



Scan the QR code to access the Arab Times WhatsApp Channel



Amir honors exceptional graduates at University City inauguration

- Details Page 2 -

Amir welcomes Sultan of Oman



Amiri Diwan photo
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tariq and his official accompanying delegation at Kuwait Airport on Monday.

'State visit reflects strong ties'

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): The Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tariq, and an official accompanying delegation arrived on a state visit in Kuwait Monday.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Sultan Haitham and his accompanying

Continued on Page 5

Opinion

In the name of Constitution, they destroyed anything beautiful in Kuwait

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah
Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

WHAT Kuwait has experienced in recent years can be summarized through the reaction of citizens who saw themselves living in injustice and oppression as a result of parliamentary interventions in everything - big or small.

Someone wrote on social media about the day after the dissolution of the National Assembly: "From today, there will be no parliamentarian who takes away your right to promotion in order to put pressure on a minister to promote his relative or a constituent. There is no parliamentarian who will intercede for a mentally ill person and put him in military training, and then the latter turns to us. There will be no parliamentarian who will run between ministries to mediate for a group that does not want to work and wants to earn a living while at home. From today, we begin the journey of cleaning up what was ruined in the past years." This kind of message explains a reality that Kuwaitis have lived through over the past five decades.

We are not revealing a secret if we say: "Indeed, this reality was caused by wrong popular choices; as people were betting that the next would be better than the previous, but they were shocked when they found it was worse, and even the choices of parliamentarians had a price."

It was assumed that the parliamentarians were the elite that legislated for a better future for a vibrant society, in which the percentage of youths is about 63 percent.

However, they went against the clock, when they believed, at a certain point, that they had become guardians of the people; imposing their fantasies stemming from political delusions in order to distort the society and untangle its harmony.

Those who were able to make all people obscure and prevent joy even in homes would enact laws that increased backwardness, and spread discord and hatred and division even between the leadership and the people, made themselves forget that they live in a country whose people -- from time immemorial -- have relied on openness and tolerance, free exchange of opinions, solidarity and individual initiative which, at some point,

Continued on Page 5

Email: ahmed@aljarallah.com

Follow me on:



ahmedaljarallah@gmail.com

Kuwait UN peace partner: Guterres

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait is a beacon of humanitarian work as well as a vital and unique partner of the United Nations due to its extensive efforts proliferating peace in the region and the world, said UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Sunday.

In an interview with KUNA, Guterres affirmed that his current visit to the State of Kuwait was to express gratitude to the Kuwaiti people and leadership led by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah who continues the legacy of fruitful cooperation with the UN.

Secretary General Guterres reflected on the Kuwaiti-UN cooperation throughout the years, commending Kuwait for its numerous humanitarian stances especially towards the Syrian crisis.

The UN chief lauded Kuwait's invaluable assistance towards Syria, remembering that Kuwait was the chief contributor to humanitarian efforts there via donating USD 500 million to the inaugural international donors' conference for Syria, in which the Gulf state organized on three occasions.

The UN official also commended the mediating role played by Kuwait to end the rift among countries involved in the Gulf crisis, saying that was reflective of Kuwait's positive stance towards unity in the region.

Whether in the Arab League or the UN, Kuwait continued to play a pivotal role in boosting cooperation amongst nations, he said, who noted that the Kuwaiti mission in the UN headquarters in New York was very active in preparation for the upcoming 2024 Summit of the Future, an event important to address upcoming global challenges.

On the UN honoring of late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as a global humanitarian leader and Kuwait as an international hub for humanitarian efforts, Guterres stressed that it was fit of Kuwait's relentless efforts in such domain.

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable on Monday to UAE President Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan on the second anniversary of his assumption of power.

His Highness applauded the UAE's developmental achievements in all fields, also hailing the two countries' strong historic relations. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: The State of Kuwait supported and stood in solidarity with the people of Afghanistan who were affected by the devastating floods that hit the northern region of their country, said the Foreign Ministry on Monday.

The statement added that Kuwait expressed its condolences towards those who lost their lives due to the floods that caused destruction of infrastructure and property and also wished for the swift recovery of people injury in this natural disaster. (KUNA)

PM Sheikh Ahmad heads Kuwait's new government

Amiri Decree approves Cabinet lineup

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah signed a decree Sunday approving the new Cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah.

- The new Cabinet lineup:
1. Fahad Yousuf Saud Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Interior Minister
 2. Shereeda Abdullah Al-Mousherji, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs
 3. Dr. Imad Mohammad Al-Atiqi, Deputy Prime Minister and Oil Minister
 4. Abdulrahman Bdah Al-Mutairi, Minister of Information and Culture
 5. Dr. Ahmad Abdulwahab Al-Awadhi, Minister of Health
 6. Dr. Anwar Ali Al-Mudhaf, Minister of Finance, and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs
 7. Dr. Adel Mohammad Al-Adwani, Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research
 8. Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya, Minister of Foreign Affairs
 9. Dr. Noura Mohammad Al-Mashaan, Minister of Public Works and Minister of Municipality Affairs



Prime Minister

10. Dr. Mohammad Ibrahim Al-Wasmi, Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs

11. Omar Saud Al-Omar, Minister of Commerce and Industry, and Minister of State for Communication Affairs

12. Dr. Mohammad Abdulaziz Bushehri, Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable

Energy, and Minister of State for Housing Affairs

13. Dr. Amthal Hadi Al-Huwailah, Minister of Social Affairs, Labor, Family Affairs and Childhood and Minister of State for Youth Affairs

The decree would take effect once published in the official gazette.

The following are brief CVs of the new Cabinet lineup:

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, born in 1952, Sheikh Ahmad did his primary studies in Sharqiya School and High School in Lebanon.

He holds a bachelor degree in Business Administration, Finance (Banking and Investment) from University of Illinois, US, in 1976.

He worked at the Kuwait's Finance Center until 1978 and then transferred to the Central Bank of Kuwait where he worked until 1987.

Sheikh Ahmad was chairman of the board for Burgan Bank from 1987 till 1998, and in July 1999 he was appointed as Minister of Finance and Minister of Communications.

On February 14 2001, he was appointed as Minister of Communications while on July 14 2003, he was appointed as Minister of Communications, Minister of Planning and Minister of State for Administrative Affairs.

Sheikh Ahmad was assigned as Minister of Communications and Minister of Health on June 15 June 2005.

Continued on Page 5



Defense/Interior



Cabinet Affairs



Oil



Information



Health



Finance



Education



Foreign Affairs



Public Works



Justice



Commerce



Electricity

Bahrain's efforts in organizing summit praised

Kuwait affirms support for joint Arab work

MANAMA, May 13, (KUNA): Kuwait's Permanent Envoy to Arab League, Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi affirmed Monday Kuwait's intent on supporting joint Arab work. Al-Mutairi made these remarks to KUNA on sideline of preparatory meetings for 33rd Arab Summit.

Ambassador Al-Mutairi spoke of the aligning visions of Arab states and of their mutual commitment to international laws and treaties.

Developments of the situation Palestine took the helm at the permanent envoy preparatory meeting, mentioned the Ambassador adding that Arab states presented a united stance for the Palestinian people to gain their legitimate rights and full United Nations membership.

The permanent envoy and high official meeting submitted a number of resolutions to the preparatory foreign min-

isters meeting to be held tomorrow, he added.

Al-Mutairi relayed Kuwait's appreciation for Bahrain for hosting the upcoming Arab Summit and for the great support they are lending to host a successful summit.

On Sunday, Kuwait's Ambassador to Bahrain Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah expressed his heartfelt appreciation to the Kingdom of Bahrain for their efforts in organizing the Arab League Summit.

Kuwait supports all means to help Bahrain see this summit a success, said the ambassador in his remarks to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), as he heads the Kuwaiti delegation in the preparatory meeting of the Arab League's Economic and Social Council for the 33rd Arab Summit.

Continued on Page 5



Social Affairs

Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:28	Asr	15:20
Sunrise ..	04:57	Maghrib ..	18:31
Zohr	11:44	Isha	19:58

Local

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

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Hot, partly cloudy and relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate northeasterly wind to moderate northerly wind, with speeds of 12-35 km/h.

Weather

By Night: Mild and relatively humid especially over coastal areas with light to moderate north-westerly wind to northeasterly wind, with speeds of 15-38 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	42	28
Kuwait Airport	43	29
Abdaly	44	28
Jahra	45	28
Salmiyah	32	27
Nuwaisib	40	26
Wafra	43	25

Amir signs decree, nods formation of 46th gov't since 1962

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah signed a decree Sunday approving formation of the 46th Cabinet led by Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

The first government was formed in January 1962 under reign of late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

Following is a chronology of the 44 governments formed since 1962.

Cabinets during the era of the Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah:

The first government, called the transitional cabinet and chaired by the late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, was formed on January 17, 1962. It consisted of 14 ministers, had a specific mandate for drafting a constitution, thus its tenure ended when this was accomplished on January 27, 1963.

The second government, formed on January 28, 1963, was chaired by Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and consisted of 15 ministers. It continued until December 5, 1964.

The third one, set up on December 6, 1964, was chaired by Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem, consisting of 14 ministers, four of them were MPs.

Survived

This government survived for 28 days only because it failed to win confidence of the National Assembly which considered selection of some ministers in violation of Article 131 of the constitution.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem chaired the fourth government that was formed on January 3, 1965, and included 13 ministers. It functioned until Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem passed away on November, triggering dissolution of government on December 3, 1965.

Cabinets during the era of the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah:

The fifth government, formed on December 4, 1965, was chaired by Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. This cabinet grouped 13 ministers including three MPs.

It resigned in the end of the legislative term, February 3, 1967.

The sixth cabinet, formed on February 4, 1967, was also chaired by Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad. It consisted of 14 ministers including three MPs, served for four years until February 1, 1971, at end of the parliamentary legislative term.



Sheikh Jaber

The seventh government, which also served a full four-year term, was formed on February 2, 1971. Chaired by Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad, this cabinet included 13 ministers including two MPs.

Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad formed the following cabinet, the 8th, on February 9, 1975. The 15-member cabinet. It ended its term a month after dissolution of the parliament in August 1976.

The ninth government, formed while the parliament was dissolved on September 6, 1976, was chaired by Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad and consisted of 18 ministers. Its mandate ended in December 1978 after the passing away of then Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad, then Crown Prince and Prime Minister, was named as Amir.

Cabinets during the era of Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah:

The 10th government was formed on February 16, 1978. Then Crown Prince Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah chaired the cabinet. It consisted of 18 ministers and served until March third, 1981 when new elections were announced.

The 11th government, formed on March 4, 1981, was chaired by Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, consisting of 15 ministers including one MP. It served a full four-year term up until March 2, 1982, ahead of parliamentary elections.

The 12th government was formed on March 3, 1985 and was chaired by Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah.

The cabinet served for 16 months only due to deterioration of relations between executive and legislative authorities that led to parliament's dissolution in 1986, triggering the government's resignation on July 11 of this year.

The 13th government was formed on the following day and consisted of 21 ministers.

Sheikh Saad formed the 14th government with 22 ministers on June 20th, 1990. This government continued in office despite the August 2, 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and was functioning from the Saudi City of Taef until the liberation in February 1991. It resigned on April 19, 1991.

The 15th government, the first after liberation, was dubbed the "government of reconstruction." It was formed on April 20 of 1991 and consisted of 20 ministers. It lasted until October 16, 1992, when new parliamentary elections were held.

The 16th government, formed on October 17th, 1992, was chaired by Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and consisted of 15 ministers including six MPs.

The 17th government was formed on October 15th, 1992. Chaired by Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah, the government consisted of 14 ministers including four MPs. The government resigned on March 21, 1998 after a no-confidence motion was tabled against then information minister the late Sheikh Saud Nasser Al-Sabah.

Formed

The following government, the 18th, was formed by Sheikh Saad on March 22nd, 1998. It served for 15 months and resigned on July 12th, 1999, in the wake of an Amiri Decree to dissolve the parliament.

The 19th cabinet, formed on July 13 of 1999, was chaired by Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah. The government resigned on January 29, 2001 after relations with the parliament deteriorated when former MP Hussein Al-Qallaf requested interpellation of Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Saad Al-Hashel.

However, the cabinet was formed by Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

because Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah had to leave the country for treatment. Sheikh Sabah selected 15 ministers including three MPs. This government resigned on July 13, 2003 at end of the legislative term of the National Assembly.

CP post separated

The 21st government was formed on July 14th, 2003, by Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad because the post of Crown Prince was separated from the post of Prime Minister for the first time.

This government served until February 8, 2006, despite its resignation a month earlier in the wake of passing away of Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Cabinets during the era of Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah:

The 22nd government was formed by Sheikh Nasser Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on February 9, 2006, and included 15 ministers and ended its mandate on July 9 because of the parliament's dissolution.

Sheikh Nasser formed the 23rd government on July 10, 2006, and resigned on March 4, 2007 due to tension in relationship between the executive and legislative authorities. Relations reached low ebb after a grilling against Minister of Health Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Sabah, which led to a motion of no-confidence.

The 24th government was formed by Sheikh Nasser on March 25th, 2007, and resigned on May 19, 2008, in the wake of the dissolution of the National Assembly.

Sheikh Nasser formed the 25th government on May 28, 2008. However, the extremely tense relations between the legislative and executive authorities caused by an interpellation against the Prime Minister forced the government to resign on November 25, 2008.

His Highness the Amir accepted the resignation and the government continued as caretaker until January 22nd, 2009. The 26th government was formed by Sheikh Nasser on January 23rd of the same year and resigned after four months.

The 27th government was formed by Sheikh Nasser on May 29th, 2009, and served for two years. It resigned following the growing number of interpellations. His Highness Sheikh Nasser was reassigned, on May 8, 2011, to form the 28th government that consisted of 15 ministers including one MP.

However, it resigned on November 29 of same year due to tense relations with the parliament following tabling of several grilling motions. On December 13th, 2001, Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah formed his first government, the country's 29th.

This care-taker government was mandated with organizing elections and its term expired on February 13th, 2012. Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak formed the 30th government the following day. However, this government was dropped because the Constitutional Court annulled parliamentary elections.

Resigned

The government resigned on July 18th, 2012. The Prime Minister formed the 31st government on July 19th, 2012 with 13 ministers. This cabinet lasted for four months due to parliament's dissolution. The 32nd government was formed by Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber on December 11th 2012.

It served for seven months until the Constitutional Court's annulled December 2012 parliamentary elections. Elections were held on July 27th, 2013.

The 33rd government was formed on August 4, 2013, and ministers tendered their resignations on November 28th, 2016. The 34th government was formed on December 10, 2016 headed by Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, consisting of 15 ministers, including one MP.

The cabinet resigned on November 30, 2017. The 35th government was formed on December 11th, 2017 under the chairmanship of Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, consisting of 15 ministers, including one MP.

The government resigned on November 14, 2019 after Minister of Public Works Jenan Bushehri announced her resignation following an interpellation.

The 36th government was set up on December 17th, 2019. Headed by Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, it consisted of 15 ministers, including two MPs, along with the return of seven ministers from (2017 government) and the entry of three women in the new ministerial formation.

Cabinets during the era of the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah:

On December 14th, 2020, the 37th government was formed headed by Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled and it consisted of 15 ministers.

It resigned on January 18, 2021. The 38th cabinet was formed on March 2, 2021 and was also headed by Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled. It resigned on November 18. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled formed the 39th government which included 15 ministers.

His Highness the Amir accepted the government resignation on May 10, 2022.

Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah formed the 40th government on August 1, 2022 and included 12 ministers. His Highness the Amir accepted the government resignation on October 2, 2022.

On October 6, the 41st government was formed led by prime minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, including 15 ministers and resigned in 26 January 2023.

On October 16, 2022, Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad formed the 42nd government consisting of 15 ministers. His Highness the Amir accepted the government resignation on January 26, 2023, assigning it to act as care-taker.

Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad formed Kuwait's 43rd government on April 9, 2023. His Highness the Amir accepted the government's resignation on June 6, 2023.

Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad formed the 44th government on June 18, 2023 and His Highness the Amir accepted its resignation on December 20, 2023.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah formed the 45th government on January 17, 2024, and resigned following the National Assembly elections held on April 4 in accordance with Article 57 of the Constitution.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah unveils a mural announcing the opening of Sabah Al-Salem University City.

HH Amir opens Sabah Al-Salem University City, honors students

Turning point for education in country: minister

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Monday sponsored and attended the opening ceremony of Sabah Al-Salem University City and honored top graduates for the years 2018/2019 - 2019/2020 - 2020/2021.

Receiving His Highness the Amir was Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Adel Al-Adwani as well as Deputy Chief of Kuwait University Dr. Nawaf Al-Mutairi and university officials.

His Highness the Amir revealed a mural announcing the opening of Sabah Al-Salem University City.

Attending the ceremony was Prime Minister-designate Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Chief of supreme judicial council and Court of Cassation Counselor Dr. Adel Bouresli, top state officials and families of graduates.

The Minister of Education gave a speech welcoming His Highness the Amir and the esteemed guests, thanking the Amir for his never-ending support to the pursuit of education and support and interest in developing human capital.

This ceremony, he pointed out, coincides with opening of Sabah Al-Salem University City, saying that it is a translation of directives of political leadership on developing education establishments and public universities and removing any obstacles that may stand in the way of progress.

This ceremony, honoring top students of three batches, is turning point for education in the country and a step contributing to comprehensive development process, stated the Minister.

Students

Minister Al-Adwani addressed honor students expressing his pride in their diligent work and congratulated them for their success and excellence.

He called on the graduates to take on responsibility towards their homeland and work towards its progress and prosperity as they are its true wealth and investment.

The Minister's heartfelt speech was followed by President Al-Mutairi's who told the audience of the years of hard work on the path towards opening this University City.

He stated that this contributes to strategic developmental goals of the state as it is one the biggest projects and a leap in the education process.

He spoke of the highly intricate design that weaves the old into the new, integrates the traditional with the modern.

Dr. Al-Mutairi spoke of the utilization of technology and Artificial Intelligence for the benefit of the students, adding that Kuwait University went beyond its academic role and gained accreditation from World Health Organization to join health cities initiative.

Al-Mutairi extended his thanks those responsible for edifice, and congratulated the honor graduates calling on them to be acquainted with various cultures while remaining rooted in their own.

Honor graduate Sheikh Bader Al-Sabah gave speech on behalf of fellow graduates, and his voiced pride and joy at having His Highness the Amir honor him and his peers.

He vowed to be a driving force behind development of this country, taking the time to thank professors for their significant efforts, and parents for their ceaseless support.

A documentary on the University City was played followed by the honoring ceremony.

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

'Submit bonus grievances'

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Official spokesperson for the Ministry of Communications Dr. Ahmad Al-Husseini has announced that employees excluded from the list of excellent job performance bonus beneficiaries who wish to submit grievances regarding the job performance evaluation for 2023 can now do so, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a press statement, Al-Husseini revealed that acting Undersecretary of the ministry Eng. Meshal Al-Zaid issued an administrative circular stipulating the two-month period for submission of grievances. He said the concerned employees can submit their grievances in person at the ministry's headquarters in the Legal Affairs Department in the Communications Tower Complex during official working hours from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon within the specified period.



French Ambassador Claire Le Flecher welcomes His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad at the event.



Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah (center) with the French Ambassador Claire Le Flecher and a guest.

'30,000 learning French language'

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad emphasized Kuwait's commitment to maintaining its status as a cultural and artistic hub in the region, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Speaking at the conclusion of the Francophonie month event, hosted by French Ambassador Claire Le Flecher and attended by numerous diplomats and citizens, His Highness highlighted the significance of the French language in Kuwaiti schools, with approximately 30,000 learners, marking a substantial achievement for Francophonie.

Reflecting on the contributions of Francophonie to global civilization, Sheikh Nasser praised the language's role in fostering thought, philosophy, science, arts, law, and diplomacy.

He emphasized the cultural significance of Francophonie, spanning four centuries, and its enduring impact on contemporary civilization through literature, cinema, and scientific advancements.

Sheikh Nasser highlighted the achievements of modern civilization, including advancements in science, technology, and the arts, which have revolutionized communication, transportation, healthcare, and the arts. He underscored the importance of human and political achievements, such as the establishment of a global peace system post-World War II, emphasizing the promotion of human rights and the rule of law.

Sheikh Nasser reiterated Kuwait's dedication to promoting cultural exchange and cooperation with Francophone countries. He emphasized Kuwait's role as a beacon of culture and arts, welcoming further collaboration to enrich cultural ties and foster mutual understanding in the years to come.

'Significant hurdles to reform & progress over, challenges exist'

"HIS HIGHNESS the Amir has intervened decisively to avert an imminent internal threat, stemming from those who erroneously believed themselves above the law. His recent address emphasized a resolute stance against corruption, fraud, and double standards," columnist **Talal Abdul Karim Al-Arab** wrote for *Al-Jarida* daily.

"In the past, instances of unscrupulous individuals engaging in nefarious activities, such as buying and selling names and assets of families and tribes for personal gain, were exposed.

"This exploitative practice involved individuals relinquishing their identities and assets, only for opportunists to forge new identities and falsely acquire citizenship benefits. Such actions not only undermined the integrity of citizenship but also posed significant fiscal burdens on the state and exacerbated housing and livelihood competitions among citizens.

"The recent government initiatives to investigate and encourage reporting of fraudulent activities have led to the exposure of numerous cases of forgery. Reports from conscientious citizens and heirs of deceased individuals have shed light on these illicit practices. The prevalence of identity fraud, estimated to involve tens of thousands, has become a pervasive concern jeopardizing national security, stability, and familial integrity.

"It's disconcerting to learn that some individuals who acquired false identities through fraudulent means may have ascended to positions of legislative authority. Their opposition to efforts aimed at rectifying these malpractices indicates vested interests threatened by the disclosures.

"The onus now rests on the government to execute His Highness' directives swiftly. There's no room for corruption, bribery, or deceit in Kuwait. His Highness has removed a significant impediment to progress and reform, but challenges remain.

"A concerted effort to reclaim misappropriated assets, rectify corruption, expose forgers, and hold wrongdoers accountable is imperative to safeguard Kuwait's security and economy."

Also:

"There's a consensus that there are those who celebrated the decision to suspend the Council for four years -- many, in fact -- and those who opposed it were few. However, the current circumstances no longer permit delays or leniency," columnist **Iqbal Al-Ahmad** wrote for *Al-Qabas* daily.

"Your Highness the Amir, your decision represents the necessary surgical intervention for our nation's weary body. Yet, the post-operative recovery phase demands meticulous precision, as any oversight here could impede progress and prolong recovery.

"It's imperative to activate oversight mechanisms at every stage of development projects, particularly as we anticipate accelerated progress in the days ahead. This will enable us to shift the narrative from past achievements to present accomplishments.

"In this article, I aim going to present the truth using numerical data, statistics, and ratios, offering a balanced perspective on the matter at hand.

"Let's delve into the numbers sourced from reliable data to substantiate our claims effectively. The compounded annual growth rate in Kuwait since 1957 stood at 4%, declining slightly to 3.2% from 1985 onwards, while the natural growth rate remains at 2.4%. This abnormal increase amounts to 8,000 individuals annually.

"How so? From 1985 to the present, an abnormal increase of approximately 16,000 individuals annually has been observed, corresponding to the period between 1957 and 1985.

"Between 1985 and 2023, Kuwait's population grew by 296,000, showcasing a noticeable abnormal increase.

"Referring to statistical tables elucidates the annual abnormal increase in Kuwait's population compared to natural growth, amounting to over 850,000 citizens.

"Utilizing the concept of exponential growth, a crucial tool in demography, allows us to anticipate population dynamics accurately over time. Historical examples, like Kuwait's population growth since 1957, underscore the significance of this concept.

"While global population growth rates have declined, Kuwait's growth trajectory has remained robust, necessitating a deeper examination.

"Data reveals that approximately 66% of Kuwait's population, numbering 1.546 million were born after the Iraqi invasion in 1990. Notably, 42% of Kuwaiti citizens are under the age of 19, indicating a youthful demographic profile.

"This raises pertinent questions: Are all individuals above 21 eligible voters? Where do newly naturalized citizens, spouses of Kuwaitis granted citizenship in the past two decades, and disenfranchised individuals fit into the electoral landscape?"

"Consequently, recent electoral appeals contesting the validity of the April 4, 2024 National Assembly

elections highlight the need for judicial scrutiny and potential amendments to existing regulations.

"In conclusion, His Highness' expressed concerns regarding national identity and citizenship underscore the importance of addressing these issues promptly and justly."

"His Highness the Amir... Blessed is your comprehensive and resolute decision. Yes, your children, the righteous and loyal Kuwaiti people, were impatiently waiting for your comprehensive and resolute decision, because a group of loud voices, heresies and idle talk were going too far in dragging Kuwait to locations other than its natural place," columnist **Mohammad Ali Al-Naqi** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"They were directing attention outside Kuwait to matters and affairs that contradict the principles and concepts of our authentic Kuwaiti society, which had established the values, customs, virtues, morals and etiquette in dealing with its children of different ages, and are committed to the principles of Arab literature and our Islamic teachings. Talking about them is boring and shameful. Many sincere and loyal people were constantly subjected to these immoral deceptions that were outside the concepts of the righteous and loyal.

