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# Diplomatic push for 308 missing Kuwaitis

### Fresh strategies sought to move search forward

**NEW YORK, May 18, (KUNA):** The State of Kuwait Permanent Delegate at the United Nations Ambassador Tareq Al-Bannai has reaffirmed the necessity of pursuing special operations to locate the remains of the 308 missing Kuwaitis and the prisoners.

Ambassador Al-Bannai, addressing a Security Council session late on Thursday, called on the international community to adopt a renewable mechanism to "move this file forward."

This multi-party operation has so far failed to identify the carcasses of half of the prisoners and the missing persons, he said, stressing that the operation must continue.

Ambassador Al-Bannai stressed on the necessity that the Security Council work out a mechanism to accelerate the search, proposing the assignment of a senior-level coordinator for this file, as the 1284 UNSG Security Council Resolution of 1999 stipulates.

He lauded intensive efforts that had been exerted to collect information and evidence for preparing the 40th report on the issue to the UN Secretary-General, who is concerned

with the file of the missing Kuwaitis, third-country citizens and Kuwaiti properties including the national archive, in line with the 4th article of the Resolution 2107 of 2013.

He acclaimed the performance of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), and affirmed Kuwait's support for completing its tasks of thrashing out pending matters, namely the file of the prisoners and the missing during its work period that expires in December 2025.

Al-Bannai expressed hope that all sticking files with Iraq be worked out during the mission's set action period and appealed to the concerned authorities in Iraq to continue efforts at this level.

Moreover, the Kuwaiti delegate indicated that in the event all these files have not been tackled for good, "we all ought to look together for other options."

He reiterated Kuwait's affirmation with respect of the necessity that Iraq's sovereignty and decisions be respected concerning the UNAMI presence in the country. Kuwait for its turn reserves the utter right regarding the file of the prisoners, the missing, and the properties, he stressed.

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KUNA photo  
The State of Kuwait Permanent Delegate at the United Nations Ambassador Tareq Al-Bannai.

# Low turnout in Kuwait Municipal by-elections

'For election'

## Sahel app enables certificate reissue

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (KUNA):** The Ministry of Interior (MoI) confirmed on Saturday that citizens who have lost their Nationality Certificate, could extract a new one for the by-elections of the Municipal Council in its 13th legislative term through the government app Sahel.

The Ministry's General Directorate of Security Relations and Media said in a press statement that the certificate could be extracted through the app, printed in colour, and then brought to the voting polls, assuring that it is valid during election day only.

## News watch

**WASHINGTON:** Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah paid on Thursday a visit to Boston Children's Hospital to meet and get reassured about the conditions of Kuwaiti patients treated there and be informed about their needs.

Speaking to KUNA, Sheikha Al-Zain affirmed her keenness on following up the conditions of Kuwaitis receiving treatment at US hospitals.

Accompanied by the representatives of the embassy and the Kuwait health bureau in Washington, Sheikha Al-Zain said she met with the hospital's medical team during the visit. (KUNA)

**RABAT:** The State of Kuwait Ambassador to Morocco Abdulatif Al-Yahya has acclaimed Kuwait's National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL) for disseminating culture and knowledge in Arab countries.

The ambassador, in a statement to KUNA during his visit to the fairground of the International Book and Publishing Fair in Rabat, said Kuwait's participation in the event mirrors the cultural renaissance in Kuwait, namely role of the NCCAL at this level.

Culture is effective in promoting countries and bolstering relations among states and peoples, he said. "It is the soft power that makes states more lucrative and effective and respectful," said Al-Yahya.

The Moroccan book fair opened on Thursday. (KUNA)

**JEDDAH:** The 27th session of the General Conference of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) kick-started on Friday, in the city of Jeddah, with Kuwait's participation.

In a speech delivered on behalf of Saudi Minister of Culture, Chairman of the Saudi National Committee for Education, Culture, and Science, Prince **Badr bin Abdullah**, Minister of Education and Vice Chairman of the committee **Yousef Al-Benyani** said that the Kingdom's hosting of the conference bears fruits of great efforts made with partners in the organization.

He added that the meeting shows also fruitful cooperation among member states.

The minister stressed Kingdom's full and unwavering humanitarian and fraternal support for the Gaza Strip, within the framework of Arab cooperation and solidarity. (KUNA)

**KUWAIT CITY:** The Ambassador of Kuwait to Belgium and Head of its missions to the European Union and NATO, **Nawaf Al-Enezi**, received two young Kuwaiti diplomats - who took part in a Diplomacy Programme for young GCC diplomats - at the embassy in Brussels on Friday afternoon and congratulated them and wished them all success.

Diplomatic attaches **Abdulaziz Al-Dhuwaikh** and **Nour Al-Duwailah** participated in the week-long first edition of the EU-GCC "Young Leaders in Regional Diplomacy" Program, organized by the European Union (EU) for young diplomats from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

"This initiative came as one of the outcomes of the European-Gulf Partnership Communication," Ambassador Al-Enezi said in a statement to KUNA on Saturday.

It will create bridges of communication between young diplomats in the two regions in order to expand the space of understanding and find a better understanding of issues and priorities, he noted. (KUNA)



Voters head to the polls early on Saturday to cast ballots for the Municipal by-elections.



Photos by Iehab Qurtal and Mohamad Morsi

## 18 candidates vie for 2 Council seats

**By Inaas Awadh, Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami and Muhammad Al-Musleh**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18:** In the early morning hours on Saturday, teams affiliated with the authorities in charge of the 2024 supplementary election of the Municipal Council like the ministries of Interior, Municipality, Justice and Information prepared to receive voters in the sixth district, which has 77 main and sub committees distributed in Khaitan, Farwaniya, Firdous, Zahraa, Siddiq, Salaam and Shuhada.

Ten nominees are contesting for the vacant seat in the sixth constituency and eight for the seat in the 9th district.

The electoral committees designated for males and females witnessed a remarkably low turnout, which the judges supervising and those responsible for the committees agreed was expected and usual in council elections in general, and the supplementary ones in particular.

They cited other factors that led to the low turnout like the temperature that has begun to rise, Saturday as the date of the election which is a day of rest. They pointed out that the number of voters is usually low on such a day, even for the parliamentary elections.

In exclusive statements to the daily, a number of judges participating in the election asserted that electoral participation rate is likely to range from 15 to 20 percent out of the 79,754 voters in the district -- 38,371 males and 41,483 females. They expected a higher turnout of male voters compared to female voters.

In the same context head of the electoral committee no. 1 in the sixth district in Abraq Khaitan Girls' Secondary School Judge Haitham Al-Manea disclosed that the number of voters who cast their votes until 2:00 pm was 21 out of 778 registered in the committee while the number of women who cast their votes in the main committee was also 21 and five at Khaitan Middle School for Girls, only

nine out of 1041 registered in the electoral list.

He affirmed it is normal for voters turnout to be low in supplementary elections for the council, but not the National Assembly. They praised the efforts of the parties assisting in the election from the Ministry of Interior, Justice, Information, and the Municipality.

Head of the main committee of female voters in Farwaniya Secondary School for Girls Judge Fawaz Abu Salib said they recorded only seven votes out of 664 registered in the electoral list, describing the turnout as very low.

He stressed the readiness of the committees and the rapid response of those in charge of them -- the teams from the Interior, Justice and Municipality ministries. He stated that the voting process was smooth as it was done in a period not exceeding five minutes.

Head of main committee no. 67 in Maria Al-Qibtiyya Secondary School in the Al-Zahraa suburb Judge Fawzan Al-Anjari confirmed that the turnout in all the main and sub-committees is very low.

The number of people who cast their votes in each committee did not exceed seven, including one vote in the main committee out of 996 registered voters and 11 votes in the female sub-committee No. 11 in the Siddiq suburb.

In addition, the ninth district also witnessed a low turnout of voters in most polling stations in the early morning hours, while a number of candidates confirmed the implementation of their electoral promises.

Eight candidates competed in the ninth district where the number of eligible voters totaled 135,683 -- 66,804 males and 68,879 females.

The ninth district consists of 22 areas with Sabah Al-Salem, Riqqa, and Sabah Al-Ahmad having the most number of voters.

The district's electoral scene was dominated by the small presence of voters in the polling stations for males; while some female polling stations were empty until the noon hours, and some polling stations had about five per-

cent of voters until the afternoon.

The presence of the elderly was noted, some of whom came in wheelchairs in order to participate in the election. They urged the council to address the problems of the people, such as poor sanitation in residential areas and others.

A number of judges stressed to the daily that the electoral process went smoothly and without any obstacle, praising the cooperation of all voters and Interior Ministry personnel who were keen to provide the best services and facilities to citizens.

The daily's staff toured a number of areas in the district, including Sabah Al-Salem and Hadiya, where voters turnout in the first hours of voting was low, amid expectations of increased participation after the afternoon prayer.

On the other hand, the Women's Committee in Dhahar also witnessed low number of voters. Two hours after the opening of the polling stations, women's participation appeared low.

Head of the main committee at Fatima Al-Haqqa Primary School Judge Asaad Al-Omar disclosed that the committee received only one female voter since the start of voting, and even two hours after election started.

Al-Omar stated that the number of female voters registered in the main committee alone is 1,033; affirming that the female presence in the sub-committees was also low.

The main committee in Raqqa's Salem Al-Mubarak High School witnessed low turnout in the first hours of the start of voting. Judge Abdulaziz Al-Musaad, who headed the 62 sub-committee in the district revealed: "Voters turnout is good so far, with 40 out of 1,567 voters. God willing, attendance will improve in the next hours," he asserted.

Moreover, a number of voters stressed the importance of participating in the election to choose someone to represent them and express their concerns to achieve their demands, hoping the winner will fulfill the promises he made to the voters.

## NBK Wealth Saudi AUM at SAR 3.1 bln by end of 2023

— Details Page 8 —



## Kuwait marks International Museum Day

### Museums catalysts for cultural exchange

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (KUNA):** Assistant Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Literature (NCCAL) for Antiquities and Museums Sector Mohammed bin Redha emphasized the crucial role of museums in fostering cultural exchange and promoting global cooperation and peace.



Bin Redha

ability and development of society.

On International Museum Day, bin Redha told KUNA that cel-

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## Health challenges key to Kuwait's development

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (KUNA):** Meeting requirements to ensure better society's health is the main challenge in the country's development plans, said Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi.

His remarks came during the eighth internal diseases conference, organized by Amiri Hospital on Saturday, with the participation of local and international experts.

The conference is key to develop the field in Kuwait and is part of the ministry's agenda to tackle different health-related challenges and different kinds of diseases, the minister said.



KUNA photo  
Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi attends the eighth internal diseases conference, organized by Amiri Hospital on Saturday.

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## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 03:24 Asr ..... 15:20  
Sunrise .. 04:54 Maghrib .. 18:35  
Zohr ..... 11:44 Isha ..... 20:02

# Local

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

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** Hot with light variable wind to light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 08-40 km/h with a chance for rising dust.

## Weather

**By Night:** Mild with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 06-30 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	38	28
Kuwait Airport	38	28
Abdaly	40	24
Jahra	41	28
Salmiyah	34	28
Nuwaisib	35	28
Wafra	38	25

## HH Amir's Representative HH the Prime Minister returns home

# Kuwait Amir's Rep thanks Bahrain King for hosting Arab Summit

### PM sends greetings

## HH Amir 'congratulates' Norway on National Day

KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has sent a cable to Norwegian King Harald V expressing congratulations on his country's National Day and wishing him good health and the friendly country further progress and prosperity.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has sent a cable to King Harald V expressing congratulations on his country's National Day.

MANAMA, May 18, (KUNA): Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable of thanks to King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa on Thursday.

"My entourage and I would like, as we leave the sisterly Kingdom of Bahrain after attending the 33rd Arab Summit on behalf of His Highness the Amir, to express profound gratitude for the hospitality we received during our stay," he wrote in his message.

His Highness Sheikh Ahmad spoke highly of the great efforts made by Bahrain and neat arrangements for the Arab Summit which was held under "exceptional conditions" in the Arab region and beyond.

He prayed for Allah, the Almighty, to help the Arab countries in their efforts to strengthen unity and cooperation and meet the aspirations of the Arab peoples for secure and prosperous future.

His Highness Sheikh Ahmad wished King Hamad everlasting wellbeing, and sisterly Bahrain more progress and prosperity.

Earlier, Representing His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation returned home following the 33rd Arab Summit in Manama.

The accompanying delegation of His Highness the Amir's Representative comprised Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Anwar Ali Al-Mudhaf, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Ali Al-Yahia and senior officials of the Foreign Ministry.

# Minister unveils strategic plans for development of healthcare

## Dr Al-Awadhi opens 2nd Family Medicine Conference

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi has confirmed that his ministry is in the process of implementing many plans and strategies to develop the health system; such as signing memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with European, American and Canadian international hospitals to train medical personnel and attract international medical professionals, lay down a strategic plan to complement the previous annual and five-year plans in order to complete what has been started, and updating and completing the electronic file in various hospitals.

In a press statement on the sidelines of the inauguration of the Second Family Medicine Conference recently, Al-Awadhi unveiled the plan to make the primary healthcare sector the gateway for the development of health services. He also affirmed that the comprehensive organizational structure for healthcare will be adopted soon.

He disclosed the ministry is expanding family medicine services through the introduction of information systems and spatial expansion, while affirming the opening of two dispensaries in Al-Mutlaa and the third will be opened upon completion of the health system in North Kuwait.

### Open

He said work is underway to open other centers in the southern region - Wafra, Sabah Al-Ahmad and Adan area, indicating that this system is being strengthened with medical personnel to support hospitals and specialized centers.

He asserted that family medicine is the first line of defense in the health system, so the ministry is working towards more achievements including positive indicators for its development and advancement.

He cited the participation of more than 70 local, Gulf and regional speakers at the conference, reflecting the strategic vision to enhance scientific research and professional development for doctors in the field of family medicine. He also mentioned the review of 34 working papers tackling the most important findings of modern science.

Meanwhile, Assistant Undersecretary for Health Care Affairs Dr. Nadia Al-Jumaa stated in her speech that primary healthcare has been proven to be a very effective, and that it is an investment with good value, given the evidence that good primary healthcare reduces the total cost of healthcare by reducing hospital admissions.

She stressed that strengthening primary healthcare is essential in achieving the sustainable development goals related to health and universal health coverage, which contribute to achieving other goals that go beyond the good health objective.



Dr Ahmed Al-Awadhi



Ambassador of Kuwait to the Argentine Republic, AbdulAziz Al-Bisher, presents his credentials to Argentinian president.

### Kuwaiti envoy to Argentina presents his credentials

The Ambassador of Kuwait to the Argentine Republic, AbdulAziz Al-Bisher, presented his credentials to the Argentinian President Javier Milei, in the presence of the Argentinian Foreign Minister Diana Mondino.

Ambassador Al-Bisher conveyed to President Milei the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for Argentina and his best wishes for further progress and prosperity.

On his part, President Milei asked Ambassador Al-Bisher to convey his sincere greetings to His Highness the Amir, affirming his desire to strengthen bilateral relations between Kuwait and Argentina.

During the meeting, the historical relations between the two countries - spanning 55 years - were recalled, as well as the political leadership's keenness in both countries to continue enhancing and expanding bilateral relations in all fields to serve the interests of both nations. (KUNA)

### Dr Al-Sharika attends forum

## 'Islam rejects terrorism in all forms, immoral actions of some only represent themselves'

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Director of the Center for Promoting Moderation at the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Dr. Abdullah Al-Sharika confirmed that "Islam and Muslims have nothing to do with terrorism, and the shameful operations carried out by some people are their own", reports Al-Rai daily.

This is part of Al-Sharika's statement to KUNA during his participation in a symposium entitled, "Meeting of the Strategic Vision Group" - one of activities of the 15th Russia-Islamic World Economic Forum held in the Russian city of Kazan. He expressed pride in the great and effective role that Kuwait plays in serving humanitarian, Islamic and Arab issues at the political, diplomatic, charitable and public awareness levels.

He affirmed: "The forum contributes to highlighting the role of religions and peaceful coexistence by strengthening their solidarity with the family and rejecting everything that would threaten its existence in the world, including strange

ideologies and wrong behaviors rejected by Islam, laws and common sense."

He added that his participation comes out of his keenness to highlight Kuwait's commitment to moderation and peaceful coexistence among the components of society and believers of different religions, stressing that "everyone enjoys the rights granted to them by Islamic law

(Sharia)."

On the other hand, Al-Sharika stated that "the participants in the symposium discussed the latest developments in the occupied Palestinian territories and the ongoing Israeli attacks on Gaza, expressing their solidarity with the Palestinian people." He also thanked those in charge of the conference, Kazan International

Center and Organization of Islamic Cooperation, hoping that the forum will be fruitful and bring about useful recommendations.

The five-day forum was launched on Tuesday, with the participation of the representatives of 80 countries and international experts and specialists in the field of Islamic economics and finance. It is being held annually with the aim of strengthening cooperation between Russia and the member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. It was granted federal status through a decision issued by Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2023 due to its importance to Russia.

The first forum, which was held in 2009, established a leading international platform to discuss issues of mutual concern and implementation of joint projects. It is one of the three largest international economic forums held annually in Russia, along with the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum and the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok.

promoting healthy living in sustainable societies and a healthy lifestyle in sustainable societies."

He added there are lectures on the role of the family doctor in humanitarian and relief missions, latest medical protocols patient safety in primary healthcare and the Saudi experience in applying family medicine, in addition to many workshops.

He revealed the conference includes meetings of the Gulf Society for Family Medicine, which were announced last conference at the initiative of the Kuwaiti Association of Family Physicians; indicating that he presented the final recommendations, results of the conference and its findings to those concerned under the title, "Document of the Gulf Society for Family Medicine 2024."

et, and to achieve a more cohesive and understanding work environment that leads to an increase in productivity, efficiency and creativity.

Moreover, President of the Conference, President of the Family Medicine Society and President of the Gulf Family Medicine Society Dr. Muhammad Al-Azmi revealed the conference, which is being held for four days, is the result of cooperation between family doctors in Kuwait and brothers in the Gulf countries, with the participation of various bodies specialized in family medicine locally, regionally and internationally.

He said the conference offers diverse scientific contents from the perspective of family medicine, as it includes many lectures, including "the impact of climate change on health and the Qatari experience in



Ministry of Health officials at the municipal polls center.

### Municipal by-elections

## MoH provides medical teams

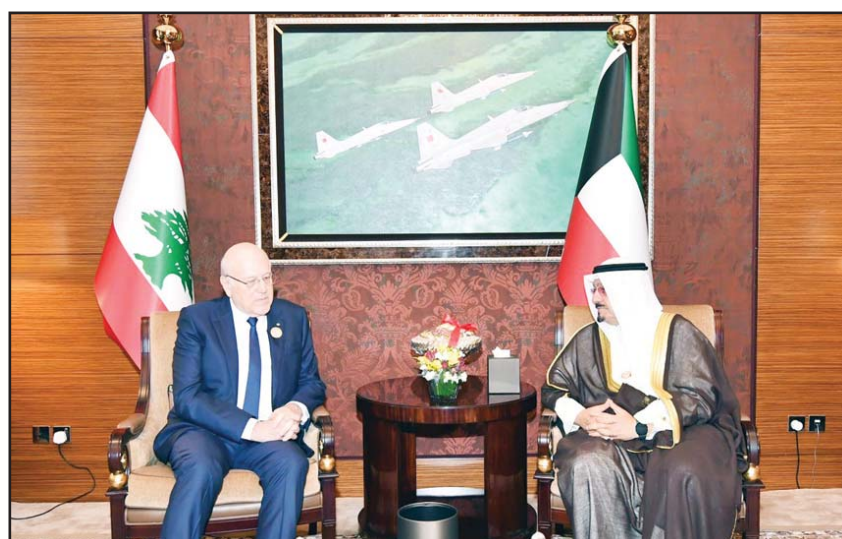
By Mirvat Abduldayem

KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (KUNA): The Ministry of Health has provided 26 medical clinics and nine ambulance vehicles for serving 24 committees at the polling stations of the municipal by-elections, an official said on Saturday.

Dr. Ahmad Al-Shatti, Director of the MoH Medical Emergency Department, said

in a statement to KUNA, after he inspected the electoral commissions, that four clinics and two ambulance vehicles were assigned for Mubarak Al-Kabeer, six clinics and two vehicles for Al-Farwaniya, 16 clinics and five cars for Al-Ahmedi, with 108 medics and technical personnel operating.

Since balloting began early today, 12 people were treated by the assigned teams, but non had to be shifted to hospitals, he added.



Lebanon's Caretaker Premier Mikati receives Kuwait's PM Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah.

## Lebanese premier congratulates Kuwait PM on forming new gov't

MANAMA, May 18, (KUNA): Lebanon's Caretaker Premier Najib Mikati congratulated on Thursday His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on forming the new cabinet.

Meeting with His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah on the sidelines of the 33rd Arab Summit in Manama, Mikati wished the new government every success in its missions and Kuwait everlasting prosperity, the Lebanon's National News Agency (NNA) reported.

Representing His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sa-

bah, His Highness the Prime Minister took part in the 33rd ordinary session of the Arab Summit.

Meanwhile, Mikati met with Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa at the summit during which they discussed bilateral relations between the two countries, and situations in Lebanon and the region.

King Hamad welcomed Mikati and his participation in the summit, stressing the deep-rooted relations between the two countries and keenness on developing and improving them, the Lebanese cabinet said in a statement.

### Al-Huwaila inspects 'Affairs' sectors

## 'Sahel' app enhances electoral services ahead of by-elections

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Yusef Kazem, the official spokesperson for the unified government application for electronic services (Sahel), has announced a significant development regarding electoral services provided through the platform, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The Ministry of Interior has introduced a new feature allowing users to inquire about their electoral registration status and voting locations via the Sahel application, coinciding with the upcoming municipal council by-elections in the sixth and ninth districts of 2024.

In a press statement Wednesday, Kazem highlighted that this new service is now accessible within the Sahel application, specifically under the Ministry of Interior's services section labeled "My Supplementary Country 2024."

Users can now easily check their electoral registration details and identify the desig-

nated voting precincts for the impending by-elections scheduled for May 18. Kazem commended the Ministry of Interior for their exceptional cooperation in expanding the functionality of the Sahel application, thereby providing additional conveniences and benefits to citizens.

This initiative reflects the ongoing efforts to leverage technology for the seamless delivery of government services, ultimately enhancing accessibility and efficiency for the public.

Meanwhile, Dr. Mathal Al-Huwaila, the Minister of Social Affairs, Labour, Family and Childhood Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, undertook a comprehensive tour of the ministry's various sectors on her first day in office. She was accompanied by the Acting Undersecretary, several assistant undersecretaries, and department directors, reports Al-Seyassah daily.



# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## 'Adopting parenting strategies vital for building self-confidence in kids'

"AMIDST the pressures that pile up on families, from the responsibility of education and providing an appropriate environment and needs that meet our children's desires, many parents are keen to build their children's personalities in a way that maintains their self-confidence," columnist **Nada Muhalhal Al-Mudhaf**, educational consultant and certified trainer in the field of childhood and adolescence wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"However, there appears a fine line that separates enhancing self-confidence from falling into the trap of pampering, a line that some parents ignore, which leads children to adopt wrong behaviors under the guise of self-confidence.

"These practices are not only considered misleading, but may negatively affect the development of the child's personality and his dealings with his surroundings, especially if there is separation or problems within the family or between the parents."

"Some of the wrong behaviors adopted by parents include, satisfying all desires. Some parents believe that satisfying all of their children's desires, regardless of their nature or importance, will build the child's self-confidence. This practice lacks in teaching the child the value of patience and effort, and makes him expect desires to be fulfilled immediately without delay or effort.

"This is in addition to tolerating bullying. Some people believe that giving a child the freedom to express himself, even if it means insulting others, enhances his self-confidence. This method neglects to teach the child the importance of mutual respect and leads to the establishment of aggressive behaviors, as some see it as a strength of character, so the son assaults friends and even attacks teachers as well or a security or police officer.

"Add to this the continuous defense of the child. Defending the child in all situations, even when he/she is wrong, prevents him from learning responsibility and admitting his/her mistake. This approach teaches the child that he/she will not face any consequences for his actions, which weakens his ability to face challenges, and we find it often in family gatherings and visits.

"Excessive and constant praise without regard to real effort or achievement can lead to building false confidence in children which need to be appreciated for their actual efforts to build true self-esteem.

"Moreover, towards building healthy confidence and sustainable self-confidence in children, parents must adopt approaches."

