Russia's military-industrial base, chemical weapons programs and people and companies in third countries that help Russia acquire weapons components as its invasion of Ukraine has entered its third year.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said the action "will further disrupt and degrade Russia's war efforts by going after its military industrial base and the evasion networks that help supply it."

The Senate, meanwhile, gave final approval to legislation barring imports of Russian uranium, boosting US efforts to disrupt Russia's war in Ukraine. Democratic President Joe Biden is expected to sign the bill into law. A spokesperson for the National Security Council said Wednesday that Biden shares lawmakers' concerns about US reliance on Russia for low-enriched uranium to support its domestic nuclear fleet. (AP)



**'Rear defensive lines barely exist':** During pitched battles with far better-armed Russian forces, Ukrainian soldier Batyay's unit has few options.

Devastating Russian aerial glide bombs that can drop up to 1.5 tons of explosives out of range of most of Ukraine's air defenses are gnawing away at his men's positions in a new tactic.

Yet, to retreat carries no promise of safety - the rear defensive lines meant to give them cover barely exist, he said.

Lack of ammunition is forcing the outnumbered Ukrainian soldiers to pull back, one village after another, including three surrendered Sunday, as intense fighting roils the countryside surrounding Avdiivka nearly three months after the strategic city fell to Russia.

"It's necessary to increase the pace of building fortifications ... so that when we retreat, we will retreat to a prepared position," said Batyay, a unit commander who gave only his military call sign in line with brigade protocols. "These fortifications are not enough." Facing an outcry after Avdiivka's fall, Ukraine is rushing to build concrete-fortified trenches, foxholes, firing positions and other barricades on the front lines. (AP)



**Georgia parliament cancels session:** The parliament of Georgia cancelled its Thursday plenary session following massive protests against a proposed law that critics fear will stifle media freedom and endanger the country's bid for membership in the European Union.

The parliament's announcement said the cancellation was connected to damage the building suffered during Wednesday protests in which police used water cannon, tear gas and pepper spray against the tens of thousands of demonstrators.

The legislature on Wednesday approved a second reading of the bill that would require media and non-commercial organizations to register as "pursuing the interests of a foreign power" if they receive more than 20% of funding from abroad.

The third and final reading was expected in mid-May and it was not clear if the cancellation of Thursday's session would affect the bill's progress. (AP)



**Police stop knife attack in central Oslo:** Police in Norway say a man carrying two knives stabbed one person and threatened several others in the center of Oslo on Wednesday.

The incident occurred outside one of the city's biggest subway stations when an argument got out of control, police said. The unnamed man in his 30s stabbed one man in the arm and charged at several others.

A policeman drew his gun and told the man to drop the knives, a witness told Norway's national broadcaster NRK.

The incident is not believed to be terror-related. (AP)



**Serbia preps to mark school shooting 'versary':** Nine-11 Radicevic still can't comprehend that her daughter is never coming back.

The 11-year-old Ana Bozovic had just arrived to her school in central Belgrade last year when another pupil, 13 at the time, came in and opened fire at anyone standing in his way.

Bozovic, two other girls and a school guard were killed immediately in the corridor. The teenage shooter then went on to a nearby classroom and turned his gun on the pupils and the teacher inside.

A total of 10 people were killed. Eight children and a school guard died, and seven people were wounded at the school on the morning of May 3, 2023. One of the wounded, a child, died from injuries later.

The shooting stunned Serbia. The Balkan nation was no stranger to violent crime, but mass shootings are rare and one hadn't taken place at a school before.

Further shock followed just a day later, when a 20-year-old man went on a shooting rampage outside the capital. He killed nine and wounded 12 others, mostly young people.

For Radicevic time stopped on the morning she lost her little girl. She believes the entire country too had to grind to a halt after such an unthinkable crime. (AP)



Republican presidential candidate former US president Donald Trump speaks at a campaign rally in Freeland, Mich. on May 1. Trump will speak at the Libertarian National Convention in Washington, DC later this month as he tries to woo voters beyond the Republican base and avoid losing support to independent candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. (AP)

## Politics

## Dems advance election bill in Pennsylvania

## Trump to speak at Libertarian confab

NEW YORK, May 2. (AP) - Former US president Donald Trump will speak at the Libertarian National Convention in Washington, DC later this month as he tries to woo voters beyond the Republican base and avoid losing support to independent candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Libertarians are some of the most independent and thoughtful thinkers in our country, and I am honored to join them in Washington, DC, later this month," Trump said in a statement issued Wednesday. "We must all work together to help advance freedom and liberty for every American, and a second Trump administration will achieve that goal."

He went on to make the case that, "If Libertarians join me and the Republican Party, where we have many Libertarian views, the election won't even be close. We cannot have another four years of death, destruction, and incompetence. 'We will work together and win!'"

## Attacks

The event comes as Trump's campaign has ramped up its attacks against Kennedy, who is running as an independent against Trump and President Joe Biden after dropping his Democratic primary bid. Kennedy has appealed to disaffected Democrats and Republicans looking for an alternative to the pending rematch of the 2020 election.

Kennedy has talked up his support for the Libertarian Party, telling CNN in January that he had a "really good relationship" with the party. A Kennedy alliance with the Libertarian Party could expedite his effort to gain ballot access in all 50 states, including battlegrounds that tiny margins could decide in November, though Kennedy told ABC last month that he didn't plan to run on the Libertarian ticket.

On Wednesday, the primary super PAC supporting Trump blasted out an old video clip of Kennedy that appeared to show him criticizing red states. "RFK hates you!" they wrote on X, formerly Twitter. Kennedy's campaign did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

While Trump has insisted publicly that he believes Kennedy's candidacy

hurts him less than it does Biden, he has been lacing into him in interviews and on his social media platform.

"RFK Jr is the most Radical Left Candidate in the race, by far," he wrote last month on Truth Social, calling Kennedy "a big fan of the Green New Scam, and other economy killing disasters."

Trump campaign aides also went after him on social media Wednesday, calling him "a radical leftist lunatic," and charging that, "Any 'conservative' or 'Republican' letting this left-wing lunatic come on their platform to whitewash his decades of far-left liberal positions & activism are aiding and abetting Joe Biden."

The Libertarian Party said in a release announcing the speech that they will share a list of their top ten issues with Trump ahead of the convention, "hoping to make an impact on the policy positions of a past, and possibly future, President."

"For 50 years, we've been trying to get our candidates on the main stage with major party POTUS candidates and we've finally succeeded in bringing one to our stage," said Angela McArdle, the party's chair, in a statement. "We will do everything in our power to use this incredible opportunity to advance the message of liberty."

## Also:

**HARRISBURG, Pa.:** Pennsylvania's House of Representatives on Wednesday approved a bill long sought by counties seeking help to manage huge influxes of mail-in ballots during elections in the presidential battleground state and to avoid a repeat of 2020's drawn-out vote count.

The bill comes barely six months before Pennsylvania could play a decisive role in selecting the next president in November's election between Democratic President **Joe Biden** and former President **Donald Trump**, a Republican.

The bill passed on party lines, 102-99, as Democrats backed it and Republicans opposed it, warning that it would open the door to fraud. Gov. Josh Shapiro, a Democrat, supports the bill, and on Wednesday issued a statement urging the Senate to pass it. But

it faces long odds in the Republican-controlled chamber.

Under the bill, county election workers could begin processing ballots up to seven days before Election Day.

Counties have sought that kind of a provision for years, even before 2020's presidential election, to give them more time to process mail-in ballots and avoid a drawn-out post-election count.

Nearly every state allows time before Election Day for workers to process mail-in ballots. Currently, Pennsylvania doesn't let counties begin processing mail-in ballots before Election Day.

The County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania backed the bill, saying that having more time to process mail-in ballots before polls close - called "precanvassing" - will help them manage the workload and ensure quicker results.

"This simple change would significantly improve election administration without compromising ballot security," **Lisa Schaefer**, the association's executive director, said in a statement.

Schaefer asked the Senate to quickly advance the bill to Shapiro so that it can be implemented for November's general election.

But Senate GOP Majority Leader **Joe Pittman** insisted Wednesday that Pennsylvania must toughen voter identification requirements as a companion to any legislation on election administration - a demand Republicans have made since 2021.

Democrats have opposed such a change, saying there is scant record of in-person voting fraud and that it will only prevent some registered voters from voting.

A surge in mail-in ballots in 2020's presidential election shined a spotlight on Pennsylvania's requirement after it took four days of counting for news agencies to project Biden as the winner of Pennsylvania, giving him the electoral votes necessary to win the White House.

However, Trump and his allies tried to exploit the days it took after polls closed to tabulate the millions of mail-in ballots to spread baseless conspiracy theories and cast doubt on the legitimacy of the election.

Wednesday with a phone number believed to belong to Garfield's mother was not immediately returned. (AP)



**26 attorneys general sue:** Twenty-six Republican attorneys general filed lawsuits Wednesday challenging a new Biden administration rule requiring firearms dealers across the United States to run background checks on buyers at gun shows and other places outside brick-and-mortar stores.

The lawsuits filed in federal court in Arkansas, Florida and Texas are seeking to block enforcement of the rule announced last month, which aims to close a loophole that has allowed tens of thousands of guns to be sold every year by unlicensed dealers who do not perform background checks to ensure the potential buyer is not legally prohibited from having a firearm.

The lawsuit argues the new rule violates the Second Amendment of the US Constitution and that Democratic President Joe Biden doesn't have the authority to implement it.

"Congress has never passed into law the ATF's dramatic new expansion of firearms dealer license requirements, and President Biden cannot unilaterally impose them," Arkansas Attorney General Tim Griffin said in a statement. (AP)



Britain's King Charles III, (left), welcomes Governor General of the Bahamas Cynthia Pratt at Buckingham Palace, London, on May 1. (AP)



Biden



Kaul

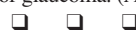
## America

**Ex-informant must remain jailed:** A federal appeals court on Wednesday rejected a bid to release from jail a former FBI informant who is charged with fabricating a multimillion-dollar bribery scheme involving President **Joe Biden's** family.

Alexander Smirnov's lawyers had urged the California-based 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals to overturn a lower court judge's order that the man remain behind bars while he awaits trial.

But a three-judge panel of the 9th Circuit said the lower court was right to conclude Smirnov is a flight risk and there are no conditions of release that would reasonably assure he shows up in court.

The appeals court also denied Smirnov's request for temporary release, which his lawyers had pressed for so he could undergo eye surgery for glaucoma. (AP)



**'Police killed student':** Police shot and killed a student outside a Wisconsin middle school Wednesday after receiving a report of someone with a weapon, the state's attorney general said in the first law enforcement briefing on gunshots that sent children fleeing and prompted an hours-long lockdown of local schools.

Authorities had previously said an active shooter who never got inside the building was "neutralized" outside Mount Horeb Middle School. State Attorney General **Josh Kaul** told reporters Wednesday evening no one else was harmed and that an investigation is ongoing.

"This incident took place outdoors. The subject in this case never gained entry," he said.

Authorities described the student as a juvenile male but didn't provide an age or indicate which of the Mount Horeb district's schools he attended.

Kaul declined to answer several questions about what happened once police responded, including whether the student had fired a weapon, what type of weapon he had, and whether he tried to get inside the school. (AP)



**Utah woman arrested:** A Utah woman has been arrested on suspicion of murder after a friend was shot in what police said was an uncompleted suicide pact the women had reached several weeks earlier. Heavenly Faith Garfield, 21, was ar-

rested Tuesday and remains jailed in Utah County on Wednesday without bail. Saratoga Springs Police have recommended she be charged with murder and discharge

of a firearm. Jail records didn't list an attorney who could speak on her behalf and no charges have been filed.

A voicemail seeking comment left



People ride bicycles by the Lake Michigan in Chicago, the United States, on May 1. (Xinhua)

Africa

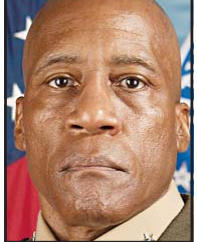
Tourists evacuated

US will return to Chad for talks, says general

ACCRA, Ghana, May 2, (Agencies): The US military plans to return to Chad within a month for talks about revising an agreement that allows it to keep troops based there, an American general said Wednesday.

The US said last month it was withdrawing most of its contingent of about 100 troops from Chad after the government questioned the legality of their operations there. This followed Niger's decision to order all US troops out of the country, dealing a blow to US military operations in the Sahel, a vast region south of the Sahara desert where groups linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group operate.

US Marine Corps Gen Michael Langley, the commander of US Africa Command, made the comments to reporters in Ghana at the second annual African Maritime Forces Summit, or AMFS.



Langley

He said the withdrawal of US troops from Chad was expected to be temporary, and Chad had communicated to Washington that it wanted to continue the security partnership after the presidential election there.

"We'll come back for discussions within a month to see in what ways, and what they need, to be able to build further in their security construct and also against terrorism," Langley said.

Government officials in Chad couldn't immediately be reached for comment. The presidential election in Chad is scheduled for Monday, and analysts expect the incumbent to win.

Chad's interim president, Mahamat Deby Itno, seized power after his father, who ran the country for more than three decades, was killed fighting rebels in 2021. Last year, the government announced it was extending the 18-month transition for two more years, which led to protests across the country.

Langley said the withdrawal of US forces was a temporary step "as part of an ongoing review of our security cooperation, which will resume after Chad's May 6 presidential election."

Both Chad and Niger have been integral to the US military's efforts to counter violent extremist organizations across the Sahel region, but Niger's ruling junta ended an agreement last month that allows US troops to operate in the West African country.

Niger is home to a major US air base, in the city of Agadez, about 920 kilometers (550 miles) from the capital, Niamey, using it for manned and unmanned surveillance flights and other operations. The US has also invested hundreds of millions of dollars in training Niger's military, since it began operations there in 2013.

Also:

**BAMAKO, Mali:** A humanitarian crisis is worsening in northeastern Mali where armed groups linked to Islamic State have besieged major towns leaving residents including some 80,000 children vulnerable to malnutrition, locals and an aid group warned Wednesday.

The town of Ménaka has been under siege for four months, driving up the prices of food. Other essential goods like medication are increasingly hard to find, residents and aid groups say.

"The humanitarian situation is catastrophic, with displaced people going from house to house asking for food for their families. Children are threatened with starvation," Wani Ould Hamadi, deputy mayor of the town of Ménaka, told the Associated Press.

Mali, along with its neighbors Burkina Faso and Niger, has for over a decade battled an insurgency fought by armed groups, including some allied with al-Qaida and the Islamic State group. Following military coups in all three nations in recent years, the ruling juntas have expelled French forces and turned to Russia's mercenary units for security assistance instead.

Col. Assimi Goita, who took charge in Mali after a second coup in 2021, promised to beat back the armed groups, but the United Nations and other analysts say the government has rapidly lost ground.

The aid group Save the Children said some 80,000 children were trapped inside the town of Ménaka facing malnutrition and disease, and many were unaccompanied having fled violence elsewhere.



**NAIROBI, Kenya:** Tourists were evacuated by air from Kenya's Maasai Mara national reserve Wednesday after more than a dozen hotels, lodges and camps were flooded as heavy rains battered the country.

Tourist accommodation facilities were submerged after a river within the Maasai Mara broke its banks early Wednesday. The reserve, in southwestern Kenya, is a popular tourist destination because it features the annual wildebeest migration from the Serengeti in Tanzania.

The Kenya Red Cross said it rescued more than 90 people. The Narok County government said it deployed two helicopters to carry out evacuations in the expansive conservation area.

More than 170 people have died across Kenya since mid-March when the rainy season started, causing flooding, landslides and destroying infrastructure. The Metrology Department has warned that more rain is expected this week.

On Wednesday, three major roads in the capital, Nairobi were temporarily closed due to flooding. The Kenya Red Cross rescued 11 people from a residential area - Kitengela - in the outskirts of Nairobi after their homes flooded overnight.



**KAMPALA:** Uganda has asked Britain to stop meddling in the local politics of the East African country after London announced sanctions on three of Uganda's senior officials over allegations of corruption.

The Ugandan parliament on late Tuesday urged Britain to respect the country's sovereignty.

It is important that foreign partners, including Britain, respect the sovereignty of Uganda and avoid the temptation to meddle into our local politics, including arm-twisting decision makers to align with their value system, the parliament said in a statement.

The British government on Tuesday announced that it had sanctioned Uganda's Speaker of Parliament Anita Among and two lawmakers, Goretti Kitutu and Agnes Nandutu, over corruption allegations.

Kitutu and Nandutu, former ministers, have been charged with corruption in Uganda's Anti-Corruption Court for allegedly stealing iron sheets intended for the impoverished northeastern region of Karamoja.

The parliament accused the British government of distorting facts to suit its political agenda.



The National Assembly passed a special bill for a new probe into the Halloween crush in 2022 in Seoul, South Korea on May 2. South Korea's parliament on Thursday approved legislation mandating a new, independent investigation into the 2022 Halloween crush in Seoul that killed 159 people. (AP)

Asia

Philippines summons Chinese Embassy official

Manele elected PM in Solomon Islands

MELBOURNE, Australia, May 2, (Agencies): Solomon Islands lawmakers elected former Foreign Minister Jeremiah Manele as prime minister Thursday in a development that suggests the South Pacific island nation will maintain close ties with China.

Manele used his first speech as leader to promise to govern with integrity and to put his nation's interests first.