"Your Highness, may Allah protect you, you have made your loyal people happy. You relieved them of their anxiety and sorrow through your bold and comprehensive steps. You are the great father of this great society with its aspirations. This society is great for its confidence and faith in your wise leadership, and your bold ability to put Kuwait back to the right path and its renaissance like before.

"Your Highness, may Allah protect and take care of you. You warmed our hearts and promised your people to restore confidence in their present, and be reassured about their future and that of the coming generations.

"O Your Highness, may Allah protect you, remove these corrupt groups through your loyal people. The righteous people, who are loyal to your Highness, do not expect anything from your honorable Highness other than firmness and determination, and that you remove the bearers of hatred and grudges against our beloved Kuwait and the loyal people of Kuwait.

"O Your Highness, may Allah protect you. You have obedience, love, righteousness and loyalty to your lofty position. Walk with the eyes of Allah who is watching over you. The people support you, walking behind you, towards the path of safety, development, prosperity and the return of confidence and hope.

"O Your Highness, may Allah protect you, you have decided. Your sublime and crucial decision will save the country and the people from peril and loss. There is still something good, because of your concern for the country's highest interest, which is more important than the interests of a group that wants to mislead the country and the people, and achieve destruction and devastation.

"The decision is yours, O Guardian, to amend and revise the Constitution in line with the latest developments, as more than six decades have passed since the issuance of the current Constitution. Generations have changed, the features of life have changed, and forces have formed around us that carry concepts contrary to what they were in the past, so the Constitution must be amended to suit the current conditions. Otherwise, it is as if we are outside the flock, the ocean and the region in which we live.

"For decades, we have been facing them from the North and East. Events are increasing and overwhelming us. We are shackled. Your decision, Your Highness, is the good that you set out to decide and work on in your lofty speech. May Allah protect you.

"You are heard and obeyed, O Guardian, O Your Highness, O the chief of your sublime decisions. The titles of these decisions are: 'Blessed be the Authentic Morning', 'Ibn Kabir Al-Asayel' and 'Your Princely Decrees are Grand and Original'."

□ □ □

"Long live HH the Amir... Those we elected freely and directly, that is, of our own free will, are the ones who brought us to a dead end, even before the National Assembly convened and took the constitutional oath to enable them to exercise their constitutional powers. It was said in the past: 'Crosses have no one but their own people!'" columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"We have reached a stage that we did not hope to reach. All this happened while they have not met officially. We did not hope that things would get worse. We expected cooperation between the Assembly and the government for the benefit of the country and the people!

"An unjustified escalation and a blatant assault on the powers of others... This is what those we elected have led us to. They reached the stage of early conflict through irresponsible actions, even before the Assembly was convened. Some of them preempted the escalation of others, up to the point that 10 members met before they took the constitutional oath, which qualifies them to exercise their constitutional powers."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



KUNA photo
The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Mubarak Al-Sabah discusses with a delegation from NATO ways to enhance cooperation with the NATO Regional Center.

Kuwaiti official, NATO team discuss bilateral issues

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): Undersecretary at Kuwait's Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Mubarak Al-Sabah discussed with a delegation from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on Monday, important topics of mutual interests.

According to a statement by the Ministry of Defense, Sheikh Dr.

Abdullah Al-Meshal received the NATO's Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy, Ambassador Boris Ruge, Nora-Elise Beck, Head of the NATO Office at the NATO-ICI Regional Centre in Kuwait.

During the meeting, multiple topics of mutual interest were discussed and ways to enhance cooperation between

the Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense and NATO-ICI Regional Centre.

Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Al-Meshal attended the NATO TALK event (20 years of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative) between Ambassador Ruge and Assistant Professor at Kuwait University, Dr. Bader Al-Saif, held at NATO-ICI Regional Center.

Admin 'attacked' in rare school mishap; all is well

Young man drowns in pool

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The Ministry of Education issued a statement regarding an incident at a school in the Hawalli Educational Zone, where the school administration was attacked by an unknown person, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Fortunately, there were no significant injuries or damages as a result of the incident. In response, the Ministry's spokesperson, Ahmed Al-Wahida, affirmed that the school administration promptly took all necessary precautions to ensure the safety of students and staff.

The aggressor was swiftly brought under control with the assistance of Ministry of Interior security personnel.

Al-Wahida emphasized that this incident is an isolated occurrence and that there was no cause for concern.

Legal measures have been promptly taken, and Ministry and educational district leaders were present at the school to oversee and monitor the situation.

Al-Wahida concluded by affirming the Ministry's commitment to providing a secure educational environment for all students, teachers, and school staff across the country.

□ □ □

Man drowns in pool: A 25-year-old man drowned inside a swimming pool of a sports club in Jahra, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily said the security authorities are investigating the cause of the death.

The man was taken to the emergency department of Jahra Hospital, but the Emergency Medical Department failed to revive him.

The corpse has been handed over to the Forensics medicine.

□ □ □

Jail upheld in kidnap bid: The Court of Appeal has upheld the imprisonment of two Kuwaiti citizens for 10 years with hard labor in the case of kidnapping a 'Fashionista' who is well-known in the social media circles, reports Al-Rai daily.

Court papers show she was kidnapped from Salwa and taken to a suburb in Kabad.

The two men denied the charge of kidnapping and claimed the victim is well-known to them, a statement denied by the victim who said she had never seen or met them before.

□ □ □

Smuggling people: The Court of Cassation acquitted a corporal, an officer and a customs employee of smuggling people, who were banned from traveling and had no passports, through Salmi border, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The court based the merits of the acquittal on the lack of evidence of communication between the defendants, and there were no surveillance camera recordings showing any of the accused.

Previously, the Court of Appeals sentenced all the defendants to five years in prison.

□ □ □

Fire in Al-Rai carpentry: Monday morning, firefighting teams took control of a carpentry fire in the Al-Rai area. The teams began to fight, control and extinguish the fire without causing significant injuries, reports Al-Rai daily.

The daily said the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) is investigating the cause of the fire.

'Come, go on time'

MoH sets work timings for clinics and hospitals

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The Ministry of Health (MoH) confirmed that work in outpatient clinics in hospitals and specialized medical centers begin at seven-thirty in the morning, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This came in an administrative circular issued by the Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry, Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi, addressed to the assistant undersecretaries of the ministry, directors of health regions, central departments, and heads of medical bodies.

The circular indicated that this comes within the framework of the Ministry's keenness to implement Civil Service Council Resolution No. 41 of 2006 and its amendments regarding the rules, provisions and controls of official work and the necessity of adhering to the established working hours according to the nature of the entity's work and to preserve the workflow.

The official working hours are from 7 am to 2 pm for male employees and from 7 am to 1:45 pm for female employees, provided that the period of delay is calculated from the end of the scheduled 30-minute grace period when reporting to work.

The circular stated that for the proper provision of health services, medical, technical and administrative staff must adhere to the scheduled official working hours, calling for adherence to what was stated in the administrative circular.

Over '25,000' people fined

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The General Traffic Department (GTD) at the Interior Ministry, under the leadership of Assistant Undersecretary for Operations and Traffic Affairs Major General Yousef Al-Khadda, continued its campaign to ensure the maximum level of discipline on the roads and to arrest traffic law violators, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily obtained a copy of the statistics issued by GTD for the past week (May 5-10), showing that 25,850 citations for various violations were issued, 34 juveniles were arrested and referred to the Juvenile Prosecution for driving without a license, and 25 individuals were detained for committing serious traffic violations.

According to the statistics, 64 vehicles and 34 bicycles were impounded for different violations like tinted windows, non-compliance with security and safety regulations, and failure to present a valid driving license.

Also, 46 vehicles wanted by law for being used in breach of trust and other cases were impounded, nine people were arrested for failure to serve the prison sentences imposed on them and three others for absconding.

Three people were referred to the Drug Control General Department for the possession of drugs and driving under the influence.

Regarding traffic accidents, the statistics revealed that 238 major accidents occurred last week; resulting in serious injuries and deaths, while 1,357 minor accidents led to material losses only.

'Royal' growing pot in custody

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: In a recent development, the Criminal Security Sector, under the vigilant eye of the General Administration for Combating Narcotics, made significant strides in combating drug-related offenses. One notable arrest includes a member of the ruling family who was apprehended for cultivating marijuana within his residence. Additionally, three individuals of Asian nationality were also detained for possession of narcotic substances, reports Al-Jarida daily.

According to a statement released by the Security Relations and Media Department, a substantial amount of illicit items were seized during the operation. This included 270 marijuana seedlings of varying sizes, approximately 5,130 kilograms of processed marijuana, 4,150 Captagon pills, 620 marijuana cigarettes, 50 grams of hashish, and 21 grams of cocaine. Moreover, authorities discovered six cans of marijuana oil, 27 grams of psychedelic mushrooms, two marijuana electronic cigarettes, three pieces of marijuana-infused sweets, and ten bottles of alcohol.

The Ministry underscored its unwavering commitment to maintaining security and combating the scourge of narcotics trafficking. Regardless of one's status or affiliation, the law applies equally to all individuals, and perpetrators of drug-related crimes will be held accountable for their actions.

Celebrate with Style
A place to make unforgettable memories

MUGHAL MAHAL FAHAHEEL
AL-RAYAN FAMILY LOUNGE & FUNCTION HALL

Weddings | Seminars | Conferences | Celebrations

See view | Ample car parking
For more enquires Call: 23911174 / 23911175 / 97644421
Email: fahaheel@mughalmahal.com
info@mughalmahal.com

@mughalmahalkuwait www.mughalmahal.com

Global leaders unite in Kuwait for humanitarian aid confab on Gaza crisis



A group photo from the conference.

Kuwait leads discussions on crime prevention at UN confab in Vienna

5-day CCPCJ session includes numerous projects, workshops

VIENNA, May 13, (KUNA): The 33rd session of the United Nations' Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) launched, Monday, with participation of Kuwait and other international delegates in Vienna, Austria.

Organized crime is an international threat, which makes up five trillion US dollars in gross domestic product.

The UN's 78th President of the General Assembly Dennis Francis, and Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Ghada Waly would be giving speeches in the opening ceremony of the CCPCJ committee.

Not only would the committee address organized crime challenges, it would also provide possible solutions in combating information and communications for criminal purposes, enhancing global cooperative efforts in the matter.

The five-day CCPCJ session included numerous projects and workshops in combating human trafficking in the digital age, followed up on

the 14th UN Crime Congress, as well as preparing the 15th Crime Congress which will be hosted by United Arab Emirates.

The CCPCJ committee highlighted issues concerning children in terrorist groups, and sought solutions to rehabilitate and integrate them into society to prevent future recidivism.

Meanwhile, the session included more than 95 events and 16 exhibitions, with the majority discussing the Doha regional center for combating cybercrime, while other activities underscored international and local criminal justice issues.

The Kuwaiti delegation participated in the session headed by the

Kuwaiti Ambassador to Austria and the permanent representative to international organizations in Vienna Talal Al-Fassam, including Director General of the General Department of Criminal Investigation at the Kuwait Ministry of Interior Brigadier General Abdullah Al-Hasan.

Minister Plenipotentiary from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Khaled Al-Hassem, Head of the International Agreements Department at the Ministry of Justice Hani Ali Al-Sebae, Ministry of Interior Major Ali Al-Azemi, and Third Secretary, Rehab Al-Farhan, the Kuwaiti permanent delegation to the UN organizations in Vienna, are also members of the delegation.

IICO & partners launch programs, initiatives

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Under the patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait, may God protect him, and in the presence of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Dr. Bader Hajar Al-Mutairi, the International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO), in coordination with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and with the generous sponsorship of major local, regional and international organizations, organized the 9th Conference on Effective Partnership for Better Humanitarian Aid, titled 'Humanitarian Partnership', with the participation of many official bodies and humanitarian organizations.

The importance of this conference comes in view of the devastating humanitarian effects of the war currently taking place in the Gaza Strip, which has resulted, to date, in the deaths of more than 110,000 Palestinians, wounded and missing, the displacement of about 1.9 million displaced persons, and the destruction of 322,000 homes, 434 schools and universities, and dozens of hospitals, mosques, churches, and others of public and private establishments and infrastructure facilities, which led to the collapse of the economic situation in the Strip, as the cost of rebuilding Gaza was estimated at between \$40 billion and \$50 billion, according to the United Nations Development Programme.

Inspired

The conference is inspired by the value of joint work and effective partnerships to contribute efficiently to achieving tangible goals in accelerating humanitarian development cooperation, building peace in emergencies, and working together to respond to humanitarian needs in the Gaza Strip in a way that is reflected in global humanitarian efforts to maximize impact and achieve the desired results. The conference aims to monitor the reality of humanitarian needs in the Gaza Strip, mobilize the efforts of humanitarian organizations to provide relief and development programs and initiatives to meet those needs, and manage the process of effective humanitarian intervention in the Strip, by launching an international humanitarian initiative to announce early recovery programs over a period of two years.

The conference began with a speech by the representative of the ceremony's sponsor, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs; Dr. Bader Hajar Al-Mutairi, in which he said: "At the beginning of my speech, I am honored to bring to you the greetings and appreciation of His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir of the country - may God protect and preserve him - and HH the Speaker of the Council Ministers, and their sincere prayers for your conference to succeed and achieve its desired humanitarian goals. He added that the State of Kuwait - its leadership, people and institutions - has been and will continue to be a pioneer in supporting Arab and Islamic issues and advocating for the legitimate and just rights of its people, most notably the issue of Palestine, the issue for which Kuwaiti support - over more than 7 decades - has constituted a history of solidarity, loyalty and emotional connection. With its events and sanctities, and at its heart is the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Circumstances

In his opening speech, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the IICO, Dr. Abdullah Maatouq Al-Maatouq: "Amidst the extremely dangerous and delicate exceptional circumstances that the Gaza Strip is witnessing, the importance of this international humanitarian conference, comes to discuss the dimensions of the humanitarian crisis in the Strip destroyed by the war machine. And to participate in supporting the early recovery process in the post-disaster phase, and to devise effective solutions and sustainable mechanisms for reconstruction, to contribute to enabling about two million and 400 thousand Palestinians to return to their normal lives." Dr. Al-Maatouq added that this conference is one of the organization's charitable initiatives and programs in support of the humanitarian response efforts to the Palestinian crisis, noting that 54 relief, development, health and social projects have recently been completed, the allocations of which are estimated at 5.4 million dollars.

He continued: During this conference, we were keen to launch an international humanitarian initiative, under the name "SANAD", to announce the humanitarian programs that each organization intends to implement in Gaza during the next two years, in a serious and effective partnership to contribute to strengthening humanitarian interventions and early recovery in the areas of relief and shelter. Reconstruction, health, education and economic empowerment.

"This conference comes at a critical time for the people of Gaza, as this unbearable conflict - and the humanitarian nightmare it has unleashed - stretches into an eighth month," said Joyce Msuya, the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator. "Just as OCHA and our partners continue to call with one voice for safe and sustained access to all those in need in Gaza - we are also working hand in hand to build and strengthen the partnerships that are central to the response, now and once the war ends."

Support

Dr. Nabil Al-Aoun, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al-Salam Association for Humanitarian and Charitable Works, said: "Al-Salam Society succeeded in this partnership with the Charitable Organization to support our brothers in Gaza. They have dispatched over 20 air cargo planes and 257 trucks carrying 6,705 tons of aid, including medical devices and equipment to support hospitals, 20 ambulances, and more than 6,000 tents and 1,000 beds, 258 portable toilets, huge electrical machines, 65 refrigerators powered by solar energy, various foodstuffs, and clothes. The society remains dedicated to ongoing aid shipments and aims to play a significant role in Gaza's reconstruction once the conflict subsides."

CEO of Qatar Charity, Yousef Al-Ku-

wari, said: "In light of the humanitarian crisis ravaging the Gaza Strip, Qatar Charity continues to provide a helping hand and assistance to our affected brothers there. We worked for 200 days through our relief interventions. We participated in sending 95 aircraft in partnership between Qatar Charity and the Fund." Qatar Development and a number of charitable organizations estimated at 2,800 tons of aid, benefiting nearly 700,000 beneficiaries. We also distributed approximately 845 tons of food supplies, provided 1,600 tents, and more than 44,000 packages of medical supplies, shelter, and clothing. All of this is thanks to the support of benefactors from the State of Qatar, who continue to support... And support our brothers in Palestine."

The Turkish Humanitarian Relief Organization representative's remarks: "I extend my thanks to His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Mishal Al-Sabah, the International Islamic Charitable Organization headed by Dr. Abdullah Al-Maatouq, all the charitable institutions in Kuwait and the Kuwaiti people for the noble and distinguished charitable works they provide. Here I pray to God that His mercy may cover all the former princes who were sponsors of spreading this goodness to the world. Kuwait is an ambassador of goodness for us. Kuwait is a country and a nation that provided a helping hand to the entire world and served humanity. In Turkey, they stood by us, rebuilt homes, and extended a helping hand to those affected by the great earthquake that struck Turkey and Syria. They were and still are always by our side. The people of Palestine did everything they could of the available capabilities. Today, their noble work continues not only in Palestine, but we see Kuwait's imprint throughout Africa and the whole world. It is an honor for us to continue our fruitful partnership with the Charitable Foundation. We have learned a lot from you, and I hope it will lead to great positive results for the benefit of serving humanity. On this occasion, I thank you all for your great efforts and wish you success, asking God Almighty to make this work sincere, to reward you with goodness in it, and to perpetuate your honorable position as an example for everyone to follow."

Participate

Islamic Relief in Birmingham representative's remarks: "We are honored to participate in this conference because what is happening in Gaza is an unprecedented and catastrophic situation. It is a crisis that we have never seen in our generations. Thousands of children are being bombed and starvation is being used as a weapon of war. It is very unfortunate that we are witnessing all of this in the world. There are millions of people on the brink of man-made famine across Gaza. Islamic Relief and its partners are putting their lives at risk and delivering vital aid to thousands of Palestinians. We hope that this crisis will end and that there will be a ceasefire now. Unfortunately, we have seen people die of hunger. The Islamic Relief Organization, in partnership with the United Nations World Food Programme, has so far provided 13 million meals, provided nutritional supplements to 75,000 women and children, and we have increased sponsorship for orphaned children to 11,000 children. But this is just a drop in the ocean "Because what we need is safe access to all affected communities in Gaza so that we can provide them with life-saving aid. On the occasion of this conference, I express my gratitude to the organizers, the International Islamic Charitable Organization and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for bringing us together in this conference."

The Al Khair Foundation in the United Kingdom representative's remarks: "Today I address His Excellency the Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait, representatives of the United Nations, leaders of the Gulf and Arab countries, heads of humanitarian organizations. Humanity means serving each other at the expense of ourselves, and one of the requirements of humanitarian work is that there be accountability." For the soul, we ask whether we have fulfilled this trust that God has bestowed upon us and our donors. As founder of the Charity Foundation in the United Kingdom, we believe that the Foundation's donors are the cornerstone and we give them a mechanism to donate 100% to those in need. We have succeeded over the past years in providing more than \$300 million in humanitarian aid in Gaza alone, during the past months, we sent more than 500 aid trucks and aircraft loads worth 35 million dollars, so I would like to leave a mark and impact on your hearts so that we are all encouraged to do charitable work in the service of humanity."

The conference featured five sessions addressing various dimensions of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, including aid delivery mechanisms, protection of civilians, and the urgent need to expand response efforts. Notably, during the closing session, an international humanitarian initiative, the Sanad Initiative, will be launched to enhance humanitarian interventions and early recovery in Gaza.

Participating organizations include governmental bodies, international agencies, humanitarian organizations, and charitable institutions, along with experts and specialists in humanitarian affairs. Strategic partners and sponsors for the conference include Rahma International Society, Human Appeal, Namaa Charity, Mbrat Alawazm Alkhiriah, Just Human, Jordan-Hashemite Charity Organization, Warba Bank, Al-Rai Media Group, and Al-Anba Newspaper.

Prominent international bodies participating in the conference activities include the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Human Settlements Program in the Arab Region (UN Habitat), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Medical Aid for the Palestinians (MAP), the Palestinian Red Crescent (PRCS) and other organizations.

IRU promotes insurance awareness at KU lecture

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The Insurance Regulatory Unit's recent lecture at Kuwait University underscores its commitment to strengthening supervision of the insurance market and promoting insurance awareness within society, reports

Al-Jarida daily.

By engaging with students and employees of the College of Public Health, the unit aims to educate individuals about its role, the developments in the local insurance market, and the importance of insurance

culture.

During the lecture, representatives emphasized the unit's dedication to regulating insurance activities with fairness, transparency, and competitiveness, in line with international standards while at the same

time highlighting the unit's objectives, which include organizing and supervising insurance activities, ensuring compliance with laws and regulations, and educating the public about insurance benefits, risks, and obligations.

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

Promo period from 2nd May to 31st May 2024

Terms & conditions apply*

LOCAL

In the name

Continued from Page 1

turned Kuwait into a message of progress, culture and art for the Arab world.

For 32 years, these people did their utmost to destroy everything, or as one citizen said: "Everything beautiful in Kuwait was destroyed -- education, economy, nationality, art, theater, culture, sports, associations, environment, demographics, streets and ministries. They also destroyed values and morals, and even crops and trees were not spared." They sabotaged everything in the name of the Constitution and the law. This is pure slander.

On the other hand, some governments worked according to their orders. Instead of seeking development, they thwarted every attempt to work toward progress. This is due to the fact that such governments' main characteristic is hesitation due to fear of a big stick raised in the name of interpellation, political execution or pushing HH the Prime Minister to resign, even before he got to know the staff in his office.

We say it frankly: "The Sun cannot be hidden with a sieve. What happened over the past decades led Kuwait to a miserable condition. Despite that, the leadership is wise and forbearing; because it bet that those who were supposed to represent the people would put the highest national interests on top of their selfishness."

However, they refused to do so, and continued their erroneous ways; up to the point that the dissolution of the National Assembly became a popular demand. Many of the country's rational people called for it, especially recently.

Without a doubt, the doctor resorts to surgery when the disease does not respond to medications. Hence, the recent measures announced by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah came at the appropriate time, as a result of absurdity that led to the elected parliamentarian's perception that he is the divine shadow on Earth and everyone must obey him. Yet, he failed to realize that the popular agency granted to him was for a specific mission. The parliamentarians went too far, to the extent that those who elected them lost faith in them.

PM Sheikh

Continued from Page 1

He was appointed Minister of Oil on February 9, 2009, and Minister of Oil and Minister of Information on May 29, 2009.

On September 20, 2021, the government approved a draft decree to appoint Sheikh Ahmad as head of the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince.

On to the First Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Interior Minister Fahad Yousuf Saud Al-Sabah, born in 1959, he graduated from the Kuwaiti military academy and previously served as an Amiri Guard officer.

He was in the previous cabinet as Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister, Acting Interior Minister.

Shereeda Abdullah Al-Mousherji, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs. Born in 1952.

Shereeda holds a Bachelor degree in Commerce from Kuwait University 1974.

He holds a Masters degree of Business Administration from Harvard University, United States in 1980.

Assistant Secretary-General for Administrative, Financial and Technical Affairs in the National Assembly 1983 - 1993.

He also was Secretary-General of the National Assembly 1993 - 2007.

Shereeda was also Minister of Transportation and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs 2007.

He also was Minister of Justice and Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs 2012.

Shereeda was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs in January 2024.

On to Dr. Emad Mohammad Abdulaziz Al-Atiqi - Deputy Prime Minister and Oil Minister. Born in 1956, he holds a PhD in chemical engineering from Leahy Pennsylvania College and has previously served in numerous academic roles in Kuwait University, including research department chief.

To Abdulrahman Bdah Al-Mutairi, Minister of Information and Culture. He holds a BA degree in Psychology with a minor in Political Science from Kuwait University.

He served as a Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs since in the cabinets of December 2020, March 2021 and April 2023.

In June 2023, he was reassigned as Minister of Information and Minister of Endowment and Islamic Affairs.

He was also the Director General of Public Youth Authority in 2016.

To Dr. Ahmad Abdulwahab Al-Awadhi - Minister of Health, holds PhD in Pediatrics (Kuwait Board) from the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialization, a PhD in Medicine (MD) from the Arab Gulf University in the Kingdom of Bahrain, and BA in basic sciences from the same university.

He served as a Minister of Health in the Cabinets formed in October 16, 2022 and April 9, 2023.

On to Dr. Amthah Hadi Al-Huwailah, Minister of Social Affairs, Labor, Family Affairs and Childhood and Minister of State for Youth Affairs. She was Assistant Professor (Cognitive Psychology).

She holds a Doctorate degree in cognitive psychology, Faculty of Arts, Cairo University, 2008.

Master's degree in Clinical Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Kuwait University, 2001.