### Also:

"The title of my doctoral thesis in 2002 focused on the burgeoning interest of the Kuwaiti government in enhancing Kuwaiti participation in the private sector. This interest manifested through the establishment of a program aimed at restructuring the workforce and governmental executive structures," columnist **Dr Abdullah Fahd Al-Abduljader** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"The program's objectives encompassed empowering recent Kuwaiti graduates and existing private sector employees by facilitating suitable job placements, providing training and skill enhancement, and extending financial support where needed.

"This initiative marked a promising beginning, with numerous individuals applying for the program. However, some remained hesitant, awaiting opportunities in the government sector.

"Motivated by these dynamics, I embarked on a comprehensive study, conducting surveys and field research across government entities, particularly the Civil Service Commission, and private sector enterprises.

"Responses revealed multifaceted reasons for graduates' hesitancy, notably concerns regarding comparatively lower salaries, longer working hours, heightened performance expectations, and the omnipresent fear of layoffs due to economic downturns such as the 2008 financial crisis and the recent Covid-19 pandemic.

"Having served as a consultant in the workforce restructuring program, I collaborated on proposals aimed at alleviating these concerns and fostering Kuwaiti engagement in the private sector.

"Recommendations included enhancing job security and stability through amendments to private sector labor laws, among other measures.

"Despite these efforts, as of 2024, the issue persists. However, there exist additional strategies in the pipeline to support Kuwaiti integration into the private sector.

"To effectively address this challenge, the government must heed the insights, research, and counsel of experienced Kuwaiti professionals in the field.

"By embracing these recommendations, the government can tackle issues of bureaucratic overcrowding, budgetary constraints, unemployment, and the prolonged wait for job opportunities. As an administrative development and human resources consultant, I emphasize the importance of leveraging Kuwaiti expertise to realize these goals and foster a more vibrant private sector workforce."



Al-Mudhaf

"A prestigious decision ... In the speech of His Highness the Amir, may Allah protect him, he expressed his commitment to exercise his constitutionally inherent right to save the country from the serious pitfalls that preoccupied society and all institutions, which have led to undesirable consequences," columnist **Major General Faisal Al-Jazzaf** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"These measures are crucial to the leader's role in making the appropriate decisions at the right time in order to salvage what can be saved. This applies to both the executive authority and the legislative authorities. It was necessary to extend his constitutional authority out of concern for the country and society. We all hope and trust in Allah, as well as in His Highness, to correct the course of the State, which has become neither an enemy nor a friend.

"Today, Kuwait is entering a new phase that requires everyone to confront anything that harms the country. This is not just a responsibility of the government, but also a societal responsibility. The state of chaos and the exploitation of influence have reached a level that threatens the highest interests of the State's supreme interests, its stability and that of society.

"Therefore, the Amiri speech has reinforced the prestige of the State and established the fact that no one is above the law. This is especially important since the violations have affected the core institutions and the powers of the head of State. The people are determined to establish the principles of justice, equality and accountability for anyone who undermines the capabilities of the State, regardless of their status.

"Kuwait today is not the same as it was yesterday, and considering the regional and international circumstances, caution is required to secure Kuwait's future and fortify its security. This is the top priority.

"Achievement is now necessary, as it complements the path and vision of His Highness, may Allah protect him, who will lead Kuwait from one state to another.

"We implore Allah to protect Kuwait and its people under the leadership of His Highness the Amir, may Allah protect and preserve him. Kuwait will continue to stand proud under the guidance of its leadership and its people, as the stability of the homeland is the pillar of the progress of its people.

"May Allah have mercy on our righteous martyrs."

"Kuwait's torch and hope ... After HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah delivered a decisive speech a few days ago, there was widespread unrest and the people found themselves in a difficult situation," columnist **Mishari Al-Thaidi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"HH the Amir previously issued warnings when he was Crown Prince and in charge of the country's affairs, during absence and hospitalization of his brother, HH the late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad. He even delivered a clear speech to the representatives in the National Assembly, urging them to reconsider their actions. However, all these efforts were in vain.

"In response to this, HH the Amir decided to take a decisive approach, as a last resort. In a speech from Al-Seif Palace, he addressed the Kuwaiti people, explaining the reasons behind the political paralysis, the lack of development, and the recurring crises and issues.

"The root of the problem lies in the failure to develop and revise the Constitution, which was supposed to be implemented five years after its approval in the early 1960s during the reign of HH the late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem, in whose honor the hall of the Kuwaiti Parliament was named.

"This Constitution paralyzed the hand of the government and granted the representatives unjustified executive powers, such as the need for them to be ministers in any government for the latter to be legitimate. This is something that the representatives or groups of them took, especially in the recent formation of the government to impose unfair conditions and demands on the government, as well as interfering in the Amir's prerogatives, including the power to choose the Crown Prince.

"We know that there are political groups in Kuwait following the 'Brotherhood' agenda or movements loyal to the Guardianship of the Jurist or figures belonging to external and internal axes that have nothing to do with the agenda of development, stability and national interests.

"These groups will likely try to obstruct this new path in various ways. This is where the importance of decisiveness comes in confronting serious attempts to put Kuwait on the correct path of history.

"To support Sheikh Mishal's new approach, the Kuwaiti authorities have taken strict measures, including summoning some former representatives and activists who have harmed the country's position, interfered in its affairs or incited against its decisions. The Public Prosecution and security services are actively working on this.

"Sheikh Mishal's firmness is for the benefit of Kuwait and its people, given its stagnant situation compared to other Gulf countries. It is like a father's determination for the benefit of the son and the rest of the family, and he who said: 'They became stubborn, lest they are arrogant, and who could be resolute?'"

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



KUNA photo

Personnel of the Kuwaiti Army in action during an exercise.

## Dedicate yourselves to safety of homeland: Army Chief of Staff

Chief of the General Staff of Kuwait Army Air Marshal Bandar Al-Muzayan has called on military personnel to live up to the trust placed in them and dedicate themselves to the safety of the homeland.

In an address to the graduates of the 108th non-commissioned officers' course and 108th personnel's course combined with the 17th Maghawir's (Special Forces) course, Al-Muzayan spoke highly of the efforts of the Maghawir brigade to build the capacity of the military personnel and enhance their preparedness through military science and field training.

The graduation ceremony was held under auspices and in presence of Air Marshal Al-Muzayan, according to a statement from the General Staff HQ.

The Chief of the General Staff reaffirmed the readiness of the Kuwait Army to carry out any mission to protect the security and stability of the dear homeland under the leadership of His Highness the Amir and

Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

On his part, Commander of Maghawir 25 Brigade Brig. Staff Nasser Barrak said the just-ended courses focused on field combat skills and chemical warfare defense.

The trainees were provided with techniques of mobilization, field combat, and engagement in mountainous areas, as well as training on communication systems and topographic study, Brig. Barrak noted in a statement.

During the ceremony, the graduates paraded their military skills and combat capabilities whether individually or collectively, and then the Chief of the General Staff handed them certificates and awards.

The ceremony gathered senior officers from the ministries of defense and interior and the National Guards as well as families of the graduates. (KUNA)

## Officers, drug dealers & guard hurt in shootout at farmhouse

### Citizen held for joining banned group

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Anti-narcotics officers, led by Drug Control General Department Director Brigadier General Muhammad Qabazard, dealt a painful blow to the drug dealers after an exchange of fire between them and three Bedoun drug dealers.**

The shootout resulted in the injury of an Asian livestock pen guard who was being used by the drug dealers in Kabad. He sustained a gunshot wound on his hand, while the dealers and two officers got injuries and bruises in different parts of their bodies.

According to a security source, the police officers received information about the activity of a drug dealer who was exploiting a livestock pen Kabad. A team of police officers was formed to raid the pen.

During the raid, one of the dealers fired his weapon at the police officers who responded and exchanged fire with him until he and two others were subdued despite their fierce resistance.

Two dealers and two detectives were injured, in addition to the pen's guard who was shot in the hand and subsequently referred to Farwaniya Hospital.

The source added that the drug dealers were found in possession of an undisclosed quantity of hashish and cocaine, a pistol and a Kalashnikov.

A case was registered and the drug deal-

ers were referred to the concerned authorities, along with the confiscated items.

□ □ □

**Banned group joined:** The Public Prosecution has ordered the detention of a Kuwaiti man on charges of joining a banned organization and promoting it on the Internet, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The daily added, the suspect is also charged with harming the country's national interests through his activities by publishing information and recordings on a social networking site promoting the ideas of that group, and also meeting with its followers who planned terrorist acts in the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia targeting the military force and the Shiite sect. The prosecution during interrogation has reportedly confronted him with the charges filed against him. The investigations are ongoing.

□ □ □

**Investigators round the clock:** First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf recently issued a directive that the work system for investigators in police stations should be amended from night watch system (morning and afternoon) to shift system to ensure the presence of investigators round the clock, reports **Al-Rai** daily quoting sources from the security sector.

Sources explained the new working hours is within the framework of facilitating procedures for citizens and expatriates, as it requires that cases be referred for investigation immediately after registration.

Sources said Director General of the Criminal Investigations General Department Saad Mahawish issued a circular to all investigation directors in the six governorates to start implementing this system in all police stations, starting Sunday.

## Work permit forgers held Worker electrocuted

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18:** An Asian worker was electrocuted at a farm in Wafra. A security source revealed that the Interior Ministry's Operations Unit received a report that an Asian worker was electrocuted in one of the Wafra farms.

Security and medical emergency personnel immediately rushed to the location. Upon their arrival, it was found that the Asian died on the spot. His body was referred to the Forensic Medicine Department to verify the cause of death.

□ □ □

**Work permit forgers arrested:** The General Department of Residency Investigations has apprehended two individuals on charges of forging official documents and selling counterfeit work permits and visas for financial gain. According to a statement issued on Friday by the General Department of Security Relations and Media, authorities discovered devices used for forgery, along with stamps, instruments of abuse, and counterfeit foreign currencies, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

The statement added that the suspects are being referred to the competent authorities for all necessary legal actions. This operation is part of the Ministry of Interior's ongoing efforts to combat crime, maintain security, apprehend lawbreakers, and fight corruption.

□ □ □

**Co-op official assaulted:** A member of the board of directors of a cooperative society has accused his fellow member of physically assaulting him at the main headquarters of the cooperative, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

This incident occurred after a heated argument between the two board members. The complainant sought assistance from witnesses who confirmed the assault.

The accused was arrested and results of investigations conducted at the police station proved that he assaulted the complainant.

As a result, a misdemeanor case was filed and the charges are assault and battery.

□ □ □

**Citizen shoots self:** A citizen is suspected to have committed suicide by firing a shotgun at himself, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

A security source informed the daily that the citizen got serious shotgun wound and was taken to the hospital, where he died.

A case was registered and investigations are ongoing to determine the cause of death.

## Kuwait deplores bid on Slovakian premier's life

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (KUNA):** The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry on Thursday condemned an attempted assassination on Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, wishing him a swift recovery and Slovakia security and stability.

In a press release, the ministry rejected this criminal act and voiced support for all measures taken by Slovakia to safeguard its domestic security. The Slovak Prime Minister was shot and injured in an attempted assassination on Wednesday after an away-from-home government meeting in Handlova Town, northeast of Bratislava.



KUNA photo

Al-Muzayan tours 6th Al-Tahreer Mechanized Brigade.

## 'Leadership's follow-up on army alertness vital'

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (KUNA):** Chief of Staff of Kuwait's Armed Forces Air Marshal Bandar Al-Muzayan stressed on Saturday that the country's wise leadership is keen to follow up on the affairs, conditions and vigilance of the armed forces.

Al-Muzayan made the remarks while touring the 6th Al-Tahreer Mechanized Brigade, the Army General Staff said in a press release. During the tour, the army chief listened to a briefing about tasks and duties carried out as part of the brigade's training plans and programs.

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**New working group to assess and enhance local agricultural resilience**

**PAAAFR initiates comprehensive food security plan for Kuwait**

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) has announced the formation of a working group to study the current state of Kuwaiti agriculture, including plant and animal farming, as well as fisheries, reports Al-Rai daily. This group, led by acting Director General of the PAAAFR Asma Al-Otaibi, will also lay down an emergency plan for food security that can be implemented during crises and emergencies. Al-Otaibi explained that the purpose of the plan is to

assess the food security situation in terms of agricultural, plant, animal and fish products; and their contribution to meeting the needs of citizens and expatriates. She said the plan aims to minimize the impact of crises and emergencies, and to establish clear procedures to be followed in such situations. It also aims to improve the crisis management skills of the authority's employees, she disclosed. She went on to say that plan will focus on supporting farmers, livestock breeders, fishermen and fish farmers;

with emphasis on increasing their production capacity, particularly in relation to the food industry during times of crisis. She revealed one of the main objectives of the plan is to monitor the production of agricultural products and ensure their availability, as well as to address the needs of local farmers and breeders.

In addition, the plan will involve coordination with other relevant authorities in Kuwait, including the ministries of Commerce and Industry, Health, Electricity,

Water and Renewable Energy; as well as the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN), Kuwait Municipality and other concerned agencies. The key aspect of the plan will be the creation of a comprehensive database that includes information on cultivated areas, plant production volumes, animal numbers, milk and fish quantities produced locally or imported, and estimates of self-sufficiency rates. This data will help determine the actual needs and requirements in terms of food security, Al-Otaibi disclosed.

**Kuwaiti official highlights cross-border efforts at Arab Anti-Corruption Forum**

Call for stronger ties between international agencies

RIYADH, May 18, (KUNA): Acting head of the Kuwaiti Financial Intelligence Unit Hanadi Bu-Hmeid stressed the importance of exchanging experience among international agencies tasked with the combat against money laundering and terror financing.

"We are taking part in the Arab Forum of Anti-Corruption Agencies and Financial Intelligence Units out of keenness on sharing experience with specialists in combatting money laundering and terror financing," she told KUNA on the sidelines of the event which opened earlier Wednesday.

"As part of the forum, we will participate in a panel discussion, due tomorrow, which will shed light on the significance of cooperation among the private and public sectors in information sharing," Bu-Hmeid pointed out. She thanked the Kingdom of



KUNA photo Hanadi Bu-Hmeid, Acting head of the Kuwaiti Financial Intelligence Unit.

Saudi Arabia for hosting the forum and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman for sponsoring the event.

The Forum is co-hosted by the Presidency of the State Security and the National Anti-Corruption Commission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

On his part, chief of the Saudi State Security (agency) Abdulaziz

**CSC affirms commitment to disbursing shift allowances**

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Civil Service Commission has affirmed its commitment to continue disbursing shift allowances in accordance with the categories specified in Civil Service Council Resolution No. 12-2012, reports Al-Jarida daily.

These allowances, linked to the nature of work, remain separate from an employee's salary, even in cases of leave or relocation to a different work station.

In a statement posted on the social networking site "X," the CSC clarified the need to adjust the format of salary certificates for employees under the shift system. The revised certificate will

now include two key details – the total actual salary, which remains consistent despite leaves or changes in work station and confirmation of the employee's receipt of a fixed additional allowance, provided they meet the eligibility criteria.

Furthermore, the CSC disclosed the ongoing considerations for expanding shift systems. This expansion would entail adjustments to the number of hours and rest days, particularly for entities with work environments necessitating flexibility in scheduling to accommodate location-based factors affecting workers.

Al-Hoeiriny said that money laundering and financing for terrorism pose trans-border menaces to international security and stability, thus requiring close international cooperation. In his inaugural speech to the gath-

ing, he briefed the attendees on the efforts, policies and legislations of Saudi Arabia in combatting those menaces and exchanging experience with other stakeholders, whether governments of regional agencies.

**Full implementation set for August 1**

**Health Minister raises the age of pediatric patients to 14 years old**

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: In order to ensure the safety and well-being of children, Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi issued a ministerial decision on raising the age of patients under the pediatric departments to 14 years old, reports Al-Anba daily.

This decision mandates pediatricians to examine sick children up to the age of 14. They are also required to attend to pediatric emergencies and admit patients to children's departments in public hospitals and specialized centers starting from Aug 1. The decision will be reviewed after a year to determine whether the age limit needs to be adjusted.



Dr Al-Awadhi

Moreover, the heads of medical staff in children's departments, public hospitals, specialized centers and related departments are responsible for preparing wards, clinics and emergency depart-

ments for this age group. These preparations must be completed by July 31.

According to the decision, medical and technical supervision for this age group should be assigned to children's departments in general hospitals and specialized centers. Pediatricians and pediatric emergency departments are entrusted with overseeing emergency cases in all emergency and intensive care departments in line with recognized medical practices.

In exceptional cases, the treating physicians in the pediatric departments may use their medical and professional discretion, with the approval of the department head, to examine and treat patients in this age group. If the pediatric departments cannot accommodate the patients, they will be transferred to the appropriate medical department, where they must receive proper evaluation and care in accordance with established regulations.

During the transitional phase, all other medical departments in hospitals and specialized centers are expected to demonstrate flexibility and cooperation.



Photo shows meeting in progress.

**Committee enforces property regulations**

**Hawalli Municipal Council focuses on urban development and civic affairs**

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: During a recent meeting chaired by Nasser Al-Jadaan, the Hawalli Committee of the Municipal Council addressed various requests and decisions pertinent to urban development and civic affairs, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The committee forwarded a proposal to establish a walkway in the Al-Shuhada area for walking exercises, aligned with healthy city standards in Kuwait, to the Ministry of Health for further action by the executive branch.

Additionally, the committee approved a request from the Ministry of Social Affairs to allocate a site for a bank in the Mushrif area, Block No. 4.

However, it rejected a citizen's appeal seeking an amendment to the municipal council's decision regarding the operation of a historical hotel or Kuwaiti restaurant activity within an old Kuwaiti house in the Salmiya area, specifically at "Maidan Hawalli", Plot No. 11, House No. 10. The committee maintained the sched-

ule for a re-application concerning the allocation of sites for the General Administration for Rescue Patrols project and the General Administration for Information Systems project in the Al-Zahraa area. Furthermore, it retained a proposal submitted by member Dr. Hassan Kamal concerning the construction of speed bumps on the side street of King Abdulaziz Road.

In another development, the Public Relations Department of the Kuwait Municipality announced the removal of a park, identified as an encroachment on state property and a visual obstruction, in the Al-Qusour and Mubarak Al-Kabeer areas.

The Violations Removal Department, under the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate Municipality branch, initiated a campaign against encroachments on state property across the governorate. The municipality affirmed its commitment to conducting regular field inspections and addressing violations accordingly.

**Revolutionizing road construction**

**'Mobile Feeder' machine ensures top quality in asphalt application**

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Eng. Khaled Dhawi Al-Osaimi, Director of the General Authority for Roads and Land Transport, announced the deployment of a mobile factory for asphalt paving at two current maintenance sites. According to Al-Osaimi, directives from Minister of Works and Minister of Municipality, Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, emphasize the importance of improving bedding work and providing all necessary resources. The newly implemented "Mobile Feeder" machine ensures the uniform mixing of asphalt components before application, achieving superior quality in laying different layers of asphalt, reports Al-Jarida daily.



Al-Osaimi highlighted that this mobile factory is the first of its kind in the country, guaranteeing the highest international standards in asphalt paving. The Authority plans to mandate the use of this equipment for all contractors in future new construction and maintenance contracts, aiming for enhanced quality in all road projects.

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## LOCAL

## Construction percentage surges to 20%

## Kuwait Municipality gives nod for expansion of Salmiya Boulevard

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Kuwait Municipality has given the nod to increase the construction percentage on 'Salmiya Boulevard' from 12.5 percent to 20 percent of the total area, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The Municipality director Engineer Saud Al-Dabbous has outlined in a document, the decision to develop the Salmiya Boulevard, in Sector 8 of Salmiya area, covering an area of 353,529 square meters.

Under the new plan, the built-up area of the boulevard will be expanded to 20 percent, equivalent to 70,705 square meters.

This expansion will be allocated as follows - 10 percent (35,000 square meters) for establishment of restaurants, cafés, administrative offices, and retail stores; and another 10 percent (35,000 square meters) for recreational

and cultural facilities including cinemas, theaters, health clubs, educational and training centers, sports facilities, art galleries, children's and adults' play areas, museums, ice skating rinks and multipurpose halls.

Al-Dabbous emphasized that the Municipality's decision aligns with the regulations set forth by the Municipal Council and authorizes relevant departments to ensure compliance with approved business activities sanctioned by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Furthermore, certain activities such as car sales, spare parts shops, repair workshops, and commercial or administrative offices are prohibited within the park premises. Additionally, updating the traffic study for the project is deemed necessary to accommodate the developments.



Salmiya Boulevard

## Public sanitation under scrutiny

## Cleanliness campaign continues

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Public Relations Department at Kuwait Municipality has announced that field teams from the Public Sanitation and Road Occupancy Department in all governorates continue the inspection of cleaning works throughout the country, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to the Public Relations Department, the Public Sanitation and Road Occupancy Department at the Municipality branch in Jahra Governorate recently carried out a campaign to inspect public cleaning services in the governorate; including the monitoring and supervision of public cleanliness and the work of cleaning contractors and public cleaning companies as well as street vendors in line with the relevant laws, regulations and decisions. The department disclosed the campaign is aimed at raising the level of cleanliness and removing everything

that obstructs the road and distorts the general view such as abandoned cars, boats and scraps from the squares and streets.

Director of the Public Sanitation and Road Occupancy Department at the Municipality branch in Jahra Governorate Nawaf Al-Mutairi revealed that the intensive inspection campaign aims to monitor negative manifestations and take legal measures against those proven to have committed violations. He affirmed that his supervisory team focuses on maintaining cleanliness in all areas under its responsibility, indicating the recent campaign resulted in the removal of 32 tons of rubble in Abdally.

He pointed out this is a continuous campaign and there is no complacency in taking legal action against those who violate public sanitation and road occupancy regulations.

## Diplomatic push

## Continued from Page 1

Kuwait during its non-permanent membership in the UNSG (2018-2019) pushed for adopting the Resolution 2474, with participation of 68 states, he said, noting that this resolution affirms the necessity that states need not deviate attention from prisoners' issues in armed strife.

He finally underscored the necessity to maintain the UN follow-up on the events in this vein through the daily regular reports, filed to the UN Secretary General, until locating the last bones.

The Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Iraq called on Baghdad to double its efforts to speed up settling of the missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals, and the missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, dossiers.

"As I said last time, swifter progress is needed," Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, also head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq, said in a briefing to a special UN Security Council session on Iraq Thursday.

"And this must involve the overcoming of bureaucratic hurdles and immediate follow-up on outstanding issues," She added.

Hennis-Plasschaert stressed the urgent need for an uptick in activities to identify and further excavate burial sites.

The UN official called for the reactivation of the joint committee on missing Kuwaiti property and described the pace of the current efforts to resolve these issues as too slow.

"It is quite simple: the pace of the search and return of property, including the national archives, is currently too slow," she said.

## Museums catalysts

## Continued from Page 1

He revealed that the NCCAL will organize the exhibition (Museums and Different Means of Education) at Kuwait National Museum, in cooperation with the Expo 965 team for heritage and craft exhibitions and Kuwaiti innovators.

Furthermore, he recapped the history of museums in Kuwait, noting that Kuwait National Museum was first opened on December 31, 1957, in the palace of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in Dasman (formerly Diwan Sheikh Khazal). In 1976, it was moved to Bait Al-Bader, one of Kuwait's traditional houses. Later, in 1983, the new museum was opened.

The national museum was designed

by the French architect Michel Ecochard, earning him an international award for architectural design.

Bin Redha confirmed that several museums in Kuwait, including the Kuwait Red Fort Museum, the Maritime Heritage Museum, the Qurain Martyrs Museum, the Mubarak Kiosk Museum, the Dixon House Museum, the Police Museum, and the Abdullah Al-Salem Palace Museum, fall under the supervision of NCCAL.

The Kuwait Red Fort, built in 1897 for the late Mubarak bin Sabah Al-Sabah, is located in Jahra. It is considered one of the most important historical monuments in the state of Kuwait due to its connection to the famous Battle of Jahra.

Additionally, bin Redha emphasized that the Al-Qurain Martyrs Museum stands as a testament to the patriotism and resilience of the Kuwaiti people. He highlighted that the late Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah commanded the transformation of the house in Al-Qurain into a historical museum.

Regarding the Dixon House Museum, bin Redha highlighted its origins at the end of the 19th century following a historic agreement between the late Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah, the Amir of Kuwait, and Britain in 1899. Initially established as a residence and office for the British political commissioner in 1904, it later served as the headquarters for the first British commissioner, Colonel Harold Dixon, in 1929.

## Health challenges

## Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, minister Al-Awadhi affirmed the need to study and monitor the rate of such diseases among society's categories to determine the best methods to fight and prevent them.

