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# **Opinion**

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf, thank you very much

## By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

FOR about 40 years or more, specifically after the departure of HH the late Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah from the Ministry of Interior, Kuwait has not witnessed any minister who performs his work in the field like First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousuf Al-Sabah who made the field his office.

Whenever the minister visits prisons and facilities supervised by the Interior and Defense ministries, he discovers many horrific

issues. Nevertheless,

he chooses humanity

over the strict text of

the law. He does so

in the women's pris-



Al-Jarallah

on where many have had a miserable life or whose husbands wronged them by implicating them in loans and dud checks. The husbands enjoyed the money, while the wives and other fam-

ily members paid the heavy price. He does the same in the men's prison, where some non-Kuwaitis are serving time for violating the residency and traffic laws or those with small debts. Thus, imposing minor sentences does not mean leaving them to be a

burden on the State. We then beg to ask: Why not deport them? They cost a lot of public money, while the solution is to deport them, and reduce the secu-

rity and social burdens. In all other countries, when prisons are overcrowded, the issue is resolved by deporting foreigners and pardoning those with minor sentences.

Just as some countries have signed agreements with other countries for the convict to serve his prison term in his country, there is also a way for certain countries -- buy public rights to ease the burdens of

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# **Kuwait highlights GCC** media unity

DOHA, May 21, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ministry of Information Undersecretary Dr. Nasser Muhaisen stressed on Tuesday the importance of strengthening and developing media cooperation between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

This came in Muhaisen's statement to KUNA, after Kuwait's participation in the GCC Undersecretaries of Information Ministries' preparatory meeting of the 27th GCC Ministers of Information meeting, which is scheduled on Thursday

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A group photo of His Highness the Amir with the UAE Balloon team at Bayan Palace on Tuesday. - See Page 2

# **KUWAIT OKAYS OVERSEAS HIRING BASED ON BUSINESS NEEDS**

# Work permits issuance under new policies to restart in June

PAM warns against manipulation, imposes penalties

#### By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) will most likely resume the issuance of work permits as per new regulations by the beginning of June.

Reliable sources confirmed that PAM will continue to operate under the leadership of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousuf Al-Sabah to realize the vision and implement regulations aimed at improving the labor market and addressing the demographic imbalance issue.

Sources revealed to Al-Seyassah/Arab Times that PAM is expected to hold meetings chaired by the minister this week and next week to assess the readiness for issuing work permits in June. They confirmed that certain regulations will be established, emphasizing that only those who are eligible will benefit from these regulations. They warned that manipulation of this issue will be strictly prohibited, and strict directives have been issued to impose penalties on violators.

These sources also affirmed that decision number 3/2024 amends the regulations for issuing work permits in order to reduce the cost of hiring expatriate workers. The regulations include granting per-

mits to employers to hire workers from abroad based on the estimated number required for each business. They clarified this decision does not require the employer to transfer the residency permit of the workers they hire from the local labor market, as this would contribute to visa trafficking and exacerbate the shortage of construction workers

and other industries that recently experienced price increases

It is worth mentioning that decision number 3/2024, issued on April 20, states that employers can obtain work permits for laborers based on the number determined by the relevant department at PAM. The decision allows workers to work for another employer during the first three years, provided they have the approval of their sponsor and pay a fee of KD 300. The following businesses are exempt from these regulations: public sector companies, hospitals and clinics licensed by the Ministry of Health, private institutes, schools and universities, foreign investors accredited by the Direct Investment Authority, sports clubs, public benefit organizations and societies, cooperative societies, charities, agriculture, fishing, grazing, commercial real estate, industrial institutions and small industrial enterprises.





Ministry of Defense photos

Left: Chief of the Kuwaiti Army General Staff and US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense chair the Joint Military Committee (JMC) meeting. Right: Group photo.

Kuwait strengthens defense ties with new agreements, workshops

# **Kuwaiti-American Joint Military Committee meeting convenes in Kuwait**

# Day by Day

WHEN Constitutional and parliamentary conditions in Bahrain were pushed to the brink which resulted in chaos, politi-cal leadership did not hesitate to suspend the democratic process and amend the Constitution. Despite widespread propaganda from various media platforms, the correct procedures were followed.

The King of Bahrain issued directives to amend the Constitution and transition to a twochamber parliament with the establishment of a consultative council. Today, Bahrain is enjoying the blessed stability and ... Yet tomorrow is another day.