"I will discharge my duties diligently and with integrity. I will at all times put the interests of our people and country above all other interests," Manele said in a speech outside the National Parliament of Solomon Islands.

Manele won 31 votes in a secret ballot of 49 lawmakers who won general elections on April 17, Governor General David Vunagi said, while Matthew Wale, who led the opposition in the previous parliament, received the remaining 18.

The withdrawal of pro-Beijing former Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare from the contest to make way for Manele as their party's candidate indicated the country could follow a similar direction.

Sogavare had hoped to become the first Solomons prime minister to maintain power in consecutive four-year terms following the election. During his previous term, China's influence increased more in the Solomons than anywhere else in the South Pacific.

Sogavare switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to Beijing and struck a secret security pact that has raised fears of the Chinese navy gaining a foothold in the region.

In his speech, Manele also urged against any post-election violence.

"Past prime minister's elections have been met with the act of violence and destruction. Our economy and livelihoods have suffered because of this violence," Manele said.

"However, today we show the world that we are better than that. We must respect and uphold the democratic process of electing our prime minister and set an example for our children and their children," he added.

Also:

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) summoned a senior official at the Chinese Embassy in Manila Thursday over recent "harassment of Philippine vessels" in the South China Sea, describing the harassment as "dangerous maneuvers."

DFA clarified in a statement that it summoned the number two official at the "Chinese Embassy of Manila Deputy

South Korea OKs independent probe of devastating 2022 Halloween crush

SEOUL, South Korea, May 2, (Agencies): South Korea's parliament on Thursday approved special legislation mandating a new, independent investigation into the 2022 Halloween crush in Seoul that killed 159 people.

The single-chamber National Assembly passed the bill by a 256-0 vote. It will become law after it is signed by conservative President Yoon Suk Yeol and promulgated by his government agency - steps that are considered formalities because the president and his ruling party already agreed on the legislation.

The bill is meant to delve into the root cause of the crush, and look at how authorities handled the disaster and who should be blamed for it. It envisages the creation of a fact-finding committee with nine members that would independently examine the disaster for up to 15 months.

Once the committee determines who is responsible and who should face charges, it would report them to the government's investigation agencies. The agencies would then be required to conclude investigations of the suspects within three months, according to the bill.

Also:

**BEIJING:** The death toll from a collapsed highway in southeastern China climbed to 48 on Thursday as searchers dug for a second day through a treacherous and mountainous area.

One side of the four-lane highway in the city of Meizhou gave way about 2 a.m. on Wednesday after a month of heavy rains in Guangdong province. Twenty-three vehicles fell down a steep slope, some sending up flames as they caught fire. Construction cranes were used to lift out the burnt-out and mangled vehicles.

**PHNOM PENH:** Cambodia's Ministry of Defense said in a statement on Thursday that a technical issue combined with an extreme heatwave was blamed for a series of explosions at a military base that killed 20 soldiers and injured several others on April 27.

The blast burst out at an ammunition depot in the Third Regional Military Command in Chamkar Doung village of Kampong Speu province's Chbar Mon town when soldiers were unloading ammunition from trucks to warehouses.

Chief of Mission Zhou Zhiyong over the 30 April 2024 harassment of Philippine vessels conducting a routine and regular humanitarian mission to Bajo de Masinloc."

"The Philippines protested the harassment, ramming, swarming, shadowing and blocking, dangerous maneuvers, use of water cannons, and other aggressive actions of China Coast Guard and Chinese Maritime Militia vessels against the vessels of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) enroute to Bajo de Masinloc," it said in a statement.

**SYDNEY:** A judge denied bail Thursday to a 15-year-old boy alleged to be in a network planning terrorist acts and who claimed to be a friend of another teen accused of stabbing a Sydney bishop last month.

The attack on the bishop triggered an investigation that led to the arrests of six teens, ages 14 to 17, who were charged last week with a range of offenses including conspiring to engage in or planning a terrorist act. All remain in custody.

The 15-year-old boy's lawyer Ahmed Dib had applied for bail Wednesday in the Parramatta Children's Court, arguing there were exceptional circumstances that required his client's release.

The boy was already in custody on an assault charge when the terrorism-related charge was added Friday.

Earlier last week, he was accused of being part of group that threw rocks at a store employee. The boy allegedly threw a wooden plank that narrowly missed his intended target. The boy was allegedly carrying a knife at the time.



A member of the National Search Commission digs in an area where search volunteers said they found a clandestine crematorium in Tlahuac, on the edge of Mexico City, on May 1. (AP)



Alvarez



Souza

Lat/Am

**Brazil's heavy rains kill 10:** Heavy rains in Brazil's southern Rio Grande do Sul state have killed at least 10 people and left 21 missing since Monday, the country's civil defense said Wednesday.

An additional 11 people were injured and more than 3,300 were forced to leave their homes due to damage caused by the storms, the civil defense added.

Operators reported electricity and water cuts across the state, and officials detailed numerous incidents of flooded roads, landslides and collapsed bridges as water levels of rivers and streams rose sharply.

Authorities activated the Brazilian Air Force to assist stranded people. It deployed two helicopters for the rescue mission.

The southern state's crisis Cabinet met on Wednesday. Rescuing people in isolated and island areas is the priority, vice-governor Gabriel Souza said, according to a statement. Authorities had registered more than 130 rescue requests by Wednesday morning.

"There is a special concern with dams in an alert situation, with risk of failure and flooding due to very high levels," Souza added. Residents in nearby areas are being relocated, he said. (AP)



**5 die of poisoning in Mexico:** Five people have died after drinking a poison potion in a Santeria ritual, police in the southern Mexico state of Oaxaca said Wednesday.

Iván García Alvarez, the Oaxaca state police chief, said four men and one woman died after drinking a mix of substances he did not specify.

He said they were involved in Santeria. García Alvarez said the victims mixed the potion themselves and drank it "to acquire some certain kind of powers." He said the deaths at a home in Oaxaca city are being investigated as a group suicide.

García Alvarez said the people were involved in Santeria and when they drank the potions, "the only thing that happened was they died of poisoning."

Their bodies were found Saturday at a house on the outskirts of Oaxaca city with no outward signs of injuries. The victims were apparently related, and ranged in age from 18 to 55.

Prosecutors said at the time that tests were being performed to identify the substances found in the house. (AP)



**'Bones found animal origin':** Traced by search dogs and police, María de Jesús Soria Aguayo and more than a dozen volunteers walked carefully through fields of weeds and dry earth with their eyes fixed

on the ground Wednesday. On the fringes of Mexico City, the group was looking for human remains and other evidence after volunteer searchers said the site might be the location of a clandestine crematorium.

The search came after Ceci Flores, a leader of a group seeking the bodies of Mexico's missing, announced on social media late Tuesday that her team had found bones, clandestine burial pits and ID cards around a charred pit on the

southern outskirts of the city. However, Ulises Lara, Mexico City's chief prosecutor, disputed the claims Wednesday night, saying that officials found 14 bones and all were of "animal origin."

"We can confirm that it is not a crematorium, nor from a clandestine grave," he said.

Flores' announcement on social media a day earlier had gained attention because it was the first time in recent memory that anyone claimed to have found such a body disposal site in the Mexican capital.

If such a site were found, it could be a blow to Mexico's governing Morena party in the runup to June 2 elections. Morena says violence in Mexico hasn't rippled to Mexico City while it has controlled the local government.

The search Wednesday underscored the slog many Mexican families face as they seek the remains of the 110,000 people declared missing amid cartel violence.

The volunteers, like Soria Aguayo, are mostly the mothers of the disappeared. They have formed their own independent groups to search in violence-torn swaths of Mexico.

The "madres buscadoras" - "searching mothers" - usually aren't trying to convict anyone of their relatives' disappearances. They say they just want to find their remains. Many families say not having definite knowledge of a relative's fate is worse than it would be to know a loved one was dead. (AP)



Visitors view rare plants at the Hong Kong garden of the International Horticultural Exhibition 2024 Chengdu in Chengdu, southwest China's Sichuan Province on May 1. Visitors across China visited the main venue of the International Horticultural Exhibition 2024 Chengdu during the May Day holiday. (Xinhua)

## dollar plunges

Exchange rate of the US dollar on Thursday dropped 0.11 percent against the Kuwaiti dinar trading at KD 0.307 and the euro rose by 0.45 percent to KD 0.329 compared to Wednesday's rates.

The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said in its daily bulletin that the sterling pound rose by 0.35 percent to KD 0.385, the Swiss franc moved up by 0.40 percent trading at KD 0.335 and the Japanese yen remained stable at KD 0.0022. Exchange rates declared by the CBK reflect average prices and not rates of actual transactions. (KUNA)

## KPC CEO emphasizes digitalization

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) CEO Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah said on Wednesday that Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) exhibition aligns with the strategic aim of digitalizing the KPC and its subsidiaries.

This came in Sheikh Nawaf Al-Sabah's speech during the opening of the KNPC's exhibition which took place at the company's main building in Al-Ahmadi City in the presence of the KNPC's CEO Wadha Al-Khateeb and the CEOs and managing directors

of the corporation and its subsidiaries. The exhibition reflects the KPC and its subsidiaries' focus on fostering talent and motivating the workforce in the oil sector.

The KNPC's Deputy CEO Khulood Al-Mutairi said to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that this exhibition is the first of its kind in the company's history.

The exhibition comprises eight aspects, mainly the company's history and vision for the development of its refineries, Al-Mutairi said. (KUNA)

## gold prices hold near four-week low

Gold prices stabilized near a four-week low on Wednesday morning as investors awaited a decision from the US Federal Reserve, which could offer insights into the timing of interest rate reductions, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Gold settled at \$2,285.69 per ounce in instant transactions, after dipping to its lowest level since April 5 earlier in the session. Tuesday saw prices drop by up to 2 percent due to a stronger dollar and higher US Treasury bond yields.

Since hitting a record high of \$2,431.29 on April 12, gold prices have

fallen by more than \$140. Meanwhile, US gold futures slipped 0.3 percent to \$2,296.30 an ounce.

All eyes are now on the US Federal Reserve's monetary policy decision and subsequent statements by Chairman Jerome Powell. It's widely anticipated that the Federal Reserve will maintain the benchmark interest rate within the range of 5.25 to 5.5 percent. While gold is traditionally viewed as a hedge against inflation, elevated interest rates can diminish its appeal as a non-yielding asset.

## Market Movements

02-05-2024

		Change	Closing pts			Change	Closing pts
SAUDI	- TASI	+6.68	12,352.33	JAPAN	- Nikkei 225	-37.98	38,236.07
DUBAI	- DFMGI	+7.51	4,140.82	PHILIPPINES	- PSEi	-53.94	6,646.55
EGYPT	- EGX 30	+843.16	26,113.71	PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	-417.60	70,707.81

# Business

## Service comes in cooperation with 'Dar Al-Sabaek'

# Warba launches gold trading service on its application in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: In a pioneering step that reflects its commitment to innovation in digital Islamic banking services, Warba Bank announces the launch of the raw gold trading service, which is an unprecedented step in the Kuwaiti market that aims to enable customers to benefit from gold price fluctuations in an innovative and safe way. This new service, which comes in cooperation with Dar Al-Sabaek, allows customers to buy and sell raw 24-karat gold with a purity of 999.9 without charging them any additional fees for the manufacturing price, which provides a unique investment opportunity. The customer can also buy small weights on an ongoing basis. It is then converted into Swiss or Emirati bullion, coated according to the customer's choice, with the possibility of delivering it to his home.

In this regard, Mr. Ahmed Faisal Al-Qatami - Chief Retail Banking Officer at Warba Bank, said: "This step represents the Bank's vision of providing innovative financial solutions that exceed expectations."

Pointing out that "the raw gold trading service is the result of our continuous efforts since the launch of the gold account in 2022 to enrich clients' experience and provide various investment options that meet their financial needs and aspirations."

Al-Qatami added that the Bank seeks to strengthen its role as a pioneer in adopting innovative digital solutions that support the culture of saving and investment among its customers, stressing the Bank's commitment to providing banking services that preserve and promote Islamic values.

Al-Qatami continued saying that Warba Bank, with its vision to create unique value in banking services and beyond, emphasizes its mission to provide the best customer experience outside the boundaries of traditional banking services, with a focus on creating sustainable value for shareholders and society through the launch of the raw gold trading service. The Bank strengthens its position as a financial institution that provides innovative and advanced solutions that are com-



Ahmad Faisal Al-Qatami



Fahad Al-Ajmi

### Al-Qatami:

- It is considered the first service of its kind in the banking sector in Kuwait
- Ensuring the highest security standards for buying and selling raw gold and gold bullion through the Warba Bank application

patible with the requirements and aspirations of its clients.

### Al-Ajmi:

- Cooperation with Warba Bank is a pioneering step to enhance the culture of investing in gold
- Cooperation with "Warba" strengthens our position as a major provider of raw gold solutions

Al-Qatami confirmed that the account can be opened immediately via

the application, and added that the raw gold trading service comes with several main advantages, including updating the price of gold every 15 seconds to ensure transparency and accuracy in trading, displaying a detailed statement of buying and selling operations, and displaying and downloading an invoice after completion of every transaction, ensuring the highest security standards for buying and selling transactions starting from 1 gram, which are implemented immediately. He added that this service not only reflects Warba Bank's commitment to providing innovative and safe financial solutions, but it also provides clients with an opportunity to invest in gold in an easy and convenient way, which contributes to diversifying their investment portfolios.

Al-Qatami concluded his statement by saying: "We invite our valued clients to explore this unique investment opportunity provided by the raw gold trading service, which represents an important step towards achieving safe investments in the gold market, and we believe that this new service will meet our

clients' expectations and contribute to achieving their investment goals."

For his part, Mr. Fahad Ghdayer Al-Ajmi, Vice Chairman of Dar Al-Sabaek Company, expressed the importance of this partnership with Warba Bank, pointing out that "cooperating with a very important bank like Warba strengthens our position as a major provider of raw gold solutions and confirms the quality and security of the services we provide.", Al-Ajmi added, "This partnership reflects our commitment to providing the best solutions to our customers, and we are proud to be part of this initiative that allows customers to exploit distinct investment opportunities in the gold market."

Warba Bank is one of the banks that achieved great successes during 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 important elements that make the Bank close to all members of society,

# Kuwait's trade surplus dips 10% due to oil price decline

## China leads as source of imports for Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: The decrease in oil prices led to a 10% decline in Kuwait's trade surplus value in January compared to the same period last year, dropping from 1.2 billion dinars to 1.1 billion dinars, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Official statistics from the Central Administration of Statistics reveal that Kuwait's exports during this time totaled around two billion dinars, marking an 8% decrease from the previous year's figure of 2.2 billion dinars. Similarly, imports saw a decrease of approximately 7.5%, amounting to 939.4

million dinars compared to 1.01 billion dinars in January of the previous year.

Oil exports dominated Kuwait's export landscape in January, accounting for 91.5% of total exports, amounting to about 1.9 billion dinars. This represented a decline of 241 million dinars year-on-year due to Kuwait's adherence to oil production cuts mandated by the OPEC+ alliance. Non-oil exports, on the other hand, saw an increase of 20.4%, totaling around 106 million dinars compared to 88.4 million dinars in the same period last year.

Non-oil exports included a variety of products such as organic chemicals, iron and steel products, machinery, essential oils, and dairy products.

In terms of import destinations for Kuwaiti goods excluding oil,

the UAE ranked first with imports totaling approximately 40 million dinars, followed by Iraq with 34.3 million dinars, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with 22 million dinars.

Kuwait's imports in January were distributed across various categories, with food and beverages accounting for 15.5% of total imports, valued at 145.5 million dinars. Industrial supplies and transportation equipment followed, with imports valued at approximately 228.5 million dinars and 148 million dinars respectively.

China emerged as the leading source of imports for Kuwait, capturing 21.6% of total imports with a value of 203 million dinars. The UAE and the United States followed, with exports worth 118.3 million dinars and 77 million dinars respectively.

## Key assets of Agility Global include Menzies Aviation & Tristar

# Agility subsidiary, Agility Global begins its trading on Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Agility Public Warehousing Company KSCP ("Agility") announced the start of trading for its subsidiary, Agility Global PLC ("Agility Global"), on the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX), one of the fastest growing stock exchanges in the world.

On March 27th, Agility announced an in-kind dividend distribution of shares representing 49% of the issued share capital in Agility Global, estimated at KD 800 million (USD 2.6 billion).

For FY 2023, Agility Global had revenues of USD 3.9 billion (KD 1.21 billion), EBITDA of USD 0.6 billion (KD 0.19 billion), 50,000 employees and operations in 70+ countries. The book value of the company is AED 19.6 billion.

Agility Global's valuable international assets include Menzies Aviation, the world's largest aviation services provider, Tristar, a global leader in fuel and chemicals storage, shipping and logistics, and Agility Logistics Parks, a leading owner and developer of industrial real estate in the Middle East, Africa and South



Tarek Sultan

Asia. Agility Global's portfolio also includes a 9% stake in DSV, the world's third-largest freight forwarder.

Agility (ticker symbol: AGLTY), listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange and Dubai Financial Market, will remain the controlling shareholder in Agility Global (ticker symbol: AGILITY) with a 51% stake and

consolidate Agility Global results in its financial reporting.

Agility Vice Chairman, Tarek Sultan said: "Agility, a global company proudly based in Kuwait, will continue to invest and grow in the country, supporting the government's Kuwait Vision 2035."