The event will include seminars and workshops led by consultant doctors specialized in different medical fields, the minister said, hoping that the conference will come out with important recommendations to develop medical services in Kuwait and protect patients rights and ensure their safety.

On his part, head of internal diseases department in the hospital, who also chairs the conference Dr Wisam Al-Muhaini said the event comes as the hospital celebrates 75 years since establishment in 1949.

The event is a great opportunity to share experience in the field, said Dr Al-Muhaini, noting that the workshops will focus on training doctors on diagnostic sonars, which is key in diagnosing diseases precisely and within a short time.

## Kuwait's humanitarian society marks endeavors success in Kyrgyz Republic

## Seven notable projects highlighted

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Al-Safa Humanitarian Society concluded its fifteenth charitable trip, gathering donors, supporters, and representatives from official bodies to witness the inauguration of significant health and development projects in the Kyrgyz Republic from May 12 to May 17. The society's commitment to transparency in Kuwaiti charitable endeavors was underscored, with a clear message that donors are integral partners in the charitable process, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Muhammad Al-Shaya, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al-Safa Charitable Humanitarian Society, expressed his satisfaction with the trip's accomplishments, noting the presence of religious leaders, benefactors, media representatives, and social media influencers from Kuwait.

He highlighted Kuwait's distinguished role in charitable and humanitarian work, citing the opening of seven notable projects during the journey.

Among the projects inaugurated were the Al-Safa Educational Complex, which includes vocational training workshops and a mosque, and the Arafa Educational Complex, also featuring vocational training workshops and a mosque.

Additionally, the Abdul Aziz Al-Fulaij Multispecialty Hospital and Jaber Al-Sulaiti Emergency Hospital were established, along with two water networks and the Jassim Al-Bahr Center for memorizing the Holy Qur'an.

The water networks are expected to benefit over eight thousand individuals, addressing a crucial need in the surrounding villages. The hospitals are projected to serve more than 70 thousand people, particularly in underserved communities. These endeavors are hailed as significant achievements, reflecting Kuwait's commitment to compassion and cooperation among Muslims.

Al-Shaya extended gratitude to all participants in the fifteenth Charity Partners Trip, including donors, sheikhs, supporters, activists, and media entities, for their unwavering support of Al-Safa Humanitarian Society's mission of goodness and generosity. He prayed for acceptance of these endeavors by the Almighty and for the rewards to be multiplied in the hereafter, emphasizing the sincerity of intentions in serving humanity.



Photo taken during the inauguration of one of the projects.

## Kuwaiti graduates celebrate success

## 'Spain among best for higher education'

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Spanish Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Miguel Moro Aguilar, has stressed on the depth of bilateral relations between Kuwait and Spain, saying Madrid and the European Union are the two most important destinations for higher education studies, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The Spanish envoy was speaking during a reception organized by the Spanish Embassy for Kuwaiti graduates who completed their academic studies at the Spanish College of Business Administration - IE University, which is one of the best international universities in Spain and one of the leading higher education institutions in the world.

Ambassador Moro Aguilar highlighted the diverse and high-quality educational opportunities available in Spain and throughout the European Union, stressing that his country is one of the leading educational destinations for Kuwaitis, noting that programs are taught in English and various other languages.

A number of Kuwaiti graduates have shared



HE Miguel Moro Aguilar, Spanish Ambassador to Kuwait.

their experiences while studying in Spain, where one graduate recounted his enriching journey in Madrid, stressing that the educational environment is truly exceptional.

## Construction progress hits 87.84%

## PAHW's East Sabah Al-Ahmad housing project set to be completed in June '24



East Sabah Al-Ahmad housing project

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) expects to complete the East Sabah Al-Ahmad housing project in June 2024, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a press statement, PAHW confirmed the continuation of the construction of 1,184 houses, public buildings, road works, infrastructure, services networks and car parks in the first and second contracts for East Sabah Al-Ahmad housing project.

It disclosed that the completion rate of the second contract of the project as of April reached 87.84 percent; indicating that the secondary power transformers and soil improvement were completed, while the implementation of the main public services and public facilities is ongoing.

## Construction

It added that the rate of construction and completion of 597 homes, public buildings, road works, infrastructure, services networks and parking lots under the first contract exceeded 80.97 percent.

It also stated that the monthly completion rate reached 3.82 percent until April; while the components of the soil improvement items and secondary power transformers were completed, and work is underway to implement 597 homes -- the completion rate of which exceeded 83.5 percent.

Regarding the main service projects, PAHW confirmed that the implementation rate of the contract for the supply, installation and construction of the main power station reached 73.39 percent.

## Ministry of Higher Education honors outstanding workers

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Ministry of Higher Education recently held a ceremony to honor the excellent workers under the patronage of acting Undersecretary of the ministry Lamia Al-Mulhim and in the presence of acting Assistant Undersecretary for Scholarships, Equivalency and Cultural Relations Affairs Ghida Al-Madhkour;

Assistant Undersecretary for Legal Affairs Heba Al-Shatti; President of the Workers Union of the Ministry of Higher Education Dr. Khaled Al-Barak; and a number of ministry officials and employees, Al-Rai daily.

The ceremony is part of the initiative to select the ideal employee, as the ministry is keen to award its efficient

employees, motivate and encourage them to give more.

In her speech during the honoring ceremony, Al-Mulhim expressed her gratitude and appreciation to the distinguished workers, wishing them further success. At the end of the ceremony, shields and gifts were distributed to the honored workers.



## World News Roundup

## Europe

## Slovak PM stable

## Ukraine mobilization law comes into force

KYIV, Ukraine, May 18, (AP): A divisive mobilization law in Ukraine came into force on Saturday, as Kyiv struggles to boost troop numbers after Russia launched a new offensive that some fear could close in on Ukraine's second-largest city.

The legislation, which was watered down from its original draft, will make it easier to identify every conscript in the country. It also provides incentives to soldiers, such as cash bonuses or money toward buying a house or car, that some analysts say Ukraine cannot afford.

Lawmakers dragged their feet for months and only passed the law in mid-April, a week after Ukraine lowered the age for men who can be drafted from 27 to 25. The measures reflect the growing strain that more than two years of war with Russia has had on Ukraine's forces, who are trying to hold the front lines in fighting that has sapped the country's ranks and stores of weapons and ammunition.

Ukrainian President **Volodymyr Zelenskyy** also signed two other laws Friday, allowing prisoners to join the army and increasing fines for draft dodgers fivefold. Russia enlisted its prisoners early in the war, and personnel shortages compelled Ukraine to adopt the new measures.

Russian troops, meanwhile, are pushing ahead with a ground offensive that opened a new front in north-eastern Ukraine's Kharkiv region and put further pressure on Kyiv's overstretched military. After weeks of probing, Moscow launched the new push knowing that Ukraine suffered personnel shortages, and that its forces have been spread thin in the northeast.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Friday during a visit to China that the Russian push aims to create "a buffer zone" rather than capturing Kharkiv, the local capital and Ukraine's second-largest city.

**Hitting**  
Still, Moscow's forces have pummeled Kharkiv with strikes in recent weeks, hitting civilian and energy infrastructure and prompting angry accusations from Zelenskyy that the Russian leadership sought to reduce the city to rubble. On Friday, Mayor Ihor Terexkov said that Russian guided bombs killed at least three residents and injured 28 others that day.

Moscow denies deliberately targeting civilians, but thousands have died or suffered injuries in the more than 27 months of fighting.

The US last week announced a new \$400 million package of military aid for Ukraine, and President Joe Biden has promised that he would rush badly needed weaponry to the country to help it stave off Russian advances. Still, only small batches of US military aid have started to trickle into the front line, according to Ukrainian military commanders, who said it will take at least two months before supplies meet Kyiv's needs to hold the line.

Thousands of Ukrainians have fled the country to avoid the draft since Russia's all-out invasion in February 2022, some risking their lives as they tried to swim across a river separating Ukraine from neighboring Romania and Hungary.

Late on Friday, Ukraine's border service said that at least 30 people have died trying to cross the Tisza River since the full scale-invasion.

Romanian border guards days earlier retrieved the near-naked, disfigured body of a man that appeared to have been floating in the Tisza for days, and is the 30th known casualty, the Ukrainian agency said in an online statement. It said the man has not yet been identified.

## Also:

**PEZINOK, Slovakia:** The man accused of attempting to assassinate Slovak Prime Minister **Robert Fico** was ordered to remain behind bars Saturday as the nation's leader was in serious but stable condition after surviving multiple gunshot wounds, officials said.

Prosecutors sought an order from Slovakia's Specialized Criminal Court to detain the suspect because of fear that he could escape or carry out other crimes, a court spokesperson said.

Prosecutors told police not to publicly identify the man or release other details about the case, but unconfirmed media reports said he was a 71-year-old retiree known as an amateur poet who may have once worked as a mall security guard in the country's southwest.

Government authorities gave details that matched that description. They said the suspect didn't belong to any political groups, though the attack itself was politically motivated.

The courthouse in Pezinok, a small town outside the capital, Bratislava, was guarded by police wearing helmets and balaclavas and carrying rifles. News media were not allowed in and reporters were kept behind a gate outside.

"Several miracles have occurred ... in the past few days, coming from the hands of the doctors, nurses and entire medical staff," Defense Minister **Robert Kalinak** said. "I can't find words of gratitude for the fact that we are steadily approaching that positive prognosis."

Fico, 59, was shot in the abdomen as he greeted supporters following a government meeting Wednesday in the former coal mining town of **Handlova**, officials said. The suspect fired five rounds before being tackled to the ground and arrested.

**PARIS:** French security forces reported another death Saturday in armed clashes in the French Pacific territory of **New Caledonia**, the sixth fatality in a nearly a week of violent unrest scorching the archipelago whose indigenous population has long sought independence.

The person was killed in an exchange of fire at one of the many impromptu barricades blocking roads on the island, said a security official speaking on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to discuss the situation publicly.

Two other people were seriously injured in the clash, the official said, confirming French media reports. The official said the firefight erupted at a blockade in the north of the main island, at **Kaala-Gomen**. Le Monde and other French news outlets said the person killed was a man and that his son was among the injured.

This week's violence erupted Monday following protests over voting reforms opposed by pro-independence supporters who have long pushed to break free from France.

Armed clashes, looting, arson and other mayhem have turned parts of the capital, **Noumea**, into no-go zones and left a vast trail of destruction. Charred hulks of burned-out cars litter roads, businesses and shops have been ransacked and buildings turned into smoking ruins, with fires sending billowing clouds of smoke into the South Pacific skies.



US Republican presidential candidate former president Donald Trump speaks at the Minnesota Republican Lincoln Reagan Dinner on May 17 at the Saint Paul River Centre in St Paul, Minn. (AP)

## Politics

## Donald accepts VP debate

## Ex-prez Trump campaigns in Minnesota

ST PAUL, Minn., May 18, (AP): Former US president Donald Trump used a day off from his hush money trial Friday to headline a Republican fundraiser in Minnesota, a traditionally Democratic state that he boasts he can carry in November.

Trump took the stage late as he headlined the state GOP's annual Lincoln Reagan dinner in St. Paul after attending his son Barron's high school graduation in Florida.

Declaring his appearance to be "an official expansion" of the electoral map of states that could be competitive in November, Trump said, "We're going to win this state."

"This November the people of Minnesota are going to tell Crooked Joe Biden - right? 'The Apprentice'? 'You're fired!'" Trump said, referencing his former reality television show and the catchphrase he used on it.

Trump boasted that the steep tariffs he imposed on foreign steel while serving as president bought the Iron Range, the iron mining area of north-eastern Minnesota, "roaring back to life." The area's population is heavily union and blue-collar workers and used to be solidly Democratic, but the region has been trending Republican in recent elections.

He also made a profane attack on President Joe Biden, calling him "a horrible president" who is "destroying our country" and then adding, "He's a horrible human being too."

Trump then shifted to calling the president a "non-athlete" and attacked his golf game, accusing him of inflating his golfing abilities and making other misrepresentations before using an expletive that drew loud laughs and sustained applause.

## Argues

Trump was using part of the day granted by the trial judge for the graduation to campaign in Minnesota, a state he argues he can win in the November rematch with Biden. No Republican presidential candidate has won Minnesota since Richard Nixon in 1972, but Trump came close to flipping the state in 2016, when he fell 1.5 percentage points short of Democrat Hillary Clinton.

Trump returned to Minnesota several times in 2020, when Biden beat

him by more than 7 percentage points. "I think this is something Trump wants to do. He believes this is a state he can win. We believe that's the case as well," David Hann, the chairman of the Republican Party of Minnesota, said in an interview.

Democratic US Sen Tina Smith of Minnesota, a Biden ally, said the Trump campaign is "grasping at straws" if it thinks he can win the state. "The Biden campaign is going to work hard for every vote," Smith said in an interview. "We're going to engage with voters all over the state. But I think Minnesota voters are going to choose President Biden."

Hann co-hosted Friday's dinner along with Trump's state campaign chair, House Majority Whip Tom Emmer, who represents a central Minnesota district. Hann said Emmer was instrumental in bringing the former president to Minnesota.

The dinner coincided with the party's state convention and the roughly 1,400 attendees included former US Sen Rudy Boschwitz and MyPillow founder Mike Lindell, who has been a prominent promoter of false claims that the 2020 election was stolen from Trump.

## Opportunities

Tickets started at \$500, ranging up to \$100,000 for a VIP table for 10 with three photo opportunities with Trump. Hann declined to say how much money he expects it will raise, but he anticipates a full house of around 1,400 people.

All the money from the dinner tickets will go to the state party, Hann said, though he added that some money from photo opportunities may go to the Trump campaign. Ahead of Trump's remarks Friday night, Emmer and Hann told the crowd that thanks to the fundraiser, the state party was out of debt for the first time in 10 years.

"No sham trial is going to keep President Trump off the campaign trail. And it's definitely not going to stop us from turning Minnesota red in November," Emmer said in his remarks.

Experts are split on whether Minnesota really will be competitive this time, given its history and the strong Democratic Party ground game in the

state. But Hann said there's "great dissatisfaction with President Biden" in the state, noting that nearly 19% of Democratic voters in its Super Tuesday primary marked their ballots for "uncommitted." That was at least partly due to a protest-vote movement over Biden's handling of the Israel-Hamas war that has spread to several states.

Trump on Friday night repeated a false claim that he won Minnesota in the 2020 election, wrongly declaring he won "a landslide in your state."

There's no evidence that there were any serious irregularities in the state.

Trump's youngest son, Barron Trump, graduated Friday morning from the private Oxbridge Academy in West Palm Beach, Florida.

## Also:

**NEW YORK:** Donald Trump said Friday his campaign has accepted an invitation from Fox News for his yet-to-be-chosen running mate to debate Vice President **Kamala Harris**, and he urged her to accept as well. In fact, Harris has already said she'll debate - but on a rival network.

President **Joe Biden's** campaign signaled it would reject Trump's offer, an official pointing to the acceptable debate parameters it detailed earlier this week. Under those conditions, a Fox News-hosted debate would not qualify.

Republican Trump's post on his social media network came after Democrat Harris accepted a different invitation from CBS News.

The public brokering of debates is continuing after the two presumptive presidential nominees this week agreed to meet twice this summer, by-passing the commission that has hosted debates since 1988. The first will be hosted by CNN on June 27, the second by ABC on Sept 10.

Fox News said in a statement it offered to host a VP debate on July 23, August 13 or a day after both party conventions. Harris' team previously told CBS she would debate in-studio on the July or August dates Fox mentioned.

Trump in his post said he hoped Harris and his eventual running mate would meet at Virginia State University, which is where Fox proposed holding its event.



A woman wheels her luggage across a downtown street covered in glass in the aftermath of a severe thunderstorm on May 17, in Houston. As the Houston area works to clean up and restore power to thousands after deadly storms that left at least 7 people dead, it will do so Saturday under a smog warning and as all of southern Texas starts to feel the heat. (AP)



Pelosi



Kaneshiro

## America

**Man gets 30 years:** The man who broke into the home of then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi seeking to hold her hostage and bludgeoned her husband with a hammer was sentenced Friday to 30 years in prison.

But prosecutors later filed a motion saying the court failed to offer the defendant, David DePape, an opportunity "to speak or present any information to mitigate the sentence" as required by federal rule. They asked the court to reopen the sentencing portion to allow him that option. The court did not immediately respond.

A jury found DePape, 44, guilty in November of attempted kidnapping of a federal official and assault on the immediate family member of a federal official. Prosecutors had asked for a 40-year prison term.

The attack on **Paul Pelosi**, who was 82 at the time, was captured on police body camera video just days before the 2022 midterm elections and sent shockwaves through the political world. He suffered two head wounds including a skull fracture that was mended with plates and screws he will have for the rest of his life. His right arm and hand were also injured. (AP)

**Cohen pressed on his crimes:** Donald Trump's lawyers accused the star prosecution witness in his hush money trial of lying to jurors, portraying Trump fixer-turned-foe Michael Cohen as a serial fabulist who is bent on seeing the presumptive Republican presidential nominee behind bars.

As Trump looked on, defense attorney Todd Blanche pressed Cohen for hours with questions that focused as much on his misdeeds as on the case's specific allegations and tried to sow doubt in jurors' minds about Cohen's crucial testimony implicating the former president.

Blanche's voice rose as he interrogated Cohen with phone records and text messages over Cohen's claim that he spoke by phone to Trump about the hush money payment to Stormy Daniels that is at the heart of the case, days before wiring her lawyer \$130,000. (AP)

**Man convicted of killing 4:** A man was convicted of killing four people at his

ex-girlfriend's home in suburban Denver in 2022 a week after she was granted a court order to keep him away from her.

Joseph Mario Castorena, 22, was con-

victed of four counts of first-degree murder after deliberation for killing three of Jessica Serrano's relatives as well as a man who rented an RV on the family's property in



Britain's Princess Anne speaks to Second World War veterans during the Not Forgotten Association Annual Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in London on May 17. The Not Forgotten Association is a tri-service charity which provides entertainment, leisure and recreation for the serving wounded, injured or sick and for ex-service men and women with disabilities. (AP)

Aurora on Oct. 30, 2022, prosecutors said. He was also convicted of one count of attempted murder.

Castorena and Serrano, who was not injured, have two children together. Their children were out-of-state with family at the time of the shooting, police have said.

Castorena was arrested over a month after the shooting in Mexico and extradited back to Colorado. (AP)

**'Ex-top prosecutor not guilty':** A jury found Honolulu's former top prosecutor not guilty Friday in a bribery case that alleged employees of an engineering and architectural firm bribed him with campaign donations in exchange for his prosecution of a former company employee.

A US grand jury indicted former Honolulu Prosecuting Attorney **Keith Kaneshiro** and five others in 2022. The indictment alleged that Mitsunaga & Associates employees and an attorney contributed more than \$45,000 to Kaneshiro's reelection campaigns between October 2012 and October 2016.

The firm's owner, Dennis Mitsunaga, who was ordered jailed during the trial because of witness tampering allegations, was also found not guilty after nearly two days of deliberation, Hawaii News Now reported. He was ordered released after the verdict. (AP)



## Lat/Am

## Haiti seeks new PM

## Argentina libertarian president visits Spain

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, May 18, (AP): Even before kicking off a three-day visit to Madrid on Friday, Argentina's libertarian President **Javier Milei** stirred controversy, accusing the socialist government of bringing "poverty and death" to Spain and weighing in on corruption allegations against the prime minister's wife.

In such circumstances, a typical visiting head of state may strive to mend fences with diplomacy.

Not Milei. The brash economist has no plans to meet Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez during his three days in the Spanish capital – nor the Spanish king, nor any other government official. Instead, he'll attend a far-right summit Sunday hosted by Sánchez's fiercest political opponent, the Vox party.

The unorthodox visit was business as usual for Milei, a darling of the global far right who has bonded with tech billionaire Elon Musk and praised former U.S. President Donald Trump. Earlier this year on a trip to the United States, Milei steered clear of the White House and took the stage at the Conservative Political Action Conference, or CPAC, where he railed against abortion and socialism and shared a bear hug with Trump.

Milei presented his 2022 book, "The Way of the Libertarian," in Madrid Friday at a literary event organized by La Razón, a conservative Spanish newspaper.

The book – withdrawn from circulation in Spain earlier this month because the back-flap biography erroneously said Milei had earned a doctorate – traces his meteoric rise in politics from eccentric TV personality to national lawmaker and outlines his radical free-market economic ideas.

To thunderous applause, Milei condemned socialism as "an intellectual fraud and a horror in human terms."

## Spotlight

"The good thing is that the spotlight is shining on us everywhere and we are making the reds (leftists) uncomfortable all over the world," Milei said.

He took the opportunity to promote the results of his harsh austerity campaign in Argentina, celebrating a decline in monthly inflation in April though making no mention of the Buenos Aires subway fares that more than tripled overnight.

Repeating a campaign pledge to eliminate Argentina's central bank – without giving further details – Milei promised to make Argentina "the country with the most economic freedom in the world."

At the event Milei gave a huge hug to his ideological ally Santiago Abascal, the leader of the hard-right Vox party and the only politician with whom Milei has actual plans to meet in Madrid.

The Vox summit Sunday seeks to bring together far-right figures from across Europe in a bid to rally the party's base ahead of European parliamentary elections in June. Milei described his attendance a "moral imperative." He also has plans to meet Spanish business executives Saturday.

Tensions between Milei and Sánchez have simmered since the moment the Spanish prime minister declined to congratulate the libertarian economist on his shock election victory last November.

But hostility exploded earlier this month when one of Sánchez's ministers suggested Milei had taken narcotics. The Argentine presidency responded with an unusually harsh official statement accusing Sánchez's government of "endangering the middle class with its socialist policies that bring nothing but poverty and death."

**Haiti seeks new PM:** A weeklong search for a new prime minister of Haiti has flooded the inboxes of a transitional presidential council with dozens of candidates jostling to become the country's next leader.

Political parties, business leaders, the diaspora and even religious institutions had until Friday to submit their choice for a position currently filled by interim Prime Minister Michel Patrick Boisvert.

It's not an easy task – and it comes on the heels of a surge in violence that convulsed the nation.

Diego Da Rin with the International Crisis Group said Haiti's next prime minister shoulders immense responsibilities, including restoring security, reforming the country's constitution, organizing elections and creating a commission for truth, justice and reparation – all in less than two years.

**Mexico, Guatemala leaders meet:** Mexico President Andrés Manuel López Obrador and Guatemala President Bernardo Arévalo were meeting Friday in this Mexican border city to tackle issues of shared interest, foremost among them immigration.

Arévalo, who took office earlier this year, noted that they were meeting in the same city where his father Juan José Arévalo, a former president of Guatemala, had met with his Mexican counterpart, Manuel Ávila Camacho, in 1946.

"We want a border that unites, a border that unites our people, the Mexican people and the Guatemalan people, a border that allows us to develop and grow together, with reciprocal benefit, trust, enthusiasm and collaboration," Arévalo said.

But both countries are under pressure from the United States to increase control of their shared border to help control the flow of migrants north. The border also carries security concerns, as so many do.

**6 dead in Mexico campaign rally:** A mayoral candidate and five other people were killed when gunmen opened fire at a campaign rally in the violence-racked southern Mexico state of Chiapas, officials said.

State prosecutors said a young girl was among the six people killed in the gunfire late Thursday, along with mayoral candidate Lucero López Maza. Two others were injured, they said.

"A confrontation broke out between armed civilians during a political campaign event," prosecutors said in a statement.

It was unclear whether López Maza was the intended target of the attack, because shootings have become so common and widespread in the area.

The mass shooting took place at a crossroads in the rural town of La Concordia, Chiapas, about 80 miles (125 km) from the border with Guatemala.

The area near the Guatemalan border is a major smuggling route for drugs and migrants and Mexico's two main drug cartels have been fighting for control of the region.



An aerial drone photo taken on May 17, 2024 shows the China Coast Guard (CCG) 3502 fleet conducting formation training in waters adjacent to China's Huangyan Dao. (Xinhua)

## Asia

## Attacker acted on his own: Malaysia minister

## North Korea test-fires suspected missiles

SEOUL, South Korea, May 18, (AP): North Korea fired suspected short-range ballistic missiles off its east coast on Friday, South Korea's military said, a day after South Korea and the U.S. flew powerful fighter jets in a joint drill that the North views as a major security threat.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the weapons launched from the North's east coast Wonsan region traveled about 300 kilometers (185 miles) before landing in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan. Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said a North Korean missile landed outside Japan's exclusive economic zone.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff statement called the launches "a clear provocation" that threatens peace on the Korean Peninsula. It said South Korea will maintain a firm readiness to repel potential aggressions by North Korea in conjunctions with the military alliance with the United States.