**Zahed Matar** 

KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA): Chief of the Kuwaiti Army General Staff, Lieutenant General Bandar Al-Muzain, and US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Daniel Shapiro chaired the Joint Military Committee (JMC) meeting, held in Kuwait Monday

and Tuesday.

Kuwaiti Army said in a press statement that the meeting included holding a number of workshops for the participating teams from both sides. in which joint defense cooperation was reviewed and several related issues and topics discussed.

It added that signing ceremonies for multiple agreements between both sides to enhance the strategic, defensive and military joint interest, and to boost cooperation

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Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Zhang Jianwei delivers a speech at the China-Kuwait Media Seminar on the Belt and Road Initiative cooperation. - See Page 2

# Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) signed a cooperation agreement with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) Tuesday to enhance relief collaboration

and support humanitarian efforts. The agreement was signed by KRCS Chairman Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer, representing the Kuwaiti side and PRCS Chairman Sardar Shahid, representing **Pakistan**'s side. (KUNA)

BEIRUT: Syrian first lady Asma Assad has been diagnosed with leukemia, the office of President Bashar Assad announced Tuesday.

The president's wife was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia "after presenting with several symptoms and following a comprehensive series of medical tests and examinations," the statement said. She will "adhere to a specialized

treatment protocol that includes stringent infection prevention measures" and "will temporarily withdraw from all direct engagements" as part of the treatment plan, it added.

Acute myeloid leukemia is an aggressive cancer of the bone marrow and the blood. (AP)

**CAIRO:** At least six people were killed and nine others injured as a bus fell into the River Nile at Abu Ghalib area in Egypt's central Giza Governorate on Tuesday, according to health authorities. Of the injured, three were taken to

hospital and six treated on the spot, wile rescue efforts were still ongoing the Egyptian Ministry of Health (MoH) said in a press release. (KUNA)

# Condolences flood Iran embassy over president's death

# By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: "On behalf of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah; I extend my deepest condolences to the leadership, government, and the brotherly Iranian people on the great loss of the Iranian President İbrahim Raisi and Foreign Affairs Minister Dr. Hussein Amir Abdullahian in the painful accident," says Minister of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Mohammed Al-Abdullah.

He added: "We implore Almighty Allah to cover them with His vast mercy and to inspire their families with patience and solace. We pray for the brotherly neighbor to overcome this painful incident and to bless

the Islamic Republic of Iran with security

Kuwait's Foreign Affairs Minister Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya expressed condolences during the reception of the Iranian Embassy mourning the death of the Iranian President, Foreign Affairs Minister and a number of their companions. "It is with great sorrow and sadness that we received the news of their death. I express my sincere condolences and sympathy to the leadership, government and people of the friendly Islamic Republic of Iran, to the families of the deceased, and to the friendly Iranian people. I pray that Almighty Allah cover them with His vast mercy, make them dwell in His spacious gardens and to inspire their families with beautiful patience and solace," he

Meanwhile, Iranian Ambassador to Ku-

wait Mohammad Totonji praised the Arab, regional and international communities. "We thank countries all over the world, especially the neighboring countries, for their sympathy over the great loss and plight that befell the Islamic Republic. It was a touch of the wounds and pain to which the Iranian people were exposed. This sympathy expressed by people and countries is the result of the late president's tireless efforts to strengthen relations with all countries. Without a doubt, this approach and this policy will continue in the new era."

He stressed that the government of the late president witnessed the strengthening and consolidation of relations with other countries, especially the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

**Continued on Page 5** 





Photos by Mahmoud Jadeed Left: Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya signs the condolence book at the Iranian Embassy. Right: Minister of Amiri Diwan, Sheikh Mohammed Al-Abdullah, meets with Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Totonji

Expected weather for next 24 hrs: By Day: Hot and relatively humid especially over coastal areas with light to moderate southeasterly wind to variable wind, with speeds of 08-32 km/h and some scattered clouds will

By Night: Mild and relatively humid especially over coastal areas with light to moderate southeasterly wind changing to light northwesterly wind, with speeds of 08-30 km/h and some high

clouds will appear.