Bachelor of Arts, Faculty of Social Sciences, Kuwait University, 1987.

She supervised a number of master's and doctoral theses at Kuwait University.

Dr. Anwar Ali Abdullah Al-Mudhaf - Finance Minister and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs. He holds a PhD in business management from Claremont College and has been the chairman of Kuwait's Al-Ahli United Bank since 2014.

On to Minister of Electricity and Water, Renewable Energy, and Minister of State Housing Affairs Dr. Mohammad Abdulaziz Bushehri.

H holds a doctorate in economics with a minor in Statistics from North Carolina State University, US 2001.

He worked as Director of the Quantitative Methods and Modeling Department at the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), and then Director of the Department of Studies and Capital Markets Development at the Capital Markets Authority.

He occupied many consulting positions in the country, including several related research projects on energy, water, consumer and production support systems, and reform and development of public economic and financial policies.

He participated in various conferences and committees, including as visiting scholar at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the years 2010-11.

Dr. Mohammad Ibrahim Al-Wasmi, Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs is Associate Professor of Commercial and Maritime Law at the Faculty of Law at Kuwait University.

He holds a Bachelor's degree in Law from the Faculty of Law at Kuwait University in 2001.

He holds a Master's degree in International Trade Law from London Metropolitan University, United Kingdom, 2006.

He holds a Doctorate in Philosophy of Law from Brunel University, United Kingdom, 2012.

Omar Saud Al-Omar, Minister of Commerce and Industry, and Minister of State for Communication Affairs.

Born in 1966, holds a Bachelor degree in Computer Science from California State University, Sacramento 1994.

He held several administrative positions at Kuwait Investment Authority, as an internal auditor, and covers the companies affiliated with the General Investment Authority and funds in the local and international markets.

CEO of Zain Kuwait from 2013-15.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority from August 2022 to date.

Dr. Adel Mohammad Abdullah Al-Adwani - Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research. He previously served as professor in Kuwait University's faculty of Administrative Sciences.

Also in the previous cabinet, Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Yahya - Minister of Foreign Affairs. Born in 1966, he holds a bachelor's degree in business management from Western Oregon University in the US. Previously served as Kuwait's ambassador to a number of Latin American countries, including Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay.

In the previous cabinet, Dr. Nora Mohammad Khaled Al-Mashaan - Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipality Affairs. She previously served as Associate Professor in the Department of Civil Engineering at the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University.

Amir welcomes

Continued from Page 1

delegation at Kuwait Airport.

A fleet of Kuwait's Air Force jets accompanied Sultan Haitham's plane over the Kuwaiti airspace.

His Majesty was received by Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shareeda Al-Muasherji, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil Dr. Imad Al-Atiqi, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Al-Yahya, and senior state officials.

His Majesty the Sultan accompanied by a high-ranking official delegation comprising Sayyed Shehab bin Tareq Al-Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, Sayyid Bilal bin Haitham Al-Said, Sayyed Khaled bin Hilal Al-Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Gen. Sultan bin Mohammad Al-Nuamani, Minister of the Royal Office and Sayyed Hamoud bin Faisal Al-Busaidi Minister of Interior.

Sultan Haitham was also accompanied by Bader bin Hamad Al-Busaidi Foreign Minister, Dr. Hamad bin Said Al-Aufi, Head of the Private Office, Abdussalam bin Mohammad Al-Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority, Qais bin Mohammad Al-Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and Dr. Saleh bin Amer Al-Kharousi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the State of Kuwait.

Upon His Majesty's arrival, the national anthem was played for both countries. Sultan Haitham greeted several senior state officials of the Kuwaiti government.

His Highness the Amir welcomed the Omani officials accompanying Sultan Haitham.

Artillery fired twenty-one rounds to welcome the arrival of His Majesty.

Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tariq Al-Said state visit to Kuwait is reflective of the strength of ties between Kuwait and Oman, said Kuwaiti media figure on Monday.

The figures told KUNA in separate interviews that the visit would help bolster ties and also exchange views and collaborate on matters pertaining to the region and the world.

In this regard the Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah lauded the exemplary ties linking the two countries.

The visit would help bolster relations, indicated Al-Jarallah who indicated that the strength of relations was reflected in 1990 when Iraq invaded Kuwait for which Oman stood strongly opposed to this heinous act.

The two countries shared mutual vision concerning issues of joint GCC cooperation as well as matter of regional and international importance, he said, reiterating that the visit would help further enhance Kuwaiti and Omani joint cooperation.

Editor-in-Chief of Al-Wasat Adnan Al-Wazzan shared similar sentiments, saying that the relations were deeply rooted in mutual cooperation and brother aspirations.

Both leaderships were keen on boost cooperation in various domains namely commerce and the economy, he asserted, pointing out the latest joint venture seen in the opening of Al-Duqm refinery and petrochemical complex in Oman was an example of fruitful cooperation.

He revealed that his newspaper had chosen Sultan Haitham as public figure of the year in 2019 with the daily dedicating a whole section showcasing his meetings with Kuwaiti leaders and figures throughout the year.

On his part, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Al-Qabas (the light) newspaper Abdullah Al-Mudhaf affirmed the importance of the latest visit for Kuwaiti-Omani relations.

He mentioned that the latest visit by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Oman back in February and the opening of Al-Duqm refinery, with a production capacity of 230,000 barrels per day, displayed both countries keenness of cooperation as well as the strength of GCC unity.

The state visit would be another milestone in the illustrious Kuwaiti Omani relations and would boost ties between the two countries, he affirmed.

Kuwait affirms

Continued from Page 1

The Ambassador pointed to some of the important topics discussed during the meeting, including appointing a secretary general to oversee the development of joint social and economic cooperation among the Arab nations.

As well as finding an appropriate response to the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation's aggression on Palestine, the meeting also discussed topics in the field of financial technology, digitization, and strategies to secure maritime trade in the Arab world.

He also assured that the summit will make decisions to reaffirm the stance of the Arab world and Kuwait with Palestine and its people and re-establish the independent state of Palestine according to the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Sudanese envoy hails Kuwait's mediation role & dev support

'Kuwait-Sudan bilateral ties important'

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Sudanese Ambassador to Kuwait HE Awadal-Karim Al-Rayah Balla emphasized Kuwait's role in practicing a moderate foreign policy and mediating conflicts among its neighbors, reports Al-Jarida daily.

He expressed Sudan's appreciation for Kuwait's approach and emphasized the importance of their bilateral relations, highlighting Kuwait's significant contributions to Sudan's development without any political agenda or interference.

During a press conference, the envoy recalled Sudan's early recognition of Kuwait's independence and the subsequent support received from Kuwait, including financial assistance through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development.

He noted Kuwait's substantial investments in various sectors in Sudan, highlighting agriculture, animal production, construction, and communications.

He highlighted Kuwait's pivotal role in supporting Sudan's development projects, particularly in eastern Sudan, where Kuwait hosted a conference for the reconstruction of the region. He emphasized Kuwait's contributions to Sudan's transformation into an exporter of services, such as electricity, through the construction of dams and other infrastructure projects.

Regarding Kuwait's humanitarian assistance, Al-Rayah Balla commended Kuwait's support during natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the ongoing conflict in Sudan. He praised Kuwait's continuous aid efforts, including humanitarian, medical, and food assistance provided through the Kuwaiti Red Crescent and Relief Committee.

On the political front, Al-Rayah Balla mentioned Kuwait's support for the Jeddah Platform, which advocates for the withdrawal of militias from civilian objects in Sudan.

He also acknowledged the challenges faced during the conflict, including regional interventions, and highlighted the contributions of Zain Telecommunications Company in supporting its employees despite the ongoing crisis.

Al-Rayah Balla noted the presence of a sizable Sudanese community in Kuwait, comprising professionals and workers in various fields. He also addressed the issue of damaged Kuwaiti investments in Sudan, citing the occupation of a Hilton hotel in Khartoum by militias.

In conclusion, Al-Rayah Balla expressed optimism about the future of Kuwait-Sudan relations and thanked Kuwait for its unwavering support and solidarity with Sudan during challenging times.



Dalal Al-Mayal receives honorary shield on behalf of her father for his contributions in Kuwait Radio. KUNA photo

Info minister officially launches ... 51 Kuwait-TV digital platform

KUWAIT CITY, May 13, (KUNA): Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi on Sunday officially launched the 51 Kuwait-TV app to make Kuwaiti TV and Radio channels as well as archival media content accessible for users anywhere and at any time.

Speaking during the launching ceremony, Minister Al-Mutairi pointed out that the ministry has taken this step in cooperation with the private sector as a part of strategy to turn from an executive body to a regulatory body with a view to optimizing its resources, maximizing revenues and improving infrastructure.

He clarified that the launching of the digital platform coincides with the 73rd anniversary of first Kuwait Radio broad-

cast on May 12, 1951.

Today, the ministry celebrates a new leap in Kuwait's media presence, he boasted.

Through launching the new app, the ministry aims to keep pace with technological developments in this sector, he said, stressing that Kuwait was and still inspiring creativity and innovation.

The minister said that platform will be a safe and family-friendly and will help preserve the society values and embrace all creative ideas that suit different tastes.

The 51 Kuwait-TV app offers live streaming of all Kuwaiti radio stations and TV channels as well as video on demand services for archival TV series and programs shown in Kuwait channels.

Kuwait's higher institute to offer cutting-edge maritime programs

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Abbas Al-Sammak, the Director of the Higher Institute of Telecommunication and Navigation at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, announced the upcoming launch of two new programs, the 'Maritime Guide' and 'Maritime Communications Technician' programs, starting from September 2024, reports Al-Jarida daily.

These programs will be part of the admission plan for the academic year 2024/2025. Al-Sammak highlighted that the "Maritime Guide" program is awaiting approval from the Civil Service Commission before the institute can enroll students in the next training semester.

While the "Maritime Guide" program has been part of the institute's specializations for several years, cooperation with the Kuwait Ports Corporation was interrupted. However, recent developments have led to

the revival of this program, requiring approval from relevant authorities to proceed with student enrollment officially and in compliance with regulations.

The launch of these two programs follows the completion of work by committees formed at the state level, one from the Navigation Department of the "Applied," and the other from the Kuwait Ports Corporation. These committees have collaborated to implement the programs and renew cooperation between the institute and the corporation. This collaboration aims to meet the needs of the labor market, both in the public and private sectors, by providing qualified graduates tailored to industry demands.

Al-Sammak emphasized the institute's commitment to continually evolving and meeting the urgent needs of the labor market by offering relevant and timely programs.

EXPLORE OUR NEW MAJORS

BACHELOR OF BANKING & FINANCE

DIPLOMA OF LOGISTICS

BACHELOR OF EVENTS MANAGEMENT

DIPLOMA OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

BACHELOR OF MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

DIPLOMA OF ACCOUNTING

BACHELOR OF AVIATION & AIRPORT OPERATION

ADVANCED DIPLOMA IN NAUTICAL SCIENCE

APPLY NOW

www.au.edu.kw

World News Roundup

Europe

'Ukraine army locked in border battles': Ukrainian troops are locked in intense battles with the advancing Russian army in two border areas, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, while the death toll from a Russian apartment building collapse blamed on Ukrainian shelling rose to 15.

Zelenskyy said "fierce battles" are taking place near the border in eastern and northeastern Ukraine as outnumbered Ukrainian soldiers try to hold back a significant Russian ground offensive.

"Defensive battles are ongoing, fierce battles, on a large part of our border area," Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address Sunday.

Ukraine's general staff said late Sunday that Russian forces had conducted at least 22 attacks over the previous 24 hours in two parts of the Kharkiv region and had "tactical success." The statement did not elaborate.

The Kremlin's forces are aiming to exploit Ukrainian weaknesses before a big batch of new military aid for Kyiv from the US and European partners arrives on the battlefield in the coming weeks and months, analysts say. That makes this period a window of opportunity for Moscow and one of the most dangerous for Kyiv in the two-year war, they say.

The new Russian push in the northeastern Kharkiv region, along with the ongoing drive into the eastern Donetsk region, come after months when the about 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line barely budged. In the meantime, both sides have used long-range strikes in what largely became a war of attrition. (AP)



Zelenskyy

both sides have used long-range strikes in what largely became a war of attrition. (AP)

Ukraine's first lady, FM visit Serbia: Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba made a surprise visit to Russia-friendly Serbia on Monday, together with Ukraine's first lady, Olena Zelenska, in a sign of warming relations between the two states.

On his first visit to Serbia since the start of the Russian aggression on Ukraine in 2022, Kuleba met new Serbian Prime Minister Milos Vucevic, whose government includes several pro-Russian ministers, including two who have been under US sanctions. Later Monday, he is to meet Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic.

Although Serbia has condemned the Russian aggression on Ukraine, it has refused to join international sanctions against Moscow and has instead maintained warm and friendly relations with its traditional Slavic ally.

Serbia has proclaimed neutrality regarding the war in Ukraine, and its authorities repeat that Serbia does not supply weapons to any parties. (AP)

Putin replaces Shoigu as defense minister: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sunday replaced Sergei Shoigu as defense minister in a Cabinet shakeup that comes as he begins his fifth term in office.

In line with Russian law, the entire Russian Cabinet resigned Tuesday following Putin's glittering inauguration in the Kremlin, and most members have been widely expected to keep their jobs, while Shoigu's fate had appeared uncertain.

Putin signed a decree on Sunday appointing Shoigu as secretary of Russia's Security Council, the Kremlin said. The appointment was announced shortly after Putin proposed Andrei Belousov to become the country's defense minister in place of Shoigu.

The announcement of Shoigu's new role came as 13 people were reported dead and 20 more wounded in Russia's border city of Belgorod, where a 10-story apartment building partially collapsed after what Russian officials said was Ukrainian shelling. Ukraine hasn't commented on the incident. (AP)

Lithuanian president front-runner: Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda won the most votes in a weekend presidential election, officials said Monday, but he still faces a runoff in two weeks against Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė.

Nausėda won 44% of the votes and Šimonytė nearly 20%, according to preliminary results published by Lithuania's Central Electoral Commission.

There were eight candidates running in all, making it difficult for any candidate to muster the 50% of the votes needed to win the presidency outright on Sunday. The runoff is scheduled to be held on May 26.

A referendum was also on the ballot on Sunday, but it failed to muster the necessary votes to pass. It asked whether the constitution should be amended to allow dual citizenship, a decision that would have affected hundreds of thousands of Lithuanians living abroad. (AP)

Davkova reignites spat with Greece: Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova was sworn as the first female president of North Macedonia on Sunday and immediately reignited a diplomatic spat with neighboring Greece.

At the ceremony in the country's parliament, Siljanovska-Davkova referred to her country as "Macedonia," rather than the constitutional name "North Macedonia."

This prompted Greek Ambassador Sophia Philippidou to leave the inauguration ceremony. The Greek Foreign Ministry later issued a statement, saying that the new president's actions violated an agreement between the two nations and put in danger both bilateral relations and North Macedonia's prospects of joining the European Union.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen implicitly rebuked Siljanovska-Davkova's choice of words. (AP)

Swedish PM hosts German, Nordic leaders: Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said Monday that the Nordic and Baltic cooperation is now "deeper than at any time in modern times," underpinned by increasing security threats from Russia following its invasion of Ukraine.

On Monday, Kristersson is hosting a meeting with German Chancellor Olaf Scholtz and the Nordic prime ministers in Stockholm. At the same time, the three Baltic prime ministers meeting in Lithuania's capital of Vilnius said that Moscow's intimidation is not going to dissuade them from supporting Ukraine.

"We have long appreciated our neighbors, but at the same time underestimated the importance of concrete, operational cooperation," Kristersson wrote in an op-ed in Swedish business paper Dagens Industri.

Sweden joined the military alliance in March while Finland joined in April 2023. (AP)

Three men charged in UK: British police have charged three men with assisting the Hong Kong intelligence service amid growing concern that hostile states are trying to interfere with democracy and economic activity in the UK.

The three men were among 11 people arrested earlier this month in Yorkshire and London by counterterrorism police using provisions of a new law that allows suspects in national security and espionage cases to be detained without warrant. The eight other suspects were released without charge.

Chi Leung (Peter) Wai, 38, Matthew Trickett, 37, and Chung Bui Yuen, 63, are also charged with foreign interference, the Metropolitan Police Service said. (AP)

Thousands protest in Georgia: Georgia's parliament green-lit a final vote on a proposed law that critics see as a threat to media freedom and the country's aspirations to join the European Union on Monday, a day after police dispersed the latest protests against it.

The bill would require media and nongovernmental organizations and other nonprofits to register as "pursuing the interests of a foreign power" if they receive more than 20% of their funding from abroad. (AP)



US President Joe Biden speaks on May 2, in Wilmington, NC. In recent appearances around the country, Biden has been betting that reminding voters about Donald Trump's presidency and highlighting his Republican opponent's latest campaign statements will work to the Democratic president's advantage. (AP)

Politics



President-elect Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova and outgoing President Stevo Pendarovski review the guard of honor in Skopje, North Macedonia, May 12. Davkova was sworn in as president of North Macedonia on Sunday. (Xinhua)



Lopinto



Yost

America

Car accident kills 3: A speeding car barreled through a red light, struck a curb and flew into a power pole and an unoccupied building, killing three people, seriously injuring three others and knocking out electricity to hundreds of residents in Pasadena, California, authorities said.

The violent single-vehicle crash happened around 2:30 am Saturday as a Tesla sedan carrying six people was traveling at more than twice the 35 mph (56 kph) speed limit, according to the Pasadena Police Department.

Three of the passengers were ejected from the back seat, police said. The driver and two of the passengers died at the scene. Three other passengers were hospitalized in serious condition, officials said.

All six of the car's occupants were between 17 and 22 years old, the Los Angeles Times reported. They were not immediately identified.

Russo said there were early indications that alcohol may have been a factor, but investigators have not confirmed if the driver was impaired. (AP)

Suspect found dead: An Ohio police officer was shot and killed after being "ambushed" while answering a disturbance call over the weekend, and a suspect was later found dead by police, authorities said Sunday.

Police in the Cleveland suburb of Euclid said officers were dispatched just before 10 pm Saturday to a home after a reported disturbance. The complainant had told police that her child's father threatened to harm her and her mother, Euclid Police said in a statement Sunday evening.

After officers arrived at the scene, the woman stated that the suspect, identified by police as Deshaun Vaughn, was on foot and possibly nearby. Officers went to check the backyard where the suspect opened fire on them.

"While police were investigating, a gunman ambushed an officer, striking him with gunfire," police said. Officers returned fire and the suspect fled the scene. Ohio's attorney general, Dave Yost, identified the slain officer as Jacob Derbin and said he was in his first year with the department. He was sworn in on July 24, 2023. (AP)

Scott runs for reelection to 5th term

Biden reminds voters on Trump presidency

SEATTLE, May 13, (AP) — US President Joe Biden is running for reelection on a record and an agenda -- often Donald Trump's.

In a hotel ballroom in Seattle, at fancy homes in California and at stops in Illinois and Wisconsin over the past week, Biden has been betting that reminding voters about Trump's presidency and highlighting his Republican opponent's latest campaign statements will work to the Democrat's advantage.

At a Seattle fundraiser Biden brought up Trump's recent interview with Time magazine in which Trump said states should be left to determine whether to prosecute women for abortions or to monitor their pregnancies. "I really urge you to read it," Biden said.

Returning

Biden, who headlined another Seattle fundraiser Saturday before returning to the East Coast, has plenty of other Trump material to draw from, too.

The president highlights how Trump has promised, if elected, to be "a dictator on Day 1," how he has suggested the United States would not necessarily defend allies from aggression and how he has pledged to "totally obliterate the deep state" in the federal bureaucracy, which he blames for blocking his first-term agenda.

"And he said a whole lot more," Biden said during a Chicago appearance. "But the bad news is he means what he says. He means what he says. Unless you think I'm kidding, just think back to the 6th of January. This guy means what he says," referring to the riot at the US Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. Biden wants the 2024 election to be a referendum on Trump's record and plans, but he also wants voters to look favorably on his own policies and actions.

Biden and his allies think the country needs reminding about Trump's tenure and his outlandish and often concerning statements, particularly because the Republican is no longer ubiquitous on X, formerly Twitter, nor is he in front of television cameras as often as he once was.

"Chaos is nothing new for Trump," Biden said in Chicago. "His presiden-

Jury convicts ex-officer: A Louisiana jury has convicted one former law enforcement officer and acquitted another in the 2022 shooting death of a man who was sitting in an SUV outside a house reputed for illegal drug activity.



Britain's King Charles III arrives in a helicopter at the Army Aviation Centre in Middle Wallop, England on May 13. King Charles III will officially hand over the role of Colonel-in-Chief of the Army Air Corps to Prince William, The Prince of Wales. (AP)

Former prez Trump suggests Chinese migrants in the US to build an 'army'

NEW YORK, May 13, (AP) — It was 7 a.m. on a recent Friday when Wang Gang, a 36-year-old Chinese immigrant, jostled for a day job in New York City's Flushing neighborhood.

When a potential employer pulled up near the street corner, Wang and dozens of other men swarmed around the car. They were hoping to be picked for work on a construction site, at a farm, as a mover - anything that would pay.

Wang had no luck, even as he waited for two more hours. It would be another day without a job since he crossed the southern US border illegally in February.

The daily struggle of Chinese immigrants in Flushing is a far cry from the picture former President Donald Trump and other Republicans have sought to paint of them as a coordinated group of "military-age" men who have come to the United States to build an "army" and attack America.

Since the start of the year, as the Chinese newcomers adjust to life in

the US, Trump has alluded to "fighting age" or "military age" Chinese men at least six times and suggested at least twice that they were forming a migrant "army." The talking point also appears in conservative media and on social platforms.

"They're coming in from China - 31, 32,000 over the last few months - and they're all military age and they're all men," Trump said during a campaign rally last month. "And it sounds like to me, are they trying to build a little army in our country?"

Asian advocacy organizations say they worry the rhetoric could encourage further harassment and violence toward the Asian community, which saw more hate incidents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Wang, who traveled several weeks from Wuhan, China, to Ecuador, to the southern U.S. border, said the idea that Chinese migrants were building a military "does not exist" among immigrants he has met.

cy was chaos. Trump is trying to make the -- the country forget about the dark and unsettling things that he did when he was president. Well, we're going to not let them forget."

Also:

MONTPELIER, Vt.: Republican Gov. Phil Scott is running for reelection to a fifth two-year term in the largely blue state of Vermont. Scott announced his reelection bid on Saturday, saying there's more work to do.

"During my four terms as Governor, my team and I have worked to grow the economy, make Vermont more affordable, and protect the most vulnerable," he said in a statement. "I've done my best to rise above partisanship to solve problems, and help people."

While progress has been made, he said he cannot step away when the Democrat-controlled Legislature is "so far out of balance." Scott and the legislature have clashed over spending and

taxes and he's vetoed a number of its bills in recent years and is expected to veto more. The Legislature has pushed back and overturned some of the vetoes.

A Republican who combines fiscal conservatism with social liberalism, Scott was a frequent critic of former President Donald Trump and voted for Joe Biden in the 2020 election. He won praise for leading Vermont through the COVID-19 pandemic.

In his reelection campaign message, he urged supporters to elect more legislators who will work with him.

When Scott first became a state senator more than 23 years ago, Sen. Dick Mazza, a Democrat, took him under his wing and became his mentor, he said in his campaign message. Mazza, who resigned from the Senate for health reasons last month, asked to be by his side as he announced his reelection bid on Saturday, which Scott called "such an honor."

after a 15-minute confrontation, Vallee's last words to officers were, "Please, put the guns down." Hughes and Louis were each indicted on a manslaughter charge with a possible 40-year sentence. Hughes faces up to five years in prison after jurors convicted him on the lesser charge of negligent homicide.

The two were among five deputies responding to a noise complaint in the early hours of Feb 16, 2022. Sheriff Joe Lopinto said Vallee was in a vehicle outside a suspected drug house and refused to get out when instructed by the deputies, WVUE-TV reported. (AP)

1 teen killed in carnival shooting: One teenager was killed and another seriously wounded in a Delaware shooting outside a carnival hosted by the non-profit Law Enforcement Against Drugs and Violence, authorities said.

State police said Sunday that troopers responded to the Concord Mall parking lot north of Wilmington at about 10:45 pm Saturday. Despite life-saving efforts, the 16-year-old was pronounced dead at a local hospital and a 17-year-old remained in serious condition, police said.

A preliminary investigation indicated that a fight broke out between several people near the entrance of a parking lot carnival. Police said someone pulled a gun and fired several shots, hitting the two teenagers before fleeing. (AP)

Africa

Rebels kill 4 in CAR

Rwanda govt 'denies' involvement in attack

NAIROBI, Kenya, May 13, (AP): Rwanda has denied claims by neighboring Burundi that it armed a rebel group that was accused of carrying out a grenade attack, as relations between the two countries continue to be strained.

"We call on Burundi to solve its own internal problems and not associate Rwanda with such despicable matters," government spokesperson Yolande Makolo said in a statement Sunday.