The listing of Agility Global on the ADX crystallizes the value of our assets and enables the company to access additional capital markets to drive further growth. Agility Global's new listing is a milestone in the ongoing growth and value creation journey that began for us in Kuwait in 1997.

Agility Global's listing gives global and regional investors an additional opportunity to be part of the Agility growth story going forward and rewards our existing shareholders in Kuwait and beyond. As always, we thank our shareholders, customers, employees, and communities for the faith and trust they have demonstrated in us and are committed to continuing to drive sustainable and long-term shareholder value and returns."

## Gulf SWF positioned to reach trillion-dollar milestone

# GCC nations emerge as global investment giants

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: According to Bloomberg, the GCC countries have amassed substantial financial portfolios from oil revenues, establishing themselves as significant players in global investments, reports Al-Qabas daily.

These countries hold stakes in major international companies, including American tech giants, European football clubs, and global real estate assets.

Notably, four of the largest sovereign wealth funds worldwide are owned by Gulf nations, positioning the region on the brink of having three funds each worth a trillion dollars.

The report highlights how Gulf nations leverage their oil wealth to exert influence globally, strategically investing to achieve broader

geopolitical objectives. Rather than relying solely on coercion, these countries aim to become soft powers through persuasive means. Gulf investors have also played a role in stabilizing struggling economies like Turkey and Egypt.

In diversifying their investment portfolios, Gulf countries focus on maximizing returns and mitigating future risks associated with oil dependency. Investments in non-energy sectors offer lucrative opportunities to generate profits and offset potential declines in oil revenues.

Furthermore, Gulf nations prioritize food security by acquiring agricultural land across Africa, Europe, Asia, and Australia. Some sovereign wealth funds have dedicated units specifically focused on securing food supplies.

This diversification strategy ensures continued access to essential resources while expanding investment opportunities.

The flow of Gulf funds into the American debt market holds significant importance for the largest economy.

Bloomberg estimates suggest that Gulf investments have contributed to lowering American borrowing costs by 0.25%, potentially saving American taxpayers around \$700 billion between 2005 and 2023.

Additionally, massive infrastructure projects, such as Qatar's \$300 billion investment in infrastructure development ahead of the FIFA World Cup, underscore the region's commitment to large-scale investments with global impacts.

## Strong profits drive dividend growth, banks lead contribution

# US companies favor dividends over buybacks amid economic uncertainty

NEW YORK, May 2, (AP): Companies continued rewarding investors with healthy dividends in 2023 even as they tread more cautiously with returning profits through stock buybacks.

Dividends hit a record \$1.66 trillion globally last year, while stock buybacks eased. Investors can likely expect more dividend growth through 2024, according to a recent report from Janus Henderson. At the same time, companies face more uncertainty on economic growth, inflation and inter-

est rates, leaving them to find a better balance of paying off debt and buying back stock.

The rare decline for stock buybacks comes amid high interest rates pressuring corporate borrowing. Buyback amounts still remain far higher than before the pandemic, but the path ahead is unclear with interest rates expected to remain higher for longer.

The technology, healthcare and financial sectors had the biggest reductions in buybacks in 2023. U.S. com-

panies in those sectors accounted for a large portion of the pullback. While U.S. companies remained the biggest buyers of their own stock, they also had the biggest reduction overall, cutting buybacks by 17%.

"It is all about companies finding the appropriate balance between capital expenditure, their financing needs and shareholder returns via dividends, buybacks or both," said Ben Lofthouse, head of global equity income at Janus Henderson, in a report.

Companies are making strong profits as consumers keep spending on goods and services. Net profit margins for the S&P 500 were just under 10.8% in 2023. That's down slightly from recent years but still allowing companies to stockpile cash while also keeping investors happy with healthy dividends.

Dividends have been rising steadily in the U.S. and globally since the pandemic in 2020. Last year 86% of companies globally either raised their dividend or held them steady, accord-

ing to Janus Henderson.

Banks contributed half of the world's dividend growth as higher interest rates allowed them to boost profits. Car makers were also a big global contributor to dividend growth. Profits in that sector rose along with prices for new and used cars.

Janus Henderson expects underlying dividend growth of 5% to \$1.72 trillion in 2024. Still, recent economic warning signs mean some uncertainty and potential caution for the rest of 2024. Economists expect economic growth to

slow from the surprisingly strong pace in 2023. Inflation has been easing, but it still remains higher than the Federal Reserve would like. The latest data shows it seemingly stuck at 3%, above the Fed's 2% target.

Wall Street entered 2024 with hopes for interest rate cuts in the U.S., but surprisingly strong economic data and stubborn inflation has clouded those forecasts. Persistently high interest rates could put increasing pressure on borrowing for consumers and businesses.



## First-of-its-kind to be issued

## KFH releases carbon footprint report in Kuwait's banking sector

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) released the first-of-its-kind Carbon Footprint report in Kuwait's banking sector. This report solidifies KFH's role in leading the way in sustainable banking practices and underscores its commitment to environmental responsibility within the financial industry.

The carbon footprint report equips KFH with valuable information to unlock insights and shape tailored mitigation plans for future years, leading to GHG reduction. These plans serve as a roadmap to comprehensively quantify the GHG inventory, reducing carbon emissions and advancing sustainable development. Through these efforts, KFH actively limits its environmental impact, aligning with global initiatives to combat climate change and demonstrating its unwavering commitment to environmental stewardship as a responsible financial institution.

Chairman of KFH Group, Hamad Abdulmohsen Al Marzouq said "I am honored to present Kuwait Finance House (KFH)'s Carbon Footprint Report, a testament to our persistent dedication and unwavering commitment to placing environmental responsibility at the core of our operations.

We understand that financial prosperity goes hand-in-hand with environmental well-being. We're not just building a better future for our customers and shareholders; we're actively investing in a healthier planet for generations to come."

Al Marzouq added: "Over the past few years, we've proudly taken significant strides in reducing our carbon footprint, firstly in promoting green finance. Our subsidiary in Turkey; KFH-Turkey has issued green Sukuk, the first-of-its-kind in Sharia-compliant finance. We've also transitioned to technology-driven solutions, reducing electricity and paper consumption, and enhancing KFH's efforts towards digital transformation in line with the sustainability and environmental pres-



KFH Chairman Hamad AlMarzouq.

**Hamad Abdulmohsen Al Marzouq:**  
KFH takes significant strides in reducing carbon footprint and promoting green finance

ervation strategy of the Bank. Our commitment to sustainable infrastructure has led to energy-efficient upgrades across KFH Group's locations.

These achievements haven't come without challenges. Implementing these changes requires ongoing investment, adaptation, and a shift in mindset. However, we know the stakes are higher than ever. Climate change isn't just an environmental crisis; it's an economic and social one. The urgency to build a resilient, low-carbon future is undeniable."

Al Marzouq pointed out that that sustainability is a priority for KFH, thus it partnered with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to set solid standards for sustainable development

goals for Sharia-compliant finance, especially in green finance.

He explained that the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with UNDP establishes stronger alignments with the sustainable development goals across the Bank, as the UNDP provides technical support to facilitate investments through key tools such as the SDGs, and the Green Finance Framework.

Al Marzouq continued: "KFH launched the (Keep it Green) campaign to serve as an umbrella for all KFH sustainability initiatives. In a testament to its successful environmentally friendly initiatives, KFH Auto showroom won the GSAS Gold Level Sustainability Assessment System Certificate, the first-of-its-kind in Kuwait.

In conclusion, sustainability stands as an integral pillar of our fundamental strategy, deeply ingrained in our mission and vision. We remain steadfast in our commitment to continuously improve and will continue to explore innovative solutions and collaborations that enable us to further reduce our carbon footprint and create a lasting, meaningful impact."



Acting Group CEO Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood.

**Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood:**  
We're not just building a stronger bank; we're building a more sustainable future

Acting Group CEO Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood

Meanwhile, Acting Group CEO Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood said: "at (KFH), we believe that financial leadership comes with environmental responsibility. We're not just building a stronger bank; we're building a more sustainable future for everyone.

Through its innovative initiatives, KFH is keen on making a lasting impact on society, tailoring eco-friendly financial products and services, adopting sustainable practices, and making responsible choices that contribute to a greener future. We're actively engaging with local communities, supporting environmental protection projects, and pro-

moting awareness about climate change solutions."

Al Rushood added: "Our commitment to sustainability extends beyond operational changes and financial offerings. We actively advocate for responsible environmental policies, engaging with governments and regulatory bodies to ensure a level playing field and accelerate the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Given its extensive reputation, trusted commitment, and outstanding contributions, KFH holds a distinctive position in leading the sustainable finance market and capitalizing on its significant growth potential." He explained that within its own operations, KFH has implemented a range of innovative initiatives to enhance energy efficiency, reduce waste, and lower greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Al Rushood said: "KFH took part in the 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) in Dubai. This participation is part of the Bank's commitment towards supporting sustainability initiatives, countering climate change



The Carbon footprint report.

implications, promoting the role of green finance, and underlining the importance of the Islamic Finance sector in such efforts. Under (Keep it Green) Initiative, KFH implemented numerous initiatives and signed several strategic partnerships to boost the sustainability efforts. These include the MoU with the UNDP, the collaboration with the Kuwait Environment Public Authority, the joint initiative with the Capital Governorate to beautify its buildings and roads, and the beach cleaning campaigns, and the cooperation with the scientific Center, a subsidiary of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) to organize a series of workshops on environment preservation and reducing plastic waste.

In conclusion, I would like to thank our shareholders, employees, customers, stakeholders, and all partners for their trust and support of KFH Group. We will continue focusing our efforts on achieving innovative sustainable solutions in all communities within our wide network."

## Huge funding gap remains

## More money is going to African climate startups

NAIROBI, Kenya, May 2, (AP): When Ademola Adesina founded a startup to provide solar and battery-based power subscription packages to individuals and businesses in Nigeria in 2015, it was a lot harder to raise money than it is today.

Climate tech was new in Africa, the continent was a fledgling destination for venture capital money, there were fewer funders to approach and less money was available, he said.

It took him a year of "running around and scouring" his networks to raise his first amount - just under \$1 million - from VC firms and other sources. "Everything was a learning experience," he said.

But the ecosystem has since changed, and Adesina's Rensource Energy has raised about \$30 million over the years, mostly from VC firms.

Funding for climate tech startups in Africa from the private sector is growing, with businesses raising more than \$3.4 billion since 2019. But there's still a long way to go, with the continent requiring \$277 billion annually to meet its climate goals for 2030.

Experts say to unlock financing and fill this gap, African countries need to address risks like currency instability that they say reduce investor appetite, while investors need to expand their scope of interest to more climate sectors like flood protection, disaster management and heat management, and to use diverse funding methods.

Still, the investment numbers for the climate tech sector - which includes businesses in renewable energy, carbon removal, land restoration and water and waste management - are compelling: Last year, climate tech startups on the continent raised \$1.04 billion, a 9% increase from the previous year and triple what they raised in 2019,

according to the funding database Africa: The Big Deal. That was despite a decline in the amount of money raised by all startups in total on the continent last year.

That matters because climate tech requires experimentation, and VC firms that provide money to nascent businesses are playing an essential role by giving climate tech startups risk capital, said Adesina. "In the climate space, a lot of things are uncertain," he said.

The money raised by climate tech startups last year was more than a third of all funds raised by startups in Africa in 2023, placing climate tech second to fintech, a more mature sector.

Venture capital is typically given to businesses with substantial risk but great long-term growth potential. Startups use it to expand into new markets and to get products and services on the market.

Venture capitalists "can take risks that other people cannot take, because our business model is designed to have failures," said Brian Odhiambo, a Lagos-based partner at Novastar Ventures, an Africa-focused investor. "Not everything has to succeed. But some will, and those that do will succeed in a massive way."

That was the case for Adetayo Bamiduro, co-founder of Metro Africa Xpress, which makes electric two- and three-wheelers and electric vehicle infrastructure in Nigeria and has raised just under \$100 million since it was founded in 2015.

Adetayo said venture capitalists "are playing a catalytic role that is extremely essential."

"We all know that in order to really decarbonize our economies, investments have to be made. And it's not trivial investment," he said.

## Microsoft will invest \$2.2 bln in cloud &amp; AI services in Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia, May 2, (AP): Microsoft is investing \$2.2 billion over the next four years in Malaysia's new cloud and artificial intelligence infrastructure as well as partnering with the government to establish a national AI center, its CEO Satya Nadella said Thursday.

It marks Microsoft's single largest investment in Malaysia, as the tech giant seeks to bolster support for AI development in the region and worldwide.

"We are committed to supporting Malaysia's AI transformation and ensure it benefits all Malaysians," he said. "Our investments in digital infrastructure and skilling will help Malaysian businesses, communities and developers apply the latest technology to drive inclusive economic growth and

innovation across the country."

Nadella on Tuesday also announced a \$1.7 billion investment in cloud and AI services in Indonesia during his visit there as part of his Southeast Asia tour. On Wednesday, he said Microsoft will build its first regional data center in Thailand. In April, the tech giant similarly unveiled a \$2.9 billion investment in Japan and \$1.5 billion in G42, an AI firm in Abu Dhabi. Microsoft also pledged to provide AI training for 2.5 million people in Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam by 2025.

Nadella earlier met Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, who said the investment will be the key support pillar for the government's goal to enhance AI capacity in Malaysia.

## Fed says interest rates will stay high until inflation further cools

strikes a note of optimism

WASHINGTON, May 2, (AP): The Federal Reserve has emphasized that inflation has remained stubbornly high in recent months and said it doesn't plan to cut interest rates until it has "greater confidence" that price increases are slowing sustainably to its 2% target.

The Fed issued its decision in a statement after its latest meeting, at which it kept its key rate at a two-decade high of roughly 5.3%. Several hotter-than-expected reports on prices and economic growth have recently undercut the Fed's belief that inflation was steadily easing. The combination of high interest rates and persistent inflation has also emerged as a potential threat to President Joe Biden's re-election bid.

"In recent months," Chair Jerome Powell said at a news conference, "inflation has shown a lack of further progress toward our 2% objective."

"It is likely that gaining greater confidence," he added, "will take longer than previously expected."

Powell did strike a note of optimism about inflation. Despite the recent setbacks, he said, "My expectation is that over the course of this year, we will see inflation move back down."

Wall Street traders initially cheered the prospect that the Fed will cut rates at some point this year as well as Powell's comment that the Fed isn't considering reverting to rate increases to attack inflation. "I think it's unlikely that the next policy rate move will be a hike," he said.

Later, though, stock prices erased their gains and finished the day essentially unchanged from where they were before Powell's news conference.

Still, Powell sketched out a series of potential scenarios for the months ahead. He said that if hiring stayed strong and "inflation is moving sideways," that "would be a case in which it would be appropriate to hold off on rate cuts."

But if inflation continued to cool - or if unemployment rose unexpectedly - Powell said the Fed would likely be able to reduce its benchmark rate. Cuts would, over time, bring down the cost of mortgages, auto loans, and other consumer and business borrowing.

Those comments were "a signal that the (Fed) is a lot less confident that



Federal Reserve Board Chair Jerome Powell speaks during a news conference at the Federal Reserve in Washington, Wednesday, May 1, 2024. (AP)

## Trump awarded 36m more Trump Media shares worth \$1.6 billion after hitting price benchmarks

WASHINGTON, May 2, (AP): Former President Donald Trump has secured an additional \$1.6 billion worth of shares in Trump Media, according to a regulatory filing this week.

Based on the company's stock hitting certain price benchmarks, Trump was awarded an additional 36 million shares in the company that owns his social media platform Truth Social. That brings his total ownership to more than 114 million shares, which based on Wednesday's closing stock price, are worth about \$5.2 billion.

For now, the value of those shares

is considered "paper wealth." Trump is prohibited from selling any shares for six months after Trump Media went public without securing a waiver from the company's board.

Trump, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, now owns close to two-thirds of the company's outstanding shares.

Trump Media & Technology Group shares have surged in the past couple of weeks and closed Tuesday at \$49.93. Trump only needed the stock to be above \$17.50 each for 20 consecutive trading days to secure the new shares.

they know how policies are going to unfold over the course of this year," said Jonathan Pingle, an economist at UBS. "We were all sort of hoping for an update on the committee's path forward. And instead what we got was, 'We're really not confident enough to tell you what our path forward is going to be.'"

The central bank's overarching message Wednesday - that more

evidence is needed that inflation is slowing to the Fed's target level before the policymakers would begin cutting rates - reflects an abrupt shift. As recently as their last meeting on March 20, the officials had projected three rate reductions in 2024, likely starting in June.

But given the persistence of elevated inflation, financial markets now expect just one rate cut this year, in Novem-

The stock on Wednesday tumbled 9.6%, closing at \$45.13.

Trump Media got its place on the Nasdaq after merging with a company called Digital World Acquisition Corp., a special purpose acquisition company, or SPAC. These type of mergers offer young companies quicker and easier routes to getting their shares trading publicly.

On March 26, the first day of trading after Trump Media closed the merger with Digital World Acquisition, shares in the newly combined company reached nearly \$80 each in intraday trading before closing at \$57.99.

ber, according to futures prices tracked by CME FedWatch.

The Fed's warier outlook stems from three months of data that pointed to chronic inflation pressures and robust consumer spending. Inflation has cooled from a peak of 7.1%, according to the Fed's preferred measure, to 2.7%, as supply chains have eased and the cost of some goods has actually declined.