Weather

Station **Max Exp** Min Rec Kuwait City Kuwait Airport 43 42 43 37 26 27 28 28 26 25 Abdaly Jahra Salmiyah Nuwaisib Wafra

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

# PAAET opens transfers between 'institutes' for academic year '24-'25

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The Deanship of Admission and Registration at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training has announced the commencement of accepting applications for transfers between training institutes for the first semester of the academic year 2024-2025. reports Al-Jarida daily.

Applications will be accepted in accordance with the relevant regulations and conditions, starting from the day after tomorrow, Thursday, until Monday, September 16, through the authority's official website.

According to sources familiar with the matter at the Applied School, transfers will be subject to specific conditions across various institutes, taking into account each specialty or institute's capacity.

Selection priority will be given based on the highest Grade Point Average (GPA), followed by the lowest, with the prerequisite of successfully completing the introductory semester, which may vary from one institute to another. Additionally, applicants may need to undergo an aptitude test or a personal interview if

Upon submission of applications through the website, institutes will process the cases to facilitate the transfer process effectively.



His Highness the Amir receives the UAE Balloon team at Bayan Palace.

#### **HH the Amir receives UAE Balloon team**

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Tuesday at Bayan Palace the UAE Balloon team on the occasion of their visit to the country.

UAE Balloon team leader Captain Pilot Abdulaziz Naser Al-Mansouri said

that he was honored to meet His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, revealing that during the meeting, they have touched on the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's Balloon, which garnered several achievements in international participation.

"His Highness Sheikh Mishal instructed us to take good care of our human resources in the GCC and to keep a strong connection between its peoples," he said

"During the meeting, we have inaugurated the Balloon of the GCC that will soar in the 45th GCC Summit to be held

in Kuwait in December, in addition to the GCC Cup," he noted.

"His Highness the Amir commended that the GCC Balloon should fly over all six countries of the GCC to represent our unity and firm relationship as one nation." he added. (KUNA)

# China-Kuwait media forum explores BRI cooperation



H.E. Zhang Jianwei, the Chinese Ambassador to Ku-



Khaled Al-Mahdi, General Secretary of the Supreme Planning and Development Council.



Wu Zhongmin, Deputy Director of Xinhua News Agen-



Marlon Aquino Malinao, Managing Editor of the Arab Times newspaper.





Panelists discussing the BRI issue.

# Xinhua News Agency, Chinese Embassy organize event

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

**KUWAIT CITY, May 21:** The China-Kuwait Media Seminar on Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) cooperation organized by Xinhua **News Agency Middle East** Bureau and co-organized by the Chinese Embassy in Kuwait was held in the Hawalli Governorate of Kuwait on Monday.

This year marked the tenth anniversary of the signing of the cooperation deal under the Belt and Road Initiative between China and Kuwait. At the seminar, representatives from Kuwait News Agency, Kuwait State Television, local newspapers and other local mainstream media institutions shed light on topics such as "the role of media in the joint promotion for the alignment of the Belt and Road Initiative and Kuwait's 2035 National Vision", and "How the Chinese and Kuwaiti media jointly respond to common challenges in the world today".

In his speech, Zhang Jianwei, the Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait, introduced the fruitful achievements of the cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative between China and Kuwait in many fields such as economy, trade and humanities over the past decade.

He stressed that people-to-people exchanges is an important part of the joint construction of the Belt and Road, in which the media plays an important role. It is hoped that in the future, the media of the two countries will continue to strengthen "twoway travel", deepen cooperation, and jointly tell the story of China-Kuwait friendship and cooperation, he added.

General Secretary of the Supreme Planning and Development Council Khaled Al-Mahdi, said during his speech in the event that the jointly building the Belt and Road Initiative has brought obvious development results to the participant countries. As one of the first countries to join the "the Belt and Road" initiative, Kuwait is constantly strengthening the docking between Kuwait's 2035 National Vision and the Belt and Road Initia-

For her part, Deputy Director of Xinhua News Agency's Middle East Bureau Wu Zhongmin introduced the exchange and cooperation between Xinhua and Kuwaiti medias, as well as Xinhua's efforts for deep integration and development in media.

She emphasized that strengthening media exchanges and cooperation is an important component of promoting cultural exchanges, enhancing friendships and building a community with a shared future between China and Arab countries.

# Relations

The Chinese envoy commended the mutually-beneficial relations between his country and Kuwait in a variety of domains, particularly their cooperation in building and developing the Silk Road Economic Belt.