Burundi's interior ministry blamed the grenade attack on Friday that injured 38 people on RED-Tabara rebels and said the group was backed by Rwanda. The rebel group denied responsibility for the attack.



Ndayishimiye

Relations between Rwanda and Burundi have deteriorated since early this year when Burundian President Evariste Ndayishimiye renewed accusations that Rwanda was funding and training the RED-Tabara rebels, who oppose the Burundi government.

Burundian authorities consider RED-Tabara a terrorist movement and accuse its members of being part of a failed coup attempt in 2015. The group first appeared in 2011 and has been accused of a string of attacks in Burundi since 2015.

In January, the Rwandan government accused Burundi of closing the border between the two countries, two weeks after an attack that Burundi said was carried out by the RED-Tabara group.

'Fires destroyed more towns': Fires being used as a weapon in Sudan destroyed more villages and towns in the country's west in April than in any other month since the conflict began more than a year ago, an analysis by a UK-based rights group said Monday.

Sudan Witness, an open-source project run by the nonprofit Center for Information Resilience, said 72 villages and settlements were either destroyed or damaged by fires last month, bringing the total number of settlements hit by fire in Sudan to 201 since the conflict began in mid-April of last year.

"We've documented the patterns of numerous fires and the continuing devastation to settlements around western Sudan, large and small, since the conflict broke out last April," Anouk Theunissen, Sudan Witness project director, said in a news release Monday.

"When we see reports of fighting or airstrikes coinciding with clusters of fires it indicates that fire is being used indiscriminately as a weapon of war. The trend is worsening and continues to lead to the mass displacement of Sudanese people," Theunissen said.

The number of fires surged particularly in the north and west of el-Fasher, the capital city of North Darfur state that faces a threat of an imminent military attack.

Sudan has been engulfed by violence since mid-April 2023, when tensions between the Sudanese military and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces broke out into intense fighting across the country. Clashes quickly spread to other parts of Sudan, including Darfur, which witnessed brutal attacks.

Investigators with the Sudan Witness project examined the patterns of fires across the war-torn country by using social media, satellite imagery and NASA's public fire monitoring data.

Since the conflict broke out, blazes have been set more than once to 51 settlements sheltering displaced people.

Fires in Sudan have often been connected to conflict, according to the group's analysis.

Rebels kill 4 in CAR: Armed rebels on Sunday attacked a Chinese-run gold mining town and killed at least four people in Central African Republic (CAR), authorities said.

Maxime Balalu, a local government spokesperson, told The Associated Press that the Coalition of Patriots for Change, an alliance of rebel groups aligned with former President Francois Bozize, had carried out the attack in Gaga, a village roughly 125 miles (200 kilometers) from the capital, Bangui.

He said the death toll might rise and included several individuals who worked at the nearby mine. Several others were injured in the attack, Balalu said.

Central African Republic has been in conflict since 2013, when predominantly Muslim rebels seized power and forced the President Francois Bozize from office. Mostly Christian militias fought back.

A 2019 peace deal only lessened the fighting, and six of the 14 armed groups that signed later left the agreement. The Coalition of Patriots for Change was founded in 2020 in the aftermath of the agreement.

The country remains one of the poorest in the world despite its vast mineral wealth of gold and diamonds among others. Rebel groups have operated with impunity across the embattled country over the past decade, thwarting mining exploration by foreign companies.

Many of those now operating in the country are Chinese-run and have faced security challenges. Last year, nine Chinese nationals were killed at another gold mine in Central African Republic during an attack that the government blamed on the same rebel alliance. In 2020, two Chinese nationals died when local residents led an uprising against a Chinese-operated mine in Sosso Nakombo.

Tunisia lawyers call for strike: Hooded police raided Tunisia's bar association headquarters and arrested a lawyer as authorities escalated a broad government crackdown that has ensnared political dissidents, non-governmental organizations and Black migrants.

Sonia Dahmani, a prominent critic of the government, was arrested Saturday after making sarcastic remarks about Tunisia on a local television program last week and charged with distributing false information and disrupting public order.

She's the latest dissident to be charged under the country's controversial Decree 54, an anti-fake news law that the government has used to pursue critics of President Kais Saied.

The Tunisian Lawyers Council called on Sunday for a nationwide general strike to be held by all lawyers.

Dahmani's advocates had gathered at the bar association Saturday to protest a warrant for her arrest when police stormed the building. French television reporters broadcast the event live on air.

The bar association has long carried "symbolic power" in Tunisia, so much so that authorities didn't enter its doors under its pre-Arab Spring dictator, Fadhwa Brahim, a Tunisian lawyer, told The Associated Press.



An election official applies indelible ink mark on the index finger of a woman voter during the fourth phase of general election, on the outskirts of Samastipur, in the Indian state of Bihar on May 13. Inset: An Indian paramilitary soldier guards as people stand in queue to cast their votes during the fourth phase of India's general election, on the outskirts of Srinagar, Indian controlled Kashmir on Monday. (AP)

India mammoth poll more than halfway done as mlns begin voting in 4th round

Millions of Indians across 96 constituencies began casting their ballots on Monday as the country's gigantic, six-week-long election edges past its halfway mark. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is seeking a third straight term with an eye on winning a supermajority in Parliament.

Monday's polling in the fourth round of multi-phase national elections across nine states and one

union territory will be pivotal for Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, as it includes some of its strongholds in states like Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

Crucial seats in Maharashtra and Bihar states, where the BJP governs in alliances with regional parties, are also up for grabs in this phase.

In Bihar's Samastipur city, hundreds of voters

lined up at a polling station that opened at 7 a.m. amid tight security arrangements. Voters said they were concerned about rising food prices, lack of employment and economic development in the state.

Most polls predict a win for Modi and his BJP, which is up against a broad opposition alliance led by the Indian National Congress and powerful regional parties. (AP)

Asia

China, Cambodia to begin military exercise

Philippine towns to host returning US forces

SANTA ANA, Philippines, May 13, (AP): The far-flung coastal town of Santa Ana in the northeastern tip of the Philippine mainland has long been known by tourists mostly for its beaches, waterfalls, fireflies and a few casinos.

But that's changing after the laid-back town of about 35,000 people, which still has no traffic light, became strategically important to America.

The United States and the Philippines, which are longtime treaty allies, have identified Santa Ana in northern Cagayan province as one of nine mostly rural areas where rotating batches of American forces could encamp indefinitely and store their weapons and equipment on local military bases under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement.

Huge

Thousands of US forces withdrew from two huge Navy and Air Force bases in the Philippines in the early 1990s at the end of the Cold War, ending nearly a century of American military presence in the country. In recent years, Washington has been reinforcing an arc of military alliances in Asia to counter an increasingly assertive China, which it now regards as its greatest security challenge.

That dovetails with Philippine efforts to bolster its external defenses after an alarming spate of territorial hostilities with Beijing in the South China Sea that started last year. The high seas confrontations have injured several Filipino navy personnel, damaged their boats and strained diplomatic ties.

The remote town of Santa Ana is caught in the geo-political rivalry between Washington and Beijing because of its strategic location. It lies across a sea border from Taiwan, the self-governing island that China regards as a renegade province to be reclaimed by force if necessary. The US has vowed to defend the territory.

Some villagers in Santa Ana have

expressed apprehension over the prospect of living near US forces. Their governor, Manuel Mamba, has vehemently opposed the looming U.S. military presence, saying it would turn Cagayan into a military target of China.

Other villagers say the Philippines needs the Americans as a crucial counterweight to China, which they say has been using its military might to threaten Manila's territorial interests in the South China Sea.

"There's no choice. If you compare the number of our forces with that of China, they have much, much more," Romeo Asuncion, a planning and economic development officer in Santa Ana, told The Associated Press. "If the Americans are here, they would protect us whatever happens."

There's also the prospect of economic benefits and aid from the US military presence. "If they donate a school that will be good," Asuncion said.

Nations to begin army drill: Cambodia and China begin their annual Golden Dragon military exercise this week to strengthen cooperation and exchange military experiences, a Cambodian official said Monday.

A total of 1,315 military personnel from Cambodia and 760 from China will participate in the 15-day exercise, backed by three Chinese warships and 11 Cambodian ships, Cambodian army spokesperson Maj Gen Thong Solimo told journalists. He said the exercise, starting Thursday, is aimed at training to fight terrorism and provide humanitarian relief in both countries as well as in the region.

The annual Golden Dragon exercises began in December 2016, shortly after Cambodia canceled similar exercises with the United States called Angkor Sentinel.

China describes its friendship with Cambodia as "ironclad." Cambodia is China's closest ally in Southeast

Asia, while China is Cambodia's most important ally and benefactor, with a strong influence on its economy.

Cambodia has numerous Chinese-funded projects - particularly infrastructure, including airports and roads, but also private projects such as hotels, casinos and property development. More than 40% of Cambodia's \$10 billion in foreign debt is owed to China.

Indonesia's Mount Ibu erupts: Mount Ibu, a volcano in Indonesia's North Maluku province, erupted on Monday, spewing thick grey ash and dark clouds 5,000 meters (16,400 feet) into the sky for five minutes, officials said.

"The volcanic earthquakes are still intense so there is a potential for a future eruption," Hendra Gunawan, chief of the Center for Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation said.

After an eruption on Friday, the center raised the alert level for the volcano from 2 to 3, the second-highest level, which widens the radius of the area which should be vacated. Local authorities have prepared evacuation tents, but no evacuation order has been reported yet.

Aussie judge lifts court ban on X:

An Australian judge Monday lifted a ban on the social media platform X showing Australians a video of a bishop being stabbed in a Sydney church.

The temporary ban was put in place April 22, but the judge rejected the application from Australia's eSafety Commission to extend the court order that would have expired Monday.

Australian Federal Court Justice Geoffrey Kennett said he would publish his reasons for imposing and lifting the order later.

The decision was a win for the company rebranded by billionaire Elon Musk when he bought Twitter last year.

government said it gave permission for the US military to fly two powerful F/A-18F Super Hornet jets over its capital to demonstrate the close military and other

forms of cooperation between this oil-exporting South American nation and the United States.

The country had about three hours no-



Rescue team members work in a damaged area after a cold lava flood at Agam regency in West Sumatra, Indonesia, on May 13. At least 44 people were killed and 15 others went missing after cold lava floods struck Indonesia's West Sumatra province on Saturday night, a senior official of local disaster agency said on Monday. (Xinhua)



US soldiers disembark inside the Naval Base Camilo Osias in Santa Ana, Cagayan province, northern Philippines after participating in joint military exercises on May 6. (AP)



Maduro



Vargas

Lat/Am

Mass shooting in Mexico: A mass shooting in a mountain township beset by crime just south of Mexico City resulted in several deaths, authorities said Sunday.

Local and state officials did not give a specific death toll, saying only that there were some deaths. But Mexican news media, including the national newspapers Reforma, Milenio and El Universal, reported that eight people were slain.

The government of the state of Morelos, which borders Mexico City, said the attack occurred late Saturday in Huizilac.

The forested mountain township has been plagued by illegal loggers, kidnappers and drug gangs, in part because it provides the closest rural hideout near Mexico's capital.

The town's mayor, Rafael Vargas, called the attack "a terrible violent act" and said that "several people" were killed. (AP)

Quake hits border: A strong earthquake shook the border of Mexico and Guatemala early Sunday, driving frightened residents into the streets.

The tremor struck just before 6 am near the Mexican border town of Suchiate, where a river by the same name divides the two countries. The epicenter was just off the Pacific coast, 10 miles (16 kilometers) west-southwest of Brisas Barra de Suchiate, where the river empties into the sea.

The earthquake had a preliminary magnitude of 6.4, according to the US Geological Survey and a depth of 47 miles (75 kilometers).

In Mexico, there were no immediate reports of damage, but more mountainous, remote parts of the border are prone to landslides.

Across the border Guatemala's national disaster prevention agency shared photos of small landslides onto highways in the Quetzaltenango region and large cracks in walls in a hospital in San Marcos on its social media accounts, but there were no reports of deaths. (AP)

Guyana gives permission: Guyana's

government said it gave permission for the US military to fly two powerful F/A-18F Super Hornet jets over its capital to demonstrate the close military and other

forms of cooperation between this oil-exporting South American nation and the United States.

The country had about three hours no-

Rescue team members work in a damaged area after a cold lava flood at Agam regency in West Sumatra, Indonesia, on May 13. At least 44 people were killed and 15 others went missing after cold lava floods struck Indonesia's West Sumatra province on Saturday night, a senior official of local disaster agency said on Monday. (Xinhua)

Guyana gives permission: Guyana's

		Change	Closing pts			Change	Closing pts
SAUDI	- TASI	+42.55	12,259.60	JAPAN	- Nikkei 225	-49.65	38,179.46
DUBAI	- DFMGI	+0.24	4,173.28				
PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	+92.32	6,604.25				
EGYPT	- EGX 30	+225.33	25,381.25				
PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	+711.98	73,822.63				

Business

Salhia Real Estate Q1 2024 profits reach KD 2.9 million

Total operating revenues surge by 14%

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Salhia Real Estate Company K.S.C.P. announced a net profit of KD 2.9 million for the period ending on March 31, 2024, with an earnings per share of 5 Fils, compared to a net profit of KD 3.7 million and an earnings per share of 6.9 Fils compared to the same period last year.

The financial statements of Salhia Real Estate Company K.S.C.P. revealed a notable rise in the company's total assets, reaching KD 522 million, indicating a growth rate of 22%. Additionally, operating revenues for the first quarter of the current year reached KD 11 million, marking a 14% increase, while operating profits surged by 22% to KD 8.4 million. In terms of ownership rights, they recorded a value of KD 174



Mr. Ghazi Fahad Alnafisi, Chairman of Salhia Real Estate Company.

million, compared to KD 166 million for the same period last year.

On the other hand, Mr. Ghazi Fahad Alnafisi, Chairman of Salhia Real Estate Company K.S.C.P., highlighted that the net profit was impacted during that period due to the rise in depreciation and amortization costs, as well as increased financing costs. Additionally, he noted the absence of extraordinary profits derived from recovering insurance claims, which were realized during the comparative period last year.

Alnafisi further emphasized that the overall financial indicators of Salhia Real Estate Company K.S.C.P. demonstrated a positive performance. This was attributed to the company's strong operational performance and stability across various financial and economic indicators, enhancing transparency and fostering a vision for development. This transparency has encouraged the company to actively engage in the local market, leveraging its ownership of high-quality real estate assets both locally and internationally. These assets contribute to bolstering revenues from operational activities and maximizing shareholders' equity.

Food for thought: What does Kuwait's F&B industry hold?

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Kuwait's love for food has shined through a diverse population, steep competition, and, more importantly, through the sands of time. A country where oil and gas businesses take most of the spotlight, very little is left to bring attention to other sectors, one of which is the restaurants and cafés segment of the food and beverage (F&B) industry.

Today, Kuwait is home to nearly 4.5 million people, catering to the eating habits of which is a network of more than 21,000 restaurants and cafés in the organized market. And with the talks of food and beverages moving from divanias to boardrooms, it is likely that the restaurants and cafés segment of the F&B industry could potentially be a hot plate to serve success on.

What's apparent is surviving in this market takes more than gastronomic genius.

To uncover the many aspects that make the restaurants and cafés segment of Kuwait's F&B market a complex playing field, KPMG in Kuwait set out on the arduous task to cook a king's banquet and understand more from the people who make it what it is, i.e., the consumers and the business owners.

After gathering insights from more than 350 consumers, 4 industry leaders and 1 social media influencer, what emerged was a country-specific report on the restaurant and cafés segment of Kuwait's F&B sector. The report, titled Food for thought: Taste, trends, and triumphs, aims to crack open the lobster and reveal where Kuwait's F&B sector is headed, the challenges that may arise, and the strategies that are being (need to be) pioneered for businesses in the industry to flourish.

It discovers that Kuwait's appetite for all things culinary is driven by a dynamic mix of cultures that demand an extra serving of newer, more diverse offerings from F&B businesses such as restaurants and cafés.

Consumers

The consumers want Lebanese food (15.9%) first, Indian (14.4%) next, and local food (14.2%) after. The craving to try something different is becoming seemingly insatiable as more consumers want to feast on contemporary cuisines such as Italian, Chinese and Japanese. Thinking one step ahead are industry leaders, who unlike some business owners planning to diversify their menu, predict consumers to make a cyclic return to cuisine staples after a period of experimentation.

A love story that was already peaking, Kuwait's affair with food is being propelled further to the top by the country's increased mobile device penetration. Consumers are increasingly relying on applications (73.9%) to order in food as well as to pay for it (43.1%). While their older counterparts have not quite soaked their minds into the adoption of tech and are sticking to the more conventional route, F&B businesses are not falling behind. They are leveraging technology to improve consumer experience, be it by developing newer and more unique recipes, reducing cooking and delivery times, or ensuring consistency in taste, among others. Notably, the rise in online orders is giving dine-in destinations a reason to reconsider their offerings and cook up something that will encourage the eats-at-home consumer to dine-in.

But in all of this, one thing remains constant — the old love for personalized discounts and offers. The consumers (55.6%) still want them and expressed that such perks are what draw them to a restaurant or café and encourage them to return. However, they agreed if their decision behind picking a restaurant/café was to be influenced, then a good word of mouth (28.5%) would do it best. The interesting thing here for F&B businesses to make note of is how they can leverage said initiatives to drive consumer satisfaction and build a strong connection with their customers.

As more modern restaurant and café chains look to enter, or cement their place, in Kuwait's F&B market, they are somehow caught up in the shisha smoke. KPMG in Kuwait's study found that 80% of the respondents smoke shisha, out of which 69.1% indulge in it 1-3 times every week. Tapping into this opportunity pool will require businesses to relook at their offerings and understand how they can put tradition on the same shelf as sophistication.

Prevalence

One could assume coffee, like shisha, would have a far-reaching prevalence in Kuwait given the country's voracious appetite for it. But that's not the case. The people want juice (21.8%) more than coffee (21.7%), albeit by a small margin. Despite the small percentage of consumers with intolerances for lactose (8.5%) and gluten (4.2%), F&B businesses are happy to accommodate such needs in their day-to-day offerings but do not see a distinct market emerge for plant-based and meatless products anytime soon.

Notably, a small niche of consumers who are subscribed (or want) to plant-based meal plans exists. But whether there will be any takers for them is going to be a factor of educating the consumers, bringing down the products' prices, and taking a giant step away from Kuwait's meat-heavy diet.

All in all, the F&B industry in Kuwait is witnessing a systemic drift led by consumers' evolving preferences. On top of their demands is increased transparency, community engagement, and a piercing call for brand representatives to step into light and address their queries.

Speaking about the report, Ankul Aggarwal, Partner and Head of Deal Advisory, KPMG in Kuwait, said, "Kuwait's F&B market is filled with a rich culinary heritage and a great potential for growth. Through this report, we wanted to gather the consumers' views and opinions and investigate what F&B businesses, i.e., restaurants and cafés, in particular, require to thrive in the market, both now and in the future. This research journey took us from working with emlyon business school, Paris, to hearing it firsthand from industry leaders in the restaurants and cafés segment. Through these collaborations, we discovered meaningful insights that can be turned into tangible opportunities. I am hopeful that the readers will have much to take away from our report and incorporate in their decision-making process."

This report by KPMG in Kuwait was made in collaboration with emlyon business school, Paris, and featured qualitative interviews of Abdulaziz AlTuraiji, CEO, TABCo Food, Mubarak Jaffar, Co-Founder and CEO, KLC Virtual Restaurants, Eng. Mohammad Al-Mutairi, CEO, Aleid Foods, Khaled Naga, CEO — Restaurant Sector, Al Thiqa Food Group Company (TFGC), and Inspired Edibles, Kuwait.

The report titled Food for thought: Taste, trends, and triumphs is available on kpmg.com/kw.



FINANCIAL RESULTS Q1 2024

KD 466 Million Revenue

EBITDA

KD 148 Million

NET INCOME

KD 29 Million

EPS

7 Fils

CUSTOMERS

42.4 Million

Net profit reaches \$95 million in Q1

Zain Group reports Q1 2024 revenue of \$1.5 billion

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative technologies and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announces its consolidated financial results for the first quarter (Q1) ended March 31, 2024, with the company serving 42.4million customers.

Zain Group recorded stable consolidated Revenue of KD 466 million (USD 1.5 billion) for Q1 2024. EBITDA for the quarter reached KD 148 million (USD 480 million), reflecting an EBITDA margin of 32%. Net income for the quarter reached KD 29 million (USD 95 million), reflecting an Earnings Per Share of 7 Fils (USD 0.02).

Key Operational Notes for Q1 2024

1. Zain Group maintained stable revenue due to strong top-line performance across main operations including Iraq (+14%), Kuwait (+7%), KSA (+5%) and Jordan (+3%). This is despite the ongoing crisis and associated network operational challenges in Sudan where network services and coverage areas are gradually improving

2. Group customer base was significantly impacted by the Sudan crisis due to damaging military attacks on business operating systems, inaccessibility to customer data centers, limited network coverage and retail distribution challenges. Moreover, it is estimated that 6.5 million people have been internally displaced with 2 million migrating to neighboring countries. Nevertheless, the recovery plan and new data center is seeing an exponential uptake in customers in Q2 2024

3. The decrease in Q1 2024 net income compared to the restated Q1 2023 net income, is mainly due to a one-time gain on sale and leaseback of the Zain KSA tower transaction

4. The restatement of the Q1 2023 consolidated statement of profit and loss was due to the accounting of KSA tower transaction which was revisited in the Q4 2023 due to the significant judgements and estimations involved in assessing transfer of control. Excluding this impact of the restated KSA tower net profit gains, the drop in Q1 2024 Y-o-Y net income would be significantly less

5. There is no impact on Zain Group of above restatement and reclassifications on the net profit and the consolidated financial statement reported and issued as at 31 December 2023, as all necessary adjustments required have already been accounted for in the consolidated financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023.

6. Data revenue grows 1% to reach USD 595 million, representing 39% of the Group's overall revenue

7. During the quarter, Group invested USD 39 million in CAPEX rolling out 5G and FTTH

8. Kuwait, KSA, Bahrain, and Jordan continue to grow their 5G customer bases

9. Fintech services Group-wide (Tamam in KSA, Zain Cash in Iraq and Jordan) report exponential growth as total revenue grows 49%, with transaction value increasing 82% to reach USD 3 billion

10. Enterprise revenues witness healthy growth as ZainTECH reports five-fold increase in revenues and key market's B2B teams secure multiple deals with businesses and governments

11. Digital services including Dizlee API platform continue to witness revenue growth totaling 22%

12. Zain's digital operator Yaqoot in KSA, and oodi in Iraq evolve their product offerings as customer base continues to grow

Mr. Osamah Al Furaih, Chairman of the Board said, "The Board is working closely with executive management to address major socio-economic challenges in several key markets. In Sudan in particular, we acknowledge and pray for the safety of our dedicated workforce, who are making many personal sacrifices to provide meaningful connectivity to the local community. Zain Sudan is an important member of the Zain Group family and we will spare no efforts in supporting the team there to maintain the network and general operations."

"Notwithstanding, we remain focused on mitigating the impact of the Sudan crisis through different Group-wide operational measures including cost optimization, network upgrades, driving enterprise revenues, and the development of new lucrative business verticals across our footprint. Moreover, our Environmental, Social and Governance practices continue to be at the forefront of our sustainability and business strategies."

Mr. Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO commented, "Considering the excellent operational progress and digital transformation we have undertaken across our markets, it's unfortunate that exceptional circumstances and network challenges in Sudan severely impacted our financial performance and customer base. Nevertheless, we are pleased with the overall revenue growth across other key markets, and through our mitigation efforts, we are currently seeing improvements on multiple levels in Sudan from the many network service availability and customer initiatives we are undertaking."

"Thanks to the on-the-ground efforts of our brave and talented team, whose safety remains a priority for us, they have focused on maintaining connectivity through the establishment of a new data recovery center in Port Sudan, which is playing a critical role in connecting families. This is a real success story as we continue to offer connectivity and grow the business in these uncertain times."



Osamah Al Furaih



Bader Al-Kharafi

Mr. Osamah Al Furaih:
Chairman

- 'The Board continues to work closely with executive management to overcome major socio-economic challenges in several key markets'

Bader Al-Kharafi:
Vice-Chairman & CEO

- 'Solid operational performance and revenue growth across key markets; focus on maintaining network services and mitigating operational issues in Sudan'

- Compared to previous period, Q1 2024 net-profit is impacted due to the one-off gains from KSA Tower sale in Q1 2023 and operational issues in Sudan due to crisis
- Revenue remained stable as strong revenue growth in Iraq (+14%), Kuwait (+7%), KSA (+5%) and Jordan (+3%) offset the negative impact from Sudan
- Group consolidated EBITDA reaches USD 480 million (KD 148million)
- Data revenue reaches USD 595 million, representing 39% of total revenues

- Fintech services in KSA, Iraq, and Jordan witness revenue growth of 49%
- Digital services revenue, including from Dizlee, continues to grow across key markets
- Robust groupwide B2B revenue growth with ZainTECH revenues increasing five-fold, launches operations in KSA
- Additional subsea cables driving revenue growth in Zain Omantel International, as well as empowering regional digital transformation initiatives by Zain operations

"Our 5G customer base in Kuwait, KSA, Bahrain, and Jordan continues to grow, as these high-speed and reliable networks empower us to offer appealing digital technologies and services to both our individual and enterprise customers, enhancing their data experience."