## From Shenzhen to Bremen, Sino-German auto cooperation takes new steps

SHENZHEN, May 2, (Xinhua): A ro-ro ship under the name "BYD EXPLORER NO.1," first of BYD's "shipping fleet" with another seven transport ships under construction, set sail from Shenzhen, south China's Guangdong Province, and arrived at the port of Bremerhaven, Germany, in late February.

More than 3,000 new energy vehicles (NEVs) manufactured by the Chinese NEV giant were unloaded.

BYD EXPLORER NO.1 is the epitome of the rapid development of China's auto industry and the continuous advancement of globalization in recent years, and it is also a portrayal of the advanced cooperation between China and Germany in automobiles.

For a long time, China has been the world's largest auto market for German auto companies such as Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz and BMW, as

well as an important global production and research and development (R&D) base. In recent years, Chinese cars have developed rapidly with electrification, constantly enriching global supply and expanding cooperation in Sino-German auto industry.

On Aug. 1, 2022, BYD announced a partnership with Hedin Mobility, a leading European dealership group, successfully introducing multiple NEV models

into Germany, marking a promising start to localized operations. As of now, BYD has established stores in 23 cities across Germany, where consumers can test drive and purchase vehicles in cities like Frankfurt, Hamburg, and Cologne.

Furthermore, BYD has signed cooperation agreements with SIXT, a leading German car rental company, which will procure at least 100,000 new energy vehicles from BYD in six years.

Additionally, BYD inked a global strategic cooperation agreement with Shell to jointly enhance the charging experience for BYD's European users.

According to Motor1.com, an automobile news website in Europe, there was a major change in the European auto market in 2023 as a result of the rise of Chinese auto brands.

On the basis of 23 Chinese car brands, the year 2023 saw another

seven new brands enter the European market. Chinese brand cars registered in Europe reached 322,000, an increase of 79 percent, and its market share reached a record 2.6 percent.

A BYD spokesperson said that the company's performance in the German market is steadily improving, receiving positive affirmation from local mainstream media regarding product innovation design.

# What's On



Photos during the event



## 'Little Angels' showcases rich Korean cultural heritage

# 'Rhythms of Korea' celebrates 60 yrs of energy cooperation with Kuwait

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: The Embassy of Korea in collaboration with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters organized the 'Rhythms of Korea', the nation's folk ballet performed by 'Little Angels' at the AbdulHussein AbdulRedha Theater in Salmiya to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Energy Cooperation between the Republic of Korea and the State of Kuwait.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador HE Chung, Byung-ha, expressed his gratitude to HE Mohammad Khaled Al-Jassar, Secretary-General of NCCAL, for joining the event and for the invaluable support in making the event possible.

He went to say, "When one thinks of Korean culture, K-dramas, K-films, and K-pop music often come to mind, given their widespread popularity and trendiness. However, Korea boasts a rich and time-honored history spanning thousands of years, during which we have nurtured our traditional arts and performances, serving as the foundation of our cultural influence today. Today, we have the pleasure of showcasing one such traditional performance, a cherished part of our cultural heritage."

"The Little Angels," who performed in the event were exceptionally talented young artists. Established in 1962, The Little Angels has garnered acclaim for its artistically remarkable performances in over 60 countries, solidifying

its status as one of Korea's most renowned performance groups.

This year, the Korean envoy said, marks the 45th anniversary of his country's diplomatic ties and the 60th anniversary of energy cooperation. Interestingly, just two years after its founding, Korea imported its first crude oil from none other than Kuwait, demonstrating the longstanding ties between the two nations.

"Even before the establishment of diplomatic relations," he added, "The Little Angels performed in Kuwait in 1974. Now, they return after 50 years, underscoring the deep-rooted friendship between Kuwaitis and Koreans. Today's event is a celebration of these milestones."

The performance by these young artists carries a deeper significance beyond mere entertainment. Born in the aftermath of the devastating Korean War, The Little Angels aimed to convey messages of peace and friendship during their overseas performances in the 1960s. Today, they continue to echo these messages, which hold even greater resonance in our world today. Peace and friendship are essential for realizing our shared future, and it is through friendship that we can truly make it a reality, he added.

"Peace and friendship," he added, are the messages that these young Korean artists wish to impart. They have traveled from Korea to Kuwait with this purpose in mind; and of course, to bring to Kuwait the beautiful Korean traditional performances."

## 'Sharia-compliant savings with generous prizes'

# KIB unveils winners of Al Dirwaza weekly draw

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the winners of the Fifth weekly draw held under the Al Dirwaza account's 2024 campaign, which is distinguished by the highest number of winners throughout the year. The weekly draw, based on customers' March deposits, recently took place in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as well as representatives from the Bank. The KD 1,000 prize was awarded to Muhammad Irfan Arshad Ahmad, Manal Ghazi Mohammad Alhoushah, Adnan Jawad Haidar Alrasheed, Ali Hanitem Abdullah Alajmi, Sultan Faleh Sultan Alsabaiee, whilst the KD 500 prize was awarded to Pulimarathin Geel Akbar Siddique, Amal Fhaid Hamad Alajmi, Sarah Mashaa Mohammad Aldaihani, Dhahaya Fadeel Awad Alrasheedi, Mouserrah Saeed Mohammed Jebri, Noura Ali Hashem Sultan, Shima Hassan Mohammed Mohammed.

It serves to note that AlDirwaza account is a savings account for individual customers, based on the Wakala investment principle, launched by KIB as one of its banking products for individuals. The account is currently the best of its kind in the sector, with annual



Dirwaza

expected profits of up to 2% disbursed on a monthly basis, where the customer gets an expected profit of 2% for the first 3 months from the account opening date and up to 1% expected rate onward. The expected profits are automatically deposited into the customer's account within the first day of the beginning of each month.

Al Dirwaza account holders are eligible to enter the weekly, monthly and annual draws on the condition of maintaining at least KD 100 in their account. For the weekly and

monthly draws, each KD 1 that has completed a full month's cycle in the account will count for one chance, and chances are calculated based on the lowest monthly balance preceding the draw. As for the mega draw, chances are calculated for each KD 1 that completes a two-month cycle in the account - based on the lowest two monthly balances prior to the draw.

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

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

## Alfouz draws entry requirement reduced

# ABK reveals Sadeq Al Hasan as winner of KD 20,000 draw

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced Mohamad Sadeq Al Hasan as the winner of the Alfouz KD20,000 monthly draw, held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for the month of April.

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

ABK has also made it easier for customers to



Alfouz

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

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

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

## Bank introduces up to 24% cashback prepaid card

# NBK unveils new package of services and enhancements on its mobile banking app

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: As a trailblazer of digital banking, and keeping with its unwavering dedication to addressing customer feedback and meeting their requirements, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) focuses on adding new products and services to its Mobile Banking App, which accounts for the major share of customers' banking transactions, thanks to the rich digital experience enabling them to manage their accounts, and conveniently and securely conduct their transactions anytime, anywhere, 24/7 without the hassle of visiting branches.

In this context, responding to market trends and customers' needs, NBK has introduced new services as well as enhancements to existing ones on its Mobile Banking App, which included the following:

**Prepaid Cashback Card**  
NBK has launched the new NBK 247 Cashback Visa Platinum Prepaid Card offering customers up to 24% cashback on their daily purchases, allowing users to turn their daily purchases into a new way of savings.

By transferring their daily spends from their debit card to the new prepaid card, customers get a cashback of 24% on streaming services (payment should be done through the streaming app or website and not through any other service provider), 7% on Food delivery (only on food delivery apps, not direct orders from restaurants), 4% on Bill payments (telecom bills that are paid through the app or website of the telecom companies or through any of their branches, and not through any service provider), 2% at hospitals, clinics and pharmacies, as well as 2% on Grocery, and 0.7% on Digital payments (made using digital wallets).

Customers can apply for the card through NBK Mobile Banking App and once they register the card in the digital wallet, they will be able to use the card immediately.

**Quick Send**  
The Quick Send feature offered by NBK enables customers to send money directly via NBK MOB to receive from any local bank by entering the receiver's name, mobile number, and the amount to be sent. The receiver gets a link via (SMS) on the mobile. When clicking the link, the receiver has the option to proceed with NBK Mobile Banking App (for NBK Customers) or via K-Net and the money will be received immediately. For the first time



Mohammad Al-Dakheel

in Kuwait, customers can send money from the app to multiple recipients.

**Load Account**  
The ability to load NBK account using K-Net portal. The amount can be loaded anytime, anywhere, even on weekends and official holidays. If customers would like to load money into their accounts, they can now do so on the K-Net payment gateway through NBK Mobile Banking Application. Customers are only required to choose the desired account in which they would like to top up funds to, along with the desired amount. From there they will be directed to the K-Net portal where they will enter their card details and their account will be loaded successfully.

**Contact Your Relationship Manager**

NBK Mobile Banking Privilege users will be able to view the name of their Relationship Manager (RM), contact details, and book appointments with them via NBK's Mobile Banking App. Customers can book appointments by selecting the date and time, during the branch's working hours with few easy taps.

**Update Civil ID by PACI**  
The ability to provide a service where customers are able to update their Civil ID expiry date through Mobile Banking App by the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI). Simply, when their Civil IDs are about to expire or have expired, a banner will be displayed informing the customer that they need to do the update. This will be done after customers allow NBK to get their information from PACI. A Notification will be sent to customers to confirm the transaction is accepted or rejected.

**Product Nickname**  
The ability for users to rename NBK products including accounts, cards, loans and even beneficiaries. Users can edit the product name at any time or delete it. This enables users to access the product quickly and conduct transactions while on the move. In addition, it makes it easier for them to recognize and refer to the product they renamed as per their preference.

**Submit A Suggestion**  
As part of its ongoing efforts to foster continuous communication with customers and engage with their feedback regarding the bank's services, the bank now allows users to submit their suggestions directly through the NBK Mobile Banking App. This update enables customers to provide input on various aspects such as accounts, cards, loans, payments, and transfers, enhancing the bank's responsiveness

to customer needs and preferences.

**Secondary Prepaid Card Ordering**

Through the NBK Mobile Banking App, NBK Customers can request a secondary prepaid card linked to their account. This service enables the primary cardholder to extend credit card benefits to other family members while maintaining full control over spending limits.

**National Bank of Kuwait (NBK)** remains committed to enriching its customers' digital experience through the NBK Mobile Banking App, by introducing additional services and implementing features and enhancements designed to meet customer preferences and fulfill their needs.

In keeping with its unwavering dedication to addressing customer feedback and meeting their requirements, NBK has introduced a number of enhancements and additions to its NBK Mobile Banking App. These enhancements empower customers to conveniently and securely conduct electronic transactions anytime, anywhere.

The following are the new features and services included in the update:

**Various Enhancements**

In addition to these new services, and keeping with the bank's constant endeavors to improve the existing services available on the NBK Mobile Banking App to exceed customers' expectations, users can now view the remaining monthly transfer limit on the form itself. This makes it easy to the users to know how much they have transferred money during the month and how much is remaining to better manage their accounts and transfers on monthly basis.

Enhancements also included 3D Shortcuts, offering a faster way for the users to access their favorite services on the App.

In addition to introducing new services, NBK has implemented several enhancements to the NBK Mobile Banking App, further enhancing the electronic experience for its customers. Among these improvements, customers can now easily add the prepaid cards they issue via the NBK Mobile Banking App to their Apple Wallet at the time of issuance.

Commenting on the launch of the new services and enhancements, Mohammad Al-Dakheel, Head of Mobile Banking, Consumer Banking Group at National Bank of Kuwait, said, "Our consistent efforts to introduce new features and ongoing enhancements to the NBK Mobile Banking App underscores our dedication to enhancing a banking experience tailored to the genuine needs and aspirations of our customers. This endeavor aligns with our goal of reshaping their lifestyles through a meticulously crafted range of digital services and products, designed with precision and care."

Al-Dakheel added that the enhancements and new services stand as a testament to the bank's deep understanding and awareness of its customers' aspirations. This understanding is reflected in the rising satisfaction rates among customers and the notable increase in the utilization of the NBK Mobile Banking App. "Through the NBK Mobile Banking App, we provide a comprehensive banking experience that empowers our customers digitally and provides them with the latest and most advanced banking services," he noted.

Film

## Hathaway shines in charming rom-com 'The Idea of You'

By Jake Coyle

In the warmly charming rom-com "The Idea of You," Anne Hathaway plays a 40-year-old divorcee and Silver Lake art gallery owner who, after taking her teenage daughter to Coachella, becomes romantically involved with a 24-year-old heartthrob in the boy band August Moon. They first meet after she mistakes his trailer for the bathroom.

There are a few hundred things about this premise that might be farfetched, including the odds of finding love anywhere near the porta johns of a music festival. But one of them is not that a young star like Hayes Campbell (Nicholas Galitzine) would fall for a single mom like Solène (Hathaway).

Solène is stylish, unimpressed by Hayes' celebrity and has bangs so perfect they look genetically modified. And, most importantly, she's Anne Hathaway. In the power dynamics of "The Idea of You," Hayes may be a fictional pop star but Hathaway is a very real movie star. And you don't forget it for a moment in Michael Showalter's lightly appealing showcase of the actor at her resplendent best.

"The Idea of You," which debuts Thursday on Prime Video, is full of all the kinds of contradictions that can make a rom-com work. The highly glamorous, megawatt-smiling Hathaway is playing a down-to-earth nobody. The showbiz veteran in the movie is played by Galitzine, a less well-known but up-and-coming British actor whose performance in the movie is quite authentic. And even

though the whole scenario is undeniably a glossy high-concept Hollywood fairy tale, Showalter gives it enough texture that "The Idea of You" comes off more natural and sincere than you'd expect.

The only thing that really needs to make perfect sense in a movie like "The Idea of You" is the chemistry. The film, penned by Showalter and Jennifer Westfeldt from Robinne Lee's bestseller, takes its time in the early scenes between Solène and Hayes - first at Coachella, then when he stops by her gallery - allowing their rapport to build convincingly, and giving each actor plenty of time to smolder.

### Mission

Once the steamy hotel-room encounters come in "The Idea of You," the movie has, if not swept you away, then at least ushered you along on a European trip and room service. At the same time, it stays faithful to its central mission of celebrating middle-aged womanhood. The relationship will eventually cause a social media firestorm, but its main pressure point is whether Solène can stick with Hayes after her ex-husband (Reid Scott) cheated on her. This is a fairy tale she deserves.

While Showalter ("The Big Sick") has long showed a great gift for juggling comedy and drama at once, "The Idea of You" leans more fully into wish-fulfillment romance. That can leave less to sustain the film, which has notably neutered some of the things that distinguished the book.

The May-December romance has been shrunk a little. In the

book, the singer is 20. Given that Galitzine is 29 and the 41-year-old Hathaway is no one's idea of old, this is more like a July-September relationship. In the book, the daughter (Ella Rubin) is a huge admirer of the pop singer, adding to the awkwardness, but in the movie, August Moon is "so 7th grade" to her.

There are surely more interesting and funnier places "The Idea of You" could have gone. But Hathaway and Galitzine are a good enough match that, for a couple hours, it's easy to forget.

But the most convincing thing about "The Idea of You"? August Moon. The movie nails the look and sound of boy bands so well because it went straight to the source. The original songs in the film are by Savan Kotecha and Carl Falk, the producer-songwriters of, among other pop hits, "What Makes You Beautiful." One Direction's debut single.

That connection will probably only further the sense that "The Idea of You" is very nearly "The Idea of Harry Styles." The filmmakers have distanced the movie from any real-life resemblances. But one thing is for sure: With August Moon following 4 (asterisk) Town of "Turning Red" (whose songs were penned by Billie Eilish and Finneas O'Connell), we are living in the golden age of the fictional boy band.

"The Idea of You," an Amazon MGM Studios release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for some language and sexual content. Running time: 115 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four. (AP)

Variety



This image released by Prime shows Nicholas Galitzine, left, and Anne Hathaway in a scene from 'The Idea of You.' (AP)

Film

A film inspired by Flannery O'Connor's life

## Ethan, Maya share laughs over 'Wildcat'

LOS ANGELES, May 2. (AP) — Ethan Hawke and his daughter Maya Hawke have a running joke about their Flannery O'Connor movie.

"Wildcat," which Ethan directed and Maya stars in as O'Connor, was made with complete sincerity. It's a deeply creative investigation into the Southern Catholic novelist and short story writer behind "A Good Man is Hard to Find" that dips in and out of both her imagination and her real life.

O'Connor died at age 39, in 1964, of lupus. She won the National Book Award posthumously, in 1972. Though celebrated for her prose and sharp social satire, in recent years she's also come under scrutiny for racism in private correspondence and her treatment of race in her works. It was territory that was both thorny and rich with possibility. But the Hawkes can't help but laugh about it too, imagining the pitch to a major studio or streamer.

Here's how it might go:  
**Maya:** "We want to make a movie about an unfortunate-looking woman with lupus. She struggles with her faith and has no boyfriends."

**Ethan:** "She's a really brilliant writer but she's completely unsuccessful."

**Maya:** "Also recently her mild success has been completely disbarred and people are mostly interested in removing her from the canon these days. What do you think?"