Ambassador Jianwei pointed out that Kuwait was the first country in the Middle East to sign an agreement with China for joining its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) -- a strategy initiated by China to connect Asia with Africa and Europe via land and maritime networks with the aim of improving regional integration, increasing trade and stimulating economic growth in 2014.

The Chinese envoy hailed the steady growth in trade exchange between China and Kuwait since 2013, saying "The volume of trade exchange between the two countries skyrocketed from \$12.5 billion in 2013 to \$22.39 billion in 2023; making China the largest trade partner of



Xinhua photos

Guests and audience.

Kuwait since 2015."

He disclosed China has opened a cultural center in Kuwait to boost cultural exchange and educating Kuwaiti citizens and residents about the Chinese culture in its diversity and recalled His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's milestone visit to China in September 2023, when he was the Crown Prince, and his talks with Chi-

nese President Xi Jinping. He elaborated on the visit of Kuwait's Amir to China and the signing of seven MoUs particularly projects under the MoUs between two countries, highlighting the importance of Chinese companies doing business in Kuwait and why China and Kuwait is important to each other, what should Chinese and Kuwait governments, companies and medias do to solve the difficulties which the projects are facing.

Moreover, he noted that Chinese companies are also executing energy, housing, infrastructure, and others projects in Kuwait. This visit ushered in a new phase of cooperation for pushing forward the Belt and Road Initiative and showed both countries' determination to harmonize the Belt and Road Initiative and the Kuwait National Vision 2035, he clarified.

He added that the two countries also signed memoranda of cooperation in other domains such as renewable energy, infrastructure and environmental governance while talks are ongoing to accelerate the implementation of projects agreed upon by the leaders of the two countries during this visit.

It is noteworthy to mention here that in June 2014, China and Kuwait signed a memorandum on jointly promoting cooperation related to the "Silk Road Economic Belt" and the "Silk City".

Addressing the seminar, the Managing Editor of the Arab Times newspaper, Marlon Aquino Malinao highlighted not just the history, but the extraordinary journey of the newspaper -- a beacon of journalistic integrity and a cornerstone of Kuwait's media landscape

Founded in 1977 under the visionary leadership of our esteemed Editor-in-Chief and Dean of Journalism Ahmed Al-Jarallah, this newspaper, he said, has transcended expectations, evolving into a dynamic daily that resonates deeply within Kuwait and far beyond.

From its modest beginnings, the news daily has offered insightful coverage that spans local, regional, and international affairs with a steadfast commitment to presenting Arab and international perspectives with clarity and depth. Arab Times is more than a newspaper; it is a cultural touchstone, a voice of reason, and a catalyst for

informed debate. In an era defined by rapid technological advancements and shifting media landscapes, the Arab Times has embraced innovation while upholding the highest standards of journalistic excellence. Its digital footprint reaches audiences across continents, ensuring its relevance and influence in an interconnected world as "We are dedicated to not only informing but also empowering our readers with verified information they can trust.'

He went on to say, "Our dedication to community extends to our most-read The Opinion' column by our Editorin-Chief, which serves as a platform for thoughtful reflection and dialogue on pressing issues facing our society.'

# **Evolution**

Looking ahead, "As we zero in on the evolution, we are deeply honored to participate in China-Kuwait Media Seminar on Belt and Road Initiative Cooperation aimed at fostering collaboration between China and Kuwait, advancing economic development, and promoting media exchanges between relevant departments of the two

On behalf of our Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Deputy Editorin-Chief Suleiman Al-Jarallah, CEOs Mishal Al-Jarallah and Sattam Al-Jarallah, Deputy CEO of Al-Jarallah Group Dr. Ayman Al-Buloushi, and the entire Arab Times team, we look forward to continuing our legacy of unparalleled journalism, insightful storytelling, and meaningful engagement with China

for years to come.' This seminar was organized to celebrate the historic moments with the aim of promoting the economic and trade development between the Kuwait and China, especially through media cooperation and exchanges between relevant

departments of the two countries. The opening ceremony was marked with Chinese and Kuwaiti government officials/media people delivering speeches following the official launch of the event.

# **Achievements**

Of particular interest was the slide show and videos highlighting the achievements of China-Kuwait cooperation and the introduction of the progress and future planning of the Belt and Road Initiative showcasing the achievements of media cooperation, exchange, and mutual visits between China and Kuwait.