"We remain focused on further driving the revenue and customer growth in several of our digital and enterprise focused initiatives, namely our fintech services in KSA (Tamam), Jordan and Iraq (Zain Cash) which are witnessing impressive growth quarter on quarter. Likewise, our digital operators in KSA (Yaqoot) and Iraq (Oodi), Red Bull Mobile (Kuwait); the Dizlee API platform; and related VAS activities are all witnessing growth in revenue and customer terms. Our recently launched fintech 'Bede' brand in Bahrain is well positioned to offer much needed financial services and we look forward to receiving a Digital Bank license in Kuwait soon."

"Our integrated digital solutions provider, ZainTECH is witnessing impressive revenue growth through working closely with operations across our footprint and we will continue to foster this lucra-

tive collaboration. ZainTECH also took a significant step forward strategically having officially opened its offices in Riyadh, KSA, offering an extensive portfolio of ICT transformational solutions to enterprises and governments. The launch of ZainTECH in KSA follows a similar unveiling earlier in the year in Bahrain, reinforcing ZainTECH's ambition to have the best in-country resources and expertise across the region."

"Furthermore, additional subsea cables and partnerships implemented by Zain Omantel International (ZOI) are driving revenue growth and providing Zain with operational independence in empowering digital transformation initiatives for our regional operations, particularly for cloud and IoT services."

"Our unrelenting operational activities do not distract us from our important parallel efforts to reduce any harmful impact of our business on the environment. The recent publication of our 2023 Sustainability Report highlights the company's efforts to provide Meaningful Connectivity leading to equitable systemic change and empowering communities through the Sustainable Development Goals."

Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) for first three months (Q1) of 2024	
Total Managed Active Customers	42.4million
Revenue	KD466million (USD 1.5billion)
EBITDA	KD 148million (USD 480 million)
EBITDA Margin	32%
Net Income	KD 29million (USD 95million)
EPS	7 fils (USD 0.02)



Zain HQ Building

We are proud to have maintained our leadership position of A- score in the 'CDP Score Report – Climate Change 2023' for the third year in a row. This grade, first achieved in 2021, positioned Zain as the highest ranked and only telecom operator in the Middle East and Africa to achieve this high rating."

Al-Kharafi concluded, "Our staff remain our greatest single asset, and we are extremely proud of our Diversity, Equity, and inclusion initiatives, which resulted in Zain being included in the Fast Company Middle East's inaugural edition of Best Workplaces for Women, which recognizes companies across the region that are empowering women by creating an inclusive environment, affirming our corporate leadership in this area."

Financial KPIs of key markets for first quarter (Q1) ended March 31, 2024

Kuwait: Maintaining its market leadership, the flagship operation saw its customer base grow 2% to serve 2.7 million. Revenue for Q1 2024 reached KD 93 million (USD 303 million), a 7% YoY growth, EBITDA reached KD 31 million (USD 100 million), representing an EBITDA margin of 33%. Net income reached KD 18 million (USD 57 million) for Q1 2024, with data revenue accounting for 36% of total revenue.

Saudi Arabia: For Q1 2024, Zain KSA revenue grew by 5% to USD 676 million, EBITDA for the period increased 11% to reach USD 206 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 31%. Net income for the three months was USD 18 million (Q1 2023 restated: USD 303 million). The decrease in net income is mainly attributed to Tower transaction in Q1 2023. The operator's data revenue grew 7%, representing 41% of total revenue, and active customers increased 1% to stand at 8.8 million.

The restatement of the Q1 2023 consolidated statement of profit and loss for Zain KSA was due to the accounting its tower transaction which was revisited in the fourth quarter of 2023 due to the significant judgements and estimations involved in assessing transfer of control. There is no impact on Zain KSA of above restatement and re-classifications on the net profit and the consolidated financial statement reported and issued as at 31 December 2023, as all necessary adjustments required have already been accounted for in the consolidated financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Iraq: Zain Iraq's Q1 2024 revenue increased 14% to reach USD 253 million and EBITDA increased 22% to reach USD 93 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 37%. Net profit for the period reached USD 15 million. The customer base increased 2% to 18.7 million, reflecting a market leading position.

Sudan: The operational and network challenges in Zain Sudan impacted the results significantly. Revenue for the quarter reached USD 50million, a drop of 70%, with EBITDA down 86% amounting to USD 12 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 23%. Net income decreased by 71%.

It should be noted that the operation's customer base was significantly impacted by the crisis due to damaging military attacks on business operating systems, inaccessibility to customer data centers, limited network coverage and retail distribution challenges. Moreover, it is estimated that 6.5 million people have been internally displaced and 2 million migrating. Nevertheless, the recovery plan inclusive of a new data center in Port Sudan, is resulting in gradual improvements in network services and coverage areas, and seeing an exponential uptake in customers in Q2 2024.

Jordan: For Q1 2024, Zain Jordan revenue grew 3% to reach USD 132 million, EBITDA increased 6% to reach USD 55 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 41%, with net income at USD 17 million. Data revenue grew 7% on the back of its 5G network, representing 52% of total revenue. The customer base increased by 4% to stand at 4 million, maintaining a market leading position.

Bahrain: Zain Bahrain generated revenue of USD 52 million, an increase of 7% EBITDA increased 3% to reach USD 15 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 29%. Net income reached USD 2.8 million, with data revenue growing 7% to represent 45% of total revenue.

About Zain Group: Zain is a leading telecommunications operator across the Middle East and Africa, serving 42.4 million active customers as of March 31, 2024. With a commercial presence in 8 countries, Zain provides mobile voice and data services in: Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and South Sudan. Headquartered in the UAE, ZainTECH, the Group's one-stop digital and ICT solutions provider, is playing a key role in the transformation of enterprise and government clientele across the MENA region. Also UAE based, Zain Omantel International (ZOI) is revolutionizing the international telecommunications wholesale landscape as the premier wholesale powerhouse serving regional operators, international carriers, and global hyperscalers. In Morocco, Zain has a 15.5% stake in 'INWI', through a joint venture. Zain is listed on the Boursa Kuwait (stock ticker: ZAIN). We recommend the Investor Community to download the "Zain Group Investor Relations" Mobile App. For more, please email info@zain.com or visit: www.zain.com; www.facebook.com/zain; www.twitter.com/zain; www.youtube.com/zain; www.instagram.com/zaingroup; www.linkedin.com/company/zain

BUSINESS

Microsoft to invest in France

Microsoft announced on Sunday investing four billion euros in the artificial intelligence (AI) sector and developing data centers around France.

This came during President Emmanuel Macron's visit to Microsoft's headquarters, before heading "Choose France" annual summit at the Chateau de Versailles near Paris. In a statement by the French Presidency, Microsoft is looking in strengthening its artificial intel-

ligence and cloud-computing infrastructure in France, which will provide 25,000 graphics-processing unit (GPU) by the end of 2025.

Microsoft also added that a plan to train a million French people on the uses of AI, as well as support 2,500 French startups on adopting AI by 2027.

Later today, "Choose France" annual event kicks off with the participation of almost 180 officials and foreign investors. (KUNA)

China-Africa trade expo in Kenya ends

The China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo (CAETE) in Africa (Kenya) 2024 ended Saturday in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, with participants renewing a call for increased Sino-Africa business relationship.

Pius Rotich, the general manager of Investment Promotion and Business Development at the Kenya Investment Authority, said that the expo provided a platform for Chinese enterprises to estab-

lish connections with their counterparts from across Africa.

The three-day event which attracted a high-level delegation from central China's Hunan Province was hosted by the secretary of the Organizing Committee of China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo (CAETE) as well as Kenya's Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry.

Gao Wei, the managing director of Afripeak Expo Kenya who

was among the organizers of the exhibition, said that the expo generated a lot of interest among Africa's business community who were keen on forging ties with Chinese enterprises.

During the expo, at least ten trade agreements were signed between African and Chinese enterprises including those involving Tanzania Sunflower Oil Processing Plant Project. (Xinhua)

bonds

The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the most recent issues of CBK Bonds and related Tawarruq at a total value of KWD (240 million for (6) months with Rate of Return (4.50%).

State Council adopts an action plan

China speeds up digital transformation of manufacturing sector

BEIJING, May 13, (Xinhua): China has started to channel more energy into the digital transformation of its manufacturing sector to foster new quality productive forces and strengthen the economic momentum.

During a recent executive meeting, the State Council adopted an action plan aimed at advancing manufacturing digitalization. The plan includes measures to fulfill manufacturing needs across diverse scenarios, accelerate technological advancements, and enhance supporting efforts ranging from setting up standards to building service platforms.

Digital transformation is key to advancing new industrialization and the building of a modernized industrial system, according to the meeting.

As Chinese manufacturers have entered a critical stage in their digital shift, the latest government policies will provide guidance for them to speed up their digital drive and facilitate technological application and innovation, according to experts.

Zhu Minghao, a professor at Beijing Jiaotong University, said that a digitalized manufacturing industry is crucial to the development of new quality productive forces, as the deep integration of the digital economy and the real economy will create new business forms, new models and new services.

For three consecutive years, China has launched smart manufacturing pilot projects, building 421 national-level demonstration factories along with over 10,000 provincial-level digital workshops and smart factories.

Technologies such as artificial intelligence and digital twins have been applied in more than 90 percent of the demonstration plants. 5G has been promoted on a large scale in quality inspection, mining production and other fields. The Industrial Internet now spans all major sectors, with over 200 application examples established.

Embracing the digital trend has brought tangible benefits to numerous producers across the country. For example, Jiangxi Huayuan Knitting Co., Ltd., located in east China's Jiangxi Province, previously had to produce a minimum of 200 kg of products to generate 1 kg of samples with the machinery continuing to run. However, following an over-10-million-yuan (about 1.41 million U.S. dollars) digital upgrade, the company has significantly minimized production waste and slashed costs.

Gao Wengen, the manager of Huayuan, said that the company can now produce 2 grams of clothing at the same unit cost as producing 2 tonnes.

Such digital shifts have resulted in a 9-percentage-point decrease in the

proportion of high energy-consuming manufacturing industries in Jiangxi's total energy consumption over the past two years, compared to the early period of the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020). The province now aims to achieve digital transformation in over 10,000 enterprises in about two years.

The State Council meeting emphasized support for the digital transition of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), particularly encouraging them to upgrade their equipment and technologies.

Zhu called for efforts to foster a batch of specialized tech companies capable of providing customized and cost-effective transformation solutions tailored to the needs of SMEs.

During an inspection tour last week in east China's Zhejiang Province, a major manufacturing base, Chinese Vice Premier Zhang Guoqing stressed the need for support for the digital transformation of SMEs.

China will enhance public services for SMEs and assist them in sharpening their business edges so that more innovative firms can spring up that utilize specialized and sophisticated technologies to create novel and unique products, Zhang said.

Are US interest rates high enough to beat inflation?

The Fed will take its time to find out

Announcement to made today

US plans to 'impose' new tariffs on EVs, other Chinese green energy imports, AP sources say

WASHINGTON, May 13, (AP): The sharp interest rate hikes of the past two years will likely take longer than previously expected to bring down inflation, several Federal Reserve officials have said in recent comments, suggesting there may be few, if any, rate cuts this year.

A major concern expressed by both Fed policymakers and some economists is that higher borrowing costs aren't having as much of an impact as economics textbooks would suggest. Americans as a whole, for example, aren't spending much more of their incomes on interest payments than they were a few years ago, according to government data, despite the Fed's sharp rate increases. That means higher rates may not be doing much to limit many Americans' spending, or cool inflation.

"What you have right now is a situation where these high rates aren't generating more braking power on the economy," said Joseph Lupton, global economist at J.P. Morgan. "That would suggest that they either need to stay high for longer or maybe even higher for longer, meaning rate hikes might come into the conversation."

Fed Chair Jerome Powell said at a press conference earlier this month that an interest rate increase was "unlikely," but he did not fully rule it out. Powell emphasized, however, that the Fed needed to take more time to gain "greater confidence" that inflation is actually returning to the Fed's 2% target.

"I think the Fed's telling you hikes are not quite as on the table as the market was expecting," said Gennadiy Goldberg, an economist at TD Securities.

On Friday, Dallas Federal Reserve President Lorie Logan said that it is "just too early to think" about cutting rates, according to news reports. She also suggested that it is unclear whether the Fed's rate is high enough to quell inflation. Logan is one of the 19 officials on the Fed's interest-rate setting committee, though she does not vote on rates this year.

Higher-for-longer borrowing costs are sure to disappoint many, from Americans hoping for lower mortgage rates before buying a home, to Wall Street traders eagerly awaiting a cut, to President Joe Biden, whose reelection campaign would likely benefit from lower rates.

On Wednesday, the government will release April's inflation report, and economists forecast it will show inflation declined slightly to 3.4%, from 3.5% in March. It has climbed from 3.1% in January, however, after falling sharply last year, raising concerns about whether progress in reducing inflation has stalled.

The Fed has pushed its key rate to a 23-year high of 5.3% in an effort to bring down inflation, which peaked at 9.1% in June 2022.

Yet despite those sharp increases, Americans, on average, spent just 9.8% of their after-tax income paying interest and principal on their debts in last year's fourth quarter.

WASHINGTON, May 13, (AP): The Biden administration plans to impose major new tariffs on electric vehicles, semiconductors, solar equipment and medical supplies imported from China, according to a U.S. official and another person familiar with the plan.

Tariffs on electric vehicles, in particular, could quadruple - from the existing 25% to 100%. The plan was described by the people on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to provide details ahead of a formal announcement.

The tariffs, expected to be announced Tuesday, come as officials across the Democratic administration have expressed frustration over China's manufacturing "overcapacity" of EVs and other products that they say pose a threat to U.S. jobs and national security.

Industrialized nations including the United States and its European allies fear a wave of low-priced Chinese exports will overwhelm domestic manufacturing. On the U.S. side, there is particular concern that China's green energy products will undermine massive climate-friendly investments made through the Democrats' Inflation Reduction Act that President Joe Biden signed into law in August 2022.

The additional tariffs also carry some political heft going into the November presidential election. Both Biden and his presumptive Republican challenger, former President Donald Trump, have told voters that they'll be tough on China, the world's second largest economy after the United States and an emerging geopolitical rival.

Biden has defined his policy as "competition with China, not conflict." He has embraced an industrial strategy that has used government financial support to pull in private investment in new factories and ad-

vanced technology, while limiting the selling of computer chips and other equipment to China.

Trump has floated the idea of levying massive tariffs against China in order to reduce the U.S. trade deficit with that country. He has repeatedly claimed that Biden's support for EVs would ultimately cause American factory jobs to go to China.

Tuesday's announcement is expected to keep in place some tariffs that were imposed during Trump's administration, covering about \$360 billion in Chinese goods. The new tax on imports would add products such as Chinese syringes and solar equipment.

There is the risk that tariffs could lead to a broader trade conflict between the two countries as they respond to each other's moves. China is seeking to create a technological edge and move up the economic chain.

There are some indications that China is cooling its production of lithium-ion batteries used in EVs, cell phones and other consumer electronics at a time when it is facing increasing criticism from the West.

On Wednesday, China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology issued a draft rule aimed at "strengthening the management of the lithium-ion battery industry and promoting the sector's high-quality growth."

The draft, which was posted on the ministry's website for public input, says companies should be striving for better technological innovation, higher quality and lower costs, rather than expanding existing capacity.

Lithium battery plants built in restricted farmlands or industrial zones should be shut down, the draft says.

U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai is conducting a review of the Trump-era tariffs, and Repub-

Two years earlier - before the Fed hiked rates - they spent 9.5%, a historically low percentage.

Why hasn't the figure risen by more? Millions of American homeowners refinanced their mortgages at very low rates during the past decade and a half when the Fed mostly kept its key rate at nearly zero to bolster the economy. As a result, their mortgages remain low and their finances largely unaffected by the Fed's policies. Consumers who paid off their cars, or who took out low-rate five-year car loans before rates rose, have also felt little impact.

The average rate for a new 30-year mortgage is nearly 7.1%, according to mortgage giant Freddie Mac. But Goldberg calculates that the average rate on all outstanding mortgages is just 3.8%, not much higher than 3.3% when the Fed began to hike rates. The gap between new rates and the average outstanding is the highest since the 1980s.

"One of the things we hear is that maybe because so many Americans refinanced their mortgages when mortgage rates dropped during the pandemic ... people are not feeling the bite of higher mortgage rates

yet," Neel Kashkari, president of the Federal Reserve's Minneapolis branch, said last week. "If that's true, and I think there's some truth to that, then it may take longer" for the Fed's rate hikes "to be fully felt by the housing market and by the economy more broadly."

Many large corporations also locked in low rates before the Fed began hiking, further limiting the impact of higher borrowing costs.

"I think the most likely scenario is where we are right now, which is just we stay put for an extended period of time," Kashkari said, referring to the Fed's key rate.

There are signs that higher rates are causing more financial struggles for many Americans, as delinquencies on credit cards and auto loans rise. And many younger Americans are becoming increasingly concerned that, with mortgage costs so high, they will not be able to afford a home.

Yet delinquencies are climbing from very low levels and are not yet historically high. Pandemic-era stimulus checks and rising incomes allowed many people to pay down debt in the past few years.

lican lawmakers including House Ways and Means Committee Chair Jason Smith and Trade Subcommittee Chair Adrian Smith are urging a "swift conclusion" to the probe.

"Continued inaction on the four year review poses serious risks for U.S. farmers, manufacturers, innovators, small businesses and workers," they wrote in a letter to Tai this week.

Meanwhile, Ohio Democratic Senator Sherrod Brown said in a tweet on Friday that "Tariffs are not enough. We need to ban Chinese EVs from the U.S. Period."

The Biden administration has also said it will investigate Chinese-made "smart cars" that can gather sensitive information about Americans driving them. The Commerce Department in February issued a notice of a proposed rulemaking that launches an investigation into national security risks posed by "connected vehicles" from China and other countries considered hostile to the United States.

There currently are very few EVs from China in the U.S., but officials worry that low-priced models could soon start flooding the U.S. market, even with a 25% tariff.

A car model launched last year by Chinese automaker BYD sells for around \$12,000 in China. The car's craftsmanship rivals U.S.-made EVs that cost three or four times as much - and is stoking fear in the U.S. industry.

The Alliance for American Manufacturing - an alliance of businesses and the U.S. Steelworkers union - released a report in February that says the introduction of inexpensive Chinese autos to the American market "could end up being an extinction-level event for the U.S. auto sector." The U.S. auto sector accounts for 3% of America's GDP, according to the report.

And Americans, in total, are carrying much less debt as a percentage of their incomes than they did during the housing bubble 15 years ago, Lupton notes.

"With consumers and businesses alike sheltered from higher interest rates thanks to pandemic-era debt paydowns and refinancing, their aggregate interest burden is not yet historically elevated," Tom Barkin, president of the Richmond Federal Reserve, said in recent comments. "To me, that suggests the full impact of higher rates is yet to come."

Goldberg said that greater borrowing costs will eventually start to bite as more Americans throw in the towel and purchase homes, even with higher mortgage rates. In some cases, they may move for a new job or have family changes that require a move. And more companies, over time, will have to borrow at higher rates as well, as their low-interest loans mature.

"The longer we stay here, the more people can't wait," Goldberg said. "If the Fed can wait out consumers, that would be one way that higher for longer actually translates to Main Street."



A woman walks in front of SoftBank store in Ginza shopping district in Tokyo, Jan. 20, 2020. SoftBank Group trimmed its losses for the fiscal year through March to about a quarter of the red ink it racked up a year earlier, as its investment losses declined, the Japanese technology company said Monday, May 13, 2024. (AP)

Company remains in red

Japan's SoftBank Group trims investment losses

TOKYO, May 13, (AP): SoftBank Group trimmed its losses for the fiscal year through March to about a quarter of the red ink it racked up a year earlier, as its investment losses declined, the Japanese technology company said Monday.

Annual sales at Tokyo-based SoftBank Group Corp. rose 2.8% to 6.76 trillion yen (\$43 billion). Losses for the fiscal year sank to 227.6 billion yen (\$1.5 billion) from a 970 billion yen loss in the previous year.

By quarter, SoftBank Group, which invests in artificial intelligence, robotics, autonomous driving and other technology, recorded its second straight quarterly profit, at 231 billion yen (\$1.5 billion) for January-March, a turnaround from a 57.6 billion yen loss a year earlier.

Its two latest quarters in the black followed four straight quarters of losses.

Investment losses for the fiscal year included Alibaba, a Chinese technology company with e-commerce, cloud computing and digital media operations, which offset gains from its holdings in T-Mobile.

The value of British semiconductor and software design company Arm, a SoftBank subsidiary, has surged in recent months, but that wasn't reflected in the earnings results. Arm listed on

the Nasdaq last year.

In its SoftBank Vision Fund of investments, some shares lost value. Among them was WeWork, a provider of shared work spaces, which filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection last year. Such minuses were offset by gains from other holdings, like ByteDance, the Chinese owner of the popular video-sharing app TikTok.

SoftBank, led and founded by billionaire visionary Masayoshi Son, also invests in Yahoo Japan and Line. Son is expected to make his pitch for the future of AI at the shareholders' meeting later this year, although he skipped the earnings presentation.

When a reporter asked why Son wasn't present, Chief Financial Officer Yoshimitsu Goto said Son was busy focusing on new efforts in what the company is calling "the AI age."

Overall, from their inception, the SoftBank Vision Fund I has logged a gain of \$16.7 billion, while SVF2 has lost \$19.3 billion. Both funds racked up losses for the fiscal year that ended in March.

Goto stressed the early hard years were now over for Vision Fund investments, and they're expected to become stable.

"The performance will improve in a big way," he told reporters.

Home food delivery cos making 'brisk' business

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: A recent report highlighted the significant role of food delivery companies in Kuwait, with their net profits constituting a substantial portion of the total profits in the Middle East and North Africa region. In 2023, these companies collectively achieved \$89 million in net profits, with Talabat Company alone contributing \$87 million, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The report, issued by the Research Department of the Tazer platform revealed that food delivery companies in the region saw a remarkable increase in net profits, reaching \$680 million in 2023, marking a 120% annual growth. Emirati companies accounted for 45% of these profits, totaling \$308 million, with Delivery Hero in the UAE generating \$164 million on its own.

Bahrain's food delivery companies contributed 23% of the region's total profits, amounting to \$160 million, with Delivery Hero Talabat leading with \$145 million. Saudi Arabia's food delivery sector represented 10% of the region's profits, totaling \$74 million, with HungerStation and Jahez achieving profits of \$42 million and \$31 million, respectively.

In Qatar, food delivery companies

accounted for 6% of the region's profits, reaching \$41 million in 2023, with Talabat alone achieving \$41 million. Other countries like Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt each had one company contributing to the sector's profits, amounting to \$1.2 million combined.

The report highlighted Talabat Group as the top profitable company in the food delivery sector for 2023, with total net profits of \$273 million across Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar. HungerStation also recorded significant profits of \$167 million in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, while Delivery Hero in the UAE generated net profits of \$164 million.

Comparing sector results over the years, the report noted significant growth. In 2021, 15 food delivery companies announced net profits of \$227 million, while 34 companies reported combined losses of \$401 million.

By 2023, the number of profitable companies increased to 19, with net profits reaching \$680 million, while losses decreased to \$121 million among 26 companies. This trend underscores the sector's resilience and growth potential in the region.



Salma Al-Hajjaj and Dr. Nawaf Al-Hajri lead the Data and Innovation Unit team at Gulf Bank.



The judging committee members, led by May Al-Owaish.

Over 400 contestants participate in first of its kind platform in Kuwait

Gulf Bank concludes third edition of Datathon competition

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: With the participation of more than 400 young talents and aspiring professionals from Kuwait, Gulf Bank announced the winning teams at the third edition of the Datathon competition, the first of its kind platform in Kuwait aimed at empowering data specialists, school and university students, and those interested in working in the fields of data and analytics.

The third edition of the Datathon, which took place at Kuwait University's Cultural Center in collaboration with Kuwait University's College of Life Sciences and the "Kuwait Code" Academy, and with the participation of the global company TABLEAU, attracted a notable number of eager young participants and skilled individuals interested in competing across the event's three categories: "Data Modeling," "Data Visualization," and "Artificial Intelligence (AI) - GenAI."

On this occasion, Ms. Salma Al-Hajjaj, Gulf Bank's General Manager of Human Resources, extended congratulations to the winning teams and all participants who

actively engaged in workshops with data science experts. She emphasized Gulf Bank's dedication to utilizing its resources to promote data literacy within society, encouraging young individuals to enhance their skills in the field of data to meet Kuwait's future demands.