**Ethan:** "Sounds like the makings of a commercial, hit movie!"

"Wildcat" (in select theaters Friday), if it isn't evident, was made independently. Both Hawkes drew heavily on friends they've worked with over the years to round out the cast. Laura Linney, Liam Neeson, Steve Zahn and Vincent D'Onofrio are just several of the names in the big ensemble.

Maya had the idea for a movie around the time she was deciding to commit her life to acting. Despite having two successful actors as parents, including mother Uma Thurman, she'd hesitated primarily because she loved literature so much. If she went to Juilliard, she worried that she'd have to choose. So,

in a mild act of rebellion, Maya decided to audition not with a monologue from the theatrical canon, but with one she'd reworked from O'Connor's "Prayer Journal" with her dad on his breaks while filming "The Magnificent Seven."

"If I showed them that I was really interested in literature, and if then they still wanted me, then it would probably be a place that would still allow me to explore language and writing and poetry the way that I wanted," Maya said. "What a rebel."

Ethan too had read O'Connor early, at the urging of his mother who wanted him to read female authors in addition to Faulkner and Hemingway. They were both interested in this prickly woman who wrote about faith in a way that wasn't proselytizing, and about race and white Christian hypocrisy as few others did. She was also talented, self-hating and dealing with this illness, which killed her father. She got her diagnosis at 24 and moved back to Milledgeville, Georgia, to live with her mother (portrayed by Linney).

### Biopics

Biopics hold little interest to Ethan, especially, he said "in the age of Wikipedia." But in agreeing to direct and co-write the film, he thought of films like Martin Scorsese's "Raging Bull" and Jane Campion's "An Angel at My Table." They were about real subjects, Jake LaMotta and Janet Frame, but they didn't require any preexisting interest in boxing or literature. They were just films about people.

"('Wildcat') is a kind of treatise on imagination, reality and faith and how those three things intersect with each other," Ethan said. "I'm not trying to do a college lesson on Flannery. We used her life experience as a launching pad for a conversation."

Before getting too deep into the process, they also asked themselves hard questions about making a movie about someone who has said racist things.

"It begged the question: Do we want to make a movie about somebody who said some ugly things at some point? And what would that say about us if we did? And how do you be a good anti-racist?" Ethan said. "One of the things that I came down to is that

you just can't tell a story about America in the past or the present, frankly, without touching on America's wounds and America's crimes and America's sins. One academic said it very beautifully that Flannery O'Connor is a racist in recovery, like our country."

Maya wondered whether depiction is inherently a celebration or if it can be an observation. She hopes it's the latter, which she said is a courtesy that's often extended to films about complicated men but perhaps less so when it's a female subject.

Something author James McBride said while Ethan was working on "The Good Lord Bird" had also stuck with him.

"He used to say how important it was that you don't paint racists with horns on their head because people don't have horns and racism is real," Ethan said.

And after much research and debate, together they decided to not back down from the conversation or defend her.

"I'm interested in this woman, and I'm interested in all the truths of her life," he said.

"Wildcat" also inspired Maya's new album, "Chaos Angel" (out May 31). The title and title track came out of a scene she shared with Philip Ettinger where O'Connor is talking about how she used to wrestle with her guardian angel.

"That idea really hit me in my gut," Maya said. "The way in which we resist our best selves. ... As soon as we finished making the movie, I went to record this album."

Maya is currently 25, the age her father was when he'd just finished "Before Sunrise" and was acting on stage in Chicago in Sam Shepard's "Buried Child." They are close and like-minded, often finishing one another's sentences. But Hawke laughs that he is slightly envious of Maya's musical talents.

"There's a part of me that has joked my whole life that all I really am is a failed musician," he said. "All art aspires to be music. It's the easiest emotional connection that we can find with each other. So to watch her excel at this art form? I'm a little jealous of her for that."

"We believe in this case and will be retrying this case," Blumberg added.

Judge Curtis Farber set a May 29 pretrial court date, with the aim of going to trial some time after Labor Day.

Weinstein, wearing a navy blue suit, was seated in a wheelchair and didn't address the court but



Jagger



Weinstein

smiled and shook hands with supporters in the gallery.

The 72-year-old, who has cardiac issues and diabetes, has been in a hospital since his return to the city jail system Friday from an upstate prison.

In court, his attorney, Arthur Aidala, said he has no concern about his client's mental abilities,

describing Weinstein as "sharp as a tack. As sharp as he ever was."

Aidala said his client wants to prove his innocence: "It's a new trial, it's a new day and his life is on the line."

In the New York case that is now overturned, Weinstein was convicted of rape in the third degree for an attack on aspiring actor Mann in

2013 and of forcing himself on a TV and film production assistant, Mimi Haley, in 2006. Weinstein had pleaded not guilty and maintained any sexual activity was consensual.

The Associated Press does not generally identify people alleging sexual assault unless they consent to be named, as Haley and Mann have. (AP)

## People &amp; Places

## Music

## Eurovision diplomacy

## Ukraine's duo carry a message of hope

KYIV, Ukraine, May 2, (AP): Even amid war, Ukraine finds time for the glittery, pop-filled Eurovision Song Contest. Perhaps now even more than ever.

Ukraine's entrants in the pan-continental music competition - the female duo of rapper alyona alyona and singer Jerry Heil - set off from Kyiv for the competition on Thursday. In wartime, that means a long train journey to Poland, from where they will travel on to next month's competition in Malmö, Sweden.

"We need to be visible for the world," Heil told The Associated Press at Kyiv train station before her departure. "We need to show that even now, during the war, our culture is developing, and that Ukrainian music is something waiting for the world" to discover.



Heil

"We have to spread it and share it and show people how strong (Ukrainian) women and men are in our country," added alyona, who spells her name with all lower case letters.

Ukraine has long used Eurovision as a form of cultural diplomacy, a way of showing the world the country's unique sound and style. That mission became more urgent after Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. Russian President Vladimir Putin has denied that Ukraine existed as a distinct country and people before Soviet times.

Ukrainian singer Jamala won the contest in 2016 - two years after Russia illegally seized the Crimean Peninsula - with a song about the expulsion of Crimea's Tatars by Stalin in 1944. Folk-rap band Kalush Orchestra took the Eurovision title in 2022 with "Stefania," a song about the frontman's mother that became an anthem to the war-ravaged motherland, with a haunting refrain on a traditional Ukrainian wind instrument.

## Inspiring

Alyona and Heil will perform "Teresa & Maria," an anthemic ode to inspiring women. The title refers to Mother Teresa and the Virgin Mary, and the lyrics include the refrain, in English: "All the divas were born as the human beings" - people we regard as saints were once flawed and human like the rest of us.

Heil said the message is that "we all make mistakes, but your actions are what define you."

And, alyona added: "with enough energy you can win the war, you can change the world."

The song blends alyona's punchy rap style with Heil's soaring melody and distinctly Ukrainian vocal style.

"Alyona is a great rapper, she has this powerful energy," Heil said. "And I'm more soft."

"But great melodies," alyona added. "So she creates all the melodies and I just jump in."

Ukraine has been at the forefront of turning Eurovision from a contest dominated by English-language pop songs to a more diverse and multilingual event. Jamala sang part of her song in the Crimean Tatar language, while Kalush Orchestra sang and rapped in Ukrainian.

Ukraine's Eurovision win in 2022 brought the country the right to host the following year, but because of the war the 2023 contest was held in the English city of Liverpool, which was bedecked in blue and yellow Ukrainian flags for the occasion - a celebration of Ukraine's spirit and culture.

Thirty-seven countries from across Europe and beyond - including Israel and Australia - will compete in Malmö in two Eurovision semifinals May 7 and 9, followed by a May 11 final. Ukraine currently ranks among bookmakers' top five favorites alongside the likes of singer Nemo from Switzerland and Croatian singer-songwriter Baby Lasagna.

Russia, a long-time Eurovision competitor, was kicked out of the contest over the invasion.

The Ukrainian duo caught a train after holding a news conference where they announced a fundraising drive for a school destroyed by a Russian strike.

The duo is joining with charity fundraising platform United 24 to raise 10 million hryvnia (about \$250,000) to rebuild a school in the village of Velyka Kostromka in southern Ukraine that was destroyed by a Russian rocket in October 2022. The school's 250 pupils have been unable to attend class since then, relying on online learning.

Teacher Liudmyla Taranovych, whose children and grandchildren went to the school, said its destruction brought feelings of "pain, despair, hopelessness."

"My grandchildren hugged me and asked, 'Grandma, will they rebuild our school? Will it be as beautiful, flourishing, and bright as it was?'" she said.

From the rubble, another teacher managed to rescue one of the school's treasured possessions - a large wooden key traditionally presented to first grade students to symbolize that education is the key to their future. It has become a sign of hope for the school.

Alyona and Heil have also embraced the key as a symbol, wearing T-shirts covered in small metal housekeys.

"It's a symbol of something which maybe some people in Ukraine won't have, because so many people lost their homes," Heil said. "But they're holding these keys in their pockets, and they're holding the hope."

## Also:

**GENEVA:** Organizers of the Eurovision Song Contest said Thursday they reserve the right to remove any Palestinian flags and pro-Palestinian symbols at the show next week in Sweden.

The announcement came amid heightened tensions surrounding Israel's participation in the annual music competition over its military campaign against Hamas in Gaza, now in its seventh month. Pro-Palestinian groups are expected to stage large protests in Malmö to raise awareness of their cause.

**Michelle Roverelli**, the head of communications for the European Broadcasting Union that runs the show each year, said ticket buyers are only allowed to bring and display flags that represent countries that take part in the event, as well as the rainbow-colored flag.

The Geneva-based EBU reserves the right "to remove any other flags or symbols, clothing, items and banners being used for the likely purpose of instrumentalizing the TV shows," she told The Associated Press in a text message.

Swedish news agency TT reported that the anyone who tries to bring a Palestinian flag or a sign with a political message will be stopped at the entrance by guards.

**Martin Österdahl**, the contest's Executive Supervisor told TT that "these rules are the same as last year. There is no change."

National flags are a common sight during the contest as fans cheer on their country's acts and those they support.



Dua Lipa poses for a portrait to promote her new album 'Radical Optimism' on Friday, April 26, 2024, in New York. (AP)

## Music

## An album for finding peace in turbulent waters

## Lipa is all about 'Radical Optimism'

NEW YORK, May 2, (AP): Dua Lipa is floating in the ocean, the sun just beginning to set behind her. She looks strong, serene - save for the looming threat of a massive shark, fin just breaching the surface a few feet away.

The image is the cover of her third album, "Radical Optimism," out Friday. It is an apt visual representation for an album about finding and protecting your peace in dangerous waters - a thematic maturation for the Grammy-award winning pop superstar, who has long identified her sound as "dance-crying."

That cheeky term encapsulates the clubby jubilation of her biggest pop hits, but "Radical Optimism," with its psychedelic electro-pop, complicates it.

"There's definitely something more cathartic that comes with the third album," she told The Associated Press recently.

"'Future Nostalgia' was my chance for me to be able to do a very polished pop-dance-disco record," she says of her 2020 sophomore release. "Radical Optimism," alternatively, was informed by what she's learned from touring the world over the last few years - drawing influence from trip hop and Britpop and including newfound interest in live instrumentation.

"It was so much more free flowing," she says of her latest album's creative process. "And it didn't have a formula, per se, but I always had that pop sensibility in the back of my mind. But I wanted to just experiment and try and create something new. But I think this was always kind of the album that I've always wanted to make."

In more ways than one: Around her first album, Lipa wrote down that she'd like to work with Tame Impala's Kevin Parker - specifically on her third album. The manifestation worked, and he became a crucial collaborator on "Radical Optimism."

"It was almost like something deep down, instinctively, was telling me that it was something earned," she says. "That over time I would be able

to go in and work with a creative that I was so inspired by, and to be in a room and learn from him."

As for the album's title: "It's euphoric, it's togetherness," she says.

"Dance music has such a long history of creating such a safe space. And I just want to embody that," she adds.

She's been working hard to get there. Lipa, now 28, began her career at age 15, when she convinced her family to let her move from Kosovo to London, where she was born, to pursue a pop career. She went to school, modeled, and in 2017 released her eponymous debut album with the blockbuster dance-pop hits "New Rules" and "One Kiss." Then came the nu-disco electropop of 2020's "Future Nostalgia," which solidified her status as one of pop music's biggest players. Not bad for a unique voice in the streaming era, where capturing the attention of the masses - and sustaining it - has never been more of a challenge.

## Opinions

In 2024, her pop songs contain a kind of learned elasticity. The melodies stack atop unusual synth sounds, the vocal range stretches (particularly on the cut "Falling Forever"), the dance breaks inspired by U.K. rave culture and formatters Primordial Scream and Massive Attack - they're all elements Lipa says she wouldn't have dared attempt on her last album. That came from working with Parker, producer Danny L Harle, songwriter Tobias Jesso Jr. (known for his work with Harry Styles and Adele), and Lipa's longtime collaborator Caroline Ailin.

"She understands how to handle a lot of opinions in the room, including her own," Jesso tells the AP. "She doesn't value hers above anyone else's, she simply uses the ones which work best for what she is trying to achieve."

"We were a band," Lipa says of the group. The first day they wrote "Illusion." The second day, "Happy for You." ("I'd never written a song like that before," she points out. "And I loved that version of myself.")

The third day, the post-disco pop of "Whatcha Doing." In bright, airy studios in London and Malibu, they finessed what would become Lipa's most ambitious - and euphoric-sounding - record to date.

That experimentation appears across Lipa's endeavors, too. She's acting more - "little baby roles!" she says with a smile - after playing Mermaid Barbie in the blockbuster "Barbie" (she also contributed the ubiquitous, Grammy-nominated song "Dance the Night" to the soundtrack) and LaGrange, a sultry spy in "Argyle" (a brief performance AP film critic Jake Coyle described as the movie's best few minutes).

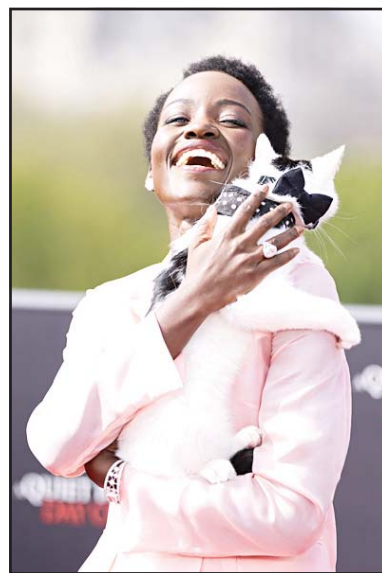
In 2022, she founded a newsletter called Service95, what she views as an extension of a childhood blog, to "tell stories from all around the world, not solely from a Western lens," she says. It has grown into a website, podcast and book club: "It's just another hobby of mine that I've somehow managed to turn into a job, which is just great," she says, smiling.

"My day job, which is my music career, which I love, comes with constantly being online. And I think for me, at least now I'm searching for other things, and not doomscrolling on Twitter," she says of her media enterprise. "At least this way I'm like learning something new about the world. I love having that kind of duality in my life."

It's a duality fueled by curiosity, like when Lipa made headlines late last year for challenging Apple CEO Tim Cook in an interview on her podcast over reports of children in the Democratic Republic of Congo mining cobalt for iPhones.

"That was scary, and really exciting," she says. "You never really know what to expect when you go in to interview someone."

A few days after visiting the AP's New York headquarters, Lipa appears at a public high school on the Upper East Side of Manhattan to speak to students in a conversation moderated by Drew Barrymore.



Lupita Nyong'o poses for photographers at the photo call for the film 'A Quiet Place: Day One' on Wednesday, May 1, in London. (AP)



Swift



Adele

## Variety

**LOS ANGELES:** Artists from Universal Music Group, which include Taylor Swift, Drake, Adele, Bad Bunny and Billie Eilish, will be returning to TikTok as the two parties have struck a new licensing agreement following an approximately three-month long dispute.

The two sides said Thursday that they are "now working expeditiously to return music by artists represented by Universal Music Group and songwriters represented by Universal Music Publishing Group to TikTok in due course."

UMG said in January that it had not agreed to terms of a new deal with TikTok, and planned to stop licensing content from the artists it represents on the social media platform that is owned by ByteDance, as well as TikTok Music services.

At the time, UMG had been pressing TikTok on three issues: "appropriate compensation for our artists and songwriters, protecting human artists from the harmful effects of AI, and online safety for TikTok's users." TikTok pushed back against the claims by UMG, saying that it had reached "artist-first" agreements with every other label and publisher. (AP)

**ROME:** A European court on Thursday upheld Italy's right to seize a prized Greek statue from the J. Paul Getty Museum in California, ruling that Italy was right to try to reclaim an important part of its cultural heritage and rejecting the museum's appeal.

The European Court of Human Rights, or ECHR, determined that Italy's years-long efforts to recover the "Victorious Youth" statue from the Malibu-based Getty were not disproportionate.

The Getty had appealed a 2018 Italian high court ruling that had confirmed a confiscation order, claiming that its rights to the statue had been violated by Italy's campaign to get it back.

"Victorious Youth," a life-sized bronze dating from 300 B.C. to 100 B.C., is one of the highlights of the Getty collection. Though the artist is unknown, some scholars believe it was made by Lysippos, Alexander the Great's personal sculptor.