North Korea has extended its run of weapons testing in recent months as part of its efforts to enlarge and modernize its arsenal while diplomacy with the United States and South Korea remains stalled. Last week, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervised the test firing of a new multiple rocket launch system, according to the North's state media.

North Korea says it has been forced to boost its nuclear and missile programs to deal with U.S.-led hostilities. North Korea cites expanded US-South Korean military training, which it calls an invasion rehearsal. Many foreign experts say North Korea uses its rivals' military drills as a pretext for building a larger weapons arsenal in the belief that it would boost its leverage in future diplomacy with the US.

Also Friday, Kim's sister and senior official Kim Yo Jong said North Korea's recent weapons tests were part of the country's five-year arms buildup plan launched in 2021. She said the recently tested weapons are designed to attack Seoul, the South Korean capital, and denied outside speculation that the tests were meant to display weapons that North Korea plans to export to Russia.

"We don't conceal the fact that such weapons will be used to prevent Seoul from inventing any idle thinking," Kim Yo Jong said in a statement carried by KCNA.

## Also:

**KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia:** The man who attacked a Malaysian police station and killed two officers was a recluse and is believed to have acted

## Putin ends two-day trip to China by emphasizing strategic ties to Russia

BEIJING, May 18, (AP): Russian President Vladimir Putin concluded a two-day visit to China on Friday, emphasizing the countries' burgeoning strategic ties as well as his own personal relationship with Chinese leader Xi Jinping as they sought to present an alternative to U.S. global influence.

Putin praised the growth in bilateral trade while touring a China-Russia Expo in the northeastern city of Harbin. He met students at the Harbin Institute of Technology, known for its defense research and its work with the People's Liberation Army.

Harbin, capital of China's Heilongjiang province, was once home to many Russian expatriates and retains some of that history in its architecture, such as the central St. Sophia Cathedral, a former Russian Orthodox church.

Underscoring the personal nature of the relationship, Putin said the Harbin institute and his alma mater, St. Petersburg State University, will open a joint school for 1,500 students. "I'm sure that it will become a flagship of the Russian-

Chinese cooperation in science and education," he said.

Speaking to reporters, Putin praised his talks with Xi as "substantive," saying that he spent "almost a whole day, from morning till evening" with the Chinese leader and other officials in Beijing the previous day.

**US envoy visits islands:** The US Ambassador to Japan stressed Friday the importance of increased deterrence and his country's commitment to the alliance with its key ally as he visited two southwestern Japanese islands at the forefront of Tokyo's tension with Beijing.

Japan has been making a south-west shift of its defense posture, and is further accelerating its military buildup under the 2022 security strategy which focuses on counter-strike capability with long-range cruise missiles.

Highlighting their solid alliance in the Indo-Pacific, **Rahm Emanuel** visited Yonaguni, Japan's westernmost island just east of Taiwan, a self-governed island also claimed by China.

on his own despite suspected links to the Jemaah Islamiyah extremist group, the country's home minister said Saturday.

The man stormed the police station in southern **Johor** state near **Singapore** in the early hours of Friday with a machete. He hacked a police constable to death and then used the officer's weapon to kill another. He wounded a third officer before being shot dead. Police initially said the man could have attempted to take firearms from the station.

Home Minister **Saifuddin Nasution** called it a "lone wolf attack" based on an initial investigation and said there was no threat to the wider public.

"We have established that the attacker acted on his own ... a lone wolf driven by certain motivation and his own understanding," Saifuddin said. "His action is not linked to any larger mission."

Police have said the man's father was a known member of Jemaah Islamiyah, a Southeast Asian network linked to al-Qaida, and that they found materials linked to the group in their home. Seven people including the

man's parents and three siblings were detained and police said they were searching for some 20 Jemaah Islamiyah members in the state.

**MANILA, Philippines:** One of Indonesia's most-wanted drug suspects has been arrested in the Philippines after an international manhunt and efforts were underway to have the suspect extradited to **Jakarta** to face charges, Indonesian and Philippine officials said Friday.

Philippine Immigration Commissioner **Norman Tansingco** said **Gregor Johann Haas**, 46, was detained in **Bogo** city in the central province of **Cebu** after the Interpol issued a red notice, an international alert for a wanted person, stemming from a criminal complaint filed against him by Indonesian authorities.

Tansingco described Haas as "a high-profile fugitive for being an alleged member of the Sinaloa cartel, a large international organized crime syndicate based in **Culiacan, Sinaloa, Mexico** that specializes in drug trafficking and money laundering activities."

that President Mahamat Deby Itno, who seized power in 2021, was elected president in the May 6 vote and rejected an appeal by his main opponent.

Deby Itno, also known as Mahamat Id-riss Deby, seized power after his father, who spent three decades in power, was killed fighting rebels in 2021. The long-

delayed election came after three years of military rule. Analysts had widely expected him to win.

The final results from the election showed that Deby Itno won with 61% of the vote, while the leading opposition candidate and head of the transitional government, Prime Minister Succès Masha, lagged far behind with an 18.5% share. (AP)

**SAfrica rescue ops end:** Search and rescue efforts at the site of a recent building collapse in South Africa, which claimed the lives of at least 33 people, were concluded on Friday, said local authorities.

The multi-story building under construction in the coastal city of George, the Western Cape Province, collapsed last week.

"The rescue and recovery operations for the building collapse site lasted 260 hours," the municipal government of George said in a statement issued on Friday afternoon.

"Search and rescue efforts are completed," the statement said.

"Consequently, the site is classified as a crime scene and has officially been handed over for a formal investigation by the South African Police Service who will hand it over to the Department of Labor and Employment for their formal investigation to be conducted," it said. (Xinhua)



Russian President Vladimir Putin attends a laying flowers ceremony at Monument to the Soviet soldiers who died in the battles for the liberation of China's northeast from Japanese invaders in Harbin in northeastern China's Heilongjiang Province, on May 17. Putin concluded a two-day visit to China on Friday. (AP)



Zuma



Sonko

## Africa

**Sonko slams army presence:** Senegal's new prime minister, who was freed from jail weeks before the presidential election earlier this year and propelled his party to victory, has criticized the French military presence in the West African country.

**Ousmane Sonko** also criticized efforts by France and the West to promote values that he said didn't fit with those held by Senegal and other African countries.

Sonko was speaking at an event held jointly with the French far-left politician Jean-Luc Mélenchon in the capital, Dakar.

Sonko is known for his criticism of interference by France, which is Senegal's former colonial ruler. His fiery views in a region where other neighbors have already taken steps to cut ties with France helped his chosen candidate Bassirou Diomaye Faye win the presidential election in March.

"I want to reiterate Senegal's desire for self-determination, which is incompatible with the long-term presence of foreign military bases in Senegal," Sonko said. (AP)

**Zuma trial date set:** Former South African President **Jacob Zuma** will go on trial for alleged corruption next April, four years after he was formally charged with taking bribes in connection with a multi-billion-dollar arms deal and 20 years after he was first implicated, prosecutors said Thursday.

Zuma is charged with multiple counts of corruption as well as racketeering, fraud, tax evasion and money laundering over a huge deal the South African government signed to revamp its armed forces in 1999. Zuma is accused of taking bribes from French arms company Thales, then named Thomson-CSF, and a subcontractor in the deal.

The arms deal became one of South Africa's biggest political scandals and was clouded in corruption allegations.

Zuma pleaded not guilty to the charges at a hearing in 2021 that was supposed to mark the start of his trial, but it has been subject to long delays after Zuma launched appeals asking for the judge and the prosecutor to be removed from the case, alleging they were personally biased against him. The original trial judge recused himself but Zuma's attempt to remove the prosecutor was rejected.

Prosecutors said the trial would now begin on April 14 next year, with a pre-trial hearing set for this August. Thales is a co-defendant in the case and has also pleaded not guilty. (AP)

**Chad's Itno confirmed winner:** Chad's constitutional council confirmed



Emergency workers on the scene of a building collapse in the city of George, about 400 kilometers (250 miles) east of Cape Town, South Africa on May 7. An exhaustive rescue operation to find missing construction workers trapped in the rubble of a collapsed building in South Africa ended on May 17 after nearly two weeks, as authorities released a major revision of their figures and said they now believe that no one else is missing. (AP)



	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
PAKISTAN - KSE 100	+394.81	75,325.88	DUBAI - DFMGI	-17.55	4,068.23
			PHILIPPINES - PSEI	-9.51	6,618.69
			BRITAIN - FTSE 100	-18.39	8,420.26
			EUROPE - Euro Stoxx 50	-8.31	5,064.14

# Business

## AUM reaches SAR 3.1 billion by end of last year

# NBK Wealth Saudi Arabia leads in Assets Under Management

## NREC shareholders approve 5% bonus share distribution

Reem Island's inclusion in ADGM

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18: National Real Estate Company (NREC) held today its shareholders' Annual Ordinary General Assembly Meeting (AGM) for the financial year ended 31 December 2023, with a quorum of 72.72%. The meeting took place electronically.**

The Company's shareholders approved all items on the AGM agenda, including the Board's recommendation to distribute 5% bonus shares, i.e., 5 shares for each 100 shares. Shareholders registered on the Company's shareholders record on the settlement date of 26 June 2024 are entitled to these bonus shares. The distribution date is 4 July 2024.

The Company reported a net loss attributable to the owners of the Parent Company of KD 35.2 million and a loss per share of 19.8 fils in 2023, compared to a net profit attributable to the owners of the Parent Company of KD 17.9 million and an EPS of 10.1 fils in 2022.

The Company's operating revenue came in at KD 12.4 million for the year ended 31 December 2023, as compared to KD 26 million in 2022.

**Embracing Local Opportunities:** Our Commitment to Kuwait's Growth and Prosperity

NREC Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Faisal Jamil Sultan Al-Essa, stated: "I am proud to reaffirm our strong commitment to embracing local opportunities and contributing to Kuwait's growth and prosperity. Since our establishment in 1973, we have been deeply rooted in the Kuwaiti business landscape, drawing strength from our heritage and the diverse cultural fabric of our nation."

"Management is presently exploring diverse investment opportunities in Kuwait, underscoring our confidence in Kuwait's potential for the near future", added Sultan.

**Updates on Reem Mall:** Optimistic Outlook Amidst Abu Dhabi's Thriving Business Climate and Reem Island's inclusion in ADGM

Sultan said: "We maintain an optimistic outlook on the mall's future



Faisal Jamil Sultan Al-Essa

performance, given the favourable business climate in Abu Dhabi, and Reem Island's inclusion in ADGM."

"Reem Island's inclusion in the Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM) as a free zone offers significant benefits to Reem Mall and its tenants", added Sultan.

"This includes a business-friendly environment with streamlined regulations, enhancing operational efficiency. The collaboration between ADGM and Reem Island is set to create substantial value, fostering a favorable business landscape and abundant growth opportunities."

"Businesses on Reem Island will enjoy advantages such as global recognition, enhanced market access, competitive tax rates, innovation support, efficient dispute resolution, access to diverse financial services, and networking within the ADGM ecosystem."

### Updates on Grand Heights

The Company's residential project in Egypt, Grand Heights, has made significant progress in developing and delivering residential units.

The percentage of units sold across the whole project as of the end of 2023 was 81%.

Total sold units across the entire project in Egypt stood at 7,300 and the remaining unsold units stood at 1,676 by year-end.

### Updates on Key Operational Assets

In 2023, Jordan's South Aqaba Investment Park continued its upward performance trend, with rental revenues growing to KD 975 thousand, a 7% increase

from the previous year. The park maintained a solid occupancy rate of 90% for warehouses and full occupancy for industrial buildings.

In Libya, The Palm City Residences saw an increase in occupancy, reaching 57.9% by the end of 2023 compared to 52.5% in 2022.

### NREC's strategic investment in Agility Public Warehousing Company K.S.C.P.

In addition to its core real estate business, NREC is the largest shareholder with a 22.3% share in Agility Public Warehousing Company K.S.C.P.

Agility is renowned for transforming supply chains to be smarter, faster, greener, fairer, and more efficient. It takes pride in its outstanding growth and value creation for shareholders, establishing itself as a top provider of supply chain services, infrastructure, and innovations.

Agility Global PLC, a subsidiary of Agility and a manager of critical company operations and assets including Menzies Aviation, Tristar Transport LLC, Agility Logistics Parks, and the DSV investment, has recently been listed on the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX). With Agility holding a controlling stake of 51%, we anticipate that this milestone will enhance value for Agility's shareholders and benefit our strategic investment in the company.

### Closing Note

Sultan stated: "I would like to take the opportunity to express my gratitude to our shareholders for their support of the Company's strategy and to thank all our stakeholders for their continued trust and confidence in our Management team."

Established in 1973 and listed in Boursa Kuwait, National Real Estate Company (NREC) is a real estate investment, development and property manager based in the Middle East and North Africa. The Company's portfolio comprises a mix of retail, commercial and residential properties in the region.

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18:** NBK Wealth - Saudi Arabia continues to strengthen its position as a premier provider of wealth management solutions in the Kingdom. This progress is fueled by its exceptional performance and unwavering commitment to strategic objectives set since its inception six years ago, aiming for significant expansion within the Saudi market.

Further attesting to NBK Wealth Group's achievements in strengthening its foothold in the Saudi market, NBK Wealth - Saudi Arabia clinched the top spot as the company with the highest Assets Under Management (AUM) in the fourth quarter of 2023 among financial institutions licensed by the Saudi Capital Market Authority (CMA).

As outlined in a comprehensive report compiled by CMA regarding the operations of its licensed financial institutions in the fourth quarter of the previous year, Watani Wealth Management, a subsidiary of NBK Group, witnessed a remarkable surge in assets under management. The assets soared by an impressive 1,004%, growing from SAR 280.8 million at the end of the third quarter to SAR 3.1 billion by the conclusion of 2023.

### Strategic Overview

Mr. Musaad F. Al-Sudairy, Board Member & Chief Executive Officer of Watani Wealth Management, said: "We are steadily moving towards strengthening our footprint in the Saudi market by offering a wide range of innovative and advanced solutions in wealth management."

Al-Sudairy emphasized the company's commitment to becoming the premier and trusted option for wealth management solutions in the Saudi market. This objective is pursued through a diverse array of operations spanning wealth management, asset management, investment services, and brokerage.

Moreover, Al-Sudairy added that the significant increase in the company's assets under management clearly demonstrates the confidence that the company holds in the Saudi market. This confidence is a result of its consistent delivery of distinctive and innovative products and services to high-net-worth individuals and families since its establishment in 2018. Furthermore, it underscores the prudent strategic vision of NBK Group in founding the company, recognizing the Saudi market as a prom-



Musaad F. Al-Sudairy

### Al-Sudairy

The company distinguished itself as the front-runner in Saudi Arabia, experiencing an extraordinary surge in Assets Under Management (AUM) with an impressive growth rate of 1004% in 4Q 2023

This leap underscores NBK Group's strategic vision, affirming Saudi Arabia's role as a key market within the wealth management sector

The significant increase in our AUM reflects our confidence in the Saudi market

We are persistently progressing towards strengthening our presence in the Saudi market by offering a diverse range of innovative solutions

NBK Wealth tailors a customized strategy for each client based on their individual financial needs and objectives

Our affiliation with NBK Group propels us to achieve heightened performance and innovate services and products that exceed customer expectations

internationally. He emphasized that this connection serves as a driving force for NBK Wealth to enhance its performance and deliver innovative services and products that exceed customer expectations.

"We don't provide off-the-shelf solutions; instead, we craft personalized wealth management strategies aligned with each client's unique financial goals and aspirations. Our dedicated team of wealth management experts offers a suite of outstanding benefits, guaranteeing our clients an unparalleled experience," He said.

### Global presence

Al-Sudairy emphasized that NBK Wealth Management is leveraging the expansion of NBK Wealth Group, which recently unveiled its new brand on a global scale through an extensive network of integrated operations spanning nine cities across five countries. He underscored that NBK Wealth includes NBK Capital, NBK Banque Privée (Suisse), National Bank of Kuwait (International) PLC, and Watani Financial Brokerage Company (WFBC), establishing itself as the largest entity in Kuwait and one of the largest in the MENA region in wealth management. With assets under management exceeding US\$20 billion as of last year's end, the entity stands as a formidable player in the industry.

NBK Wealth has secured a prominent standing by offering distinctive services that extend beyond traditional investment realms. These encompass asset management, trading, lending, deposits, financial advisory, and a spectrum of customized and innovative services tailored for high-net-worth individuals and families. This suite of offerings is delivered by a committed team of over 125 investment experts, traders, and 75 relationship managers, ensuring personalized attention and expertise.

The Group utilizes its deep market expertise, worldwide presence, and dedication to pioneering investment strategies to empower clients in realizing their long-term financial objectives with steadfast assurance. Meanwhile, NBK Wealth benefits from strategic partnerships with JPMorgan Asset Management and Investest, strengthening its service portfolio across various fronts, such as advisory services and the creation of innovative investment solutions.

ising arena for growth and prosperity in the realm of wealth management.

Al-Sudairy further highlighted that the overall strength of NBK Wealth Group derives from its association with NBK Group, a renowned financial organization, both locally and

## Other Voices

Crude prices hover at \$82-83 pb

## OPEC+ faces challenges amid 'excess' oil supply

By Kamel Al-Harami  
Independent Oil Analyst

The current concern is the excess supply of crude oil in the market, with some potential volume appearing very soon, possibly at the OPEC+ meeting in the first week of June.

So far, two countries have not fully adhered to the OPEC+ agreement. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is awaiting the meeting in order to ask for official approval of its crude oil volume that could reach five million barrels per day, although it could easily produce four million barrels.

The growth in demand for oil is not as anticipated and is lower by 200,000 barrels per day, with inflation still not receding; while China's situation is uncertain, so there is no bright growth expected for the time being.

Today, oil prices are at \$82 to \$83 per barrel for Brent crude and \$79 for American oil; whereas oil producers are seeking something closer to \$95 per barrel to balance their fiscal budget. So, another challenge is that they are facing two challenges at the same time - reducing production and receiving lower income. This is contradictory to the basic principle of reducing oil for the sake of higher income. It is difficult to envisage the worse scenario of lower production and

lower revenues. Some members are keen on raising production, while others do not fully adhere to the basic concept of quota restriction.

How can OPEC+ get itself out of this unique situation, with all its members having excess oil production capacity; while the oil markets are not responding to OPEC+ actions?

Since other oil producers are free to produce and maximize their production without any restriction, they are simply free to produce and generate returns for their shareholders; protracted by OPEC+ restrictions and quotas.

On the other hand, the new volumes of oil available from the US and Brazil are causing some discomfort for Arab Gulf producers, as these two producers are selling their oil to India, for instance.

This may not be a threat at the moment, but it could become one in the future if Arab Gulf producers start pricing their oil higher in Asian markets. Again, the volume is not that great, but it is a clear warning to OPEC+ Arabian Gulf producers.

The upcoming OPEC+ meeting next month will not be an easy one, with long meetings and discussions, as some members are insisting on higher crude oil throughput. The organization is not in the mood for disagreements, because the new producers and the USA are at their throat. These new producers are free from price or volume restrictions. Certainly, future oil prices do not look positive for the coming months, as there is ample supply.

email: [naftikuwait@yahoo.com](mailto:naftikuwait@yahoo.com)



Al-Harami



KIB signs MoU with ECO.



## Strengthening strategic partnerships for sustainability

# KIB signs MoU with ECO for environmental innovation

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18:** Kuwait International Bank (KIB) has announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with ECO, a pioneering business incubator in the fields of environment and renewable energy. The initiative aims to boost innovation in the business sector, support Kuwaiti projects, and adopt new environmental ideas.

This step reflects the Bank's commitment to its strategic objectives of supporting sustainable development projects and advancing progress in Kuwait, by enhancing environmental awareness within the community and transitioning to alternative energy sources, thereby reducing dependence on traditional energy.

Commenting on the new MoU, Marwa Marafie, Manager of Marketing and Corporate Communications at KIB, said: "At KIB, we take pride in embracing various initiatives and supporting efforts that ensure we achieve our goals concerning the transition to the safe use of alternative and renewable energy, and reducing reliance on traditional energy solutions."

This commitment aligns with the Bank's comprehensive strategy and its leadership role among institutions that support sustainable development and environmental solutions.

These efforts enhance community welfare and raise awareness about the importance of environmental protection and the positive impact of sustainable environmental practices. This is in line with our slogan 'Bank for Life'."

On his part, Jassem Al-Abouh, founder and CEO of ECO Incubator for Environment and Renewable Energy Projects, praised this significant step, saying: "As ECO is the first business incubator of its kind in

Kuwait and consists of many local initiatives, we value the launch of this strategic partnership with KIB that will give a lending hand to Kuwaiti environmental projects.

We view ourselves as a crucial link between innovators, and governmental and private entities aiming to achieve sustainable environmental impact. Such vital initiatives unleash comprehensive excellence by merging practical experience with academic knowledge to develop effective solutions for the environmental and energy challenges facing Kuwait and the region."

As a leading initiative in the fields of sustainability and renewable energy, ECO plays a significant role in providing technical and advisory support to transform progressive environmental ideas into successful projects.

Moreover, it encourages research and development and boosts environmental awareness by organizing educational events and workshops. These activities help foster a culture of environmental appreciation and emphasize the importance of taking tangible steps toward a more sustainable lifestyle.

It is worth noting that KIB spares no effort in strengthening its relationships and strategic partnerships which reflect its commitment to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles, as well as add value in achieving sustainable environmental goals in Kuwait and the region.

These efforts align with the Bank's dedication to implementing its innovative plans under the umbrella of its comprehensive social responsibility program, which plays a crucial role in elevating the community's standard of living.

## Gold prices surge on weakening dollar and treasury yields

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18:** Gold prices saw an uptick Friday following a significant surge in the previous session, as the dollar and Treasury bond yields retreated in response to US consumer price inflation data, which heightened the likelihood of a September interest rate cut, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Spot gold prices rose by 0.2 percent to \$2,391.78 per ounce, marking its highest level in over three weeks. Similarly, the US gold futures contracts increased by 0.1 percent to \$2,396.10.

The decline in the dollar against a basket of major currencies con-

tributed to the rise in gold prices, as it made the yellow metal priced in US currency more affordable for holders of other currencies. Additionally, 10-year Treasury bond yields reached their lowest levels in over a month.

Tim Waterer, chief market analyst at KCM Trade, noted, "With inflation showing signs of deceleration, gold demonstrated strength in early trading." This suggests that investors are turning to gold as a hedge against potential economic uncertainties amid changing monetary policies.



## BUSINESS

## CEO of Brazil's oil and gas giant Petrobras steps down

The head of Brazil's state-controlled oil and gas giant Petrobras has stepped down, the company said Wednesday, following months of tensions with the federal government.

Petrobras opted not to pay extraordinary dividends to its shareholders earlier this year, souring relations between Petrobras CEO Jean Paul Prates and Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, head of the ruling leftist Workers' Party.

Lula had defended that move, calling the market a "voracious dinosaur" after Petrobras' shares plunged following the decision regarding dividends.

The company's shares fell by as much as 9% after the announcement of Prates' departure, before paring losses. They were down by 7% by Wednesday afternoon.

Local newspaper O Globo reported that Lula himself informed Prates of his dismissal. Prates, a former senator for the

Workers' Party, will be replaced by engineer and former director of Brazil's oil and gas regulator ANP, Magda Chambriard. Petrobras appointed the executive director of corporate affairs, Clarice Coppetti, as interim president.

Brazil's federal government has a controlling stake in Petrobras, while private investors also hold shares. That often creates a clash of interests between the government and minority shareholders. (AP)

## AI makes Chinese automobiles smarter

Setting into the plush comfort of his vehicle cockpit, a driver nicknamed Liu spoke to the sleek dashboard display: "Simo, how long before I reach home?"

"You have an hour's journey ahead," answered the onboard intelligence system supported by the large language model (LLM), an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered program that can recognize and generate multimedia text.

"Please activate the home air conditioning and close the curtains

30 minutes prior to my arrival." "Affirmative."

This scenario unfolded within Jiyue, an intelligent vehicle backed by Geely Auto, a prominent Chinese automaker, in collaboration with Yiyan, Baidu's LLM platform.

Despite the complexity of overlapping voices, simultaneous commands or ongoing conversations, the smart voice system can adeptly discern and address the unique requirements of the commander. Its adoption rate has reached an

impressive 98 percent among its car owners, who on average utilize the system more than 60 times daily, said Xia Yiping, CEO of Jiyue Auto.

"See it, say it, and get it done." Achieving this level of sophistication for smart cockpits is the goal of China's automotive industry.