This commitment aligns with Kuwait Vision 2035, which aims to cultivate a creative human capital, and with Gulf Bank's strategy to cement its position as a forward-looking financial institution.

Al-Hajjaj emphasized that the third edition builds on the impressive success and outstanding youth participation in the competition, along with the valuable insights gained from the workshops. Consequently, measures were taken to incorporate new age groups in the latest edition by reducing the minimum age requirement for participants from 18 to 16 years old, allowing them to register for all categories. Moreover, the GenAI category was introduced for the first time.

She mentioned that this annual event enhances Gulf

Bank's position as a leading bank in the field of data and digital services, as well as helps spread data literacy across society, with a particular emphasis on the youth. She pointed out that the competition provided unique opportunities for university students and recent graduates seeking high-level training opportunities in data analysis and programming. Additionally, it catered to high school students aged 16 and above, experienced data enthusiasts, and even members of the public with an interest in data science.

Dr. Nawaf Al-Hajri, the Dean of the College of Life Sciences, conveyed his pleasure in hosting this esteemed competition at the Sabah Al-Salem University City campus, in partnership with Gulf Bank. He also expressed satisfaction with their accomplishment of attracting greater participation from various sectors, such as students from schools and universities, along with employees from government and private sectors, to actively engage in the event.

Ghaith Ghazi, Tableau's Area Vice President, emphasized the vital role Gulf Bank plays in organizing such competitions to support Kuwait's talent base in terms of both quantity and capabilities, which in turn positively impacts the economy as a whole.

Categories of participants

- **University Students:** Currently enrolled or recent graduates seeking educational opportunities to gain experience in data analysis, programming, and problem-solving.
- **High School Students:** For the first time, high school students aged 16 and above are able to join all three categories, learning new skills and engaging in data culture.
- **Data Enthusiasts:** Individuals experienced in data analysis and interpretation.
- **General Public:** Anyone interested in the field of data and its applications.



Indulge in Mexican flavors every Wednesday at Safir Fintas Hotel.

Enjoy a Mexican fiesta

'Tastes of Mexico' buffet launches at Safir Fintas

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Safir Hotels in Fintas has unveiled a brand new culinary experience guaranteed to tantalize your taste buds. Every Wednesday evening, from 7pm to 11pm their Flavors Restaurant transforms into a vibrant fiesta with the "Tastes of Mexico" Buffet.

"It gives me immense pleasure to launch the Tastes of Mexico Buffet Night at Flavors Restaurant," said General Manager of Safir Fintas Hotel, Saif Edeen Mohamad, while inaugurating the "Tastes of Mexico Buffet Night" on 8 May. He added, "Following the resounding success of our Korean Authentic Experience (K-night) last season, we're thrilled to offer our guests a chance to explore the rich culinary heritage of Mexico, a cuisine proudly recognized by UNESCO."

Success

"I extend my sincere gratitude to our culinary team, led by Chef Binu Joseph, and all our hotel colleagues for their dedication in making this special evening a success story. If you're seeking a fun and flavorful adventure, look no further than the Safir Fintas Hotel," said Mr. Mohamad.

The lavish buffet promises an authentic Mexican experience for the whole family. Dive into a world of unique flavors, starting with an appetizing selection of homemade side dishes like Esquite (corn salad) and Pico de Gallo (salsa fresca). Refreshing salads like Gazpacho (chilled tomato soup) and Ceviche (marinated seafood) prepare your palate for an explosion of Mexican dishes.

A variety of cheeses and appetizers like savory Empanadas (pastries) and flavorful Molotes (fried dough balls) await your selection. The main courses are a true celebration of Mexican cuisine, featuring Birria (stew), Veracruz-style fish, and Aroz con Moriscos (Moorish rice). Seafood enthusiasts can delight in a dedicated paella station, while meat lovers will find a selection of succulent cuts. Do not miss the live cooking station, where skilled chefs prepare fresh tacos, quesadillas, and burritos according to your preferences, or the dedicated bread station offering an array of choices.

For dessert, a selection of sweet treats awaits, including traditional Empanadas, creamy Mexican Rice Pudding, and Torrijas (French toast with a Mexican twist). Cheese cakes, ice creams, and even a touch of French toast round out the delectable

options. And for those with a preference for Arabic flavors, a dedicated oriental selection ensures something for everyone.

Several distinguished guests and media personnel were invited to taste the Mexican experience for themselves at the launch of the restaurant. The Tastes of Mexico Buffet is more than just a culinary journey, it is an opportunity to immerse yourself in a Mexican ambiance with lively Mexican music adding a touch of authenticity to your dining experience. At only KD13,900 per person, this buffet offers exceptional value for a memorable evening.

To secure your spot at this exciting culinary adventure, call +965 60070257 for reservations. Do not miss out on your chance to experience the authentic flavors and festive spirit of Mexico at the Safir Fintas Hotel every Wednesday evening.

New service launched

Warba announces winners of 'Al Sunbula weekly draw'

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Warba Bank - the best bank in corporate and investment banking services in Kuwait - announced the winners of the weekly Al Sunbula draws. Warba Bank will continue to hold weekly draws for ten winners of Al Sunbula account, in the presence of a representative of Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Warba Bank employees.

Each of the 10 lucky winners of the Sunbula weekly draw of Warba Bank received KD 1,000, and the winners are: Dalal Thiyab Khamees Darwish, Mohammed Turki Fahad Al-Anezi, Abdullah Ghuloum Al-Kandari, Abdullah Yasser Al-Safran, Hamad Saud Abdulaziz Al-Meer, Abdullah Hamad Mohammed Al-Dosari, Mohammed Ghanem Hilal Al Bin Ali, Mohammed Jabr Aboud Al-Rashidi, Anwaar Omar Naif Al-Otaibi, and Saad Mohammed Khaled Al-Otaibi.

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

Regarding the conditions, Mr. Abdulaziz Saud Al-Bakhait, Area Manager Retail Banking Group

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

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

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



Al-Bakhait

Top account in Kuwait for winners, returns

KIB unveils weekly Al Dirwaza draw winners

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the winners of the weekly draw held under the Al Dirwaza account's 2024 campaign, which is distinguished by the highest number of winners throughout the year. The second weekly draw, based on customers' April 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 Fahad Mohammed Alhumaidi AlAjmi, Zahra Abdullahateef Mohammad Hajji Akbar, Abdullah Mehmas Sulaiman Almutairi, Mustafa Zaher Habib Kamal, Mohammedreza Manouchr Ahmad, while the KD 500 prize was awarded Ahmed Mahmoud Mohamed Ahmed, Ali Hussain Neema Abdulrahman, Ghaliyah Ali Ahmad, Khaled Waleed Ahmad Almajed, Afaf Abdulrahman Barahim Alhajri, Niveen Mohammad Harris Qamhiieh, Marwan Amer Soliman Ahmad.

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 ac-

count is currently the best of its kind in the sector, with annual 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.



A photo from the NBK HIPO Mentoring Program for developing future leaders.

IDRAK partners for workshops

NBK launches 2nd HIPO of Mentorship Program

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Building on the remarkable success of the program's 1st edition in 2022, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has kick started the 2nd edition of its HIPO Mentoring Program for developing future leaders, which is organized in cooperation with IDRAK Training and Consultancy.

The program resonates with NBK's consistent endeavors to develop employees' career path and help them build a thriving career that drives its future growth. To this end, it involves transferring the knowledge and experience of highly qualified and experienced employees to the young talent to maximize their opportunities of progression and rising to leadership roles in the future.

The overarching objective of the NBK HIPO Mentoring Program is to ensure that all participants have an increased awareness of the benefits of mentoring including building critical relationships, enhancing communication skills and productivity and exchange of knowledge and experience, as well as increasing the engagement and retention of employees.

With 56 mentors and 170 mentees attending the program this year, it includes an introductory seminar attended by all participants, followed by intensive training for mentors and mentees through various workshops highlighting the meaning and importance of mentoring and how to make use of this relationship to transfer the skills and experiences of high-performing leaders to identified new and less experienced employees, in addition to boosting organizational communication and productivity, and improve the preparation of high-potential employees for transition into senior leadership positions.

On the last day of the program, a

matching session will be arranged to allow the mentees to communicate with all mentors, so that each mentee will choose the mentor that best suits them to have an ongoing mentoring relationship for 18 months, which can extend further, if it proves successful. This will build a strong relationship between mentors and mentees, which will reflect positively on the performance of the bank's human resources.

Commenting on this program, Mr. Emad Al-Ablani, GM -Head of Group Human Resources at National Bank of Kuwait, said: "NBK HIPO Mentoring Program reflects our steadfast commitment to investing largely in our human capital and increasing their efficiency by providing employees aspiring to rise to leadership roles in the future with career progression opportunities."

"NBK places the development of its people as a top priority, harnessing all its capabilities to contribute to their career progression by providing training and development programs in line with its belief that diverse and high-caliber talent is key to sustaining success and achievements. Therefore, NBK HIPO Mentoring Program receives significant support from the bank's executive management, being one of the key talent management initiatives serving a pivotal aspect of our human resources strategy, which aims to promote personal and professional growth and to increase the sharing of knowledge, skills and experiences among current and future leaders," he highlighted.

"NBK harnesses all its capabilities to develop and upskill its human capital, and improve their performance, in order to ensure the quality of the human factor representing one of the bank's core sustainability drivers," he emphasized.

It is worth mentioning that during 2023, NBK has received many prestigious accolades in recognition of its excellence in developing human resources and talent.



Al-Ablani

On-screen 'energy boosters'

China's sports film frenzy fueling fitness revolution

BEIJING, May 13, (Xinhua): A sports film frenzy has been sweeping China this year, marked by box office sensation "YOLO," which hit cinemas on Feb. 10 and tells the story of an obese, unemployed woman in her 30s who determines to change her life through boxing.

Since February, boxing gyms across China have seen a sharp rise in members, with some people even reportedly heading straight from the cinema to the gym.

Through public movie screenings, film festivals and the popularity of sports clips online, sports are playing an increasingly significant role in inspiring the Chinese people and shaping China's culture.

Many who have seen "YOLO" have cited both the film's storyline and how lead actress Jia Ling lost over 50 kilograms for her role as sources of inspiration.

According to Meituan, a leading online services platform in China, user searches containing the keyword "boxing" surged in the first couple of weeks following the film's release. With box office sales surpassing 3.46 billion yuan (about 487 million US dollars), it is currently the top-grossing film of the year in China.

Shui Qingxia, former head coach of the China women's national football team, said that engaging in sports is a personal challenge that activates adrenaline, noting that the popularity of related films and media has been driven by the fact that more and more people are now actively taking part in sporting activities.

Industry experts say that sports films focusing on women, people with disabilities and individuals from other vulnerable groups are an-

other major factor driving the frenzy.

Sports movies screened at the Beijing International Film Festival in April included "Circle," an animated film about a retired Mongolian wrestler finding redemption, "Girl of Wind," a documentary short showcasing a young deaf woman's devotion to extreme sports, and "Namcha Barwa," a documentary focusing on a grassroots soccer team in the Xizang Autonomous Region's Medog County.

Dramatization

Fan Xiaoqing, an associate professor at the Communication University of China, said that the dramatization of the underdog adds tension to sports films, which often turns them into on-screen "energy boosters."

"For me, whenever I'm almost worn out, scenes from the film pop up in my head and drive me to carry on," said a Shanghai resident surnamed Liu, who is a fan of "YOLO" and a regular at a local boxing gym.

Sports-themed film and media production used to be complex due to copyright issues and heightened requirements for filming equipment and technology, among other obstacles.

But it does not take much film industry expertise to make an impact these days. Wang Junxia, who won gold in the women's 5,000 meters at the 1996 Olympic Games and became a household name in China, proved this recently by posting a now-viral clip of her daughter running online.

"Why do so many people, including myself, enjoy running despite it being so tiring? How do we make sure both our intelligence and stamina are switched on during a race? Showing the answers to these questions might just be what makes a quality sports-themed production," Wang said.

Xu Jiren, vice president of the Chinese Football Association, said the stories and struggles of athletes behind the scenes deserve more attention, as all athletes are fighting for their dreams.

Shui Qingxia is of the same opinion, and said that these real scenes and moments should feature more in sports films, including the falls and the misery. "Athletes in films are supposed to have flesh and blood as well as conviction."

Increased efforts to showcase these realities have already been made. A recent documentary telling the story of Zhou Guanyu, China's first-ever Formula One driver, hit screens last month ahead of the Formula One Chinese Grand Prix, showcasing the rising strength of sports in China and how an individual's potential can be unleashed through globalized efforts.

Experts said the sporting spirit embedded in these films can also help promote international bonds, as sports are a common language for all mankind.

"We should continue discovering the essence of sports stories to produce great films, and take them beyond the barriers between cultures and territories to touch the hearts of global audiences," Xu said.

Variety



This image released by MUBI shows a scene from 'Gasoline Rainbow.' (AP)

Film

Ross brothers' film shines light on American youth

A radiant teen road trip in 'Gasoline'

By Jake Coyle

In sibling directors Bill and Turner Ross' latest, "Gasoline Rainbow," five Oregon teens just out of high school make their meandering way some 500 miles to reach the coast for what's been billed as the "End of the World" party.

They are like countless young protagonists before them: on the road to find out. But while they share much of the same yearnings and anxieties of American road travelers from "On the Road" to "Easy Rider," the circumstances of their particular coming of age are uniquely theirs - and what's on the radio dial is, too. "Dude, I want to listen to some Shakira, bro," one says from the backseat of their van.

This being the Ross brothers - the makers of the Texas-Mexico border portrait "Western" and "Bloody Nose, Empty Pockets," in which they brought 22 people to a Las Vegas dive bar and asked them to act as though it was closing the next day - we are in a hybrid film world, part documentary, part fiction. Our characters - Micah, Nathaly, Nichole, Tony, Makai - are nonprofessional actors and their journey is a loosely constructed series of encounters that mostly unfold naturally.

It's a filmmaking approach that can, in its weaker moments, result in the worst of both worlds: the rambling narrative of documentary and the manufactured quality of fiction. But on the whole, the Ross brothers' observational, immersive filmmaking gets close to something bracingly real.

In the case of "Gasoline Rainbow," which opens in theaters Friday, much is expressed by the land the teens traverse. Whether by car or on foot, their travels take them under highway overpasses, through sprawling train yards and along long rows of wind turbines. Global warming is mentioned only once, but it hovers over their uncertain future. They make their way across barren, dry lands and industrial blight. The name of that party is no coincidence.

Bleak as that may be, "Gasoline Rainbow" - which would fit comfortably alongside films like Alma Har'el's "Bombay Beach" and Andrea Arnold's "American Honey" - is most concerned with the question of: So what now? For these young people, unsure of what to do with their lives, getting out on the road provides plenty of answers. The world they've been left by older generations may be damaged. "Do you know what the difference is between kids and adults?" one elder tells them. "Adults aren't supervised." But there is beauty to be found, like shimmering pools of gasoline, if you're willing to hit the road and make some new friends.

The answer lies most in community - in daring to leave the house, meet strangers and find like-minded souls. Perhaps more than anything, the Ross brothers - with a keen eye for American eccentrics - are interested in gathering together all the most interesting people they can find. And the spirit of camaraderie that results warms just as much as the bonfires gathered round in "Gasoline Rainbow."

"Gasoline Rainbow," a Mubi release, is not rated by the Motion Picture Association. Running time: 110 minutes. Three stars out of four.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Andy Serkis is going back to Middle-earth to play Gollum in two new "Lord of the Rings" films.

Warner Bros. Motion Picture Group's Michael De Luca and Pam Abdy said Thursday that Peter Jackson, Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens, the Oscar-winning team behind the "Lord of the Rings" and "The Hobbit" trilogies, will produce and Serkis will direct.

"Yesssss, Precious," Serkis said in a statement. "The time has come once more to venture into the unknown with my dear friends, the extraordinary and incomparable guardians of Middle Earth Peter, Fran and Philippa...It's just too delicious."

The working title is "Lord of the Rings: The Hunt for Gollum" and Walsh and Boyens are co-writing the screenplay. The collaboration between Warner Bros. and New Line Cinema is expected to be released in 2026.

The "Lord of the Rings" and "The Hobbit" films have made nearly \$6 billion combined at the box office. "The Return of the King" won a record 11 Oscars, including best director and best picture, tying "Titanic" and "Ben-Hur" for most won.

De Luca and Abdy said in a statement that this team represents their commitment to excellence in further contributing to the cinematic history of the "Lord of the Rings."

Jackson, Walsh and Boyens, who consider themselves lifetime scholars of J.R.R. Tolkien's worlds, added that they were looking forward to traveling back to Middle-earth with Serkis, "who has unfinished business with that Stinker - Gollum!"

The studio also has the animated fantasy "The Lord of the Rings: The War of the Rohirrim" arriving in theaters in December.



LOS ANGELES: The odds are more in the favor of "The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes," which begins streaming Tuesday on Starz after a successful theatrical run last November. It's a prequel to the Hunger Games, themselves. The games are in their 10th year and ratings are flagging, but a few twists and turns will catapult them to Panem's center stage. The origin story is also for the man who will become President Coriolanus Snow, played by Donald Sutherland in the first four films. Here, the young, ambitious Snow is played by Tom Blythe, whose performance lifts the movie. In my review, I wrote: "Just as in the 'Hunger Games' films led by Jennifer Lawrence's Katniss Everdeen, the new one proves how much you can sacrifice in story when you've got a thrilling young performer commanding the screen." (AP)

LOS ANGELES: "Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes" reigned over the weekend box office with a \$56.5 million North American opening, according to studio estimates Sunday, giving a needed surge to an uncertain season in theaters.

The film from 20th Century Studios and Disney that built on the rebooted "Apes" trilogy of the 2010s had the third highest opening of the year, after the \$81.5 million debut of "Dune: Part Two" in early March and the \$58.3 million domestic opening of "Kung Fu Panda 4" a week later.

The strong performance for "Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes" - it played even better internationally with a global total of \$129 million - comes a week after a tepid start for Ryan Gosling's "The Fall Guy" signaled that the summer of 2024 is likely to see a major drop-off after the "Barbenheimer" magic of 2023.

"Planet of the Apes" easily made more than the rest of the top 10 combined.

"The Fall Guy" fell to No. 2 with a \$13.7 million weekend and a two-week total of \$49.7 million for Universal Pictures.

Zendaya's "Challengers" was third with \$4.7 million and has earned \$38 million in three weeks for Amazon MGM studios.

The opening for "Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes," helmed by "Maze Runner" director Wes Ball, was the second best in the series, after the \$72 million opening weekend of 2014's "Dawn of the Planet of the Apes."

It's the 10th movie in the "Planet of the Apes" franchise that began in 1968 with the Charlton Heston original with a twist ending.

"This franchise has never been allowed to lose its momentum," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. "There are very few franchises that have this kind of longevity."

And it really is the property itself. The new film shares no central actors or characters with its predecessors. (AP)

LAGOS, Nigeria: Nigeria's fashion and traditional dances were at full display on Sunday as Prince

Harry and Meghan Markle arrived in its largest city, Lagos, as part of their three-day visit to the country to promote mental health for soldiers and empower young people.

The couple, invited to the West African nation by its military, were treated to different bouts of dancing, starting from the Lagos



Gosling



Markle

airport where a troupe's acrobatic moves left both applauding and grinning. One of the dancers, who looked younger than 5 years old, exchanged salutes with Harry from high up in the air, standing on firm shoulders.

Going with Meghan's white top was the traditional Nigerian aso oke, a patterned handwoven fabric

wrapped around the waist and often reserved for special occasions. It was a gift from a group of women a day earlier.

The couple visited a local charity - Giants of Africa - which uses basketball to empower young people. There, they were treated to another round of dancing before unveiling a partnership

between the organization and their Archewell Foundation.

"What you guys are doing here at Giants of Africa is truly amazing," Harry said of the group. "The power of sport can change lives. It brings people together and creates community and there are no barriers, which is the most important thing." (AP)

The Conversation

Study uncovers brain changes in first-time fathers

Brain study identifies a cost of caregiving for new fathers

By Darby Saxbe

USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

Parenting makes the heart grow fonder, and the brain grow ... smaller? Several studies have revealed that the brain loses volume across the transition to parenthood. But researchers like me are still figuring out what these changes mean for parents.

In a new study that looked at brain change in first-time fathers, my colleagues and I found that brain volume loss was linked with more engagement in parenting but also more sleep problems and mental health symptoms. These results might point to a cost of caregiving, traditionally shouldered by women but increasingly borne by men also.

Caring for an infant demands new motivations and skills, so it is no surprise that it might also sculpt the brain. Research in rodents first identified remodeling of both the structure and function of the brain during pregnancy and parenthood. A new body of research is unearthing similar effects in human parents, too.

In a pair of studies, researchers recruited first-time mothers for a brain scan that occurred before they became pregnant and then scanned them again a few months after birth. Gray matter - the layer of brain tissue that contains neuronal cell bodies - shrank in the mothers but not in a comparison group of women who did not become mothers.

Although a shrinking brain sounds bad, researchers theorized that this more streamlined brain could be adaptive, helping process social information more efficiently and therefore facilitating sensitive caregiving.

In keeping with this hypothesis, studies have linked maternal brain changes with women's degree of attachment to infants and with their responses to images of their infants. Women who lost more gray matter volume also appeared more bonded with their babies.

Shrinking

Most studies of the parental brain have focused on women, but emerging evidence suggests that similar brain changes might occur in new fathers, too. My collaborators and I had previously identified brain volume loss in men transitioning to fatherhood, in similar parts of the brain that changed in mothers.

Before you picture the shrunken-head guy from the movie "Beetlejuice," keep in mind that these changes were subtle. Fathers showed smaller, less statistically significant brain changes than mothers.

Dads vary in how invested they are in caring for the baby, so as a next step, we wanted to know how men's brain changes across the transition to fatherhood map onto their experiences of new parenthood.

To test this question, we looked more closely at 38 men we scanned in California before and after their baby's birth. During pregnancy and again at three, six and 12 months postpartum, we asked the fathers how they were feeling about their infants and how well they were sleeping. We also asked about their symptoms of depression, anxiety or other mental health problems.

As before, we saw significant prenatal-to-postpartum brain differences across the entire cortex, the outermost layer of the brain that carries out many higher-order functions, such as language, memory, problem-solving and decision-making. On average, men in

our sample lost about 1% of their gray matter volume across the transition to parenthood.

Consistent with the research on mothers, men's brain volume reductions did indeed seem to track with their parenting. If men told us during pregnancy that they wanted to take more time off from work after the birth, and felt more bonded to their unborn child, they subsequently lost more gray matter volume, especially in the frontal and parietal lobes - parts of the brain involved in executive functioning and sensorimotor processing, respectively.

Greater volume loss also emerged among fathers who told us that they spent more time with their infants at three months postpartum, took more pleasure in interacting with their infants and experienced less parenting stress. Taken together, our results dovetailed with the prior studies of mothers and suggested that more motivated, hands-on fathers lost more gray matter volume across their transition to parenthood.

Shrinking

The plot thickened when we looked at mental health and sleep quality. Men who lost more brain volume also reported greater depression, anxiety, general psychological distress and worse sleep at both six and 12 months after birth. These results held up when we controlled for the same measures during pregnancy.

This finding provides a clue to a possible direction of causality: Rather than prenatal sleep problems or psychological distress predicting greater brain change, we found instead that fathers' gray matter volume loss preceded their postpartum sleep problems and mental health, above the effect of their well-being before birth.

Importantly, this research is preliminary: We had a small sample of fathers who were willing to participate in our intensive research study. These results need to be replicated in larger and more representative groups of fathers.

Still, as one of the first longitudinal studies of male brain changes across the transition to first-time parenthood, our findings illustrate that perinatal brain changes may reflect both adaptation and vulnerability.

The very same changes linked with fathers' greater investment in caregiving also seemed to heighten their risk of sleep trouble and mental health problems.

As any new parent will tell you, caring for an infant is a challenge. Becoming a parent forces a realignment of life priorities and can bring magic and meaning to everyday life. But parenting can also be dull, repetitive, lonely and draining.

Perhaps our findings in fathers point to a cost of caregiving, a burden that has long been familiar to mothers but may be increasingly shared by men as fathers step up their participation in hands-on parenting.

The take-home message here is not that men should stop caring for children. A slew of research suggests that children with involved fathers do better across the board: academically, economically and emotionally. And fathers themselves report that parenthood makes their lives richer and more meaningful.

Instead, results like these support public health priorities that invest in fathers - and parents in general - through policies that reduce stress for new parents in the first months after birth, such as paid leave and workplace efforts to normalize leave-taking among men. (AP)

Illness took away her voice

AI tech 'clones' woman's lost voice

PROVIDENCE, R.I., May 13, (AP): The voice Alexis "Lexi" Bogan had before last summer was exuberant.