An Italian court in Pesaro had ordered it seized and returned in 2010, at the height of Italy's campaign to recover antiquities looted from its territory and sold to museums and

private collectors around the globe. (AP)

**XI'AN:** A photography exhibition named "Encounters: Silk Road - Xi'an in the Eyes

of an Italian Journalist" was unveiled at Xi'an Museum in northwest China's Shaanxi Province on Wednesday.

This exhibition is a selection of 87 old photos of Xi'an taken by Italian sinolo-



This image released by Oscilloscope Laboratories shows writer-director Ethan Hawke, (left), and his daughter, actor Maya Hawke, on the set of 'Wildcat.' (AP)

—Details Page 11

gist, journalist, and photographer Adriano Madaro between 1979 and 1983.

Madaro's journey in China began in April 1976, when the 34-year-old was invited by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to visit the country as a journalist. Since then, he has visited China 217 times, and his tours have covered many places across the country.

Through the photos taken by Madaro, the viewer can see a city street view, Shaanxi specialties, an agricultural market, the Bell Tower, the Terra Cotta Warriors, and other cultural attractions. Each photo records the history of Xi'an, and the captions convey Madaro's thoughts and feelings at that time. (Xinhua)

**BEIJING:** A domestically-produced new film spotlighting the Chinese police units on overseas peacekeeping missions hit China's big screen on Wednesday, the first day of the May Day holiday.

The new production, named "Formed Police Unit," spirals around a story about Chinese peacekeeping police going to foreign countries and war-torn areas to carry out peacekeeping missions.

In the process of making this film, a number of Chinese peacekeeping police personnel who had participated in overseas peacekeeping missions were invited to the film set to give guidance. (Xinhua)

## The Conversation

## Pediatric brain tumor is notoriously hard to treat

## mRNA vaccine offers hope for children with brain cancer

By Christina von Roemeling and John Ligon  
University of Florida

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

Brain cancers remain among the most challenging tumors to treat. They often don't respond to traditional treatments because many chemotherapies are unable to penetrate the protective barrier around the brain. Other treatments like radiation and surgery can leave patients with life-long debilitating side effects.

As a result, brain cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related death in children. Brain tumors in children frequently do not respond to treatments developed for adults, likely due to the fact that pediatric brain cancers are not as well-studied as adult brain cancers. There is an urgent need to develop new treatments specific to children.

We developed a new messenger-RNA, or mRNA, cancer vaccine, described in newly published research, that can deliver treatments more effectively in children who have brain cancer and teach their immune systems to fight back.

## Immune

The immune system is a complex network of cells, tissues and organs whose primary function is to continuously surveil the body for threats posed by foreign invaders - pathogens that damage tissues and make you sick. It accomplishes this by recognizing antigens, or abnormal proteins or molecules, on pathogens. T cells that recognize these antigens seek out and destroy the pathogens.

Your immune system also protects you from domestic threats like cancer. Over time, your cells sustain DNA damage from either internal or external stressors, leading to mutations. The proteins and molecules produced from mutated DNA look quite different from the ones cells typically produce, so your immune system can recognize them as antigens. Cancer develops when cells accumulate mutations that enable them to continue to grow and divide while simultaneously going undetected by the immune system.

In 1991, scientists identified the first tumor antigen, helping lay the framework for modern-day immunotherapy. Since then, researchers have identified many new tumor antigens, facilitating the development of cancer vaccines. Broadly, cancer vaccines deliver tumor antigens into the body to teach the immune system to recognize and attack cancer cells that display those antigens. Although all cancer vaccines conceptually work very similarly, they each significantly vary in the way they are developed and the number and combination of antigens they carry.

One of the biggest differences among cancer vaccines is how they are created. Some vaccines use protein fragments, or peptides, of tumor antigens that are directly given to patients. Other vaccines use viruses reengineered to express cancer antigens. Even more complex are vaccines where a patient's own immune cells are collected and trained to recognize cancer antigens in a laboratory before being delivered back to the patient.

Currently, there is a lot of excitement and focus among researchers on developing mRNA-based cancer vaccines. Whereas DNA is the blueprint of which proteins to make, mRNA is

a copy of the blueprint that tells cells how to build these proteins. Thus, researchers can use mRNA to create blueprint copies of potential antigens.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought significant attention to the potential of using mRNA-based vaccines to stimulate the immune system and provide protection against the antigens they encode for. But researchers have been investigating the use of mRNA vaccines for treating various cancers since before the pandemic.

Our team of scientists in the Brain Tumor Immunotherapy Program at University of Florida has spent the past 10 years developing and optimizing mRNA vaccines to treat brain cancer.

Cancer vaccines have faced significant challenges. One key hurdle is that these vaccines may not always trigger a strong enough immune response to eradicate the cancer completely. Moreover, tumors are not made up of one type of cancer cell, but rather a complex mix of cancer cells that each harbors its own unique cocktail of mutations.

Our cancer vaccine seeks to address these issues in a number of ways.

First, we designed our vaccines by using the RNA of a patient's own cancer cells as a template for the mRNA inside our nanoparticles. We also packaged our cancer vaccine inside of nanoparticles made up of specialized lipids, or fat molecules. We maximized the amount of mRNA packaged within each nanoparticle by sandwiching them between lipid layers like the layers of an onion. In this way, we increase the likelihood that the mRNA molecules in our nanoparticles produce enough tumor antigens from that patient's cancer to activate an immune response.

Also, instead of injecting nanoparticles into the skin, muscle or directly into the tumor, as is commonly done for many therapeutic cancer vaccines, our mRNA nanoparticles are injected into the bloodstream. From there, they travel to organs throughout the body involved in the immune response to teach the body to fight against the cancer. By doing so, we've found that the immune system launches a near immediate and powerful response. Within six hours of receiving the vaccine, there is a significant increase in the amount of blood markers connected to immune activation.

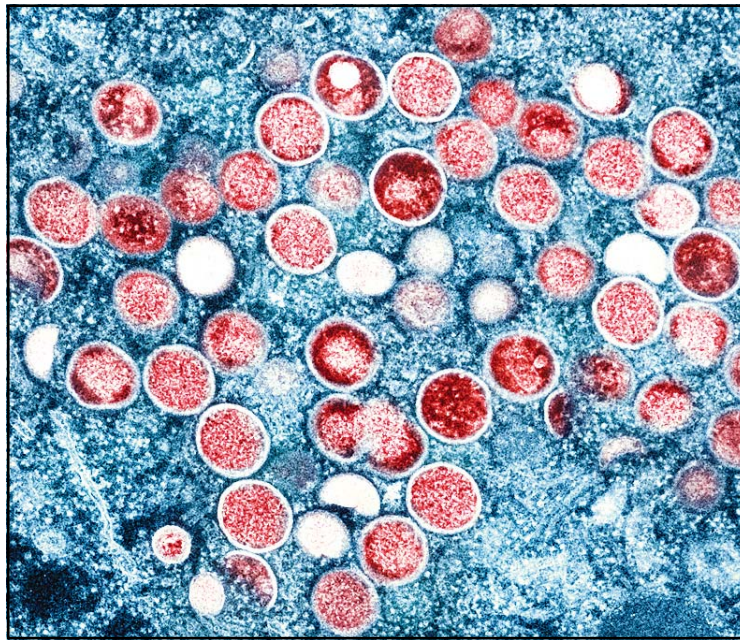
## Trials

Our mRNA-based vaccines are currently undergoing early-phase clinical trials to treat real patients with brain cancer.

We administered our mRNA-based vaccine to four adult patients with glioblastoma who had relapsed after previous treatment. All patients survived several months longer than the expected average survival at this advanced stage of illness. We expect to treat children with a type of brain tumor called pediatric high-grade glioma by the end of the year.

Importantly, mRNA vaccines can be developed to treat any kind of cancer, including childhood brain tumors. Our Pediatric Cancer Immunotherapy Initiative focuses on developing new immune-based therapies for children afflicted with cancer. After developing an mRNA vaccine for glioma in children, we will expand to treat other kinds of pediatric brain cancers like medulloblastoma and potentially treat other kinds of cancers like skin cancer and bone cancer.

We are hopeful that mRNA-based vaccines may lead to more children being cured of their brain tumors. (AP)



This image provided by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) shows a colorized transmission electron micrograph of monkeypox particles (red) found within an infected cell (blue), cultured in the laboratory that was captured and color-enhanced at the NIAID Integrated Research Facility (IRF) in Fort Detrick, Md. Scientists say a new form of mPox detected in a mining town in Congo might more easily spread among people. Already, Congo is seeing its biggest mPox outbreak with more than 19,000 suspected infections and 900 deaths. (AP)

## Biggest outbreak

## Highly 'infectious' strain of mPox found in Congo

KINSHASA, Congo, May 2, (AP): Congo is struggling to contain its biggest mPox outbreak, and scientists say a new form of the disease detected in a mining town might more easily spread among people.

Since January, Congo has reported more than 4,500 suspected mPox cases and nearly 300 deaths, numbers that have roughly tripled from the same period last year, according to the World Health Organization. Congo recently declared the outbreak across the country a health emergency.

An analysis of patients hospitalized between October and January in Kamituga, eastern Congo, suggests recent genetic mutations in mPox are the result of its continued transmission in humans; it's happening in a town where people have little contact with the wild animals thought to naturally carry the disease.

## Genetics

"We're in a new phase of mPox," said Dr. Placide Mbala-Kingebeni, the lead researcher of the study, who said it will soon be submitted to a journal for publication. Mbala-Kingebeni heads a lab at Congo's National Institute of Biomedical Research, which studies the genetics of diseases.

The lesions reported by most patients are milder and on the genitals, Mbala-Kingebeni said, making the disease trickier to diagnose. In previous outbreaks in Africa, lesions were mostly seen on the chest, hands and feet. He also said that the new form seems to have a lower death rate.

In a report on the global mPox situation this week, WHO said the new version of the disease might require a new testing strategy to pick up the mutations.

With experts pointing out that fewer than half of people in Congo with mPox are tested, Mbala-Kingebeni said: "The risk is that unless patients themselves come forward, we will have a silent

transmission of the disease and nobody will know."

Mbala-Kingebeni said most people were infected via sex, with about a third of mPox cases found in sex workers. It was not until the 2022 global emergency of mPox that scientists established the disease was spread via sex, with most cases in gay or bisexual men. In November, WHO confirmed sexual transmission of mPox in Congo for the first time.

There are two kinds, or clades, of mPox, which is related to smallpox and endemic to central and west Africa. Clade 1 is more severe and can kill up to 10% of people infected. Clade 2 triggered the 2022 outbreak; more than 99% of people infected survived.

Mbala-Kingebeni and colleagues said they have identified a new form of clade 1 that may be responsible for more than 240 cases and at least three deaths in Kamituga, a region with a significant transient population traveling elsewhere in Africa and beyond.

Dr. Boghuma Titanji, an infectious diseases expert at Emory University who is not connected to the research, said the new mutations are concerning.

"This suggests the virus is adapting to spread efficiently in humans and could cause some pretty consequential outbreaks," she said.

## Epidemic

Although the mPox epidemics in the West were contained with the help of vaccines and treatments, barely any have been available in Congo. Congo's minister of health has authorized the use of vaccines in high-risk provinces, said Cris Kacita Osako, coordinator of Congo's Monkeypox Response Committee. He said officials are in talks with donor countries like Japan to help buy the shots.

"Once a sufficient quantity of vaccines is available ... vaccination will be implemented as part of the response," Kacita Osako said.

'Pioneering tomorrow'

## Scientists and sci-fi writers explore new tech potentials

BEIJING, May 2, (Xinhua): New technologies are maturing at a rapid pace that could facilitate many futuristic ideas, from underground cities to cyborgs, but scientists and science fiction writers hold differing perspectives on how these advancements might unfold in the future.

Leading sci-fi authors, including Hugo Award winner Liu Cixin, convened with a group of scientists on Tuesday to discuss the possible applications of cutting-edge technologies that are mushrooming amid the ongoing tech boom.

The underground city concept, which figures prominently in Liu's short story "The Wandering Earth," is currently enjoying renewed attention thanks to progress on deep-Earth drilling.

"An inhabitable underground city may become a reality in the foreseeable future with the help of new technologies," said Li Huili, an expert on deep-Earth exploration.

Last month, the drilling of a super-deep borehole in China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region exceeded the 10,000-meter mark, making it the deepest vertical well in Asia.

Li said thermal insulation "coats" are being developed to help testing instruments used in drilling survive the heat of the underground environment.

"Imagine covering a city with such a coat, so it can be built at a much greater depth. The underground heat, instead of being a problem, could be harnessed to provide energy for the city," she said.

Liu concurred that building an underground city is no longer a mere fantasy. However, he noted that it is more likely to be built on the moon or Mars to shield human settlers from strong cosmic radiation.

Brain-computer interface (BCI) technology is another scientific frontier where the boundary between imagination and reality is becoming increasingly blurred. Last week, Chinese scientists unveiled in Beijing the NeuCyber Array BMI System, which allowed a monkey with its hands restrained to control an isolated robotic arm and grasp a strawberry through a soft filament electrode implanted in its brain.

A BCI is a communication system that converts brainwaves into instructions. Li Yuan, a BCI scientist, said the technology has demonstrated its superpower by allowing people with paralysis, for instance, to walk again with the help of mind-controlled exoskeletons.

## Also:

**OSLO:** Three Chinese researchers arrived at China's Yellow River Station in the Arctic on Monday to conduct a variety of scientific surveys across the region over the year.

**Hu Zhengyi,** head of the Yellow River Station, told Xinhua that the station expects to host over 50 researchers this year, who will engage in seasonal expeditions spanning four quarters.

Post-pandemic expeditions at the

## Food security risk

## Swift permafrost thaw boosts CO2

BEIJING, May 2, (Xinhua): A team of Chinese researchers has discovered that soil carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions are significantly more sensitive to climate warming in areas where permafrost has collapsed than in areas where it has not.

This finding, published this week in the journal Nature Geoscience, sheds new light on the relationship between permafrost carbon-climate feedback and future global warming scenarios.

Abrupt permafrost thaw, known as thermokarst, occurred in about 20 percent of the northern permafrost region on Earth that stores about half of all below-ground organic carbon.

The researchers from the Institute of Botany under the Chinese Academy of Sciences found that the warming-induced increase in soil CO2 release was about 5.5 times higher in thermokarst features than in adjacent non-thermokarst landforms.

They found that the greater warming response was mainly due to the lower soil substrate quality and higher abundance of microbial functional genes related to organic carbon decomposition in thermokarst-affected soils.

The results may help to project the future trajectory of permafrost carbon-climate feedback more accurately, said the researchers.

## Also:

**ACCRA:** A World Bank Group report has said the effects of climate change are posing health and food security risks to Ghana.

The Climate and Health Vulnerability Assessment (CHVA) for Ghana Report launched late Tuesday said climate change in Ghana is causing extreme weather events like floods and droughts, deepening Ghana's exposure to illnesses like malaria and diarrhea diseases.

The CHVA report also pointed out that the elderly, youth and children have become more vulnerable to increasing health issues related to heat, air pollution and infectious diseases.

According to the report, the increased heat and expanded rates of infectious diseases have exposed at least two million people to the risk of death.

Yellow River Station have resumed gradually since last July, during which team members have carried out a range of operational surveys and scientific research projects in the fields of glaciology, terrestrial and marine ecology and space physics.

Chinese and Norwegian scientists have also jointly undertaken studies on environmental pollutants in the Arctic.

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## Paris set to host the Games for the third time

## Belem's symbolic torch relay connects Oly histories of France, Greece

PARIS, May 2, (Xinhua): In 1896, the first modern Olympic Games was inaugurated at the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens, Greece, marking a new chapter in the history of world sports. In the same year, over 2,000 kilometers away, in the French port city of Nantes, a three-masted sailing ship named Belem was completed and embarked on its maiden voyage.

128 years later, with Paris set to host the Olympic Summer Games for the third time, the Olympic torch was passed from the Hellenic Olympic Committee to the Paris 2024 Organizing Committee at the renowned Panathenaic Stadium. The French, ever imaginative, decided to transport the torch back to France by sea, for the first time in the Games' history.

Belem was chosen as the carrier as the transfer of the torch links this historically significant sailing ship with the Olympics, serving as a testament to the friendship between Greece and France, two nations that have played pivotal roles in the history of modern Olympics.

"What a wonderful story," expressed the French Minister for Sport, Amelie Oudea-Castera, during the torch boarding ceremony at the Port of Piraeus in Athens last week. "This ship was born in 1896, the same year the Olympic Games were revived. As we all know, France and Greece have worked together in the re-establishment of the modern Olympics. The transfer of the torch via Belem is a reconnection of the two countries through the Olympics."

## OLYMPICS

Belem is 51 meters long, excluding the 7-meter bowsprit, and has a maximum beam of 8.80 meters. Its three large masts reach a height of 58 meters, giving it a commanding presence on the water. The ship's first destination on its initial voyage was Brazil, and during this trip, a fire broke out onboard. Fortunately, the ship was promptly repaired and successfully reached Brazil. In its early years, Belem was used as

a cargo ship, transporting goods such as cocoa, rum, and sugar between France and other continents, and its legendary story continued. Belem avoided the disastrous eruption of Mount Pelee in 1902, which killed about 30,000 people in Martinique and almost destroyed the city of Saint-Pierre. On that day, the ship was supposed to dock at a port which was fully occupied, so it was forced to stop at another bay, sparing it from the catastrophe.