The topic of the seminar was 'How should the media play its role in the strategic alignment of the China-proposed 'Belt and Road' and the '2035 National Vision' of Kuwait; and Introduction of significance development history, and achievements of the 'China Arab Cooperation Forum".

In 2004, China and the Arab League established the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum. In 2022, at the first China-Arab Summit, both sides agreed to make every effort to build a China-Arab community with a shared future for the new era.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the China-Arab Cooperation Forum, and both sides will hold a series of activities to celebrate this important milestone.

The China-Kuwait Media Exchange Seminar serves as a testament to the enduring partnership between the two nations, highlighting the pivotal role of media in advancing bilateral cooperation and fostering a shared future. As China and Kuwait navigate the complexities of the modern world. initiatives such as these pave the way for deeper understanding, prosperity, and mutual benefit.

# diwaniya 🕈 حيوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

# 'Lot more needs to be done to protect public, repel e-attacks'

"IT IS not an exaggeration if we say that information has become the wealth of the modern age. On the other hand, the world is infected by many cyber attacks targeting access to sensitive information for several reasons, including blackmail, tampering with the

information, benefiting from it for personal interests," columnist Asrar Johan Hayat wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"Here lies the importance of cybersecurity, which is known as "protecting systems, networks.



Asrar Hayat

and programs against digital attacks," while applying cybersecurity rules appear to be a challenge for countries, entities, companies, and individuals, as the massive and accelerating technical development makes cyber criminals more capable of penetrating systems, while we still suffer from scarcity of qualified personnel to repel electronic attacks

"Today, cybersecurity protection is not only possible by providing government agencies concerned with that only. We have competent authorities, such as the Cybersecurity Agency, for example, as well as the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA), but the matter requires a comprehensive strategic plan that guarantees the protection of the security of our information, as information may be the most powerful

"Ît is rare that we find that a person did not receive a call or an advertising text message carrying information about him, which was obtained by revealing some data!

"As piracy methods develop, we are in urgent need of providing a secure space for digital data in various entities and devices, and this is only possible with the solidarity of the parties concerned with electronic space and communications in Kuwait on the one hand, as well as the educational arm to provide qualified personnel.

"The private sector may seem more flexible in implementing mechanisms for cybersecurity protection, but what is more important here is that the government sector intensifies its strategy for preserving digital data and that a unified strategy is developed for the state with strict standards that guarantee this vital security aspect.

"There is no doubt that the work of a cybersecurity strategy must include several axes: technical, organizational, human resources, and a legal aspect.

"The first steps we need today, in terms of government data, is to develop a comprehensive law for data preservation and cybersecurity, specifying the mechanisms, frameworks, standards, and controls for how to enter preserving and protecting digital data, and adhering to these standards by appointing quality officers for this.

"Today, piracy has even seeped into our bank accounts, via calls or SMS, and we must not deny that no matter how much awareness among the public increases, there are still groups that can be vulnerable to fraud, such as the elderly, groups with modest education, teenagers, and others, and we must protect them by protecting its data, and I stress that it is the responsibility of all the concerned government agencies with technology, communications and information security, such as the Cybersecurity Agency and CITRA.

"We do not ignore the importance of the human element in this aspect, as we still need more cadres specialized in cybersecurity, by graduating students in this specialty and its ramifications. "Indeed, some countries go further

than that by using the hackers themselves to train cadres on how to repel electronic attacks, and I cannot fail to applaud the step.

The recent signing of a cooperation agreement between Abdullah Al-Salem University and the Cybersecurity Agency is one example in preparing qualified cadres, but we still need more

# Also:

"The National Assembly and its deputies, regardless of their different backgrounds and affiliations, all annoyed us and preoccupied themselves ostensibly with preserving the constitution and adhering to it, while our constitution was neither present nor applied in our practical life, especially with the presence of the nation's assemblies, especially the articles on equality and freedoms," columnist Abdul Latif Al-Duaij wrote for Al-Jarida daily.

"It was neglected and disrupted by the representatives before power. They bothered us by preserving the constitution and adhering to it, while they and others were the first to trample upon it. The constitution for the nation's representatives is the National Assembly and its elections only.