China's competitive edge in the automotive market is not just a result of its burgeoning new energy vehicle (NEV) sector. (Xinhua)

## Earnings per share up by 15%

## NAPESCO reports KD 2.38m net profit, an increase of 8% in Q1 of 2024

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: National Petroleum Services Company "NAPESCO", a subsidiary of Kuwait Projects Company (Holding), and one of the leading companies in the energy and oilfield services sector, announced that it has achieved a net profit of 2.38 million Kuwaiti dinars for the first quarter of the fiscal year 2024, with an increase of 8% compared to the same period in 2023.

The earnings per share also increased by 15% during the first quarter of the current year to reach 26.37 fils per share, compared to 22.84 fils per share during the same period in 2023.

On this occasion, Sheikh Sabah Mohammed Abdulaziz Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Board of Directors of NAPESCO, stated that the positive results of the first quarter of the current year reflect the efforts made to enhance the efficiency of our operations to ensure the company's



Mai Bader AlOwaish

continued achievement of its strategic objectives in the oil services sector, and to enhance revenues specifically, within a framework of integrated governance and a forward-

## CINET appoints Mai Bader AlOwaish as its CEO

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Kuwait Credit Information Network Company (CINET) has announced the appointment of Mai Bader AlOwaish as its Chief Executive Officer, with approval from both the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Board of Directors at CINET.

This decision underscores CINET's commitment to consolidating its leading position in the local market, fostering national talent, fortifying its leadership stature, and ensuring the provision of all necessary resources for its long-term strategic objectives. AlOwaish will play a pivotal role in steering CI-

NET towards the realization of the company's new strategic direction in the upcoming phase.

The Chairman of the Board of Directors at CINET, Alia B. Alhumaidhi, commented, "We are delighted to announce the appointment of Mai AlOwaish as the Chief Executive Officer of CINET. Her extensive expertise in the banking, financial, and commercial sectors - coupled with her proven track record of industry accomplishments - will significantly contribute to steering CINET towards continued success. We have no doubt that AlOwaish

will play a pivotal role in executing CINET's strategy and upholding its legal and institutional obligations."

Alhumaidhi further stated, "CINET is committed to delivering unparalleled credit reporting and rating services to both individual and corporate clients, in strict adherence to the regulations governing the exchange of credit information outlined in Law No. 9 of 2019, and in line with the executive regulations and guidelines set forth by the Central Bank of Kuwait. By doing so, CINET aims to foster sustainable growth and generate value

for its esteemed shareholders and all stakeholders. On behalf of the Board of Directors, CINET employees, and myself, I extend a warm welcome to AlOwaish and convey our collective wishes for her and the entire CINET team to achieve unlimited progress and success."

On her part, Mai AlOwaish expressed, "I am deeply honored by the trust placed in me by CINET, and I eagerly anticipate building upon our past successes while driving forward the transformational strategies and change initiatives outlined for the next phase.

looking vision aimed at diversifying income streams to mitigate risks.

Mr. Muhaiman Ali Al-Behbehani, Vice Chairman and CEO added in

his statement that the efforts to implement strategic development and expansion plans, along with diversifying products and services, will

enhance the company's performance and achieve its goals. This aligns with the company's developmental vision and follows a prudent policy

aimed at reducing risks, effectively meeting the requirements of sustainable development, and maximizing profits and shareholders' value."

## 68 countries benefited

## Private sector investment reached \$86bn in '23: WB

WASHINGTON, May 18, (KUNA): The World Bank revealed that new data suggested that private sector investments in infrastructure projects in low and middle-income countries reached USD 86 billion in 2023.

The bank mentioned in a report on its website that despite the total investments decreasing by 5 percent from the previous year, more countries received private investments in infrastructure projects on a wider scale compared to other projects.

In 2023, 68 countries received investments across 322 projects, compared to 54 countries and 260 projects in 2022, Guinea Bissau, Libya, Papua New Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, and Suriname achieved their first private participation in infrastructure (PPI) transactions in more than a decade.

On his part, the Infrastructure Vice President at the World Bank Guangzhe Chan said getting the right infrastructure in place is "crucial for people to live to their full potential"

He also said that with the government budgets under pressure and an infrastructure financing gap totaling multiple trillions of dollars, more private sector participation was needed to deliver infrastructure projects.

The Bank affirmed that effort was made to facilitate the progress by enhancing work in the private-public partnerships, guarantee programs and grants provided to the world's poorest countries.

When it comes to the world's poorest countries, 26 countries that were members of the International Development Association (IDA) received investment commitments amounting to USD 4.3 billion across 53 projects in 2023, an 18 percent increase and a record in terms of number of projects.

Chen emphasized that the World Bank report on private sector participation in infrastructure projects was a crucial tool, offering unique insights into the regions and sectors attracting investments and the organization of these projects.

## China remains popular destination for foreign investment: FM spokesperson

BEIJING, May 18, (Xinhua): With China's steady economic growth, the country will remain a driver of global economy and a popular destination for foreign investment, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said on Friday.

Wang made the remarks at a regular press briefing in response to the Spring 2024 Economic Forecast released by the EU Commission, which adjusted up China's growth forecast for this year by 0.2 percentage points to 4.8 percent. Many international financial institutions have also raised their forecast for China's economic growth this year.

Wang noted that since the beginning of this year, China's economy has continued to pick up and the socioeconomic development has been off to a good start.

He said that in the first quarter this year, the economy grew by 5.3 percent and continued to enjoy greater momentum of rebound. In April, China's manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) stood at 50.4 percent.

Noting that the trend of China's

economic rebound further fuels international optimism about China and investing in China, Wang said that international financial institutions, including Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, Citibank and UBS, have recently revised upward China's growth forecast in 2024. Asian Development Bank predicted that from 2024 to 2025, China will account for 46 percent of the economic growth of Asian developing countries. U.S. management consulting firm Kearney said that China has a large economic size and a stable and positive policy environment.

Wang said that in recent years, China has taken steps to abolish all market access restrictions on foreign investment in manufacturing, which gives a strong boost to international investors' confidence.

"China's development is open to the world, and our opportunities are shared by the world," Wang said.

He added that an increasingly open China with a steadily growing economy will surely remain a driver of global economic growth and a popular destination for foreign investment.

## China gov't rolls out new measures to spur growth

BEIJING, May 18, (AP): China announced a slate of fresh measures to reinvigorate its ailing property industry after the latest data showed housing prices have slumped nearly 10% since the start of the year.

Among other things, the central bank said it would reduce the minimum down payment for mortgages and remove the floor on interest rates for first and second homes.

China's housing market has slumped after a crackdown on excessive borrowing by property developers several years ago, dragging along a wide range of other businesses - such as home furnishing, appliances and construction - and slowing growth in the world's No. 2 economy.

Dozens of developers, whose legions of high-rise apartments have transformed urban landscapes across China, have defaulted on their debts. Many projects have just stalled, unfinished.

He Lifeng, a vice premier, said officials would roll out policies to suit each city and "fight the tough battle of dealing with the risk of unfinished commercial housing."

"We will solidly advance key tasks such as guaranteed housing delivery and absorption of existing commercial housing," the official Xinhua News Agency cited He as telling a top level teleconference on property policies.

The effort to entice more families to buy homes has gained momentum after earlier moves such as interest rate cuts and government-backed financing failed to lure buyers into the market at a time when developers are struggling to deliver housing already promised and paid for.

Housing is a mainstay of investment for Chinese, given the low level of interest rates paid by banks, and many potential buyers might be waiting for the market to bottom out before considering new purchases.

## Latest indicators show China's economic recovery picking up

Industrial output edged up 0.97% in April

BEIJING, May 18, (Xinhua): The Chinese economy has built recovery momentum in April, with key economic indicators demonstrating strong resilience and potentials to temper the impacts of external shocks, according to official data released on Friday.

Accelerated industrial growth China's value-added industrial output, an important economic indicator, went up 6.7 percent year on year in April, accelerating 2.2 percentage points from March, data from National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed.

On a monthly basis, industrial output edged up 0.97 percent in April from the previous month, the highest month-on-month growth rate recorded over the recent years, according to NBS spokesperson Liu Aihua, at a press conference.

From January to April, industrial output rose 6.3 percent year on year, 0.2 percentage points higher than that from January to March.

Boosted by policies aimed to keep the foreign trade stable, the export delivery value of the industrial sector climbed 7.3 percent year on year in April, 5.9 percentage points faster than that of March.

The uptick in export delivery value prompted the recovery of sub-sectors that have a large share in exports, such as the electronics and textile sectors, Liu said, attributing it as an important reason for the quickened industrial expansion.

The industrial output is used to measure the activity of enterprises each with an annual main business turnover of at least 20 million yuan (about 2.82 million U.S. dollars).

Other positive signs Friday's data also showed that the surveyed urban unemployment rate in China stood at 5 percent in April, down 0.2 percentage points from a month ago. The rate was also lower than the 5.2 percent reading a year ago.

Fixed-asset investment rose 4.2 percent year on year to 14.34 trillion yuan during the January-April period.

China's retail sales of consumer goods, a major indicator of the country's consumption strength, climbed 4.1 percent year on year in the first four months of this year.

In April alone, retail sales of consumer goods increased 2.3 percent from a year ago, slower than the 3.1 percent growth in March, data showed.

Although some indicators have reported an eased year-on-year growth in April due to factors such as a higher base from the same period last year, China's economy maintained generally stable expansion, sustaining a sound recovery momentum, commented Liu.

Resilience to withstand external shocks

The United States on Tuesday



Reddit Inc. signage is seen on the New York Stock Exchange trading floor, prior to Reddit IPO, Thursday, March 21, 2024. OpenAI and Reddit are teaming up in a deal that will bring the social media platform's content to ChatGPT. Shares of Reddit jumped 17% before the market open on Friday, May 17. (AP)

## OpenAI &amp; Reddit teaming in deal that will bring Reddit's content to ChatGPT

NEW YORK, May 18, (AP): OpenAI and Reddit are teaming up in a deal that will bring the social media platform's content to ChatGPT.

Share of Reddit surged more than 10% before the market open on Friday.

Reddit said in a blog post that the agreement will give OpenAI access to its data application programming interface, which provides real-time, structured, and unique content from the platform.

Reddit users and moderators will also gain access to new artificial intelligence-powered features, and OpenAI will become a Reddit advertising partner.

"Reddit has become one of the internet's largest open archives of authentic, relevant, and always up to date human conversations about

anything and everything," Reddit co-founder and CEO Steve Huffman said in a statement. "Including it in ChatGPT upholds our belief in a connected internet, helps people find more of what they're looking for, and helps new audiences find community on Reddit."

Reddit said the deal is consistent with other content arrangements, and doesn't change its data API terms or developer terms, which say that content accessed through Reddit's data API can't be used for commercial purposes without the platform's approval.

Reddit said that API access is still free for non-commercial usage under its published threshold.

"We are thrilled to partner with Reddit to enhance ChatGPT with uniquely timely and relevant infor-

mation, and to explore the possibilities to enrich the Reddit experience with AI-powered features," Brad Lightcap, OpenAI chief operating officer, said in a statement.

Reddit made its debut on Wall Street in March, with investors pushing the value of the company close to \$9 billion seconds after it began trading on the New York Stock Exchange.

Reddit has a large audience that religiously visits the service to discuss a potpourri of subjects that range from silly memes to existential worries, as well as get recommendations from like-minded people.

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman accumulated a stake in Reddit as an early investor and it has made him one of the company's biggest shareholders.

decided to raise additional tariffs on its imports of some Chinese products including electric vehicles, lithium-ion batteries, solar cells, critical minerals, semiconductors, steel and aluminum, and cranes, on top of existing tariffs under Section 301.

In response to a media query on the additional U.S. tariffs posing possible impacts on the Chinese economy, Liu said that the Chinese economy has

showed stronger resilience and potentials, which will help offset the implications from external shocks.

Domestic demand has continued to recover, propelled by the country's super-large market, according to Liu, citing the 12.2 percent year-on-year increase of China's imports of goods in April. "The figure is apparently faster than the export growth, mirroring a rising trend of domestic demand."

In terms of international circulation, Liu underlined the solid expansion of China's total goods imports and exports, which gained 5.7 percent year on year in yuan terms in the first four months of this year.

The country is also a major trading partner of more than 140 countries and regions, adding to the proof that China's foreign trade has strong resilience and competitive edges, Liu added.

## UN reports improved prospects for the world economy

UNITED NATIONS, May 18, (AP): The United Nations reported improved prospects for the world economy since its January forecast on Thursday, pointing to a better outlook in the United States and several large emerging economies including Brazil, India and Russia.

According to its mid-2024 report, the world economy is now projected to grow by 2.7% this year - up from the 2.4% forecast in its January report - and by 2.8% in 2025. A 2.7% growth rate would equal growth in 2023, but still be lower than the 3% growth rate

before the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020.

"Our prognosis is one of guarded optimism, but with important caveats," Shantanu Mukherjee, director of the U.N.'s Economic Analysis and Policy Division, told a news conference

launching the report.

The report pointed to interest rates that are higher for longer periods, debt repayment challenges, continuing geopolitical tensions and climate risks especially for the world's poorest countries and small island nations.





Awarding the high-school level winners.



Al Mutairi and Alasfour award the university level winners.

## Company joins judges panel of 'Company Program'

# Zain celebrates future entrepreneurs at INJAZ's annual competition

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Zain has celebrated the winners of the Most Innovative Product award for the high-school and university levels during the closing ceremony of the INJAZ Company Program Competition 2024. Zain supports this contest annually in partnership with INJAZ Kuwait to empower the next generation of young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs.

The ceremony, hosted by the American University of the Middle East at the AUM Cultural Center, was attended by INJAZ Kuwait Executive Director Lailah Hilal Al Mutairi, Zain Kuwait Corporate Sustainability Manager Louwah Alasfour, and representatives from sponsors and partners. Zain took the stage to honor the two winning teams of the Most Innovative Product award: RHYTHMi (university level) and Solution Seekers (high-school level).

Zain's support came under the umbrella of its long-term strategic partnership with INJAZ Kuwait, which extends for 19 years since the non-profit's inception in 2005. Throughout this partnership, Zain has continued to shoulder the academic programs and initiatives organized by INJAZ to invest in young people's creative skills to empower them to pursue their entrepreneurship aspirations.

Zain Group Digital Solutions Di-

rector Ali Dashti joined the judges panel, which featured entrepreneurs, businesspeople, and private sector executives. The panel listened to final pitches from the students, initiated the evaluation process, and carefully selected the winners.

INJAZ's annual Company Program competition provides university and high school students with a great opportunity to learn how to establish and run their own startups. Corporate volunteers from across the Kuwaiti private sector guide students through the most essential business skills, like how to develop a business idea, conduct a feasibility study, sell stocks, work as a team, devise business plans, create and sell products/services, and much more.

Through its strategic partnership with INJAZ Kuwait, Zain strives to empower ambitious young minds who are passionate about building their own businesses with world-class training programs.

INJAZ Kuwait is an NGO and a Nonprofit organization that inspires and prepares young people to succeed in a global economy by delivering business programs on entrepreneurship, work readiness, and financial literacy. INJAZ is a member of Junior Achievement Worldwide and has so far trained over 100,000 students from 200+ public and private schools and universities through 7000+ volunteers.

## 'Roadmap for sustainability'

# Gulf Bank launches street ad 'repurposing' initiative

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: As part of its ongoing commitment to environmental sustainability, Gulf Bank has launched an ambitious initiative aimed at repurposing its street advertisements into reusable bags. This initiative underscores the Bank's dedication to promoting sustainable practices and reducing plastic waste.

## A Remarkable Achievement in Recycling

Najla Aleisa, Chief Marketing Officer at Gulf Bank, highlighted the progress, stating, "We have successfully converted 2,300 square meters of our street advertisements into reusable bags. This initiative reflects our long-term dedication to environmental protection and aims to shift societal norms towards embracing reusable bags." Aleisa emphasized the multi-step recycling process that minimizes materials used in the advertisements. The ads are sent to a specialized recycling company where they are cleaned, sterilized, and cut into various sizes before being transformed into multiple uses.

**Strengthening Environmental Commitment**

This innovative approach enhances Gulf Bank's commitment to environmental preservation and demonstrates practical efforts to reduce plastic waste and reliance on single-use plastic bags, which have detrimental effects on wildlife and marine ecosystems. Aleisa highlighted the Bank's parallel initiative, launched earlier in the year, where approximately 100,000 reusable bags were distributed in collaboration with five cooperative societies. Each Co-op provided 20,000 bags to its members, reinforcing the Bank's dedication to sustainability.

## Promoting Reusable Bags at Gulf Bank's Events

Gulf Bank ensures the distribution of reusable and recycled bags at most of its major events, including the recent event announcing the winner of the grand prize in the AIDanah Millionaire Draw, valued at KD2,000,000. This practice not only promotes the use of reusable bags but also raises awareness about the importance of sustainability.

**A Clear Roadmap for Sustainability**

Aleisa affirmed that these initiatives unequivocally demonstrate Gulf Bank's firm commitment to incorporating sustainability principles. The Bank has outlined a clear roadmap and structural plan within its 2030 Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) sustainability strategy. This strategy is aimed at maintaining robust developments in sustainability across environmental, social, and governance levels through diverse initiatives strategically selected to benefit the Bank both internally and externally.

## Leading the Way to a Sustainable Future

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

## Supporting Kuwait Vision 2035

Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it. Through its sustainability initiatives, Gulf Bank is setting a benchmark in the banking sector for environmental responsibility and sustainable practices.

By repurposing street advertisements into reusable bags, Gulf Bank not only contributes to environmental sustainability but also inspires the community to adopt eco-friendly practices.

This initiative is a testament to Gulf Bank's commitment to making a positive impact on the environment and leading the way toward a sustainable future.

## Live demo of LYNX for real-time vehicle data management

# Al Mulla Industries hosts 2nd Transport Solutions Expo

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Following the success of the first AMI Expo in 2023, Al Mulla Industries Co. (AMI), a subsidiary of Al Mulla Group and a trusted market leader and initiator of best practices in Kuwait's steel products manufacturing, transport refrigeration, as well as other related market sectors, has recently organized the 2nd edition of the Transport Solutions Expo at Kuwait's International Fairground in Mishref, Kuwait.

The Exhibition was inaugurated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in the presence of Mr. Hormuzda Davar, Managing Director of Financial Services and Trading & Manufacturing at Al Mulla Group accompanied by the General Manager - AMI Mr. Satish Gupta, distinguished guests, Principals, associates, and others.

The second edition of this unique exhibition comes as part of the company's constant efforts to promote its robust Transport Solutions that are designed, customized, and manufactured at Al Mulla Industries' factory in Kuwait in accordance with the highest quality control standards that conform to both local and international specifications.

Visitors to the AMI Expo '24, had the opportunity to witness first hand various heavy and light Transport Solutions, both rigid-body/ chassis mounted and trailers, such as reefer boxes, trailers, vans, and other vehicles fitted with cooling units, tail-lifts, and other solutions in addition to Static Equipment Solutions for Kuwait's Oil and Gas sectors that reflected the Company's long history of over four decades of delivering excellence in the steel products manufacturing and transport refrigeration segments.

The AMI Expo '24 included the launch of two types of Transport Solutions for frozen application on insulated Polyurethane Box (PUB):

- 1) Eutectic System from Hwasung Thermo with Special Insulated Body built by Al Mulla Industries, and
- 2) Diesel Cooling-Unit from



Photos during the Expo

Carrier with special insulated body, also built by Al Mulla Industries.

These Transport Refrigeration solutions are suitable for transportation of Ice-Creams and other frozen products that require temperatures up to minus 30 degree Celsius. These top-of-the-line Transport Solutions are fitted with Air Conditioning from global leaders such as Carrier. The other product that was launched included a live demo of LYNX, demonstrating the smooth management of real-time data received from the vehicle (e.g. Vehicle movement, temperature, etc.) and other critical parameters.

Exhibit highlights included a specially designed double-deck Car Carrier fitted with a hydraulic lift system that make it suitable for

the transport of low-slung luxury cars as well as large SUVs on both lower and upper decks. The expo showcased also a Hardox tipper, the first of its kind manufactured in Kuwait. These specially designed tippers are typically suitable for transporting stone chips, gravel, and hard rock boulders amongst others. The display of a Mini-Mud Plant model, complete with an array of Silos, Mixing Tank, and other key parts, as well as the Pig-Launcher, Above-Ground Fuel Tanks (AGFT) and Underground Fuel Tanks (UGFT) were among the special attractions of the Expo, exhibited uniquely for Oil & Gas sector applications.

Visitors to the AMI Expo '24 had unique experience in witnessing firsthand the exceptional capa-

bilities of Al Mulla Industries to customize, manufacture and deliver a wide array of solutions in various steel and commercial transport manufacturing sectors that would not just meet their expectations, but rather exceed them as part of our unnegotiable commitment to innovation, excellence and professionalism, which form the core principles of Al Mulla Group. Our mission, especially for our customers needing solutions for transport of their commercial cargo in regulated temperatures, is to ensure maximum cooling efficiency during peak summer temperatures and minimal down time, through offering the right cooling solution tailor made to the customer needs, and then continuous preventive maintenance.



Photos during the event

## Beat the heat in style with LuLu Hypermarket's Summer Fashion Specials

LuLu Hypermarket, your one-stop shop for the best deals, officially launched its much-awaited Summer Fashion Specials 2024 on 16 May at their Al Rai outlet. The ceremony, which was inaugurated by fashionistas and vloggers along with the LuLu Management, kicked off a promotional bonanza running from 15 to 4th June across all LuLu Hypermarket locations in Kuwait.

The 21-day LuLu Summer Fashion Specials 2024 allowed fashion aficionados and budget-conscious shoppers alike to rejoice, as the fashion festival offered a plethora of exciting deals on the latest summer collections for men, women, and children. Shoppers could browse through a vast selection of trendy clothing, footwear, and ladies' bags, including from renowned

brands such as Eten, Cortigiani, Tom Smith, DeBackers, Marco Donatelli, John Louis, and Reo — all at incredible discounts ranging from 20 percent to a whopping 70 percent.

The launch ceremony at the Al Rai outlet was a dazzling affair, featuring popular fashion bloggers and influencers who not only graced the event but also tried on the latest summer collections. Adding to the spirit of style, a kids' fashion show was held in conjunction with the launch, with over 50 enthusiastic children showcasing the latest summer trends in children's wear. All participants in the fashion show received attractive prizes, making it a memorable experience for everyone involved.



# 'Blue Angels' puts viewers in the 'box' with elite flying squad

LOS ANGELES, May 18, (AP) — If you're looking for a little bit of that "Top Gun: Maverick" spectacle and thrill at the movie theater this summer, you're in luck. A groundbreaking new documentary, "The Blue Angels," is flying onto IMAX screens for one week, through May 22.

Using IMAX-certified cameras mounted on a helicopter, the filmmakers were granted unprecedented access to the US Navy's Flight Demonstration Squadron, both on the ground and in "the box," the tightly guarded performance airspace. Unlike in a Hollywood movie, there were no staged recreations, second takes or computer-generated shots. And they had about "5% of the budget" "Top Gun" had, those involved estimated.

The film was the brainchild of Rob Stone and Greg "Boss" Woolridge, a former Blue Angel and subject of a 1994 film about one of their historic tours in Europe. COVID-19 derailed plans to follow their 75th anniversary season, but a silver lining would emerge in the delay. By that point, aerial coordinator Kevin LaRosa II had worked several times with actor Glen Powell, on "Top Gun" and "Devotion." Powell, he'd learned, had grown up with a Blue Angels lithograph in his childhood bedroom.

"(Powell) said, 'I'll hook you up with the Creative Artist Agency in Hollywood and we'll get this done,'" Woolridge said in a recent interview.

Soon, they were also talking to J.J. Abrams' company Bad Robot and figuring out ways to collaborate with IMAX and show audiences things that no civilian has seen before, under the direction of filmmaker

Paul Crowder.

Abrams, who also produced, had grown up living across the street from a former Blue Angel pilot and wrote in an email that he'd "always been intrigued by their skill, bravery and heroism." This film would take that fascination to the next level.

"The footage was filmed especially for IMAX," Abrams continued. "Watching these pilots do their thing in this format - the jets literally inches apart - is utterly bonkers. Truly spectacular to see."

One of the craziest ideas was to put a helicopter with a camera mounted on it in the middle of a demonstration, in airspace where no civilian aircraft has ever been allowed. It would be during a practice demonstration, but Woolridge is quick to remind that there is no real difference between a practice and the real show when it comes to execution, the level of excellence expected and the danger involved.