After several changes in ownership and roles - from a cargo ship to a private yacht, and later to a training ship - it was restored and returned to France in 1979. "It's even more coincidental that in just over one week, the Olympic torch will reach the port of Marseille, a city also originally founded by the Greeks along the Mediterranean coast. This makes Belem's voyage even more historically significant," said Paris 2024 president Tony Estanguet.

Many French residents and tourists in Greece gathered at the site to see off the ship. The Giraldi family of four from southern France watched the

handover ceremony at the Panathenaic Stadium and went to the port the next morning to see the torch off.

"This summer, I will also take my family to watch the Olympics in Paris," said Giraldi. "We also look forward to the torch passing near my hometown, and I will be there to see it," he added.

The Olympic torch will arrive at Marseille on May 8 and begin its over two-month journey within France and overseas. On July 14, France's National Day, the torch will reach Paris, where it will continue its relay in the city and surrounding areas.

"This is a great voyage, from Greece to France, symbolizing the transmission of the Olympic spirit," Oudea-Castera said.

"We are in a complex and ever-changing world, where disagreements and even wars may arise. But since its inception, the Olympic movement has been associated with peace, and we hope that Belem, this ship carrying the Olympic torch, will also convey a message of peace to the world." The Paris Olympic Games will open on July 26.



Belem, the three-masted sailing ship carrying the Olympic flame to France, is being towed through the Corinth canal in Corinth, Greece, Sunday, April 28, 2024. The French sailing ship sailed from the port of Piraeus Saturday, a day after the handover ceremony from the Greek Olympic Committee to the Summer Olympics organizers, and will arrive at Marseille, France, on May 8. (AP)

## Chahar and Brar lead Punjab to 7-wicket win over Chennai



Punjab Kings' captain Sam Curran bats during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Chennai Super Kings and Punjab Kings in Chennai, India, Wednesday, May 1, 2024. (AP)

## Super Kings stay at No. 4 despite loss

CHENNAI, India, May 2, (AP): Punjab spinners Rahul Chahar and Harpreet Brar stifled Chennai Super Kings batters as they led the Kings to a seven-wicket win in the Indian Premier League.

Chahar and Brar didn't concede a boundary and picked up four wickets for just 33 runs off their eight overs to restrict Chennai to 162-7 after captain Ruturaj Gaikwad lost his ninth toss in 10 games and Punjab opted to field.

Punjab cruised to 163-3 with 13 balls to spare for its fourth win of the season with Jonny Bairstow (46) and Rilee Rossouw (43) leading the chase against a depleted Chennai pace attack under dewy conditions.

Despite the loss, Chennai stayed at No. 4 with 10 points on superior net run-rate ahead of Sunrisers Hyderabad and Delhi Capitals. Punjab is seventh with eight points.

## CRICKET

Chennai fast bowler Richard Gleeson, playing his first IPL game, provided an early breakthrough when he got a leading edge of Prabhshir Singh's (13) bat in his second over.

Bairstow, who smashed an unbeaten century in Punjab's record-breaking 261-run chase against Kolkata Knight Riders last week, and Rossouw then combined in 64-run stand as both spinners - Ravindra Jadeja and Moeen Ali - struggled with plenty of dew.

Both batters fell in space of three overs when Shivam Dube deceived Bairstow with a slow cutter and got a thick edge and Rossouw missed out on Shardul Thakur's full toss and got clean bowled.

Captain Sam Curran (26 not out)

## Asians delay announcing T20 World Cup squad

## Pakistan recall Ali for tour to Ireland &amp; England

ISLAMABAD, May 2, (AP): Pakistan recalled fast bowler Hasan Ali as backup for the injured Haris Rauf for Twenty20 series against Ireland and England as it searches for the right pace combination for next month's T20 World Cup.

Selectors on Thursday said the 15-member World Cup squad will be announced after the first T20 against England on May 22. The International Cricket Council has set May 24 as the deadline for participating teams to finalize their squads.

Pakistan will play three T20s against Ireland at Dublin from May 10-14 before heading to England for four T20s from May 22-30. The World Cup in the United States and Caribbean starts June 1, and Pakistan's opener is June 6.

Ali has taken 60 wickets in 50 T20s but hasn't played in the format for Pakistan since the Asia Cup in September

2022. He has been playing for Warwickshire in the English County Championship Division One and came under consideration after taking 14 wickets in the Pakistan Super League while representing Karachi Kings.

Fast bowler Haris Rauf, wicketkeeper-batters Mohammad Rizwan and Azam Khan and middle-order batter Irfan Khan all are recovering from injuries and were included in the 18-member squad.

## CRICKET

Rauf has been out of competitive cricket since dislocating his shoulder in February during the PSL but has been bowling at the National Cricket Academy in Lahore, where he's going under rehabilitation.

Azam missed out on the drawn series against New Zealand because of a calf

muscle injury he sustained on the eve of the first T20 at Rawalpindi. Rizwan and Irfan both were ruled out of the last two T20s against the Black Caps because of hamstring injuries they sustained during the three games.

"We still have time to finalize our World Cup squad and we want to look at fitness of a few players," said Wahab Riaz, one of seven members on the selection committee.

"Hasan was under consideration and we have given him clarity that he is the backup for Haris Rauf in case he (Rauf) doesn't fully recover."

**Squad:** Babar Azam (captain), Abrar Ahmed, Azam Khan, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imad Wasim, Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Amir, Mohammad Rizwan, Irfan Khan, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Shadab Khan, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Usman Khan.

and Shashank Singh (25 not out) raised a half-century stand and guided Punjab home.

Earlier, Chennai didn't lose a wicket in the power play for the first time this season as Gaikwad (62)



Punjab Kings' Arshdeep Singh congratulates Chennai Super Kings' captain Ruturaj Gaikwad for batting well during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Chennai Super Kings and Punjab Kings in Chennai, India, Wednesday, May 1, 2024. (AP)

notched his fourth half-century of the season and Ajinkya Rahane (29) put on 64-run stand.

Left-arm spinner Brar clamped the scoring by grabbing two wickets off his successive balls as Rahane slog swept straight to deep mid-wicket and Dube was out plumb leg before wicket while going for a big shot first up against the spinner.

Chahar's impeccable leg-spin further tangled Chennai batters as he had Jadeja (2) lbw off a sharp delivery before bowling confidently against veteran Mahendra Singh Dhoni in the penultimate over which went for only three runs.

Gaikwad raised his half-century in the 16th over with the first six of Chennai's innings as he smashed Curran over mid-on before Arshdeep Singh (1-52) had him bowled off a yorker.

## Team attempt to rebound

## Heat on Hurricanes after injuries to hookers in Super Rugby Pacific

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, May 2, (AP): The Hurricanes face an injury crisis at hooker as they attempt to rebound from their first loss of the season in Super Rugby Pacific when they play the New South Wales Waratahs on Friday.

The Wellington-based Hurricanes have lost all three contracted hookers to injuries in recent weeks. All Blacks hooker Asafa Aumua seriously injured his knee in the Hurricanes' ninth-round win over the Fijian Drua and his understudy, James O'Reilly, will miss the Waratahs match after suffering a concussion during last weekend's 27-19 loss to the Canberra-based Brumbies.

## RUGBY

Those setbacks followed a long-term injury sustained by third-string hooker Jacob Devery.

Head coach Clark Laidlaw called on veteran All Blacks hooker Dane Coles prior to the Brumbies match, but he also is injured.

Extended squad member Raymond Tuputupu is likely to start at hooker against the Waratahs in what will be just his third Super Rugby match. Kianu Kereru-Symes has been called in as cover after last playing for the Hurricanes in 2022. Another replacement might have to be called on.

The spate of injuries at hooker is exacerbated by the loss of All Blacks scrumhalf Cam Roigard to a season-ending injury. Rogiard's absence and the loss of his physical game and ability to ignite attack was felt against the Brumbies.

"On the whole our squad has been relatively fit but we're losing bodies in one or two positions," assistant coach Tyler Bleyendaal said. "At hooker we're going to be tested a lot and we have to bring guys in, but otherwise we're getting enough out of our squad."



In this file photo, England's Billy Vunipola during the Rugby World Cup Pool D match between England and Chile at the Stade Pierre Mauroy in Lille, Saturday, Sept. 23, 2023. English rugby club Saracens is looking into an incident involving England international Billy Vunipola in Majorca. It follows reports he was arrested after officers used a Taser to subdue him. (AP)

For the first time this season, the Hurricanes will have to prepare for a match on the back of a loss. While the Waratahs are in 11th place with only two wins, they retain an outside chance of making the playoffs and are capable of better performances than their form suggests.

"We're disappointed. It's the first time the team has had to reflect on a loss," Hurricanes backrower DuPlessis Kirifi said. "The side was going into the remainder of the season with challenges and it was an opportunity to dig deeper while reflecting on what they needed to improve on in their remaining games."

"With a loss comes a great chance for us to be better and to look under a few rocks."

## Champs League being expanded, EPL teams have failed to take advantage

MANCHESTER, England, May 2, (AP): The English Premier League has missed out on a bonus fifth Champions League place in next season's revamped and expanded competition.

Borussia Dortmund's 1-0 win against Paris Saint-Germain in their semifinal first leg on Wednesday confirmed Germany would join Italy in being granted an extra berth.

The fifth spots were based on performances from each country this season in the Champions League, Europa League and Europa Conference League and averaged out by UEFA.

Aston Villa was England's only remaining team in Europe by advancing to the semifinals of the Conference League. But even if it goes on to win the competition, Villa cannot amass enough points for England to overtake Germany, which still has two teams in the Champions League and one in the Europa League.

Dortmund's win took Germany's average points total to 18.357. The most England could amass is 18.25.

It means three-time European Cup winner Manchester United will miss out on next season's Champions League, likely increasing the pressure on manager Erik ten Hag.

Aston Villa and Tottenham - competing for fourth place in the Premier League - also know there will be no back door entry to the biggest stage in Europe.

UEFA's ranking system gives points for each game a team wins or draws in European competition, with bonuses attached to advancing to different stages.

Since 2005, England would have qualified for a fifth place in the Champions League in 14 of 19 seasons. And despite having finalists in five of the past six editions, English teams' disappointing performances this season have wrecked their chances of an extra place.

Man United and Newcastle failed to advance from the group stage, and Manchester City's quarterfinal loss to Real Madrid was the defending champion's earliest exit from the competition in four years.

In the Europa League, Liverpool was surprisingly eliminated by Atalanta in the quarterfinals.

## SOCCER

In contrast, German teams have excelled. Bayern Munich and Dortmund were through to the semifinals of the Champions League and Bayer Leverkusen into the semifinals of the Europa League.

Dortmund, fifth in the Bundesliga, guaranteed a place in next season's Champions League by beating PSG.

Roma is currently fifth in Italy. The Champions League is expanding from 32 to 36 teams next season to allow for a new league phase that will replace the existing group stage.

Via a seeding system, teams will be drawn to play against eight opponents home and away in one league format.

The top eight teams will advance to the round of 16. Teams that finish from ninth to 24th will face a two-leg playoff in order to advance.

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## Refugee Team for Paris Olympics has 36 athletes from 11 countries across 12 sports

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, May 2, (AP): The Refugee Team for the Paris Olympics will feature 36 athletes from 11 countries in 12 sports.

They were picked from more than 70 scholarships, International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach said at the team announcement on Thursday.

Instead of competing under the Olympic flag, the refugees have their

own emblem featuring a heart at its center, surrounded by arrows symbolizing how lost refugees can find their way back. The team will be known under the acronym EOR from the French name Equipe Olympique des Réfugiés.

"Having our own emblem creates a sense of belonging, and empowers us to also stand for the population of more than 100 million people who

share this same experience," said Masomah Ali Zada of Afghanistan, the team chef de mission who competed in women's cycling at the Tokyo Games. "I cannot wait to wear it proudly."

A total of 23 men and 13 women will compete in athletics, badminton, boxing, breaking, canoeing, cycling, judo, shooting, swimming, taekwondo, weightlifting and wrestling at the Games starting on July 24.

Boxer Cindy Ngamba and Ethiopian runner Farida Abaroge are among the women. Kasra Mehdipournejad, an Iranian taekwondo athlete living in Germany, and shooter Edilio Francisco Centeno Nieves from Venezuela are among the men.

"My Olympic dream is coming true," Mehdipournejad said.

On Tuesday, a third runner on the team was suspended for a positive

doping test.

The refugee team was created by the IOC for the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro to allow athletes to keep competing, even if they have been forced to leave their home countries.

There were 10 athletes in Rio, with Syrian swimmer Yusra Mardini becoming the first to compete. Three years ago in Tokyo the number was 29 across 12 sports.

## Al-Qurain win Federation Cup

# Kuwait's Al-Najjar and Daif among best players recognized at Arab Championship



Al-Qurain presented with the trophy.

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: Recently concluded in Casablanca, Morocco, the Sixth Arab Championship for Youth Handball Teams witnessed a thrilling competition where the Atlas Lions emerged victorious, while Kuwait's national team secured the runner-up position. Among the stand-out players were Abdulaziz Al-Najjar and Abdulaziz Daif, both from Kuwait honored as the best playmaker, while

### HANDBALL

Dhaif was celebrated as the best right back. Other notable mentions in the best lineup included Mohammed bin Hussein from Tunisia as the best goalkeeper, Hussein Al Freih from Saudi Arabia as the best right winger, Wahib Elias from Morocco as the best left winger, Maytham Abu Sari from Saudi Arabia as the best player in the circle, and Rizki Abdullah from Tunisia as the best acer pack.

In the domestic league, the 12th round of the "Merge" handball league features two exciting matches today. Kuwait Club, currently with 20 points, will face Al-Sahel at 4:30 pm, while Al-Tadamon will play against Yarmouk at 6 p.m. Tomorrow's highlight will be the showdown between Al Salmiya, sitting second in the standings with 19 points, and Al Qadisiya, ranked third with the same score.

In other news, the under 13 years Al-Qurain handball Team clinched the Federation Cup title by defeating Al-Nasr in the final, with Kuwait

Club securing the third spot. Khaled Talib, the Treasurer of the Handball Federation, awarded the teams in a ceremony attended by Al-Nasr Club President Khaled Al-Shraida and Al-Qurain Club President Abdul Karim Al-Shahoumi.

Faleh Al-Zoubi, the director of handball at Al-Nasr Club, attributed this achievement to the dedicated efforts of the administrative, technical staff, and players. He emphasized the club's commitment to nurturing talent and fostering a competitive spirit across all age levels, aiming to make history and excel in various championships.

Al-Zoubi concluded by expressing optimism for the future, stating, "Nothing is impossible, and this is just the beginning; the best is yet to come."



Boston Celtics forward Jayson Tatum (0) shoots over Miami Heat guard Tyler Herro (14) during the first half of Game 5 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series in Boston. (AP)

## Final round of the equestrian league kicks off

# Kuwait Equestrian Federation president Johar Hayat celebrates successful season

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: President Masoud Johar Hayat of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation

applauds the achievements of the current season, highlighting the fierce competition among both

male and female riders across all levels. He attributes this success to the technical prowess of the champions and the unwavering support of the fans throughout the season.

Hayat emphasizes the outstanding conclusion of the third season of the league, noting the exceptional organization amidst robust competition, strong public turnout, and significant sponsorship support.

### EQUESTRIAN

Expressing gratitude to all sponsors, including government and private sector entities, for their steadfast support of equestrian sports, Hayat acknowledges their role in elevating the sport to its current honorable status.

The eighth and final round of the league kicks off at 4:15 pm at the Kuwait Equestrian Center track in the Subhan area.

Riders representing local clubs will compete across various heights, ranging from 90 cm to 140 cm, with competitions continuing tomorrow at heights of 115 cm, 135 cm, and culminating in the grand prize round at 145 cm.

Top rider Ali Al-Kharafi from Kuwait Club leads the knights' standings with 150 points, followed by Fawaz Al-Sabai from Subhan Club (105), Ghazi Al-Jariwi from Kuwait Club (96), Abdullah Al-Awadi from Al-Mas'ael Club (76), and Yara Al-Hunaidi from Kuwait Club (73). Kuwait Equestrian Club leads the club standings, followed by Hawalli Club and Subhan Club (274). The tournament is proudly sponsored by Zain, KGL and Kuwait International Bank.



Hayat with Al-Kharafi, Al-Jariwi and Al-Fazia.

## Zain Premier League qualification on the line, Al-Sahel face Yarmouk

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: In the nineteenth round of the first division league, Al-Sahel faces Yarmouk in a must-win clash to keep their hopes alive for the second qualification card for the Zain Premier League. Simultaneously, they meet Burgan and Sulaibikhat out of contention.

Al-Sahel's victory today is paramount, as any other result would mean Al-Tadamon clinching the second ticket to the Zain Premier League. If Al-Sahel triumphs, they must also win their last match against Sulaibikhat, while Al-Tadamon loses to Yarmouk in the final round.

Despite facing a daunting task, Al-Sahel is determined to secure victory, knowing that they have not managed to defeat Yarmouk in their three encounters this season. On the contrary, Yarmouk, already guaranteed a spot in the Premier League, may utilize this match to give playing time to previously sidelined players.

It's a crucial juncture for Al-Sahel as they strive to keep their Zain Premier League aspirations alive amidst fierce competition and high stakes.

### SOCCER

laibikhat in an important match at the Tadamon Stadium.