She loved to belt out Taylor Swift and Zach Bryan ballads in the car. She laughed all the time - even while corralling misbehaving preschoolers or debating politics with friends over a backyard fire pit. In high school, she was a soprano in the chorus.

Then that voice was gone.

Doctors in August removed a life-threatening tumor lodged near the back of her brain. When the breathing tube came out a month later, Bogan had trouble swallowing and strained to say "hi" to her parents. Months of rehabilitation aided her recovery, but her speech is still impaired. Friends, strangers and her own family members struggle to understand what she is trying to tell them.

In April, the 21-year-old got her old voice back. Not the real one, but a voice clone generated by artificial intelligence that she can summon from a phone app. Trained on a 15-second time capsule of her teenage voice - sourced from a cooking demonstration video she recorded for a high school project - her synthetic but remarkably real-sounding AI voice can now say almost anything she wants.

Sentences

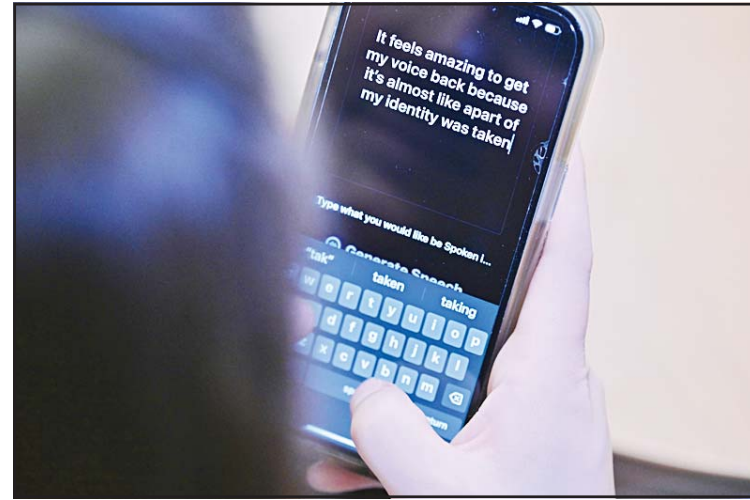
She types a few words or sentences into her phone and the app instantly reads it aloud.

"Hi, can I please get a grande iced brown sugar oat milk shaken espresso," said Bogan's AI voice as she held the phone out her car's window at a Starbucks drive-thru.

Experts have warned that rapidly improving AI voice-cloning technology can amplify phone scams, disrupt democratic elections and violate the dignity of people - living or dead - who never consented to having their voice recreated to say things they never spoke.

It's been used to produce deepfake robocalls to New Hampshire voters mimicking President Joe Biden. In Maryland, authorities recently charged a high school athletic director with using AI to generate a fake audio clip of the school's principal making racist remarks.

But Bogan and a team of doctors at Rhode Island's Lifespan hospital group believe they've found a use that justifies the risks. Bogan is one of the



Alexis Bogan types a response to a reporter's question with an app which approximates her lost voice, Thursday, March 11, 2024, at Rhode Island Hospital in Providence, R.I. (AP)

first people - the only one with her condition - who have been able to recreate a lost voice with OpenAI's new Voice Engine. Some other AI providers, such as the startup ElevenLabs, have tested similar technology for people with speech impediments and loss - including a lawyer who now uses her voice clone in the courtroom.

"We're hoping Lexi's a trailblazer as the technology develops," said Dr. Rohaid Ali, a neurosurgery resident at Brown University's medical school and Rhode Island Hospital. Millions of people with debilitating strokes, throat cancer or neurodegenerative diseases could benefit, he said.

"We should be conscious of the risks, but we can't forget about the patient and the social good," said Dr. Fatima Mirza, another resident working on the pilot. "We're able to help give Lexi back her true voice and she's able to speak in terms that are the most true to herself."

Attention

Mirza and Ali, who are married, caught the attention of ChatGPT-maker OpenAI because of their previous research project at Lifespan using the AI chatbot to simplify medical consent forms for patients. The San Francisco company reached out while on the hunt earlier this year for promising medical applications for its new AI voice generator.

Bogan was still slowly recovering

from surgery. The illness started last summer with headaches, blurry vision and a droopy face, alarming doctors at Hasbro Children's Hospital in Providence. They discovered a vascular tumor the size of a golf ball pressing on her brain stem and entangled in blood vessels and cranial nerves.

"It was a battle to get control of the bleeding and get the tumor out," said pediatric neurosurgeon Dr. Konstantina Svokos.

The 10-hour length of the surgery coupled with the tumor's location and severity damaged Bogan's tongue muscles and vocal cords, impeding her ability to eat and talk, Svokos said.

"It's almost like a part of my identity was taken when I lost my voice," Bogan said.

The feeding tube came out this year. Speech therapy continues, enabling her to speak intelligibly in a quiet room but with no sign she will recover the full lucidity of her natural voice.

"At some point, I was starting to forget what I sounded like," Bogan said. "I've been getting so used to how I sound now."

Whenever the phone rang at the family's home in the Providence suburb of North Smithfield, she would push it over to her mother to take her calls. She felt she was burdening her friends whenever they went to a noisy restaurant. Her dad, who has hearing loss, struggled to understand her.

Back at the hospital, doctors were

looking for a pilot patient to experiment with OpenAI's technology.

"The first person that came to Dr. Svokos' mind was Lexi," Ali said. "We reached out to Lexi to see if she would be interested, not knowing what her response would be. She was game to try it out and see how it would work."

Bogan had to go back a few years to find a suitable recording of her voice to "train" the AI system on how she spoke. It was a video in which she explained how to make a pasta salad.

Her doctors intentionally fed the AI system just a 15-second clip. Cooking sounds make other parts of the video imperfect. It was also all that OpenAI needed - an improvement over previous technology requiring much lengthier samples.

Reconnect

They also knew that getting something useful out of 15 seconds could be vital for any future patients who have no trace of their voice on the internet. A brief voicemail left for a relative might have to suffice.

When they tested it for the first time, everyone was stunned by the quality of the voice clone. Occasional glitches - a mispronounced word, a missing intonation - were mostly imperceptible. In April, doctors equipped Bogan with a custom-built phone app that only she can use.

"I get so emotional every time I hear her voice," said her mother, Pamela Bogan, tears in her eyes.

"I think it's awesome that I can have that sound again," added Lexi Bogan, saying it helped "boost my confidence to somewhat where it was before all this happened."

She now uses the app about 40 times a day and sends feedback she hopes will help future patients. One of her first experiments was to speak to the kids at the preschool where she works as a teaching assistant. She typed in "ha ha ha ha" expecting a robotic response. To her surprise, it sounded like her old laugh.

She's used it at Target and Marshall's to ask where to find items. It's helped her reconnect with her dad. And it's made it easier for her to order fast food.

Bogan's doctors have started cloning the voices of other willing Rhode Island patients and hope to bring the technology to hospitals around the world. OpenAI said it is treading cautiously in expanding the use of Voice Engine, which is not yet publicly available.

Ambulances diverted, records taken offline

Cyberattack disrupts US health system operations

TOPEKA, Kansas, May 13, (AP): A cyberattack on the Ascension health system operating in 19 states across the US forced some of its 140 hospitals to divert ambulances, caused patients to postpone medical tests and blocked online access to patient records.

An Ascension spokesperson said it detected "unusual activity" Wednesday on its computer network systems. Officials refused to say whether the nonprofit Catholic health system, based in St. Louis, was the victim of a ransomware attack or whether it had paid a ransom, and it did not immediately respond to an email seeking updates.

But the attack had the hallmarks of a

ransomware, and Ascension said it had called in Mandiant, the Google cybersecurity unit that is a leading responder to such attacks. Earlier this year, a cyberattack on Change Healthcare disrupted care systems nationwide, and the CEO of its parent, UnitedHealth Group Inc., acknowledged in testimony to Congress that it had paid a ransom of \$22 million in bitcoin.

Ascension said that both its electronic records system and the MyChart system that gives patients access to their records and allows them to communicate with their doctors were offline.

"We have determined this is a cy-

bersecurity incident," the national Ascension spokesperson's statement said. "Our investigation and restoration work will take time to complete, and we do not have a timeline for completion."

To prevent the automated spread of ransomware, hospital IT officials typically take electronic medical records and appointment-scheduling systems offline. UnitedHealth CEO Andrew Witty told congressional committees that Change Healthcare immediately disconnected from other systems to prevent the attack from spreading during its incident.

The Ascension spokesperson's lat-

est statement, issued Thursday, said ambulances had been diverted from "several" hospitals without naming them.

In Wichita, Kansas, local news reports said the local emergency medical services started diverting all ambulance calls from its hospitals there Wednesday, though the health system's spokesperson there said Friday that the full diversion of ambulances ended Thursday afternoon.

The EMS service for Pensacola, Florida, also diverted patients from the Ascension hospital there to other hospitals, its spokesperson told the Pensacola News Journal.

MEDICAL CLASSIFIEDS

Take care of your health



To advertise in this page please call: (+965) 24813566 Ext.: 513 or E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

For your ads on this page

Call: 24813805 E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

www.arabtimesonline.com

مرکز شفاء الجزيرة الطبي SHIFA AL JAZEERA MEDICAL CENTRE الفروانية FARWANIYA

DENTAL & COSMETIC DEPARTMENT

- SCALING & GUM TREATMENT
- COSMETIC SMILE RECONSTRUCTION
- GUM & ORAL SURGERY
- BAD BREATH TREATMENT
- SURGICAL TREATMENT
- ROOT CANAL TREATMENT
- COSMETIC FILLING
- FIXED & REMOVABLE DENTURES
- CROWN TREATMENT
- SIMPLE & SURGICAL EXTRACTION

Working Time: From 9am to 1pm & 5pm to 9pm
Ph: 24 734 000

Behind Maghateer Commercial Complex & Opp. Police station - Farwaniya
www.shifaaljazeera.com.kw

Ruidiaz scores go-ahead goal

Sounders secure a 2-1 Cascadia Cup win over Portland

PORTLAND, May 13, (AP): Raul Ruidiaz scored the go-ahead goal early in the second half and the Seattle Sounders snapped Portland's six-game undefeated streak in their rivalry series with a 2-1 Cascadia Cup victory over the Timbers.

Cristian Roldan scored a first-half goal and the Sounders secured just their third win in the regular season's first 12 matches.

Felipe Mora scored for the Timbers, who have not won since beating NYFCFC 2-1 on March 9. Since then, they've lost six and had three draws and they've tumbled to last place in the Western Conference standings.

"For us to not only win on the road but to put that type of performance, of grittiness, of belief, to defend our lead, was something we've been needing," Roldan said.

Mora scored in the 15th minute to give Portland (2-6-4) the early lead at home. It was Mora's team-leading fifth goal of the season.

Roldan answered in the 19th with a goal blasted from outside the penalty area that Timbers goalkeeper Maxime Crepeau appeared

SOCCER

to get a hand on but couldn't stop. Ruidiaz gave the Sounders (3-5-4) the lead with another shot from distance in the 50th minute that Seattle coach Brian Schmetzer called "highlight reel stuff." Ruidiaz leads all Sounders with 10 regular-season goals against the Timbers, and 13 overall.

Portland Timbers coach Phil Neville said he was "massively dis-

appointed" by the loss and took full responsibility for it.

"The results have to change very quickly, if I was a supporter I wouldn't be happy today," said Neville, in his first season with Portland.

Both the Timbers and the Sounders have had frustrating seasons and went into the match with just two wins after 11 games and identical 2-5-4 records.

Portland had a six-match unbeaten streak in the series (4-0-2) going into Sunday's match, the longest unbeaten run in the history of the series.

"Going into the match, we realized what kind of game it was going to be. The loser of the game was going to be in last place. So there was added emphasis to win the game, the motivation was defi-

nately there," Roldan said.

Diego Chara started for the Timbers after serving a one-game suspension against Charlotte last weekend. The week before, Chara set the all-time MLS record for appearances with one team with 377. Chara, who was honored for the home crowd before the game, is in his 14th season with Portland.

The Timbers also announced new jersey sponsor Tillamook before the game. The company is a dairy and cheesemaker located in the Oregon town of the same name.

The Cascadia Cup is a competition created by supporters of the Timbers, Sounders and the Vancouver Whitecaps, dating back before the teams joined MLS. The winner of the trophy each year is determined by points in the three-way rivalry.



Vancouver Whitecaps forward Ali Ahmed (22) and Los Angeles FC midfielder Timothy Tillman (11) vie for the ball during the second half of an MLS soccer match in Los Angeles. (AP)

Chennai, Bengaluru stay in contention for the playoffs



Chennai Super Kings' Sameer Rizvi plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Chennai Super Kings and Rajasthan Royals in Chennai, India. (AP)

Super Kings beat Royals by 5 wkts

CHENNAI, India, May 13, (AP): Defending champion Chennai Super Kings remained in contention for the playoffs after beating Rajasthan Royals by five wickets in the Indian Premier League.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru also kept alive its qualification hopes with a 47-run victory against Delhi Capitals in the late game.

Chennai prevailed in the low-scoring match thanks to skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad's 41-ball 42 not out in his team's chase.

Pacers Simarjeet Singh and Tushar Deshpande had shared five wickets to restrict Rajasthan to 141-5 on a slow-paced wicket. Chennai chased that down in 18.2 overs, finishing on 145-5, to seal its first win over the Rajasthan Royals in five games.

With its seventh win in 13 games, Chennai climbed to third in the IPL table on 14 points, the same as Sunrisers Hyderabad but ahead on net run-rate.

CRICKET

Rajasthan is still second with 16 points from 12 games after its third straight loss and needs a solitary win in the remaining two games to confirm its last-four spot.

The visitors had won the toss and opted to bat, but didn't make use of the opportunity in the afternoon heat.

Its top-order trio all got starts, but couldn't capitalize for bigger knocks. Yashasvi Jaiswal scored 24 and put on 43 with Jos Buttler (21). Sanju Samson scored a slow 15 off 19 balls and all three batters were out to Singh, who finished with 3-26 in four overs.

Ryan Parag then played a rescuing hand with 47 not out off 35 balls, including three sixes. Dhruv Jurel contributed 28 off 18 to give him company.

Deshpande (2-30) claimed two wickets at the death and prevented Rajasthan from having a slog at the end.

Chasing 142, Chennai was prepared for an attritional game. Gaikwad dropped anchor at one end, while New Zealand duo Rachin Ravindra and Daryl Mitchell scored quickly.

Ravindra made 27 off 18 balls, while Mitchell scored 22 off 13, to

DUBLIN, May 13, (AP): Pakistan avenged its shock opening defeat to beat Ireland by seven wickets in the second Twenty20 match in Dublin and set up a series decider.

Ireland stunned Pakistan by five wickets in the T20 opener on Friday. It was Ireland's first T20 win over Pakistan.

Ireland made a fast start Sunday after being put into bat, scoring 29 runs in the first three overs before Shaheen Afridi dismissed opening pair Paul Stirling and Andrew Balbirnie in the fourth.

propel Chennai in the power play.

Rajasthan spinners Yuzvendra Chahal and Ravichandran Ashwin put on the brakes as boundaries dried up.

Shivam Dube broke the impasse with two fours and a six, scoring 18 off 11 balls, before he holed out.

Ravindra Jadeja was out obstructing the field. He came across Samson's throw while returning from a second



Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Cameron Green, (left) and Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Virat Kohli celebrates the dismissal of Delhi Capitals' Tristan Stubbs during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Delhi Capitals in Bengaluru, India. (AP)

Lorcan Tucker and Harry Tector (32) put on 62 for the third wicket, with Tucker scoring 51 in 34 deliveries.

Curtis Campher (22) and George

CRICKET

Dockrell (15) boosted the score before Gareth Delany's 10-ball 28 not out helped the hosts post 193-7.

Pakistan wobbled at the beginning of its chase as Saim Ayub was

run, and was adjudged out.

Impact player Sameer Rizvi then smacked 15 not out off eight balls to help Chennai cross the finish line.

Rajat Patidar's 52 runs off 33 balls paved the way for host Bengaluru's sixth win of the season and helped the team move to fifth spot.

Will Jacks hit a 29-ball 41 as Bengaluru finished with 187-9 in 20 overs

caught in the first over and captain Babar Azam nicked Graham Hume behind to depart for a duck in the second.

But Ireland's hopes of sealing a famous series win with a game to spare were dashed as Mohammed Rizwan (75 not out off 46 balls) and Fakhar Zaman (78 off 40) put on a stunning 140-run partnership.

Azam Khan then added 30 not out from 10 balls to take Pakistan home with 19 balls to spare and level the series at 1-1.

The third T20 is on Tuesday.

after Delhi won the toss and opted to field.

Left-arm medium pacer Yash Dayal then took 3-20 for Bengaluru, while Lockie Ferguson picked up 2-23, as Delhi was dismissed for 140 in 19.1 overs. Stand-in captain Axar Patel's 57 off 39 went in vain as Bengaluru leaped over Delhi, which can still qualify. Both sides have 12 points from 13 games, with Bengaluru ahead on net run-rate.

Rishabh Pant missed out for Delhi with the captain suspended because of his team's third slow over-rate offence in the previous game against Rajasthan. Cameron Green scored 32 not out off 24 deliveries earlier for Bengaluru and Virat Kohli hit a brisk 27 off 13 before he was caught behind off Ishant Sharma.

Bengaluru kept losing regular wickets but Green - with one four and two sixes - pushed them to a defensible total.

In Delhi's chase, David Warner was out for his third single-digit score in succession, while Abishek Porel was dismissed for two as Delhi made a poor start.

Jake Fraser-McGurk's 21 off eight balls propped his team up, but fielding was the key difference between the two sides. While Delhi dropped as many as five catches, Bengaluru made sure to grab its chances.

Zhang takes Founders Cup

McIlroy wins Wells Fargo

CHARLOTTE, May 13, (AP): Rory McIlroy won the Wells Fargo Championship for a record fourth time Sunday, overcoming a two-stroke deficit to beat Xander Schauffele by five strokes.

No other player has won the event more than twice.

McIlroy closed with a 6-under 65 at Quail Hollow, playing the final 11 holes in 6 under even with a double bogey on the 18th hole. He finished at 17-under 267 after four straight rounds in the 60s and won his second straight PGA Tour event after teaming with Shane Lowry to take the Zurich Classic two weeks ago in New Orleans. Schauffele shot 71.

McIlroy trailed by two after Schauffele made an eagle on the par-5 seventh, but the world's second-ranked player quickly shifted into another gear.

The star from Northern Ireland pulled even after birdies on Nos. 8 and 9 and then made a 33-foot eagle putt on the 10th for his first lead of the tournament.

GOLF

McIlroy's finish was reminiscent of 2010 when he carded six straight 3s en route to a final round 62 to beat Phil Mickleson for his first career PGA Tour win. He also won the event in 2015 and 2021.

Rose Zhang won the Cognizant Founders Cup to end Nelly Korda's record-tying LPGA Tour winning streak, rallying to beat Madelene Sagstrom by two strokes.

Zhang birdied four of the final five holes to overcome a three-shot deficit in a thrilling final-round duel with Sagstrom after the two broke away from the field Saturday.

Zhang shot a 6-under 66, birdieing Nos. 14, 15, 17 and 18 at Upper Montclair Country Club. Sagstrom bogeyed the 16th in a 69.

Korda, who struggled the final two days after playing magnificently in winning the five straight events she entered, had a second straight 73 and tied for seventh at 7 under.

After her final putt, Zhang bent over and put her hands to her mouth, before walking to hug caddie Oliver Brett. The two-time NCAA champion at Stanford who won last year at nearby Liberty National in her pro debut, finished at 24 under 264 total - the best score in the three years the event has been held here.

Doug Barron won the Regions Tradition for his third PGA Tour Champions victory and first major title, shooting a 4-under 68 to hold off Steven Alker by two strokes.

Barron finished at 17-under 271 at Greystone in the first of the season's five senior majors. He ended a victory drought dating to the 2021 Shaw Charity Classic. Wins eluded him throughout his PGA Tour career, where he didn't finish higher than



Rose Zhang poses for photo after winning the LPGA Cognizant Founders Cup golf tournament, Sunday, May 12, 2024, in Clifton, N.J. (AP)

third in 238 events.

But there wasn't a lot of drama in this one as he outlasted some of the tour's biggest names with a bogey-free round and a casual tap-in finish. Hall of Famers Ernie Els and Padraig Harrington ended up being the ones offering congratulatory hugs at the end. Barron called it "a dream come true to beat all these great players."

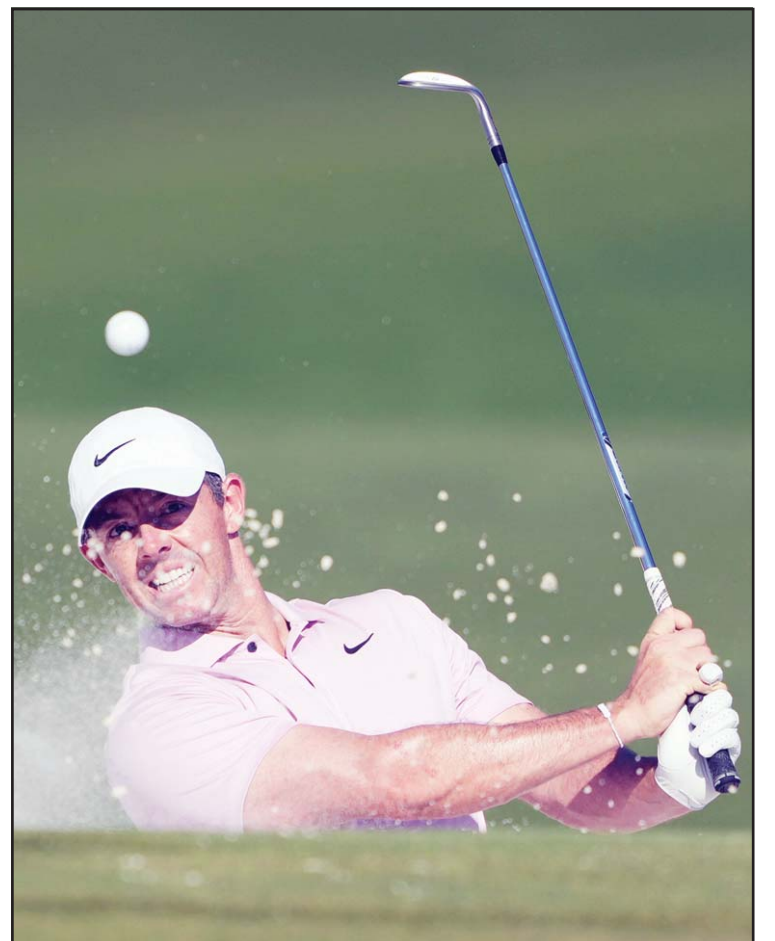
Alker had a 63 to match the tournament record for Greystone. Chris Gotterup won the inaugural Myrtle Beach Classic for his first PGA Tour title, closing with a 4-under 67 for a six-stroke victory at Dunes Golf & Beach Club. The tournament was played opposite the Wells Fargo Championship, a signature event in Charlotte, North Carolina. Gotterup got a spot in the PGA Championship next week, but not in the Masters or a guaranteed spot in the remaining two \$20 million signature events.

Four strokes ahead entering the round, Gotterup bogeyed the first two holes, then rebounded with a birdie-eagle-birdie burst on the next three. The 24-year-old former University of Oklahoma player won in his 27th tour start, finishing at 22-under 262.

Alistair Docherty (64) and Davis Thompson (68) tied for second.

Blades Brown, the second 16-year-old in two weeks to make a cut, tied for 26th at 19 under after a 69. Last week, Kris Kim advanced to the weekend in the Byron Nelson.

Just over a year after Michael Hendry was diagnosed with leukemia, he made it all the way back by winning For The Players By The Players on the Japan Golf Tour. Hendry, a 44-year-old from New Zealand, earned six points in modified Stableford scoring for a one-point victory over Hideto Kobukuro. Hendry, who had to turn down his spot in the British Open last year while being treated, won for the sixth time in his career.



Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland makes an eagle on the 15th hole from the bunker during the final round of the Wells Fargo Championship golf tournament at the Quail Hollow Club in Charlotte, N.C. (AP)

SPORTS

Arsenal take title race with City to final day of season

Defeat for United a latest blow for Hag

MANCHESTER, England, May 13, (AP): It's going down to the wire.

Arsenal ensured the Premier League title race will go to the last day of the season after returning to the top of the standings with a 1-0 win at Manchester United.

Leandro Trossard's 20th minute winner at Old Trafford means the Londoners will take defending champion Manchester City to the final round of games next Sunday.

"Today we wanted to really knock (at) that door and open that box of dreams and live the last and final day of the season in front of our people with the opportunity to win the Premier League," Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said. "Everything is at stake. We had no margin for error since January." Anything other than a win for Arsenal against United could have seen City clinch the title with victory at Tottenham on Tuesday. Arteta's team duly delivered and moved one point clear at the top.

Arsenal will host Everton in the final round, when City is at home against West Ham after Tuesday's game at Spurs.