### Surprise

"When Kevin said, 'let's do this' my eyes got as big as saucers," Woolridge said. "I led the (Blue Angels) on three occasions and I said, 'I'm not sure I would allow this to happen.'"

LaRosa had exhaustively studied how it might happen safely and ensured everyone was properly debriefed. Still, on the day, everyone was prepared to hear "no maneuver" over and over as everyone got used to the distraction of a helicopter in their airspace. Much to their surprise, the "boss" never called "no maneuver." It all went according to plan.

"We researched every possible way to film that information, and everybody's done it different ways from the ground. But to get into the

air with a wing-mounted camera and all the cameras in the cockpit?" Woolridge said. "It was unbelievable."

LaRosa had done such a good job flying the helicopter that they were able to inch even closer to the jets by the end of the shoot. Crowder also used a Phantom camera, which can shoot 1,000 frames per second (the standard is 24 fps), to get spectacular shots of the vapors coming off the jets.

Beyond the spectacle, the film looks at the people in the jets as well, including the first woman to fly with the squadron as a pilot, Lt. Amanda Lee, of Mounds View, Minnesota.

"You can read all you want, but until you've spent time in Pensacola at the air base and really spend time with these guys, watching them do what they do and dedicated everything that they are to it, you don't really get it," Crowder said. "What we were hoping to do in the film was to portray a lot of that."

After its one-week IMAX run, "The Blue Angels" will be available to stream on Prime Video starting May 23. Crowder recommends ignoring "mom's advice" and sitting as close to the screen as possible for the best viewing experience.

Woolridge, who led the Blue Angels three times, said the experience of watching this film is better than being up there.

"I've seen it from the cockpit, my cockpit, a bunch. I've seen it from the ground as we debrief," he said. But I've never seen it the way you see it in this movie. The perspective was so much better than I ever saw as a pilot. I'm wowed and awed by it."

Film

## Variety



Uma Thurman poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'Oh, Canada' at the 77th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Friday, May 17. (AP)

## Film

Schrader's near-death inspires new film

# 'Oh, Canada' reunites Gere, Thurman

CANNES, France, May 18, (AP) — After a string of hospitalizations for long COVID, Paul Schrader had a realization.

"If I'm going to make a film about death," Schrader told himself, "I'd better hurry up."

The health of the 77-year-old filmmaker, whose films and scripts have covered half a century of American movies, from "Taxi Driver" to "First Reformed," has since improved. But that sense of urgency only increased when Russell Banks, a friend of Schrader's since he adapted Banks' "Affliction" into the 1997 film, began ailing. Banks died in 2023.

Schrader resolved to turn Banks' 2021 novel "Foregone" into a film. At the time, he imagined it would be his last. But Schrader, who's been as prolific as ever in the past decade, has said that before.

In 2017, he surmised that "First Reformed" was his final cinematic statement. Then he made 2021's "The Card Counter." And, after that came 2022's "Master Gardener."

"The irony is every time you think, 'Well, that's about it,' you have a new idea," Schrader told The Associated Press in an interview at the Cannes Film Festival. "And you have to write the new idea and make the new film. 'OK, God, put that thing on hold. I'll be back to you when I've finished my film.'"

Schrader, chuckling, adds: "I'm going to start a new company called Post-Mortem Cinema."

On Friday, Schrader premiered his Banks' adaptation, now titled "Oh, Canada," at Cannes. It's his first time back in competition in 36 years. And, particularly given that he's joined this year by Francis Ford Coppola and George Lucas - all of them central figures of the fabled New Hollywood - Schrader's Cannes return comes with echoes of the heyday of '70s American moviemaking. "Taxi Driver," which Schrader wrote, won the Palme d'Or here in 1976.

Schrader, though, allows for only so much nostalgia.

"It's gotten aggrandized in the collective memory. There were a lot of bad films. There were a lot of bad players," Schrader says of the '70s. "However, it was

the birth of the self-starting movement in cinema. So people like George and Francis and I, all film-school graduates like Marty, we all started our careers in this environment. That was a kind of a golden moment, but that doesn't mean all the films were golden."

"Oh, Canada," which is seeking a distributor, is a kind of bookend to one of the films from that era: the 1980 neo-noir "American Gigolo." Schrader reteams with Richard Gere decades after "American Gigolo" made Gere a star. Until now, Schrader says, the two hadn't much discussed reuniting.

"Richard had been developing some mannerisms that I wasn't entirely comfortable with as a director, and roles I wasn't comfortable with," Schrader says. "I was thinking more in terms of Ethan (Hawke) and Oscar (Isaac)."

### Sequel

But the idea of "Oh, Canada" as a kind of spiritual sequel to "American Gigolo" appealed to him. In the film, Gere stars as a revered Canadian filmmaker named Leonard Fife who, nearly on his deathbed, grouchily sits for an interview with documentary filmmakers. His wife (Uma Thurman) watches on as Leonard tells his life story, seen in flashbacks with Jacob Elordi playing the younger Fife, in the 1960s. We have the impression that Fife, who fled to Canada during the Vietnam War, is speaking more honestly than ever before.

"I thought the dying Gigolo - that put some spin on it. People are going to be interested in that, even though it's not the same character at all," Schrader says. "I could see that he had come out of retirement. He needs this, therefore he'll do it for nothing."

Schrader approached Gere with a few stipulations. "I said, 'I'll send it to you on three conditions: One, that you read it right away. Two, that I get an answer in two weeks. And, three, that you understand my financial parameters,'" Schrader says. "He agreed. I said the same thing to (Robert) De Niro. Bob said, 'Well, I agree to the first two but not the third one.'"

"So I didn't send the script to Bob," Schrader says, laughing.

Since the 2013 film "The Canyons," which he directed from a Bret Easton Ellis script, Schrader has found a way to make the economics of independent filmmaking work for him.

"People thought that was all a kind of desperate career failure, but it was a glimpse into a new world. It was a trial run of how you do a film yourself," says Schrader. "After that, I knew that you could make a film and get final cut. You could say to an investor: 'I'm not going to make you rich - get that dog out of your head. But I think I'm going to make you whole. And I'm going to give you a credit and I'm going to put you on a red carpet somewhere. You could put your money into toasters or tires, or you could put it into this film.'"

The significant caveat to that, Schrader says, is that he came up in the old system of Hollywood. He's not sure the same strategy could work for someone less established in today's digital landscape.

"I got my head above the crowd when there was only 400 people in the room," he says. "Now there's 40,000 people in the room."

But few filmmakers remain as engaged with current cinema as Schrader. He goes at least once a week to the movies and often posts brief reviews on his Facebook page. Jane Schoenbrun of "I Saw the TV Glow," he recently wrote, is "hands down the most original voice in film in the last decade." He liked the tennis drama "Challengers" ("Zendaya is a star") but wrote: "The studios would have never let this slight story run so long - on the other hand, the studios aren't making this movie anymore."

"You usually go to the movies because it's something you want to see in a crowd," Schrader says. "Like, I went to see 'Cocaine Bear' because I knew it would be great to see with an audience."

"It's not a particularly good time for film," Schrader concludes as the interview winds down. "It's not a bad time. It's very easy to get a film made. It's very hard to make a living."

LOS ANGELES: Security video aired by CNN appears to show Sean "Diddy" Combs physically assaulting singer Cassie in a Los Angeles hotel hallway in 2016.

The video, dated March 5, 2016, shows Combs, wearing only a white towel, punching and kicking the R&B singer who was his protege and longtime girlfriend at the time. The footage also shows the music mogul shoving and dragging Cassie, and throwing a vase in her direction.

The video, dated March 5, 2016, closely resembles the description of an incident at the now-closed InterContinental Hotel in Los Angeles described in a November lawsuit filed by Cassie, whose legal name is **Cassandra Ventura**, that alleged years of sexual abuse and other violence from Combs.

The lawsuit was settled the day after it was filed, but spurred intense scrutiny of Combs, with several more lawsuits filed in the following months, along with a federal criminal sex-trafficking investigation that led authorities to raid Combs' mansions in Los Angeles and Miami.

Representatives for Combs did not immediately provide comment on the video, but he has previously denied the allegations in the lawsuits, and his lawyers have said he denies any wrongdoing. (AP)

SANTA FE, N.M.: A New Mexico judge plans to rule next week on a grand jury indictment against **Alec Baldwin** in the fatal shooting on the set of "Rust," after hearing arguments Friday that the proceedings were unfair to the defendant.

The indictment in January charged Baldwin with involuntary manslaughter in the fatal shooting of cinematographer **Halyna Hutchins** on Oct. 21, 2021, at a movie ranch on the outskirts of Santa Fe.

Baldwin, a lead actor and co-producer on the Western, was pointing a gun at cinematographer Halyna Hutchins when the revolver went off, killing Hutchins and injuring Joel Souza, the director. Baldwin has maintained that he pulled back the gun's hammer, but not the trigger. Baldwin's motion to dismiss

and witnesses.

During rehearsal, Baldwin was pointing a gun at cinematographer Halyna Hutchins when the revolver went off, killing Hutchins and injuring Joel Souza, the director. Baldwin has maintained that he pulled back the gun's hammer, but not the trigger.

Baldwin's motion to dismiss



Buscemi



Combs

the indictment argued that the grand jury received inaccurate and limited testimony about the revolver and safety protocols on movie sets. (AP)

NEW YORK: A man wanted in connection with the random attack on actor **Steve Buscemi** on a New

York City street earlier this month was arrested on an assault charge Friday, police said.

The 66-year-old star of "Boardwalk Empire" and "Fargo" was walking in midtown Manhattan on May 8 when a stranger punched him in the face, city police said. He was taken to a hospital with bruising, swelling and bleeding to

his left eye, but was otherwise OK, his publicist said at the time.

Police charged a 50-year-old homeless man with second-degree assault on Friday afternoon in the same precinct where Buscemi was attacked. Authorities announced on Tuesday that they had identified the man as the suspect and were looking for him. (AP)



## People &amp; Places

## Obit

## Versatile artist

## Iconic actor Dabney Coleman dies at 92

NEW YORK, May 18, (AP): **Dabney Coleman**, the mustachioed character actor who specialized in smarmy villains like the chauvinist boss in "9 to 5" and the nasty TV director in "Tootsie," has died. He was 92.

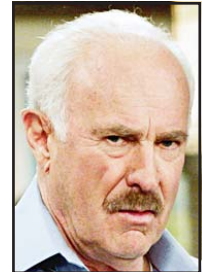
Coleman died Thursday at his home in Santa Monica, his daughter, Quincy Coleman, said in a statement to The Associated Press. She said he "took his last earthly breath peacefully and exquisitely."

"The great Dabney Coleman literally created, or defined, really - in a uniquely singular way - an archetype as a character actor. He was so good at what he did it's hard to imagine movies and television of the last 40 years without him," Ben Stiller wrote on X.

For two decades Coleman labored in movies and TV shows as a talented but largely unnoticed performer. That changed abruptly in 1976 when he was cast as the incorrigibly corrupt mayor of the hamlet of Fernwood in "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman," a satirical soap opera that was so over the top no network would touch it.

Producer Norman Lear finally managed to syndicate the show, which starred Louise Lasser in the title role. It quickly became a cult favorite. Coleman's character, Mayor Merle Jeeter, was especially popular and his masterful, comic deadpan delivery did not go overlooked by film and network executives.

A six-footer with an ample black mustache, Coleman went on to make his mark in numerous popular films, including as a stressed out computer scientist in "War Games," Tom Hanks' father in "You've Got Mail" and a fire fighting official in "The Towering Inferno."



Coleman

## Awards

He won a Golden Globe for "The Slap Maxwell Story" and an Emmy Award for best supporting actor in Peter Levin's 1987 small screen legal drama "Sworn to Silence." Some of his recent credits include "Ray Donovan" and a recurring role on "Boardwalk Empire," for which he won two Screen Actors Guild Awards.

In the groundbreaking 1980 hit "9 to 5," he was the "sexist, egotistical, lying, hypocritical bigot" boss who tormented his unappreciated female underlings - Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin and Dolly Parton - until they turned the tables on him.

In 1981, he was Fonda's caring, well-mannered boyfriend, who asks her father (played by her real-life father, Henry Fonda) if he can sleep with her during a visit to her parents' vacation home in "On Golden Pond."

Opposite Dustin Hoffman in "Tootsie," he was the obnoxious director of a daytime soap opera that Hoffman's character joins by pretending to be a woman. Among Coleman's other films were "North Dallas Forty," "Cloak and Dagger," "Dragnet," "Meet the Applegates," "Inspector Gadget" and "Stuart Little." He reunited with Hoffman as a land developer in Brad Silberling's "Moonlight Mile" with Jake Gyllenhaal.

Coleman's obnoxious characters didn't translate quite as well on television, where he starred in a handful of network comedies. Although some became cult favorites, only one lasted longer than two seasons, and some critics questioned whether a series starring a lead character with absolutely no redeeming qualities could attract a mass audience.

"Buffalo Bill" (1983-84) was a good example. It starred Coleman as "Buffalo Bill" Bittinger, the smarmy, arrogant, dimwitted daytime talk show host who, unhappy at being relegated to the small-time market of Buffalo, New York, takes it out on everyone around him. Although smartly written and featuring a fine ensemble cast, it lasted only two seasons.

Another was 1987's "The Slap Maxwell Story," in which Coleman was a failed small-town sportswriter trying to save a faltering marriage while wooing a beautiful young reporter on the side.

Other failed attempts to find a mass TV audience included "Apple Pie," "Drexell's Class" (in which he played an inside trader) and "Madman of the People," another newspaper show in which he clashed this time with his younger boss, who was also his daughter.

He fared better in a co-starring role in "The Guardian" (2001-2004), which had him playing the father of a crooked lawyer. And he enjoyed the voice role as Principal Prickly on the Disney animated series "Recess" from 1997-2003.

## Reserved

Underneath all that bravura was a reserved man. Coleman insisted he was really quite shy. "I've been shy all my life. Maybe it stems from being the last of four children, all of them very handsome, including a brother who was Tyrone Power-handsome. Maybe it's because my father died when I was 4," he told The Associated Press in 1984. "I was extremely small, just a little guy who was there, the kid who created no trouble. I was attracted to fantasy, and I created games for myself."

As he aged, he also began to put his mark on pompous authority figures, notably in 1998's "My Date With the President's Daughter," in which he was not only an egotistical, self-absorbed president of the United States, but also a clueless father to a teenager girl.

Dabney Coleman - his real name - was born in 1932 in Austin, Texas after two years at the Virginia Military Academy, two at the University of Texas and two in the Army, he was a 26-year-old law student when he met another Austin native, Zachry Scott, who starred in "Mildred Pierce" and other films.

"He was the most dynamic person I've ever met. He convinced me I should become an actor, and I literally left the next day to study in New York. He didn't think that was too wise, but I made my decision," Coleman told The AP in 1984.

Early credits included such TV shows as "Ben Casey," "Dr. Kildare," "The Outer Limits," "Bonanza," "The Mod Squad" and the film "The Towering Inferno." He appeared on Broadway in 1961 in "A Call on Kuprin." He played Kevin Costner's father on "Yellowstone."

Twice divorced, Coleman is survived by four children, Meghan, Kelly, Randy and Quincy, and the grandchildren Hale and Gabe Torrance, Luie Freundl and Kai and Coleman Biancianiello.

"My father crafted his time here on earth with a curious mind, a generous heart, and a soul on fire with passion, desire and humor that tickled the funny bone of humanity," Quincy Coleman wrote in his honor.



Lainey Wilson performs a medley during the 59th annual Academy of Country Music Awards on Thursday, May 16, at the Ford Center in Frisco, Texas. (AP)



Aishwarya Rai Bachchan poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'Kinds of Kindness' at the 77th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Friday, May 17. (AP)

## Variety

**LONDON:** Paul McCartney is a billionaire Beatle. According to figures released Friday, the former member of the Fab Four is the first British musician to be worth 1 billion pounds (\$1.27 billion). The annual Sunday Times Rich List calculated that the wealth of the 81-year-old musician and his wife, **Nancy Shevell**, had grown by 50 million pounds since last year thanks to McCartney's 2023 Got Back tour, the rising value of his back catalogue and **Beyoncé's** cover of The Beatles' "Blackbird" on her "Cowboy Carter" album.

The newspaper estimated 50 million pounds of the couple's wealth is due to Shevell, daughter of the late US trucking tycoon **Mike Shevell**.

McCartney ranked 165th overall on the newspaper's respected and widely perused list of the UK's 350 richest people. Top spot went to **Gopi Hinduja** and his family, who own the banking, media and entertainment conglomerate Hinduja Group and are worth an estimated 37 billion pounds.

Other entertainment figures on the list include "Harry Potter" author **J.K. Rowling**, whose fortune is estimated at 945 million pounds, and singer **Elton John**, estimated to be worth 470 million pounds.

King Charles III ranked 258th with an estimated wealth of 610 million pounds. The king's fortune includes the large inherited private estates of **Sandringham in England** and **Balmoral in Scotland**. The total does not include items that are held in trust by the monarch for the nation, such as the Crown Jewels. (AP)

**PARIS:** In the largest and first of its kind exhibition in France since 1995, about 400 art pieces are displayed in 11 halls featuring the famous Romanian sculptor **Constantin Brancusi**, whose art made him one of the founders of modern sculpture.

In appreciation of Brancusi's artistic achievements, who revolutionized the art form in both shape and substance and earned him wide fame, the National Georges Pompidou Centre of Art and Culture in Paris would be hosting the exhibition until July 1, which explores the stages that the Romanian sculptor went through to achieve his fame from 1876 to 1957.

Brancusi's works, which include sculptors, paintings, photographs, personal belongings, archival documents and letters that embody his ability to innovate and create, breaking away from the traditional ways.

Brancusi, who willingly handed his works to France and decided to reside in Paris from 1904 until his death, became famous for the beauty of his art and works following a radical approach and refining with raw metal pieces, stones and wood. (KUNA)

**SOFIA:** At the China Film Festival in

## Music

## Aldean pays tribute to Keith

## Wilson wins big at ACMs

LOS ANGELES, May 18, (AP): It was Lainey Wilson's night, in many ways. She took home female artist of the year and the top prize of entertainer of the year at the 2024 Academy of Country Music Awards.

"I've been in Nashville for 13 years doing this," Wilson started her speech. "Everybody in this category has loved on me and believed on me," she added. "And I love y'all for that."

She joins an exclusive category of few women to earn the top prize: Miranda Lambert was named entertainer of the year in 2022. In 2020, Carrie Underwood and Thomas Rhett tied for the title, the first time ever for a tie and the first time a woman had won the category since Taylor Swift in 2012.

Wilson also opened the 59th annual ACMs with a cover of Little Texas' "God Blessed Texas," flawlessly jumping into her new single, "Hang Tight Honey." Afterward, Clay Walker and Randy Travis presented Jordan Davis with song of the year for his ubiquitous country radio hit "Next Thing You Know."

## Speech

"First off, I want to thank the fans for loving this song," he said in his acceptance speech. "I love songwriting because of songs that won song of the year, so to be holding this right now is crazy."

Music event of the year also went to Wilson - and Jelly Roll, for his smash "Save Me."

"No pun intended, but seriously, this song saved me," Jelly Roll said in his speech. "I thought I would die and go to jail," he said while getting emotional - and instead, he celebrated being an ACM award winner.

The ACMs, held at the Ford Center at The Star in Frisco, Texas, just north of Dallas, was hosted by Reba McEntire.

In one of the most anticipated performances of the show, Jason Aldean lit up the stage in a moving tribute to the late Toby Keith.

He gave the crowd a poignant, acoustic performance of Keith's classic "Should've Been a Cowboy" as the audience sang along, and Keith's family watched from the crowd.

Across his career, Keith took home 14 ACM Awards, twice winning the top prize of entertainer of the year. He died in February at age 62, following a diagnosis of stomach cancer.

Album and male artist of the year

**Bulgaria**, six Chinese films are expected to captivate audiences with their rich themes and diverse genres, exploring topics ranging



McCartney



Rowling

## Books

## PEN gala

## 'Ancestral saga' in Messud novel

NEW YORK, May 18, (AP): Secrets and shame - every family has its share. When it came time to write her most autobiographical novel, **Claire Messud** relied on a 1,500-page family history compiled by her paternal grandfather. The result, "This Strange Eventful History," sprawls over a third as many pages - 423, to be exact - to tell the story of three generations of a French Algerian family displaced from their colonial homeland, who never quite found another place where they felt so completely at home.

The story is told from the point of view of the fiercely French, devoutly Catholic, patriarch Gaston; his rootless, cosmopolitan son, Francois; and his fearful, deluded, psychologically damaged daughter, Denise. Rounding out the chorus are Barbara, the beautiful, Protestant, Canadian-born wife of Francois, torn between roles as wife, mother and daughter as she struggles to earn a law degree at the peak of 1970s-era "women's lib" while raising their two daughters and whipping up Julia Child recipes for dinner parties; and finally, Gaston's granddaughter Chloe, a stand-in for the author, inheritor of this "strange, eventful history" and ultimately, spiller of family secrets and perhaps, exorciser of shame.



Messud

## Homeland

Behind the "endless ritual" of their busy lives - from birth to death, grade school to retirement - Messud is keenly aware that a vaster story is unfolding, one that spans epochs and continents, perceived only in glimmers by various members of the clan. For instance, when Francois calls Barbara to tell her about a terrible accident at the site of a mining operation in Australia, where they have been posted for his job, she thinks, "What had been there? Not nothing. It was an Aboriginal tribal homeland: before it had been transformed into a dystopian hellscape, it had been untouched for thousands of years, the people there living as lightly and resourcefully upon the land as the animals and birds."

For fans of Messud, whose earlier novels include the bestselling 2006 novel "The Emperor's Children" as well as "The Woman Upstairs," this latest work will be ambrosial, brimming with long passages that attempt to capture the evanescent sensations of life - touch, taste, sounds, smells, the ever-shifting register of light. Others may get lost in dense, descriptive passages that roll on and on, owing a debt to the English modernist writer Virginia Woolf, one of Messud's literary heroes. Yet all in all, the book is a masterful achievement, a somber, joyous meditation on the consolations and disappointments of empire, nation, faith and family.

## Fundraiser

With guests including **Paul Simon** and **Seth Meyers**, PEN America gathered Thursday night for its annual gala, a dressed-up, high-profile event raised even higher because some wondered if it would be held at all.

The literary and human rights organization has faced ongoing criticism over its response to the Israel-Hamas war, with hundreds of writers alleging that PEN showed limited concern over the suffering of Gaza residents and the deaths of Palestinian writers and journalists. PEN has already canceled its spring awards ceremony after dozens of nominees withdrew and its World Voices festival after hundreds signed an open letter saying they wouldn't participate.

But the gala is the organization's major annual fundraiser, with more than \$2 million already coming in from Thursday's event, and key supporters from previous years are again contributing. All five major New York publishers - Penguin Random House, Simon & Schuster, HarperCollins, Hachette Book Group and Macmillan - are listed as sponsors, along with organizations ranging from Bloomberg and Barnes & Noble to the National Basketball Association and the David Geffen Foundation.

"The test of our partnerships is whether we can find a common cause, not whether we hold every cause in common," PEN America CEO **Suzanne Nossel** said in a statement.

Honorees Thursday night included **Simon**, Wall Street Journal publisher **Almar Latour** and the Vietnamese dissident **Pham Doan Trang**. **Meyers** will serve as emcee.

Authors scheduled to attend included **Robert Caro**, **Candace Bushnell**, **Jay McInerney** and **Andrew Solomon**, a former PEN president who joined **Salman Rushdie**, **Jennifer Egan** and other onetime PEN officials in publishing a letter in April urging "writers to keep faith in the community that we have built together so that PEN America can continue to evolve in ways that serve and elevate the writers as a vital force within society."

from love and family to culture, tradition, and history.

The Festival, dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Bulgaria, kicked off here on Friday evening in the Cinema House. The event, which will run from May 17-19 and May 24-26, provided an enriching opportunity for Bulgarian viewers to delve into Chinese society and culture, said **Mao Yu**, executive deputy director general of China Film Administration.

These films delicately portrayed Chinese family values and emotions, showcased vibrant Chinese folk art, and offered fresh interpretations of traditional Chinese culture, Mao said. (Xinhua)



## The Conversation

## Researchers identify iron's role in inflammation control

## Iron fuels immune cells – and it could make asthma worse

By Benjamin Hurrell and Omid Akbari  
University of Southern California

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

You've likely heard that you can get iron from eating spinach and steak. You might also know that it's an essential trace element that is a major component of hemoglobin, a protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen from your lungs to all parts of the body.