With Yarmouk securing the first qualifying card with 30 points, the battle for the second card intensifies between Al-Qadisiya (26 points) and Al-Sahel (21 points), with Burgan and



A file photo of players challenging for the ball.

## Al-Qadisiya and Al-Nasr battle for victory in the league

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 2: The fifth round of the Zain Premier League championship group culminates today with a crucial match between Al-Qadisiya and Al-Nasr at Mohammed Al-Hamad Stadium at 7:00 pm.

Both teams are eager to bounce back from recent setbacks. Al-Qadisiya suffered a defeat against Kuwait Club in the last round, denting its title hopes, while Al-Nasr slipped to sixth place after a loss to Al Salmiya.

Sitting third in the standings with 46 points, Al-Qadisiya aims to reignite its title ambitions by securing a win today. Coach Muhammad Al-Mashaan emphasizes the importance of restoring confidence and accumulating crucial points, especially with the Amir Cup final against Al-Salmiya approaching.

Al-Qadisiya will be without Libyan professional Mohamed Sula due to injury but welcomes

back Mubarak Al-Fanini.

Under coach Zaher Al-Adwani, Al-Nasr (24 points) is determined to secure its first victory in the Championship Group League. Despite facing challenges, including the absence of key player Ayman Lakjia due to suspension, Al-Nasr seeks to capitalize on its opponent's circumstances and revive its pursuit for an advanced position in the league.

Tonight's match promises high stakes and intense competition as both teams vie for victory and a chance to reshape their league standings.

### SOCCER

# Celtics rout 'short-handed' Heat, advance to East semis

## Mavericks take 3-2 lead over Clippers

**BOSTON, May 2, (AP): If this playoff run is about redemption for the Boston Celtics, it had to start with exacting some revenge against the Miami Heat.**

A year ago, Miami embarrassed Boston in a Game 7 showdown at TD Garden.

This time, the Celtics returned the favor.

Jaylen Brown and Derrick White each scored 25 points and the Celtics advanced to the Eastern Conference semifinals, beating the short-handed Heat 118-84 in Game 5.

Boston will face the winner of the Cleveland-Orlando series. The Cavaliers lead 3-2, with Game 6 in Orlando on Friday night.

Brown said they went into the game with a business-like approach.

"It is a lot of history, back and forth. But it didn't matter who it was," Brown said.

That was echoed by teammate Jayson Tatum.

Brown also had six assists, and White hit five 3-pointers. Sam Hauser added 17 points and Tatum had 16 points and 12 rebounds. The top-seeded Celtics never trailed and led by 37 points.

Bam Adebayo scored 23 points and Tyler Herro had 15 for Miami, which made its first exit from the playoffs prior to the conference finals since 2021. The Heat struggled throughout, going 3 of 29 from 3-point range.

Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said it was clear early that the Celtics were playing with some extra energy from the opening tap.

Despite the lopsided loss and the way their season ended, Adebayo said he is taking lessons into the offseason.

Boston played for the first time this postseason without center Kristaps Porzingis after he strained his right calf in



Dallas Mavericks guard Dante Exum (right), shoots as Los Angeles Clippers center Mason Plumlee defends during the first half in Game 5 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series in Los Angeles. (AP)

the Celtics' Game 4 victory. His teammates filled in the gaps, as the Celtics' lead reached 30 points in the first half.

Boston exploited a Heat team that was the most injured it'd been in the series. Jaime Jaquez Jr. sat out after suffering a hip injury in Game 4. He was replaced in the lineup by Delon Wright, marking the 37th starting five the Heat used this season. Jaquez joined Jimmy Butler (knee) and Terry Rozier (neck), who had both been sidelined since the start of the series.

It made for unique rotations for Miami, which included veteran Patty Mills logging minutes for just the third time in the series.

Boston seized on the vulnerabilities in the Heat's defense, spreading them out and knocking down eight 3-point-

ers in the opening period. It helped the Celtics carry an 18-point lead into the second quarter.

The highlight of the opening 12 minutes came courtesy of White, who pulverized Miami from long distance with eight 3s in Game 4. He stayed on the attack early Wednesday, faking a 3-point attempt and then driving in for an uncontested one-handed dunk.

White played to the home crowd afterward, holding his hand in front of his face as he backpedaled up the court. After the Heat called a timeout, a courtside fan near the Celtics' bench could be seen pantomiming fanning White on the sideline.

### Mavericks 123, Clippers 93

In Los Angeles, Luka Doncic scored 20 of his 35 points in the second half and added 10 assists and seven rebounds, propelling Dallas to a victory over the Los Angeles Clippers in Game 5 and a 3-2 lead in their first-round series.

### BASKETBALL

Maxi Kleber hit five 3-pointers and Kyrie Irving added 14 points for the Mavericks, who clamped down on the Clippers defensively and won decisively in Los Angeles for the second time in the series. Dallas moved to the brink of its first playoff series victory since 2022 and only its third since winning the NBA title in 2011.

Doncic is playing on a sprained right knee that limited him at times in the series, but the Slovenian superstar clearly got more comfortable and more dangerous as Game 5 went on. He had 14 points in the third quarter while the Mavs stretched their lead to 25 and eventually took an 89-69 advantage into the fourth, where the Clippers never threatened to do an imitation of Dallas' rally back from a 31-point deficit in Game 4.

## Malaysia cruise into semifinals

# Dominant China secure last four spots in Thomas & Uber Cup

CHENGDU, China, May 2, (Xinhua): China's men's and women's teams trounced their opponents 3-1 and 3-0 respectively, advancing to the Thomas and Uber Cup semifinals here on Thursday.

Playing on home soil for the first time since 2016, China is looking to triumph in the biennial international badminton championships, as the

powerhouse only finished in the last eight in the men's Thomas Cup and lost the women's Uber Cup final two

### BADMINTON

years ago.

World No. 2 Shi Yuqi recovered from one game down to beat Prannoy

Haseena Sunil Kumar 15-21, 21-11, 21-14, scoring the opening victory for China in the quarterfinal clash against defending champion India in the Thomas Cup.

Indian rising star Lakshya Sen crushed Li Shifeng when China led 2-0, but in-form He Jiting and Ren Xiangyu made it 3-1, sealing the host's last-four berth.

Also on Thursday, Malaysia cruised into the semifinals after eliminating Japan 3-1, and will meet China on Saturday.

In the women's Uber Cup, China secured a semifinal spot with a commanding 3-0 victory over Denmark.

Olympic champion Chen Yufei put China ahead by beating Line Hojmark Kjaersfeldt 21-10, 21-12, before world No. 1 Chen Qingchen and Jia Yifan made it 2-0 in the following doubles clash.

He Bingjiao also contributed a 2-0 win against Line Christophersen, 21-16, 22-20.

China will face Japan in the semifinals after the latter defeated India 3-0.

"Japan is a strong team and we need to face them with a good attitude," Chen said. "No matter who the opponent is, we will give our best." "Japan has a flexible lineup because of four great singles players. But so do we," added He.

The championships, held in Chengdu, southwest China's Sichuan Province, marked the 33rd edition of the Thomas Cup and the 30th edition of the Uber Cup, with each tournament featuring 16 teams and taking place from April 27 to May 5.

The remaining quarterfinals will be played on Friday.



A file photo of players in action.



PSG's Lucas Beraldo (left), jumps for a header with Dortmund's Niclas Füllkrug during the Champions League semifinal first leg soccer match between Borussia Dortmund and Paris Saint-Germain at the Signal-Iduna Park stadium in Dortmund, Germany. (AP)

# Sports

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## Dortmund take first step towards CL final

PSG face uphill battle after first leg loss

**DORTMUND, Germany, May 2, (AP):** Niclas Füllkrug scored and Borussia Dortmund earned a 1-0 win over Paris Saint-Germain in the first leg of their Champions League semifinal.

Dortmund defender Nico Schlotterbeck sent a long pass over the top for Füllkrug to control brilliantly with his first touch before firing it past PSG goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma with his next in the 36th minute.

"It's not the first time that I've tried to stick the ball in at the near post this season. This time it worked out and I'm even happier that it's in such an important game," Füllkrug said.

The win gives Dortmund a narrow advantage before the teams play again

### SOCCER

in the second leg in Paris next Tuesday, when the French champion will need to overturn the result if it's going to capture Europe's biggest prize before Kylian Mbappé leaves the club.

PSG is under pressure to finally win to the Champions League to justify more than a decade of huge investment from its Qatari owners.

Dortmund's win ensured it qualified for the tournament next season and it gives the Bundesliga five teams in the expanded tournament. Dortmund is assured of finishing at least fifth.

Roared on by most of the 81,365 fans present, including the famed "yellow wall" behind one of the goals, Dortmund made the busier start and maintained its intensity for the whole game. The home team ran 119.7 kilometers - almost 10 more than the visitors.

Defender Lucas Hernández went off injured after trying to stop Füllkrug from scoring. It looked like Hernández suffered a left leg injury.

PSG pushed hardest early in the second half, when Mbappé hit the right post before Achraf Hakimi struck the left post.

Gregor Kobel saved Mbappé's next effort and Dortmund survived the pressure.

Füllkrug went on to miss further good chances for the German team, while Marquinhos made a crucial block to deny Julian Brandt late on.

"It would have been nice if we could have made our counterattacks count to get a second goal at the end," Dortmund veteran Mats Hummels said. "But now we have to come through in Paris."

The visitors missed chances, too. Ousmane Dembélé should have scored on his return to Dortmund when he blazed a shot over late, then Vitinha flashed a shot wide of the left post.

"We tried to keep the ball from them but it's so difficult because they have a lot of quality," PSG coach Luis Enrique said. "They are a great team on the ball and off the ball. Today in that environment they were great in both aspects of the game. I think we had maybe a lack of intensity in the first half, but in the second half we created clear, clear chances. But we couldn't score."

Dortmund coach Edin Terzić only made his first substitution in the 83rd, when he sent on veteran Marco Reus for the exhausted Karim Adeyemi.

The winner of the two-leg tie will play either Real Madrid or Bayern Munich in the final in London on June 1. The old rivals drew 2-2 in their semifinal first leg in Munich.

Ralf Rangnick became the latest high-profile coach to turn down the vacant Bayern Munich job on Thursday.

Rangnick has decided to remain in charge of Austria beyond this summer's European Championship.

"I am the Austrian team manager with all my heart. This job gives me incredible joy and I'm determined to continue successfully on the path we've chosen," Rangnick said in a statement on the Austrian Football Association website. "I would like to expressly stress that this is not a rejection of FC Bayern, but a decision in favor of my team and our common goals."

Rangnick's decision is an embarrassing blow for Bayern, whose officials had been praising the 65-year-old former Leipzig and Manchester United coach in recent days.

"He has huge skills in developing players and teams. Everything I hear from people around the Austrian national team is very, very positive. And we ourselves have players who work under him," Bayern president Herbert Hainer said this week. "If he were to come, he would be a very good choice for us."

Rangnick had emerged as the favorite to take over from the departing Thomas Tuchel as other candidates ruled themselves out.



Captain of the handball junior team receives the championship trophy as Kuwait Club players celebrate on the podium.

Al-Arabi and Kazma resume intense rivalry

## Kuwait Club emerge as junior league champs

**KUWAIT CITY, May 2:** Kazma will go head-to-head with Arabi at the Al-Ittihad Hall within the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Hall Complex. This marks the commencement of the "Playoff" matches determining the third and fourth spots in the Basketball League. The league adopted best of three for the series.

Meanwhile, Kuwait emerged as the champion of the Junior League (under 17 years) in basketball, triumphing over Al-Qurain, the runner-up, with a score of 92-82 in the final round held at the Al-Ittihad Hall. Al-Qadisiya secured third place by defeating Kazma in the same round with a score of 76-68.

The final round, set to commence next Friday, will see Kuwait facing off against Al-Qadisiya, adopting a comparable format but extending over five matches.

Throughout this season, Al-Arabi and Kazma clashed

four times, all resulting in favor of the "orange" team, yet the green team proved a formidable opponent in every encounter.

Al-Arabi aims to reclaim its spot on the podium by clinching third place, while Kazma endeavors to com-

### HANDBALL

pensate for their absence in the final, having held second place in the preceding four editions.

Al-Arabi places its faith in Abdullah Salmeen, Hussein Al-Khabaz, alongside Americans Kendall and Dembicki, whereas Kazma banks on the skills of Ahmed Al-Balushi, Abdulaziz Al-Hamidi, Youssef Bourahma, in addition to Americans Leslie and Chapman.



Kuwait gymnastics team gearing up for the tournament.

## Al-Hilal and Al-Nasr set for the King's Cup final

**RIYADH, May 2:** For the sixth time in the tournament's history, Al-Hilal and Al-Nasr will face off in the final of the King's Cup.

Al-Nasr secured its spot in the

### SOCCER

final after defeating Al-Khaleej 3-1 in the semi-final, marking its 15th qualification for the final. The yellow team has previously claimed the title six times, with its last victory dating back to 1990.

Al-Hilal, on the other hand,



Cristiano Ronaldo challenges for the ball with an opponent.

earned its place in the final by defeating Al-Ittihad. The clash between Al-Hilal and Al-Nasr marks their sixth encounter in the tournament's final round.

Their previous meetings in the final occurred in 1981, 1987, 1989, 2015, and 2020. Al-Nasr emerged victorious in the first two encounters, while Al-Hilal claimed victory in the last three matches.

As anticipation builds for the final showdown, both teams are poised to deliver an exhilarating display of football prowess in their quest for the prestigious title.

## Kuwait gymnastics team heads to Warsaw for Polish Championship

**WARSAW, May 2:** The junior women's rhythmic gymnastics team delegation embarked on a journey to Warsaw to gear up for the Polish International Gymnastics Championship. The tournament commenced yesterday and will run until the following Sunday.

Comprising seven talented gymnasts, including Sarah Al-Bannai, Layan Behbehani, Amina Al-Kandari, Talia Behbehani, Nabila Al-Kharafi, Raya Al-Qassar, and Al-Jazi Al-Haroun, the national team delegation is under the leadership of Souad Al-Kandari, a member of the Women's Committee in the Gymnastics Federation. Assisting her is the

team's manager, Lujain Al-Asfour, alongside Ukrainian coaches Irina Kovalchuk and Victoria Vysyuk.

The participation of the junior girls' team in this championship aligns with the federation's strategy to enhance the skills of female players by exposing them to diverse and

### GYMNASTICS

advanced training environments in rhythmic gymnastics. With aspirations for top rankings in the tournament, the federation aims to bolster the players' confidence on the international stage.

Barcelona battle Girona

## Real Madrid eye La Liga title

**MADRID, May 2, (Xinhua):** Real Madrid could be crowned La Liga champions on Saturday if results go their way, especially in the clash between Girona and FC Barcelona, which is vital to see who will finish in second place.

For Madrid to be officially confirmed as La Liga champions with four matches still to play, they need to win their match against Cadiz on Saturday afternoon and Barca fail to win their visit to face Girona in the Montilivi Stadium.

Real Madrid are clear favorites to beat Cadiz, who travel to Madrid, third from bottom in the table and five points behind 17th placed Celta Vigo.

Carlo Ancelotti will again rotate his starting 11 with a view to next week's Champions League semifinal return leg at home to Bayern Munich, but that still means players such as Eder Militao, Brahim Diaz, Arda Guler and Dani Carvajal all starting.

Cadiz have only scored 23 goals all season and anything other than defeat in the Bernabeu would be a major upset.

If Real Madrid win, then attention will immediately turn to the Catalan derby in Girona, where the home side will go second if they can beat Barca.

Barca made hard-work of beating 10-man Valencia on Monday and were once again led by 16-year-old Lamine Yamal and veteran striker Robert Lewandowski.

Girona pose a big threat down both wings, with Yan Couto and Savio whose performances have helped powerful striker Artem Dovbyk, who is the top scorer in La Liga with 19 goals this season.

Xavi Hernandez's side have to stop the Girona attack in what promises

to be an entertaining game, with the added interest of whoever goes second is in line to play next season's Spanish Supercup.

The weekend kicks off with fifth place Athletic Bilbao traveling to Getafe looking to end their dip in form after winning the Copa del Rey. Athletic's task isn't helped by injuries to Yuri Berchiche, Inigo Ruiz de Galarreta and Oihan Sancet.

Real Sociedad will expect three points to end a winless run of three games when they entertain Las Palmas, who have lost their last six matches, although the home side have lost Spain international Martin Zubimendi through injury.

Saturday's final game sees Atletico Madrid travel to Mallorca, without the suspended Antoine Griezmann. A win would see Mallorca safe from relegation, and they will take heart from the fact their rivals have lost 12 from 23 away matches this campaign.

Last week's 1-1 draw in the Seville derby dented Betis' hopes of overtaking Real Sociedad, but they will be optimistic of three points when they visit Pamplona to face an Osasuna team who have lost four games from five after Jagoba Arrasate said he was stepping down as coach at the end of the season.

Valencia's defeat in Barcelona also put a break on their European hopes, but despite losing goalkeeper Giorgi Mamardashvili, they are favorites at home to an Alaves side that will be assured of top-flight survival if Cadiz fail to beat Real Madrid.

Celta will also be hoping for a Cadiz defeat ahead of their hope game to Villarreal in a game that is relevant to both the battle to qualify for Europe and to avoid the drop.

Celta's main task will be to stop Villarreal's 17-goal striker Alexander Sorloth, who has four goals in the last four games.

### SOCCER



Ancelotti