For now, Arsenal has done all it could to keep the pressure on Pep Guardiola's team - improving on last season when it suffered a late collapse to allow City to wrap up a third successive title with three games to spare.

While the title is still in City's hands, it will have to win its remain-

ing two games to be certain of a record fourth-straight English league title.

Arsenal is aiming to be crowned champion for the first time since 2004, when Arsene Wenger's team went an entire league campaign without defeat to earn the nickname of the "Invincibles." The current class cannot match that feat, but with 27 wins and 89 goals it has set two new club records in the Premier League era.

"That's not progress, that's history," Arteta said. "That's very difficult to do, especially in the league where we are playing now." The visit to Old Trafford always looked like Arsenal's biggest test during the run-in and history was not on its side, having won only once in its last 16 league games at the home of United. Despite that record, it was still the favorite to over-

SOCCER

come a United team that had been ruthlessly exposed by Crystal Palace earlier in the week when routed 4-0 at Selhurst Park.

Casemiro, who had received heavy criticism for his performance as a makeshift center back against Palace, was culpable again for Arsenal's winner when he was slow to push up and played Kai Havertz inside. The Germany forward took advantage and drove into the box before crossing for Trossard to convert from close range.

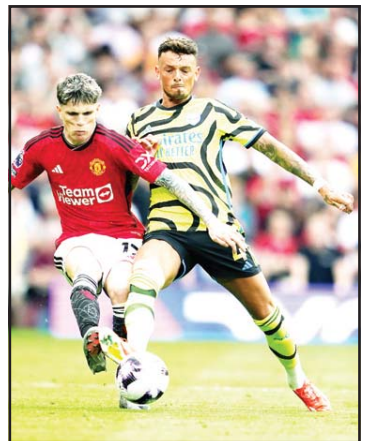
With so much at stake, the tension appeared to get to Arsenal's players, who could not build on that early advantage and instead ceded long periods of possession to United.

Still, United rarely looked likely to open up its opponent and it was Arsenal that came closest to adding to its lead through substitute Gabriel Martinelli in the second half and Declan Rice.

Defeat for United was a latest blow for under-pressure manager Ten Hag, whose team lost for the 14th time in the league this season and extended a damaging run that has seen it win just one of its last eight games in England's top division.

While Ten Hag has the FA Cup final against City to look forward to at the end of the season, there was little to encourage co-owner Jim Ratcliffe, who was in the crowd along with Keir Starmer, leader of Britain's opposition Labour Party.

With two games remaining in the league, United is eighth in the standings and in danger of missing out on European soccer next season. United has never finished lower than seventh in the Premier League era.



Manchester United's Alejandro Garnacho, (left), challenges for the ball with Arsenal's Ben White during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and Arsenal at the Old Trafford Stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

Al-Sahel and Al-Tadamon eye first victory in league

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The 13th and final round of the "Merge" Handball League kicks off at the Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Complex, featuring three crucial matches. The first match, scheduled for 4:30 pm, pits Al Sahel against Al Tadamon, both seeking their inaugural victory in the league. Following at 6:00 pm is the showdown between Al Fahaheel, with eight points, and Kuwait Club, boasting 22 points. Later in the evening, at 7:30 pm, Yarmouk, with nine points, faces off against Khaitan, with four points.



A file photo of players in action.

The clash between Al-Tadamon and Al-Sahel takes center stage as both teams vie for their first win and crucial points to evade the bottom spot in the standings.

Meanwhile, the outcomes of the remaining matches hold less significance in terms of impacting the overall standings.

This season's league, spanning 2023-2024, introduced a revamped format following the withdrawal of Al-Jahra

HANDBALL

and Al-Shabab. The league adopted a "merge" system, integrating all 14 clubs into a unified league for one round before splitting into the Premier League and First Division League.

In the Premier League, the top six clubs, including Kuwait Club, Al-Qadisiya, Kazma, Al-Salmiya, and Al-Arabi, compete for the championship while retaining points earned from the Merger League. Matches are played on a home-and-away basis.

Meanwhile, the First Division League features the eight clubs ranked from seventh to 14th, maintaining their accumulated points and battling for promotion to the Premier League in a single round.

With five clubs already securing spots in the Premier League, the sixth and final berth is contested between Burgan and Sulaibikhat.

Best of the Rest

China into semifinals: Despite a 4-0 loss to Japan in the final group game here on Monday, China still advanced into the semifinals of the 2024 AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup.

With two consecutive victories over Australia and Thailand in Group B, China had already booked a semifinal berth along with group leader Japan before their clash. (Xinhua)

Ancelotti drops Courtois hint: Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti on Monday dropped a hint that fit-again Thibaut Courtois could replace Andriy Lunin in goal for the UEFA Champions League final against Borussia Dortmund on June 1.

Courtois has played in Madrid's recent wins against Granada and Cadiz since returning from the cruciate knee ligament injury he suffered in pre-season, but Lunin was in goal for last week's return leg of the Champions League semifinal against Bayern Munich. (Xinhua)

The Ukrainian has impressed in Courtois' absence and quickly took the goalkeeper's jersey from Kepa Arrizabalaga, after the latter had

been brought in on loan from Chelsea to cover for Courtois.

Speaking ahead of Tuesday's La Liga game at home to Alaves, Ancelotti said that both "Lunin and Kepa" would play before the end of the season, but admitted it "won't be easy, as we don't have many games left to play." The big debate is whether Courtois should replace Lunin in the European final after Lunin's performances this season, but Ancelotti seemed to imply that he favors Courtois for the big game - which would be the Belgian international's European debut this season. (Xinhua)

Juve secure next CL spot:

Juventus secured a Champions League spot for next season despite being held to a 1-1 draw by already-relegated Salernitana. This outcome was aided by Atalanta's 2-1 victory over Roma.

Juventus, in a slump, had managed only one win in their last nine Serie A matches prior to Sunday, contrasting with Salernitana's early relegation from Europe's top five leagues. (Xinhua)



PSG's Kylian Mbappe, (center left), celebrates with his teammates PSG's French League One title after the French League One soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Toulouse at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris. (AP)

'Unfair distribution of foreign players'

Saudi League record spending fails to deliver desired results

RIYADH, May 13: Despite the Saudi Football League's significant investment in signing numerous star players to elevate the level of competition, the desired results have yet to materialize swiftly.

Despite the infusion of a record \$957 million by the Saudi Public Investment Fund into new player transfers, the league has not seen a commensurate increase in competitiveness for the title, public attendance, or Saudi club success in continental championships. Even the performance in the Asian Cup left much to be desired, with an early exit in the round of 16.

SOCCER

While the investment fund attracted top-tier talent for the four clubs it acquired—Al-Hilal, Al-Nasr, Al-Ahly, and Al-Ittihad—only Al-Hilal managed to stand out amidst relatively weak competition.

Al-Hilal, despite early setbacks like Neymar's injury and subsequent absence for the season, clinched the Super Cup and secured a spot in the cup final against rival Al-Nasr. Notably, Al-Hilal's recruitment of energetic players like Brazilian Malcolm, Portuguese Ruben Neves, and Serbians Sergey Milinkovic-



Cristiano Ronaldo working out.

Savic and Aleksandar Mitrovic contributed significantly to their league triumph.

Saudi clubs openly voiced concerns regarding the perceived unfair distribution of foreign players among teams. Al-Hilal notably achieved remarkable victories, including a 9-0 win over Al-Hazm, a 7-0 victory against Abha, and a 6-1 triumph over Riyadh. Their remarkable 34-match winning streak across various competitions made history, only to be halted by Al Ain of the Emirates during the AFC Champions League.

The continental disappointments suffered by Al-Hilal, Al-Nasr, and Al-Ittihad—especially the latter's elimination at the hands of Al-Hilal—underscored the challenges faced by Saudi clubs in strengthening their continental presence and clinching titles.

Internationally, reigning champions Al-Ittihad, bolstered by French stars Benzema and N'Golo Kante, faltered in the Club World Cup, hosted in Saudi Arabia, succumbing to a 1-3 defeat against Egypt's Al-Ahly in the second round.

'A bit of surprise, but a lot of excitement'

Hawks win NBA lottery in year where there's no clear choice for No. 1 pick

CHICAGO, May 13, (AP): The Atlanta Hawks came in facing slim odds. They walked away with their biggest victory in years.

The Hawks won the NBA draft lottery on Sunday, landing the No. 1 pick and a potential cornerstone player in a year where there's no clear-cut choice.

"At least I can go home and tell my wife on Mother's Day, 'Hey, at least we won the lottery,'" general manager Landry Fields said. "That's her present. Yeah, there we go."

The Hawks hit the jackpot despite just 3% odds after finishing 10th in the Eastern Conference at 36-46. They dropped their final six regular-season games and lost to the Chicago Bulls in the first round of the play-in tournament.

"It was a shock," said Fields, who grinned ear to ear when deputy commissioner Mark Tatum announced the Hawks as the winners. "When I first saw that it wasn't us between 10 and 12, that launched us into the top four. I was like, all right, we've got a real shot at this thing. A bit of surprise, but a lot of excitement."

The Hawks haven't won a postseason series since a surprising run to the Eastern Conference finals in 2021. They got knocked out in the first round in 2022 and 2023.

Atlanta has some big decisions to make this offseason, including whether to break up its backcourt of Trae Young and Dejounte Murray. Fields can build with the No. 1 pick - assuming he keeps it - though it's not clear who will be taken first after Victor Wembanyama was the obvious choice for San Antonio last year.

"Our group has been fantastic," Fields said. "There's a whole lot of trust. They've put in the work. We'll kind of lean into our process and take it from there."

Washington, Houston, San Antonio and Detroit rounded out the top five. The draft is June 26-27 in Brooklyn.

Houston coach Ime Udoka was thrilled to get the third pick after the Rockets went 41-41 and missed the playoffs for the fourth straight year.

"Pleasant surprise when you move up the way that we did," he said. "I feel like there's a lot of qualified candidates out there."

Washington and Detroit had the best chances to land the top pick at 14%. Only four teams have won the lottery with slimmer odds than Atlanta, with the biggest longshot being Orlando at 1.52% in 1993. The Magic orchestrated a blockbuster draft night trade with Golden State, sending the rights to Chris Webber to the Warriors for the rights to Penny Hardaway along with three future first-round picks.

BASKETBALL

San Antonio landed a generational player last year in Wembanyama. The franchise that previously took David Robinson and Tim Duncan with the No. 1 overall pick got its next great big man, and all the Frenchman did was turn in one of the best rookie seasons in NBA history.

Fields disputed the idea that this year's class is a weak one, saying there are future All-Stars.

"Every draft class has great players in it," he said.

The No. 1 pick could once again come from France, whether it's center Alex Sarr or sharp-shooting forward Zaccharie Risacher, but that's far from a certainty. UConn guard Stephon Cas-

tle and Kentucky's Reed Sheppard and Rob Dillingham are both expected to be off the board within the first few selections.

The 7-foot-1, 224-pound Sarr has the size and mobility that teams crave and can defend the perimeter when he's not blocking shots down low. The 19-year-old from Toulouse is known for his explosiveness around the rim, though he could use some more muscle. It would help, too, if he developed into a more reliable 3-point shooter.

Sarr, whose brother Olivier plays for the Oklahoma City, spent this past season in Australia's National Basketball League.

Risacher, who was born in Spain and grew up in France, is known as a dynamic, albeit streaky shooter for JL Bourg, whether he's popping off screens or pulling up for 3-pointers. He often guards the other team's best player.

Castle joined Andre Drummond in 2012 as UConn's only one-and-done player when he declared for the draft in April after the Huskies' latest NCAA championship run. The 6-foot-6 guard averaged 11.1 points, 4.7 rebounds and 2.9 assists while often drawing the defensive assignment to shut down the opposition's top perimeter player.



Atlanta Hawks general manager Landry Fields, right, and NBA Deputy Commissioner Mark Tatum pose for photos after Tatum announced that the Hawks had won the first pick in the NBA draft, during the draft lottery in Chicago. (AP)

Mbappé PSG journey ends on a sour note

PARIS, May 13, (AP): Kylian Mbappé's relationship with Paris Saint-Germain started with great fanfare but is ending amid ongoing tensions and without a Champions League trophy.

Mbappé joined as a teenage phenom from Monaco in 2017 in a deal worth 180 million euros (\$194 million). On Sunday, the 25-year-old superstar played his last home game for PSG and scored in a 3-1 loss to Toulouse.

He was loudly jeered by sections of the crowd at Parc des Princes when his name was announced - two days after finally making it official he is leaving - though Mbappé got a warmer welcome from other PSG fans.

As the soccer world discussed his imminent departure on Friday, French champion PSG did not comment on the matter.

The late-evening announcement by Mbappé may have taken PSG by surprise since it was in a video posted on X, and not through the club's communication department.

Between then and the Sunday night kickoff, there were more than 20 posts on PSG's official feed on X.

Those included an exclusive look at next season's home strip, an item on a betting site, a clip of PSG's women's team reaching the French Cup final, and kickoff times for the match in different parts of the world - but nothing on Mbappé.

SOCCER

No tribute was paid to him by the club during Sunday's game, either, albeit not the last match of the season.

It was left to the ultra supporters from the CUP, or Paris Ultras Collective, to honor him with a banner and a giant tifo in his image.

The fracture between the cash-rich Qatari-owned club and its 256-goal record scorer appears to run deep.

PSG may be feeling let down by Mbappé after offering him the most lucrative contract in the club's history when he signed a new contract in 2022.

But Mbappé was frustrated because he felt promises to sign key players - notably a top-class center forward like Robert Lewandowski so he could play in his favored position wide left - were not kept.

When he signed the new deal, he was paraded in front of fans holding up a jersey with 2025 on it. Mbappé was reportedly annoyed about this, because the contract was until 2024 with the option for an extra year.

Mbappé stunned PSG in June last year by informing the club he would not take the option for an extra year. With his contract effectively into its final year, it put PSG in the position of needing to sell Mbappé to avoid losing him for free when the contract expired.

PSG insisted he would be sold but Mbappé wanted to see out the final year, so the club flexed its muscle by leaving him out of the pre-season tour to Japan in late July.

Al-Hilal came in with a world record \$332 million bid, but Mbappé was not interested and reportedly refused to meet with representatives from the Saudi club in Paris.



Albaert, mascot of the European Football Championship EURO 2024, stands next to the European Football Championship trophy during a presentation in the Allianz Arena stadium in Munich, Germany. (AP)

Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

Salwa Al-Sabah Club sweeps Al-Fatah Club for Women's Federation Cup

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: Salwa Al-Sabah Club's premier women's volleyball team clinched the coveted Women's Federation Cup Championship title for the 2023-2024 sports season with a resounding victory over Al-Fatah Club in the final match. The match concluded with a commanding three-round sweep, securing scores of 25-13, 25-14, and 25-21. Meanwhile, the Girls Club Al-Oyoun claimed the third-place spot. The thrilling final showdown took place at the Al-Itihad Hall within the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex.

In a ceremony graced by esteemed dignitaries including Dr. Jaber Al-Marri, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Volleyball Federation, Nayef Al-Khamili, the Assistant Secretary, and Fadela Al-Shuwailan, President of the Girls Club, Salwa Al-Sabah women's team was crowned champions. It received the championship cup, while the girls from Al-Fatah and Al-Oyoun were awarded gold and silver medals, respectively, with bronze medals bestowed upon Al-Oyoun's players.

This marks Salwa Al-Sabah Club's second triumph of the season, having previously secured the General League Championship title for girls under 18 years. Its victory over Al-Fatah Club in that contest further solidified its dominance in women's volleyball.



Officials applaud as captain of Salwa Al-Sabah Club hoist the championship trophy.

Best of the Rest

'Lewandowski to stay': Robert Lewandowski's agent Pini Zahavi affirmed that the Polish striker will remain at FC Barcelona next season.

"That is nonsense. Lewandowski will stay in Barcelona one hundred percent. He wants to play another year in Catalonia," Zahavi told Polish media on Monday morning.

He added that Lewandowski is not interested in a transfer to the Saudi Pro League.

The 34-year-old scored four goals for Barcelona in his last two La Liga matches, and sits fourth in this season's individual scoring charts with 17 goals. (Xinhua)

Iraola signs extension: Bournemouth manager Andoni Iraola has signed a new contract through to the end of the 2026 season, the Premier League club said Monday.

The Spaniard signed a two-year deal when he was hired last summer and has gone on to lead Bournemouth to its highest points total in the Premier League with a game still to go. "For me, it is a matter of renewing the confidence from both sides," Iraola said. "We have had a good experience with our first season together in the Premier League, and I am happy that both sides want to continue the relationship further." Iraola replaced former manager Gary O'Neil last June and preserved the club's topflight status despite failing to win any of his first nine league games in charge.

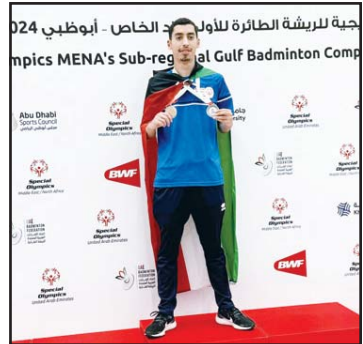
Bournemouth is 11th in the standings on 48 points. It's previous highest total was 46 in 2016-17 under former manager Eddie Howe. (AP)

Nuggets, Pacers even series

Kuwait Special Oly team shines in Gulf Badminton Competition

ABU DHABI, May 13: Kuwait's Special Olympics Badminton Team secured a triumphant sweep, clinching three coveted medals – gold, silver, and bronze – in the Gulf Badminton Competition held as part of the Special Olympics in Abu Dhabi.

Mohammed Walid showcased his prowess, securing the bronze medal in the men's singles category during the final day of the competition. His outstanding performance included a victory against a formidable player from the Bahraini Special Olympics team.



A Kuwaiti winner displays his medals on the podium.

Additionally, Walid and his teammate, Fawzan Al-Qassar, claimed the silver medal in the men's doubles event. Despite a loss to the Omani Special Olympics team in the second match, they triumphed in the initial bout against the Saudi Special Olympics team. Hanaa Al-Zawawi, President of Special Olympics Kuwait, extended her heartfelt congratulations to the players for their remarkable

BADMINTON

achievements. She dedicated their success to the nation's leadership, the Kuwaiti populace, and the players' families. Al-Zawawi commended the Kuwaiti players for their stellar performance throughout the tournament, emphasizing their unwavering enthusiasm, dedication, and determination.

Al-Zawawi expressed pride in the team's ability to uphold Kuwait's sporting reputation for individuals with intellectual disabilities. She extended gratitude to the players, as well as the technical and administrative staff, the Kuwaiti Special Olympics community, Al-Tomooh Club, and the parents for their unwavering support.

Timberwolves beaten at home again

MINNEAPOLIS, May 13, (AP) Nikola Jokic scored 16 of his 35 points in the fourth quarter, and Aaron Gordon had 27 points on 11-for-12 shooting to propel the Denver Nuggets to a series-tying 115-107 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves on Sunday night in Game 4 of the Western Conference semifinals.

Jamal Murray had 12 of his 19 points in the third quarter for the Nuggets in a momentum carryover from his buzzer-beating swish from behind half court, and the Wolves only cut the deficit below double digits in the second half for brief stretches.

Anthony Edwards scored 44 points in another spectacular performance for Minnesota, shooting 16 for 25 from the floor. But despite a 42-31 rebounding edge, the Wolves were beaten at their own game for the second straight time at home by the defending NBA champions, who were fired up after dropping the first two games of the series on their home court.

The series goes back to Denver for Game 5 on Tuesday night.



Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic (15) goes up for a shot as Minnesota Timberwolves guard Anthony Edwards, bottom, defends during the first half of Game 4 of an NBA basketball second-round playoff series in Minneapolis. (AP)

Mike Conley had 15 points, Karl-Anthony Towns went just 5 for 18 from the field for 13 points and 12 rebounds, and Rudy Gobert came alive late to score 11 points and grab 14 rebounds. Still, the Wolves were on their heels at home for a second straight game.

Gordon didn't miss until there was 3:39 to go. The Nuggets scored eight points in 20 seconds to close the first half, highlighted by Murray's improbable heave.

The three off days between Games 2 and 3 did the Wolves no good, yielding a 27-point defeat after which coach Chris Finch declared them feeling "fat and lazy" after all the fawning near and far for their performance in Denver. They needed to reintroduce their edge right away to keep the crowd consistently roaring, and Edwards dutifully led that response.

BASKETBALL

The 2020 first overall draft pick scored nine points in the first four-plus minutes before Murray even touched the ball, with Gordon and Jokic sharing the point guard duties to reduce the burden on Murray and his strained left calf muscle.

After a quiet Game 3, Edwards was on a mission to will the Wolves to win, as the Nuggets fully expected. Their loading up on him in the lane wasn't enough, as he hit from everywhere on the court, but the rest of the Wolves frequently failed to make the Nuggets pay for leaving them open.

They missed tip-ins at the rim, not just corner 3s. Towns missed his first seven shots, and while his effort and defense never suffered, he was a mess trying to get the ball to the basket, rarely drawing the fouls he argued for.

The Wolves showed off their league-best defense and their enviable depth in the first two games, but the Nuggets copied and pasted that formula on the road. When their secondary scorers and bench players are

hitting their jumpers, they're awfully tough to beat.

Gordon, Justin Holiday (10 points), Christian Braun (11 points) and Reggie Jackson (six points) went a combined 8 for 11 from 3-point range. They fueled a 26-4 run that bridged the first and second quarters, and all but five points on that surge came with the four-time NBA Defensive Player of the Year Gobert resting on the bench.

Tyrese Haliburton scored 20 points, T.J. McConnell added 15 points and 10 assists and the Indiana Pacers rolled to their third-biggest postseason victory ever, beating the New York Knicks 121-89 to even the Eastern Conference semifinal series at 2-2.

Haliburton also had six rebounds, five assists and four 3-pointers as the Pacers led by 43 points during a start-to-finish romp. They fell just short of their most lopsided playoff victory, when they beat Cleveland by 34 points in April 2018.

Indiana also won by 33 against the Los Angeles Lakers in the 2000 NBA Finals.

Game 5 of the series will be played Tuesday at Madison Square Garden. The Knicks put just three players in double figures. Alec Burks finished with 20, Jalen Brunson scored 18 - his fewest in this postseason - and Deuce McBride had 16 on a day they shot 33.7% from the field, 18.9% from 3-point range and faced the largest deficit by any team in this postseason.

It was the fourth-largest margin of defeat in the postseason for the Knicks, who lost to the Bulls by 41 in 1991, 40 to the 76ers in 1978 and 35 to the Pistons in 1990.

And, naturally, the Pacers fed off the energy of a nearly full Gainbridge Fieldhouse, where they are now 5-0 with Game 6 coming to Indianapolis on Friday. Those watching from court-side included Indiana-born singer John Mellencamp, Indianapolis 500 winners Scott Dixon and Dario Franchitti and former Pacers stars Dale Davis and Derrick McKey.

Al-Qadisiya renew confidence in Al-Mashaan

Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi emerge as front-runners

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 13: The dynamics of the race for the Zain Premier League title came into focus following the conclusion of the seventh round of championship group matches. Kuwait Club, with 60 points, and Al-Arabi, with 57 points,

SOCCER

emerged as the primary contenders after Al-Qadisiya was eliminated, finishing at 50 points following its defeat against Al-Fahaheel 0-2. This outcome crystallized just before the end of the previous round.

With only three rounds remaining, the countdown to the title intensifies. Despite Kuwait Club holding a three-point advantage over Al-Arabi, the defending champion face a challenging path ahead, confronting Al-Salmiya, Al-Qadisiya, and ultimately Al-Arabi, while its rival contend with Al-Fahaheel, currently leading the table.

In the last round, Kuwait Club

secured a relatively straightforward victory against Al-Nasr, who was disadvantaged by injuries and suspensions, maintaining its lead over

Al-Arabi. Notably, Mohamed Dahham netted two goals against his former team.

Meanwhile, Al-Arabi faced a



Kuwait Club's Muhammad Dahham vies for the ball with Al-Nasr player.

tough battle, managing to overcome Al-Salmiya with a solitary goal despite playing with ten men for a significant portion of the match after Hamad Al-Qallaf received a red card. Its perseverance paid off in achieving its objective.

Ante Misha, coach of Al-Salmiya, opted to rest key players in anticipation of the upcoming Amir Cup final against Al-Qadisiya, mirroring Mohammed Al-Mashaan's strategy with Al-Qadisiya, who also prioritized the cup final over league matches. Al-Mashaan faced criticism for this decision despite Al-Qadisiya having a chance to contend for the title, but the focus remained on securing cup success and avoiding player injuries.

Despite the setback, Al-Qadisiya's board member Muhammad Marafi affirmed confidence in the coaching staff, announcing Al-Mashaan's continuation with the team into the next season. Marafi emphasized the importance of rational decision-making and expressed regret to the fans for falling short in the league title race, while expressing hope for future success, particularly in securing the Amir Cup.