A lesser known important function of iron is its involvement in generating energy for certain immune cells.

In our lab's newly published research, we found that blocking or limiting iron uptake in immune cells could potentially ease up the symptoms of an asthma attack caused by allergens.

During an asthma attack, harmless allergens activate immune cells in your lungs called ILC2s. This causes them to multiply and release large amounts of cytokines - messengers that immune cells use to communicate - and leads to unwanted inflammation. The result is symptoms such as coughing and wheezing that make it feel like someone is squeezing your airways.

To assess the role iron plays in how ILC2s function in the lungs, we conducted a series of experiments with ILC2s in the lab. We then confirmed our findings in mice with allergic asthma and in patients with different severities of asthma.

First, we found that ILC2s use a protein called transferrin receptor 1, or TFR1, to take up iron. When we blocked this protein as the ILC2s were undergoing activation, the cells were unable to use iron and could no longer multiply and cause inflammation as well as they did before.

We then used a chemical called an iron chelator to prevent ILC2s from using any iron at all. Iron chelators are like superpowered magnets for iron and are used in medical treatments to help manage conditions where there's too much iron in the body.

When we deprived ILC2s with an iron chelator, the cells had to change their metabolism and switch to a different way of getting energy, like trading in a sports car for a bicycle. The cells weren't as effective at causing inflammation in the lungs anymore.

Next, we limited cellular iron in mice with sensitive airways due to ILC2s. We did this in three different ways: by inhibiting TFR1, adding an iron chelator or inducing low overall iron levels using a synthetic protein called mini-hepcidin. Each of these methods helped reduce the mice's airway hyperreactivity - basically reducing the severity of their asthma symptoms.

Lastly, we looked at cells from patients with asthma. We noticed something interesting: the more TFR1 protein on their ILC2 cells, the worse their asthma symptoms. In other words, iron was playing a big role in how bad their asthma got. Blocking TFR1 and administering iron chelators both reduced ILC2 proliferation and cytokine production, suggesting that our findings in mice apply to human cells. This means we can move these findings from the lab to clinical trials as quickly as possible.

Iron is like the conductor of an orchestra, instructing immune cells such as ILC2s how to behave during an asthma attack. Without enough iron, these cells can't cause as much trouble, which could mean fewer asthma symptoms.

Next, we're working on targeting a patient's immune cells during an asthma attack. If we can lower the amount of iron available to ILC2s without depleting overall iron levels in the body, this could mean a new therapy for asthma that tackles the root cause of the disease, not just the symptoms. Available treatments can control symptoms to keep patients alive, but they are not curing the disease. Iron-related therapies may offer a better solution for patients with asthma.

Our discovery applies to more than just asthma. It could be a game-changer for other diseases where ILC2s are involved, such as eczema and type 2 diabetes. Who knew iron could be such a big deal to your immune system? (AP)

AI lab aims to aid disabled people

# AI tool capable of classifying brain tumours within hours: researchers

CANBERRA, May 18, (Xinhua): A team of researchers from the Australian National University (ANU) has developed an artificial intelligence (AI) tool to more quickly and accurately classify brain tumors.

In a study published on Friday, the team demonstrated that their deep learning model - Deploy - can accurately classify brain tumors into 10 major subtypes.

The AI tool analyzes microscopic pictures of a patient's brain tissue to make its classification.

Danh-Tai Hoang, the co-lead of the project from the Biological Data Science Institute at ANU, said that the current gold standard for diagnosing and categorizing brain tumors - a process called DNA methylation-based profiling - can take several weeks and is not widely available.

By comparison, the AI tool can deliver results within hours.

"Remarkably, Deploy achieved an unprecedented accuracy of 95 percent," Hoang said in a media release.

"Furthermore, when given a subset of 309 particularly difficult to classify samples, Deploy was able to provide a diagnosis that was more clinically relevant than what was initially provided by pathologists."

Deploy was trained and validated on a dataset of approximately 4,000 patients from the United States and Europe.

Hoang said it could be used in the future to add to a pathologist's initial diagnosis or even prompt a re-evaluation when it finds disparities.

The researchers believe it could eventually be used to help classify other types of cancer.

**Disability:** China Disabled Persons' Federation and iFlytek, one of China's leading AI companies, signed a cooperation agreement in Hefei, capital of east China's Anhui Province, on Thursday to build a joint laboratory of general artificial intelligence to assist the disabled.

According to the agreement, the lab will actively develop human-computer interaction components and intelligent rehabilitation assistive devices for the disabled, carry out multi-category research on intelligent assistance for the disabled, and build application scenarios for the needs of the disabled.

"Science and technology are an important support for creating a better life for the disabled and promoting the quality development of the cause of the disabled," said Zhou Changkui, chairperson of the Board of Executive Directors of the China Disabled Persons' Federation.

This Sunday marks the 34th National Day of Disabled Persons.

**Skin cancer:** Deaths from melanoma, the most serious skin cancer, have reduced by one third over the past decade in New Zealand despite no overall decrease in new cases, according to a study released on Friday.

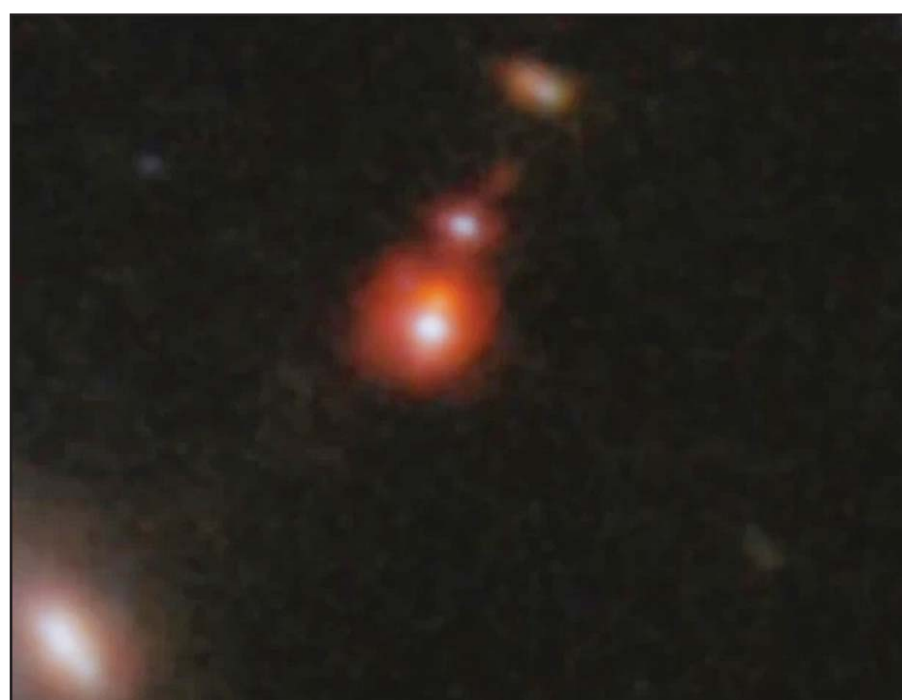
This is most likely due to increased awareness which leads to earlier diagnosis, as well as more effective diagnostic services and treatments, said an editorial published in the New Zealand Medical Journal.

Melanoma usually occurs on the parts of the body that have been overexposed to the sun.

Deaths from melanoma at all ages have fallen considerably, said authors from the University of Auckland, University of Waikato and the Clinical Trials New Zealand.

There were 333 deaths in 2021, and if the 2012 rates had continued, there would have been 164 more, the editorial said.

The favorable mortality trends could be due



This image released by NASA shows the ZS7 galaxy system, revealing the ionized hydrogen emission in orange and the doubly ionized oxygen emission in dark red. (AP)

## Ancient black holes merger detected

The Webb Space Telescope has discovered the earliest known merger of black holes.

These two gigantic black holes and their galaxies consolidated just 740 million years after the universe-forming Big Bang. It's the most distant detection ever made of merging black holes, scientists reported Thursday.

One black hole is 50 million times more massive than our sun. The other is thought to be similar in size, but is buried in dense gas, which makes it harder to measure.

Until now, astronomers weren't sure how supermassive black holes got so big.

The latest findings, published in the

Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, suggest mergers are how black holes can grow so rapidly - "even at cosmic dawn," said lead author Hannah Ubler of the University of Cambridge.

"Massive black holes have been shaping the evolution of galaxies from the very beginning," Ubler said in a statement.

Launched in 2021 as the eventual successor to NASA's Hubble Space Telescope, Webb is the biggest and most powerful observatory ever sent into space. A joint U.S.-European project, the infrared observatory surveys the universe from a location 1 million miles (1.6 million kilometers) from Earth. (AP)

and suggesting schools to consider ventilation enhancements and design when undergoing remodeling or when undertaking new building construction to optimize clean air.

"CDC has updated actions schools can take to prevent germs from spreading and keep kids healthy and learning," said CDC Director Mandy Cohen. "This update puts lessons learned into actionable steps schools can follow to keep our kids, teachers, and school staff safe."

**Plant cancer:** Chinese researchers have developed a novel bio-fungicide to combat root rot disease in cultivating *Astragalus membranaceus*, commonly known as Huangqi or Astragalus root, according to an article published in *Chemical Engineering Journal*.

The bio-fungicide can suppress the root rot disease and promote the growth metabolism of *Astragalus membranaceus*, said Gao Wenyan, a professor at the School of Pharmaceutical Science and Technology, Tianjin University, who led the research team.

Root rot disease is a kind of plant cancer and a common disease in Chinese medicinal herb planting areas, caused by a complex of pathogenic fungi.

## Respiratory issues

### Disease challenges 'soar' with warming

NANNING, May 18, (Xinhua): The past few years have witnessed increasing health risks triggered by climate and environmental change, experts said on Saturday during an international symposium in Nanning, capital of south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

Around 300 experts and government officials from home and abroad joined the first Symposium on Environment and General Health & Livable Health and Longevity, sharing views and opinions under the theme of "Jointly Improve Environment and Health for Green and Low-carbon Development".

Participants were of the view that the relationship between climate change, ecological environment, and disease prevention and control has become increasingly close, with increasing risks of cardiovascular diseases due to more frequent heatwaves, rising incidence of hypertension and heart diseases due to dust storms, and notably higher rates of respiratory system diseases due to air pollution.

"There is growing recognition of the connection between the health of people and health of our planet," said Makiko Yashiro, programme officer for Ecosystem Management Sub-programme at UN Environment's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, via a video. "Declines in nature have contributed significantly to the crossover of diseases from wildlife to people, or from wildlife to domesticated livestock. There is urgent need to scale up efforts to stop destroying nature, in order to prevent future pandemics like COVID-19."

Cai Wenjia, a professor from the Department of Earth System Science at Tsinghua University, said that climate change is directly or indirectly affecting public health through various pathways, and the threat continues to grow. "All sectors and industries need to work together on climate and health issues," she said.

### Also:

**HONOLULU:** A University of Hawaii study examining the health effects of last year's deadly wildfires on Maui found that up to 74% of participants may have difficulty breathing and otherwise have poor respiratory health, and almost half showed signs of compromised lung function.

The data, gathered from 679 people in January and February, comes from what researchers hope will be a long-term study of wildfire survivors lasting at least a decade. Researchers released early results from that research on Wednesday. They eventually hope to enroll 2,000 people in their study to generate what they call a snapshot of the estimated 10,000 people affected by the fires.

**Dr. Alike Maunakea**, one of the researchers and a professor at the university's John A. Burns School of Medicine, said those who reported higher exposure to the wildfire tended to have more symptoms.

Many study participants hadn't seen a doctor, he said. Some study participants said they weren't able to because clinics had burned down or because they prioritized getting housing, jobs and food after the disaster. Maunakea urged people exposed to the wildfires to get checked.

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## Pound launches fierce attack on USADA

## WADA gains support from Foundation Board on Chinese swimming case



Celtic goalkeeper Joe Hart and teammates celebrate with the trophy after the Scottish Premiership soccer match between Celtic Glasgow and St Mirren FC, at Celtic Park, in Glasgow, Scotland. (AP)

## Sun erupt in the 4th quarter to 'pull away' from Mystics 84-77

Lynx beat the Storm in double OT

UNCASVILLE, May 18, (AP): DeWanna Bonner had 22 points and six of Connecticut's 14 steals, Dijonai Carrington added 21 points and the Sun used a big fourth quarter to beat the Washington Mystics 84-77 on Friday night.

Connecticut has won 10 of the last 11 regular-season meetings with Washington.

Connecticut trailed 62-56 with 8:18 left in the fourth quarter before scoring the next 15 points to take a 71-62 lead. The Sun finished with 32 points in quarter after scoring just 36 in the first half.

Julie Vanloo, a 31-year-old rookie, completed a three-point play with 1:50 left to get Washington within 75-72 but Tyasha Har-

## BASKETBALL

ris answered with a basket and free throw at the other end.

Bonner grabbed an offensive rebound and made a shot in the paint with 27.1 seconds left for an 82-75 lead and she added two free throws on Connecticut's next possession to seal it.

Alyssa Thomas, coming off her ninth regular season triple-double of her career, finished with 13 points, 11 rebounds and six assists for Connecticut (2-0). Thomas and Carrington combined to make 14 straight free throws as Connecticut went 24 of 26. Bonner, who moved into fifth all-time in scoring in WNBA history on Tuesday, was 9 of 19 from the field including 0 of 6 from distance.

Karlise Samuelson led Washington (0-2) with 18 points. Vanloo finished with 12 points and eight assists, and Shakira Austin had 10 points and nine rebounds. Brittney Sykes was helped off the court in the first half with an apparent left ankle injury and she did not return.

Samuelson made all five of her shots in the first half, including her fourth 3-pointer with 1:09 remaining before halftime to tie it at 36-all. The four 3-pointers tied her career-high for an entire game. Connecticut was just 2 of 13 from distance in the first half and finished 2 of 20.

Lynx 102, Storm 93 2nd OT

In Minneapolis, Napheesa Collier

## Brumbies top Crusaders with late penalty try

## Drua beat Reds to maintain 8th place

SUVA, Fiji, May 18, (AP): Hooker and captain Tevita Ikanivere scored a try in each half as the Fijian Drua beat the 14-man Queensland Reds 28-19 in hot conditions in Suva on Saturday to hold on to eighth place and a playoff chance in Super Rugby Pacific.

The Reds were reduced to 14 men for 20 minutes in the second half when winger Suliasi Vunivalu received a second yellow card for a foot trip which was upgraded to a red card. Suva-born Vunivalu was handed a yellow card and conceded a penalty for a foot trip in the first half.

The Drua's fifth win in six home matches this season kept them in eighth place after 13 of 15 regular-season rounds.

"We didn't perform last week (in a 48-10 loss to the Western Force) but we still filled the stadium this week and that was for our fans and our families," said Ikanivere who was a powerhouse for the Drua, leading them in carries.

"I challenged everyone this week to show up today. They showed up and I just scored the tries because I was there at the right time."

Vunivalu took his first trip to the sin-bin in the third minute when Kitione Salawa slipped through a narrow gap in the Reds defense, stepped off his right foot and seemed to be heading in under the posts. As the last defender Vunivalu stretched out his leg to bring Salawa down, earning a yellow card and giving up a penalty try and 7-0 lead.

Ikanivere scored his first try in the

had 29 points, nine rebounds, five assists and six steals, Kayla McBride added 19 points and the Minnesota Lynx beat the Seattle Storm 102-93 in double overtime.

Minnesota led 78-67 with 3:22 left in regulation before Seattle scored the next 11 points.

McBride missed two free throws with 24.1 seconds left in regulation and she fouled Jewell Loyd on a 3-point attempt at the other end. Loyd made all three free throws to tie it at 78-all. Courtney Williams missed a baseline jumper for Minnesota and Loyd was off on a jumper at the other end to send it to overtime.



Brumbies Rob Valenti runs at the defense during their Super Rugby game against the Crusaders in Canberra, Australia. (AP)

eighth minute when the Drua recovered a kick behind the Reds defense and he was on hand to dive over.

Winger Floyd Aubrey scored a try on debut for the Reds, catching a cross-kick by flyhalf Leighton Creighton and diving over in the right corner. Then Creighton scored himself, taking advantage of a mismatch with a prop to break the defensive line and score.

The Reds closed within a point at 15-14 after 24 minutes but Keni Valenti kicked a long-distance penalty for the Drua to make the lead 18-14 at halftime.

"The fight and the bounce-back was really good and we fought our way back into it," Reds co-captain Liam Wright said. "Probably the

Collier made the first of two free throws to tie it at 88-all with 2.7 seconds left in the first overtime. But she missed the second free throw and Seattle was unable to get a shot off before the buzzer.

Collier and McBride each made a 3-pointer on back-to-back possessions to start the second overtime to put Minnesota ahead 94-88. Alanna Smith made Minnesota's 13th 3-pointer with 1:25 left to seal it.

The teams combined for 52 turnovers, 38 steals, and 54 free-throw attempts.

Smith finished with 16 points and six blocks and Williams add-

ed 10 points for Minnesota (2-0), which was coming off an 83-70 win at Seattle on Tuesday.

Nneka Ogwumike had 24 points, 11 rebounds and five steals for Seattle (0-2). Skylar Diggins-Smith added 22 points and Loyd finished with 20 before fouling out with 59.2 seconds left in the first overtime.

Ogwumike scored the opening points of the first overtime to give Seattle its first lead since it was 4-2.

Loyd struggled again from the field, combining to go 7 for 40 in two games.

story of the game was the penalty and three points we conceded on halftime. That sort of ill-discipline crept in and chilled some of the opportunities we were creating in our attacking zone."

Ikanivere scored his second try in the 45th minute at the end of an outstanding passage of play by the Drua. They first stole a Queensland lineout throw five meters from the Drua goalline. Valetini put the ball out near halfway and the Drua stole the lineout again to put themselves in Reds territory.

Selestino Ravutaumada made a long, stepping run and Ikanivere was on the end of the move to score, making the lead 25-14.

The Drua then defended their line resolutely until the 78th minute when replacement hooker George Blake scored for the Reds from a lineout drive.

In a tense finish, with the Drua holding a six-point lead, flyhalf Isaiah Armstrong-Ravula missed one penalty then nailed another to seal the game.

In a later match at Canberra, Australia, the ACT Brumbies secured a home playoff after a last-minute penalty try ensured a 31-24 win over the Christchurch, New Zealand-based Crusaders.

The game seemed set to end level until Quinten Strange conceded a penalty try in the last minute. The Crusaders lock intentionally knocked back a loose ball after Noah Lolesio's side-line penalty goal attempt struck the upright.

Almost all the questions he faced were about the speculation in Spain's sports press that club president Joan Laporta was upset with Xavi for having said earlier this week that "the situation is very difficult, above all on the economic level, for us to compete with our top rivals, whether it be Real Madrid or teams in Europe."

The media reports said Laporta is pondering a replacement for Xavi this summer. Xavi insisted Saturday that he had heard no such thing from the club.

MONTREAL, Canada, May 18, (Xinhua): The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) President, Witold Banka, said Friday the agency received the backing of its highest decision-making body, the Foundation Board (Board), on the Chinese swimming case.

In an extraordinary meeting of its Board to discuss the contamination case involving swimmers from China, WADA received broad support from stakeholders.

"Today WADA received the backing of its Foundation Board, which came from members of all stakeholder groups, including from athletes, the Sport Movement, Governments and National Anti-Doping Organizations," Banka said.

During the Board meeting, WADA gave members a full outline of the work it has carried out on the case from the moment it became aware of the positive tests in 2021 to date, from every perspective including as it relates to science, legal affairs, and intelligence and investigations.

WADA has now referred the matter to an independent prosecutor, Eric Cottier, who will conduct a review with the intention of issuing a report by the end of June.

Banka said the independent prosecutor has now started his review which will have full access to all WADA's files and any information in its possession.

"He is also free to choose any other independent expert to assist him in reaching his conclusions, as he deems necessary," Banka said. "WADA will be ready to consider any recommendations he may have in that regard." "In fact, as we are currently carrying out a stakeholder consultation update of the World Anti-Doping Code and International Standards, the timing is perfect to consider any recommendations as to how the global anti-doping system can be strengthened further," said Banka.

WADA Vice-President Yang Yang said she had every faith in the prosecutor's ability to produce a fair and unbiased report based on the facts and evidence.

"We should now await to see what his findings will be," she said.

WADA Athlete Council representative on the Board, Patrick O'Leary, said: "It is very important that the athletes' voices are not lost in this story and that we continue to be part of the conversation." "We welcome WADA's move to invite an independent prosecutor to conduct a thorough review of its handling of the matter. It is important that we reserve judgement and give him the space he needs to conduct that independent process in advance of the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris." WADA's Founding President, Dick Pound launched a fierce at-

tack on the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) during the meeting.

"I am deeply disappointed and disgusted by the deliberate lies and distortions coming from the USADA, including that WADA has swept doping cases in China under the rug," said Pound. "That accusation, bereft of any truth, has but a single purpose: to deliberately damage the reputation of WADA and to lessen the worldwide trust that has been built up since WADA was created a quarter of a century ago to head up the international fight against doping in sport." "What is missing in USADA's conduct is a willingness to work for solutions, just endless and biased criticism," he said.

Yang also expressed her anger at how this story has been portrayed in the media related to her Chinese nationality.

"It is not right. It is not true. It is disgraceful that my integrity would be questioned without any evidence," she said. "As a former athlete who has involved in sport organizations voluntarily for more than 20 years, I strongly believe sports can unite people and create hope and opportunities. Unfortunately, some are trying to divide the world of sport around this issue." "It is extremely unfair for those athletes who are preparing the biggest moments of their careers, not only those athletes whose identities were wrongly publicized, including some minors, but also the athletes who were misled by false information from a group of people with ulterior motives and therefore would lose confidence in clean sports." "It is completely unacceptable to manipulate athletes for one's own ego and political agenda. That is why we must enable people to see the truth and safeguard the confidence of athletes in clean sports," she added.

WADA confirmed that the related Chinese athletes provided approximately 1,700 doping control samples between 2018 and 2022, with certain athletes having been tested dozens of times per year, whether by swimming's International Federation (now known as World Aquatics) or the Chinese Anti-Doping Agency.

In almost four months from April 1, 2021 until the start of the Tokyo Olympic Games in July 2021, close to 300 samples were collected from the athletes, which equates on average to several samples per month, per athlete, WADA said.

WADA, established in 1999 as an international independent agency to lead a collaborative worldwide movement for doping-free sport, is composed of a 42-member Foundation Board and a 16-member Executive Committee, to which the Foundation Board delegates the management and running of the agency.

## 'All soccer infrastructure in Gaza destroyed'

## FIFA to seek legal advice on 'proposal' to suspend Israel

BANGKOK, May 18, (AP): Facing a Palestinian proposal to suspend Israel from international soccer because of the conflict with Hamas, FIFA bought time Friday by agreeing to seek legal advice before holding an extraordinary council meeting within two months.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino outlined the plan to 211 member federations after leaders of the Palestinian and Israel soccer bodies spoke at the governing body's annual congress in Bangkok.

"Now, due to the obvious sensitivity of these matters, FIFA will mandate as of now independent legal expertise to analyze and assess the three requests made by the Palestinian Football Association and ensure that the statutes and regulations of FIFA are applied in the correct way in order to ensure a fair and due process," Infantino said.

"This legal assessment will have to allow for inputs and claims of both member associations. The results and the recommendations ... will be forwarded to the FIFA council."

"Due to the urgency of the situation, an extraordinary FIFA Council will be convened and will take place before July 20 to review the results of the legal assessment and to take the decisions that are appropriate."

The Palestinian soccer federation has now spoken at a FIFA Congress at least five times since 2014 without making the progress it wants.

Palestinian soccer's issues with Israel in that decade have included travel restrictions on its players, the Israeli league including teams from West Bank settlements, and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

In the past 10 years, FIFA under two different presidents has deferred a vote or decision, or created a working group to report back at a later meeting.

The Palestine Football Association proposal to 211 member federations called for "appropriate sanctions, with immediate effect, against Israeli teams" and was forecast in FIFA documents released last month.

The motion noted "international law violations committed by the Israeli occupation in Palestine, particularly in

Gaza" and cited FIFA statutory commitments on human rights and against discrimination.

The Palestinian FA wrote that "all the football infrastructure in Gaza has been either destroyed, or seriously damaged, including the historic stadium of Al-Yarmuk."

On Friday at the congress, Palestinian soccer's leader Jibril Rajoub said "the Palestinian people, including the Palestinian football family, are enduring an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe."

## SOCCER

He said 193 footballers were among the thousands of Palestinians to die in the ongoing war which erupted Oct. 7 with Hamas' deadly attack on Israel.

More than 35,000 Palestinians have been killed in the war, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its figures. About 80% of Gaza's population have been driven from their homes.

Rajoub, who said he had been threatened because of his sanctions proposal, urged FIFA delegates not to delay the vote.

"The Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs has made serious threats to imprison me if I do not withdraw this proposal, but no power in the world can stand in the way of truth," Rajoub said.

But Infantino said the matter couldn't go to a full vote of the membership on Friday because it had to be dealt with by FIFA's governing council.

"I do not want to divide our 211 member countries," he said. "I have a responsibility as president to apply the statutes of FIFA and its regulations, whatever my personal conviction on these and other terrible matters around the world."

He said at the FIFA council meeting on Wednesday, all 37 members unanimously agreed to condemn the acts of violence that have taken place and decided to send a strong message of solidarity.

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## Xavi denies reports that Barcelona's leadership is considering firing him

BARCELONA, Spain, May 18, (AP): Xavi Hernandez on Saturday denied a slew of reports in Spanish media outlets that Barcelona's leadership is considering firing the coach for having said that the club's poor finances will impede it from competing with Real Madrid.

"The club has transmitted to me that I should stay calm and continue working with the same motivation and commitment. Nothing has changed," Xavi said at a pre-game news conference.

Almost all the questions he faced were about the speculation in Spain's sports press that club president Joan Laporta was upset with Xavi for having said earlier this week that "the situation is very difficult, above all on the economic level, for us to compete with our top rivals, whether it be Real Madrid or teams in Europe."

The media reports said Laporta is pondering a replacement for Xavi this summer.

Xavi insisted Saturday that he had heard no such thing from the club.

"I don't know and I don't care where that information is coming from. I have the support of the president and Deco, our sports director," the former Barcelona midfielder said.

Neither Laporta nor the club have made any public statements about the rumors. The club said it had no comment on them when asked by The Associated Press.

Even if Barcelona keeps Xavi on, it is still an awkward situation for a coach who just three weeks prior had reversed a previous decision made in January to leave the club

this summer. In April, Xavi said that he had changed his mind after his players showed him that they believed in the team's potential and had improved their performances.

Laporta inherited a club mired in debts of more than 1.3 billion euros (\$1.4 billion), and soccer's most expensive payroll, when he returned to run the club for a second time in 2021.

A few months later he brought back fan favorite Xavi, who had been coaching in Qatar, to lead a team rebuild following the exit of superstar Lionel Messi.



## Toyota demonstrates carbon-neutral fuel at the first GR Yaris Cup in Middle East

# Al Sayer holds season finale for the first Toyota GR Yaris Championship

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The first GR Yaris Cup in the Middle East launched last November in Kuwait by Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Est Co. with the support of Toyota Motor Corporation in association with Kuwait Motor Town and Suffix Sports has now concluded its exciting first edition.

The ceremony was attended by Mr. Mubarak Naser Al Sayer – Group CEO, Mr. Bengt Schultz – Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Martin Aherne – Senior Business Manager Toyota Sales, Mr. Ibrahim Al Fozan – Senior Business Manager Service, Mr. Bader Faisal Al Sayer – Toyota Senior Marketing Manager, a group of Al-Sayer family, senior management members, representatives from Kuwait Motor Town (KMT) and Suffix Sports, the team of sponsors, racers, members from Toyota Sales and Marketing, Toyota Ahmadi Service Performance Team along with press and media representatives.

Speaking on this occasion, Mubarak Al Sayer said: "I am delighted to have you with us to celebrate the success of the first-ever Toyota Gazoo Racing Yaris championship, not only in Kuwait, but also in the GCC. After the first season of the championship, Toyota vehicles proved to be exciting, energetic, as well as of high quality, reliability and durability".

Martin Aherne said: "The success of this championship has given us a great indication that we can achieve

a strong, practical and safe presence in professional motorsport now and in the future."

Bader Al Sayer said: "The Toyota Gazoo Racing Championship, which was held in Kuwait from November 2023 to March 2024, has been a great success at all levels. In addition to the continuous support of our big team, partners and sponsors. This Championship also gathered an exceptional level of engagement in our social media platforms and positive feedback motorsport fans and enthusiasts."

GR Yaris is true sports car developed by experts at the Toyota Gazoo Racing World Rally Team and the 10 units which are part of the GR Yaris Cup are being race prepared under FIA regulations, in-house with skill and precision by service technicians at Al Sayer Ahmadi Performance. Carefully selected race specific components are added to the impressive standard specification to create a car at home circuit in the cut-throat environment of a one-make competition.

In conclusion, the winning sponsoring companies were honored, and prizes were distributed to the winning contestants, where Ahmed Al-Ghanim, driver of the 'Cofran Lubricants' car, came in first place, Ali Al-Sabah and Jaber Al-Sabah, drivers of the 'Gazoo Racing' Unit came in second place, and Salem Al-Nussif and Mohammed Al-Nussif, drivers of the 'Commercial Bank of



Kuwait' car, came in third place.

GR Yaris Cup Kuwait saw Toyota demonstrate the potential of the carbon-neutral fuel-powered GR Yaris during the fifth and final round. Pro-

duced from feedstock which absorbs CO2 from the atmosphere, this fuel boasts the same performance as conventional fossil fuel and is widely compatible with existing power train



Top and above photos taken from the event.

technology.

By pushing the boundaries of its latest innovations through its participation in motorsports, Toyota is helping bring diverse green mobility

solutions to customers worldwide. This is a key factor in Toyota's multi-pathway approach and the realization of a more carbon-neutral future for all.



The first family council for Special Olympics athletes.

## Al-Ansari elected Chairman of Special Oly Player Families Council

The Kuwaiti Special Olympics Player Families Council held its inaugural meeting at the Al-Tommoh Sports Club headquarters, where Siddiq Al-Ansari was elected as Chairman, Dr. Ali Al-Dashti as Vice-President, and Ali Dashti, Nour Bassam, Maryam Al-Kandari, Zainab Al-Mailli, Taqwa Al-Najjar, Seema Al-Matrouk, and Fahd Al-Anazi as members.

Al-Ansari expressed her gratitude to the Council members for their trust. She emphasized her commit-

ment, along with the members, to diligently work towards achieving the Council's goals. These goals include strengthening the family's role and its active participation in supporting the players, creating an environment conducive to their continuous success and achievements. Al-Ansari highlighted that the family serves as a true driving force in the lives of Special Olympics players, providing optimal care in all aspects of their lives and supporting them during various competitions and games.

## Siakam finishes with 25 points and seven rebounds

# Pacers force decider against Knicks

INDIANAPOLIS, May 18, (AP): Indiana Pacers coach Rick Carlisle challenged his team to play more physically and more tenaciously Friday night.

His desperate team responded with one of its most inspired performances all season.

Pascal Siakam finished with 25 points and seven rebounds, Myles Turner added 17 points and eight rebounds, and the Pacers turned the tables on the New York Knicks with a 116-103 victory to even the Eastern Conference semifinals at 3-3.

The decisive Game 7 will be played Sunday at Madison Square Garden.

"I thought Game 5 was our least aggressive game in the playoffs," Carlisle said. "We played hard tonight, which was a must. They came out really hard tonight, which was evident, but we moved the ball better, we got more rebounds and that's obviously been a big part in this series." Indiana had two days to figure out how to contend with the Knicks' hustle plays and their strength on the glass, two things that led to Tuesday's 30-point blowout in Game 5 and put the Pacers on the brink of elimination.

This time, the Pacers held a 47-35 rebounding edge and even had a slight 14-13 advantage on the offensive end. And they had balanced scoring, too, which spread out the Knicks defense.

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Tyrese Haliburton and Andrew Nembhard each scored 15 points, with Nembhard pulling down six rebounds and dishing out six assists. Haliburton had nine assists as Indiana kept its perfect postseason home record intact at 6-0, in front of a raucous sellout crowd that helped re-energize the Pacers during key moments.

"We knew they were going to play hard coming off the last game, and that's what it's about," Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau said. "We're just going to have to play a lot better." Even Jalen Brunson, the All-Star who has been the league's top

postseason scorer. Yes, he finished with 31 points and five assists while shooting 11 of 26 from the field, but that came after he missed his final 11 shots in the first half.

Deuce McBride added 20 points and Donte DiVincenzo had 17, but the short-handed Knicks may have suffered yet another blow when Josh Hart left in the fourth quarter with what the Knicks called abdominal soreness.

"I expect him to play," Brunson said when asked about Hart. "It's Game 7." The good news for the Knicks is they don't have to return to Indiana, where they've lost nine straight playoff games. Instead, they're heading back to the Garden against a group of many players making their first playoff appearances or playing key roles for the first time in the postseason.

And now, they'll be playing on national television on the league's biggest stage.

"It's exciting," Haliburton said. "We've got nothing to lose. I think

we realize it's time to empty the clip. We are ready to go from start to finish." The Pacers sure looked like it Friday as they repeatedly won the battles to loose balls and turned them into quick points, taking a 42-41 lead on Haliburton's second 3-pointer of the game. The ensuing 16-7 run helped the Pacers take a 61-51 halftime lead and they never trailed again.

Brunson rebounded in the second half, getting the Knicks within 61-56 after making two baskets and a free throw, but after a timeout Nembhard and Haliburton answered with consecutive 3s and the Pacers rebuilt an 11-point margin.

The Knicks never really recovered, losing for the third time in four games and leaving them one win away from reaching their first conference final since 2000. Indiana hasn't played in the conference finals since 2014.

And after playing three games to single-digit margins, the last three

to double-digit margins and the home team winning all six, they'll square off again Sunday – in a win-or-go-home scenario.

"It's the ultimate game and it's a great opportunity," Carlisle said. "Other than Pascal and maybe James Johnson, I'm not sure if any of our guys have been in a Game 7. But this team has been through a lot of new experiences in the last 1 1/2 weeks and this will be another new experience. So we'll do everything possible to get them ready." New York again played without four key players because of injuries – forwards OG Anunoby, Bojan Bogdanovic and Julius Randle, and backup center Mitchell Robinson. Only Anunoby, who injured his left hamstring in the second half of Game 2 and hasn't played since, appears to have a chance to return Sunday.

Thibodeau said Anunoby continues to do "light work" as he tries to recover. He said Anunoby was considered day to day.



Indiana Pacers forward (right) Pascal Siakam drives around New York Knicks guard Josh Hart. (AP)

# Kuwait Club on 'brink' of Zain Premier League title

## Khaitan secure Premier League status

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Kuwait Club needs only two points from the last two rounds to secure the Zain Premier League title for the 19th time in its history, and the third consecutive time. If it wins the title this season, it will be just

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two championships behind Al-Qadisiya and Al-Arabi.



Kuwait Club player attempts to score against Al Salmiya.

"Al-Abyad" overcame a significant hurdle by defeating Al-Salmiya 3-0 at Thamer Stadium in the eighth round of the championship group competitions. This victory raised its tally to 63 points, putting it 5 points ahead of its closest rival, Al-Arabi, who dropped two crucial points after drawing 1-1 with Al-Qadisiya in the same round.

Kuwait Club President Khaled Al-Ghanem stated, "The league title is still up for grabs," adding, "The five-point lead does not guarantee that Kuwait has won the title."

Al-Salmiya played with most of its key players in preparation for the Amir Cup final against Al-Qadisiya, but struggled, especially after Athbi Shehab received a red card in the first half.

Al-Arabi is now hoping for a "gift" from their traditional rival to stop "Al-Abyad" and revive its own title hopes. Kuwait Club will face Al-Qadisiya in the next round, before

meeting Al-Arabi in the final round. "Al-Akhdar" struggled to cope with the challenges faced during the "Derby" match against Al-Qadisiya, particularly after Badr Al-Mutawa was injured in the first half and goalkeeper Khaled Al-Rashidi was sent off at the beginning of the second half.

Al-Arabi may have been affected by the absence of Nigerian Anayo Ayewala, a key attacking player, while Moroccan Hamza Khaba did not perform at his best. "Al-Akhdar" lost focus and failed to capitalize on the numerical advantage, showing signs of impatience.

In the relegation league, Khaitan achieved a valuable 1-0 victory over Al-Jahra, securing second place with 21 points. It benefited from Al-Shabab's stumble against Kazma, who won 2-0. As a result, "Sons of Al-Ahmadi" fell to third place with 20 points. Al-Shabab and Al-Jahra have been relegated to the first division for the next season, 2024-2025.

## Best of the Rest

### Mumbai finishes bottom:

Lucknow Super Giants beat the five-time champion Mumbai Indians by 18 runs in the last Indian Premier League game for both.

They were already out of playoffs contention but played out a match that became surprisingly close.

Lucknow put up a mighty 214-6 thanks to Nicholas Pooran's electrifying 75 off 29 balls and captain Lokesh Rahul's fighting 55 off 41 deliveries.

Mumbai impact substitute Rohit Sharma, who will be leading India at the T20 World Cup next month, gave Mumbai a rollicking start to the big chase with 68 off 38 balls, and Naman Dhir's unbeaten 62 off 28 narrowed the margin of defeat. Mumbai finished at 196-6.

Pooran and Rahul combined in a 109-run fourth-wicket stand in 7.2 overs. Pooran hit eight sixes and five fours and his entertainment ended when he holed out at long on, giving Nuwan Thushara the second of his three wickets. (AP)

### Fiorentina draw with Napoli:

Last year's Serie A champion Napoli can finish no higher than eighth this season after drawing at Fiorentina 2-2.

Napoli sits ninth on the table, two

points behind Fiorentina, which has a game in hand. Napoli has one game left.

Napoli won the league 12 months ago for the first time since Diego Maradona wore its distinctive light blue shirt but it has squandered points with regularity this season, drawing 13 times in 37 games. Napoli is winless in its last six games.

Amir Rahmani put Napoli ahead after eight minutes when he nodded home a corner kick.

But Cristiano Braghi with a superb free kick and M'Bala Nzola with a low drive struck back in the five minutes before halftime to send the home side up 2-1 into the break. (AP)

**Juventus fire Allegri:** Juventus fired coach Massimiliano Allegri for his ugly outburst toward the referees in the Italian Cup final.

The move comes with only two games remaining in Serie A.

Allegri lost his cool in stoppage time when he grew angry at a decision, ripped off his jacket and earned a red card for sarcastically applauding the referee. Juventus beat Atalanta 1-0 on Wednesday.

Juventus said in a statement that Allegri's behavior was not in line with its "values." (AP)





Hamad Al-Nemshan with other winners on the podium.

# Sports

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## Al-Rajhi wins gold in 5,000m wheelchair race

Chinese dominate Para worlds

**KOBE, May 18, (Agencies): Faisal Al-Rajhi, the standout athlete representing our national team in disabled athletics, clinched the gold medal in the 5,000-meter wheelchair race (T54 category) at the 11th Para Athletics World Championships, currently underway in the Japanese city of Kobe.**

Al-Rajhi completed the race in an impressive time of 10:50 minutes, surpassing his Japanese rival, Hyoguchi, and the Chinese athlete Luigsengshonan, who secured second and third place, respectively.

This victory secures Al-Rajhi's spot in the upcoming Paralympic Games in Paris 2024.

Leading the delegation of our national disabled team is Fahd Al-Mutairi, who dedicated this remarkable achievement to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad and the people of Kuwait.

In the women's javelin throw F13 final, Zhao Yuping defended her world title with a throw of 44.86 meters. Wen Xiaoyan, another defending world champion, won the women's long jump T37 final with a leap of 5.42 meters, while wheelchair racer Tian Yajuan clinched gold in the women's 5,000 meters T54, clocking 11 minutes 41.76 seconds. Both Wen and Tian set new championship records in their events.

Additionally, para runner He Shanshan broke the Asian record with a time of 4 minutes 34.12 seconds in the women's 1,500 meters T11 final, earning a silver medal.

Later in the day, Li Yingli, 26, secured the gold medal in the women's shot put F37 final with a throw of 13.52 meters, while her teammate Mi Na claimed bronze with a throw of 12.83 meters.

Other medalists on Saturday included Xu Mian, Zhou Peng, Wang Hao, and Luo Xingchuan, who won bronze medals in the women's discus throw F57, men's 100 meters T38, men's long jump T47, and men's 5,000 meters T54, respectively.

As of Day 2 of the nine-day event, China has amassed six golds, three silvers, and seven bronzes. The Kobe 2024 Para Athletics World Championships, held in East Asia for the first time, serve as a crucial qualifier for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games. The championships have attracted over 1,000 athletes from 100 countries and regions competing in 168 events.

A total of 73 Chinese para-athletes are competing in the championships, which run until May 25. Originally scheduled for 2021, the event was postponed twice due to the COVID-19

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pandemic

Earlier, China made a clean sweep of all three medals in the men's long jump T11 final.

Chen, 23, bagged the gold with a leap of 6.62 meters at the Universiade Memorial Stadium in the Japanese port city of Kobe, twice refreshing the championship record during the process.

The visually-impaired athlete also outperformed his previous personal best of 6.39m.

Di Dongdong clinched the silver with a jump of 6.50m, while Ye Tao grabbed the bronze with a personal best of 6.48m. "I did great today, and I am so glad that I am qualified for Paris 2024," Chen, a world championship debutant, told Xinhua.

Held in East Asia for the first time and a crucial qualifier for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, the Kobe 2024 Para Athletics World Championships attracted over 1,000 athletes from 100 countries and regions to compete in 168 events.



Faisal Al Rajhi celebrates his gold victory.

A total of 73 Chinese para athletes, many of whom are multi-eventers, are competing in the nine-day championships.

On Day 1, China took home six medals, including two golds, two sil-

vers and two bronzes.

The championships, the 11th edition of its kind, will run until May 25. The event was originally scheduled for 2021 but was postponed twice due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Kuwait wins gold and bronze in Arab shooting tournament

**TUNIS, May 18:** Kuwait shooting team secured both gold and a bronze medal in the ongoing Arab competition in Tunisia.

Hamad Al-Nemshan claimed the top spot in the 10-meter pistol shooting category, while his female counterpart, Ghezlan Al-Hindi, clinched third place in the women's competition.

In a fierce showdown, Al-Nemshan outperformed Egyptian shooter Hafez Ibrahim, who settled for the silver medal, while the bronze went to Iraqi

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athlete Ali Al-Musawi.

Meanwhile, Al-Hindi battled through intense competition with Egyptian shooter Hala Al-Johari, who took second place, and Tunisian athlete Duaa Shaljoum, who secured third place.

Duaj Al-Otaibi, head of the Kuwaiti and Arab shooting federations, commended the outstanding achievements of the Kuwaiti shooters and dedicated their success to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad al-Jaber Al-Sabah, as well as to the government and people of Kuwait.

He emphasized the significance of such competitions as vital preparations for the upcoming Olympic Games in Paris scheduled for July.

### Emotional

Klopp prepares for 'final' match

**LONDON, May 18, (AP):** As part of a club documentary offering an inside view of his final days at Liverpool, Jurgen Klopp was asked by the filmmakers to stand alone on The Kop one afternoon and gaze out around Anfield.

He did it, and didn't particularly like it.

"I love Anfield to bits," Klopp said Friday, "but I love it when it's full."

On Sunday, there won't be a spare seat inside the storied stadium when Klopp takes charge of his final game as Liverpool manager after nearly nine years at the club.

There might not be many dry eyes among the home fans, either.

Klopp was the man who made Liverpool dream again.

The man who led the team to seven major trophies - including a sixth Champions League title ("Let's talk about six, baby," he memorably sang) and a first English league championship in 30 years.

The man who forged such a connection with the port city that he has been compared to Bill Shankly, the club's most legendary manager.

The man who felt equally at home motivating his players to go above and beyond with his heavy-metal style of football as he was talking compassionately with families of the victims of the 1989 Hillsborough disaster.

Speaking ahead of Sunday's game against Wolverhampton, Klopp stopped many times while answering questions - sometimes because he was getting emotional and sometimes because he wanted to find exactly the right words about all aspects of a club that has become so close to his heart.

"I would not be happy if I'd have thought I could have done

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more," the 56-year-old German said. "I couldn't. I couldn't have done more." It's why there wasn't such a sense of sadness as he said individual goodbyes to his players on Thursday and had a barbecue with the squad. He visited workers in the club's store in Liverpool city center one final time. He forgets how many Liverpool jerseys he has signed over the past few days.

Klopp said it has been "the most intense week of my life."

"Saying goodbye I don't think is ever nice," he said, "but saying goodbye without feeling sad or feeling hurt, that would just mean the time you spent together wasn't right or great. And I had a great time." There was a sense of joy as he went through his greatest hits as Liverpool manager.

His best game? Maybe, surprisingly, the 1-1 draw with Manchester City at Anfield this season, when Liverpool delivered a dominant second-half display against the team Klopp feels is the best in the world. The best goal? Goalkeeper Alisson Becker's header from a corner in the fifth minute of stoppage time to win a game at West Bromwich Albion.

His favorite assist was Trent Alexander-Arnold's quickly taken corner for Divock Origi's goal in the 4-0 comeback win over Barcelona in the 2019 Champions League semifinals. And Alisson's late stop against Napoli in that same Champions League campaign was his favorite save.

As he recounted all the memories, it made him realize just what an amazing time he's had and the journey he has gone on since arriving as a bespectacled eccentric with slightly wonky teeth and a playing style - all passion and high-energy - that was seemingly made for Liverpool.

"I take memories, friendships and relationships with me forever," Klopp said. "You realize the older you get, when time slips through your fingers, you look back and go, 'My God, that was really good."

Premier Handball League commences

## Al-Adwani calls for public and private sector backing after recent success



Kuwaiti players pose with officials.

**By Khaled El Anzi**

By Al-Seyassah /Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 18:** The General Secretary of Kuwait Handball Federation, Qaid Al-Adwani, has urged both the public and private sectors to extend their support to our national handball teams, especially following their recent remarkable achievements. These accomplishments include the national team securing its first bronze medal at the Masters, marking its return to the podium after many years, and successfully qualifying for the 2025 World Cup finals after a 14-year absence.

Furthermore, the junior team clinched the second position in the recent Gulf Games held in the Emirates, while the youth handball team emerged as the runner-up in the Arab Championship held in Morocco.

These accolades were celebrated

during an honoring ceremony organized by the Handball Federation for the youth and junior national teams at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex, coinciding with the final round of the General League. The event was attended by Al-Adwani, Assistant Secretary Abdullah Al-Dhiyab, and Federation member Mubarak Al-Daihani.

Al-Adwani emphasized the significance of Kuwaiti handball's achievements and its resurgence on the global stage. He highlighted the potential of the players to excel in upcoming competitions and called for unified support from senior sports figures for Kuwaiti handball.

Assistant Secretary of the Handball Federation, Abdullah Al-Dhiyab, underscored the importance of the recent achievements, stating that they have reinstated the "Blue" team to its former glory. He emphasized the importance of strategic planning and consistent effort pursued by both past

and present federations to secure podium finishes, a goal that has been successfully realized.

In a parallel development, the Premier Handball League commences today, featuring the top six clubs from the league: Kuwait Club, Al-Qadisiya, Al-Salmiya, Kazma, Al-Arabi, and Burgan. The league will

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adopt a home-and-away system, with matches based on the clubs' standings in the league. The competition is set to culminate on June 9th.

Simultaneously, the first division league commenced yesterday, comprising teams ranked seventh to fourteenth in the General League. Following the same home-and-away format, this league is scheduled to conclude on July 11th.

## Southampton to face Leeds in final

**SOUTHAMPTON, England, May 18, (AP):** Southampton will face Leeds United for a spot in next year's English Premier League after beating West Brom 3-1 in the second leg of their Championship playoff.

Southampton and Leeds will meet at Wembley on May 26 to decide who joins the already promoted Leicester City and Ipswich Town in the top flight. The Saints progressed 3-1 on aggregate after a goalless first-leg at the Hawthorns last Sunday.

The celebrations were briefly marred when some of the 30,000 crowd invaded the pitch at the final whistle. Police rushed to keep the two sets of supporters separated and major trouble was avoided as players from both sides were quickly taken to the dressing rooms.

The final matchup is fitting given

that Leeds finished third and Southampton fourth in the Championship. Leeds eliminated Norwich on Thursday to guarantee its place in the decider. Watched by British Prime Minister and Saints fan Rishi Sunak, Southampton spent the first half on the attack and the visitor did well to soak up the pressure.

Four minutes into the second period came the breakthrough when Will Smallbone cracked a volley past Alex Palmer.

Prolific striker Adam Armstrong got his reward 12 minutes from time when he squeezed a low drive through the legs of a defender and into the far corner of the net. He got his second and Southampton's third from the penalty spot with five minutes remaining to confirm the Saints superiority.