"As long as the Council exists, our "constitution" is fine and democracy is in peace. But what about freedoms, equality, and the continuing violation of the rights of many citizens, starting with the Kuwaiti citizen who was deprived for years, or even decades, of her political rights, passing through the Kuwaitis born in Kuwait to a naturalized father, who were not treated fairly until years ago, and ending with all citizens who were and still are victims of mediocrity, nepotism, and bribes from

"Years ago, the Ministry of the Interior honored a police officer because, with his "acumen," he arrested an Indian maid who had stolen her employer's gold. When the astute policeman asked how he knew that she was a "thief," he replied that she appeared confused, so

he searched for her and found the gold. "Thus, this news went unnoticed, perhaps until now, and the enthusiasts of the constitution did not object or even feel the blatant violation.

"The declared constitutional rights of expatriates, and the explicit violation by the policeman and those who honored him -- and this is important -- of the articles of the Constitution, which preserve the rights of individuals, whether expatriates or citizens.

"It is not permissible to arrest or search a person except in accordance with the provisions of the law', Article 31 of the Kuwaiti Constitution, which the representatives of the National Assembly listened to in defense of it.

"No human being, any human being, may be arrested except in accordance with the law. The Ministry of the Interior publicly bragged about honoring one of its members, because he arrested an Indian expatriate.

"Her fault when she was arrested was that she was confused or appeared confused in the eyes of the discerning policeman. Of course, this is an example of the violations that were taking place of the Constitution under the nose of those singing its praises, and there is no doubt that these violations, and others like them, are still continuing to this day.

"We had a council, and we had elections, but we did not have them, or at least our representatives have sufficient awareness for us to have democracy, freedom, or equality even today."

"Torch of security and safety... Thank Allah, and then His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his lofty speech that addressed the suffering of his loyal people. Joy filled their hearts after the dissolution and suspension of the National Assembly," Sheikh Ali Al Jaber Al-Ahmad wrote for Al-Seyassah

"It was a joy that I could not have imagined, even if it had been a public demand since the representatives have rebelled. His Highness did not make this difficult decision until he was certain that it would have been more difficult if he kept the situation as it is, considering His Highness gave the Assembly and the government an opportunity to correct the course and make a good choice. Advice and guidance were issued through letters, but the two authorities did not perform as required.

"When I say, 'Oh, the joy of what happened', I do not say it just to gloat. I say it because of the reaction of the representatives and their joy after they succeeded. Their barbaric and attacking style began, which took the lead among the Kuwaiti representatives and some naturalized people. This is in addition to their threats to family members and ministers. We did not hear their electoral programs. Most of their electoral headquarters were just there to deliver a message of imposition to the government and to highlight the imaginary heroism of the people.

have repeatedly warned, as others have warned, in previous articles, that when a disaster occurs, it only falls on those who do not listen and do not learn from previous experiences and warnings. Today, all they have to do is accept what 'Baraqish' committed against herself.

"I also did not understand the reason for their inappropriate, reckless, provocative statements and challenges, instead of each of them knowing his position and limits.

"The representative does not have the right to be arrogant. Not everything he requests will be implemented and not everything he says is true. Nevertheless, the government showed its cooperation by being lenient to satisfy the representatives with some of their requests. Perhaps, they will respond to that cooperation, but they went too far with their requests and conditions, which did not end in previous assem-

"The representatives commented repeatedly until they infringed on the powers of the judiciary and reached the powers of His Highness with expressions of abuse, which is called the 'disease of greatness' that afflicted them in recent years.

"The overwhelming joy over the dissolution and suspension of the Assembly is not complete; unless the government completes its projects without delay or extension and complete the committees of its dysfunctional bodies that have stopped the wheel of development. The government has no excuse.

"Ministers must intensify their efforts to make up for what was lost. The opportunity is available to work hard without obstacles. It is equally important to monitor the performance of employees and oblige them to work full hours in their offices in order to give everyone their due rights without oppressing anyone, especially after His Highness paved for you the path of work, reform and good luck.

"Listen and obey, then listen and obey, then listen and obey.

"May Allah protect Kuwait and its people from all forms of evil and

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Sheikh Fahd in talks with Shapiro.

Al-Qabas photo

## **Meet focuses on recent developments**

# Sheikh Fahd holds talks with US Dy Assistant Defense Secretary

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahd Yousef Saud Al-Sabah engaged in discussions with US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Daniel Shapiro, addressing topics of mutual interest and the latest regional and international developments, reports Al-Oabas daily.

According to a press statement issued by the Ministry of Defense on Monday, Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef welcomed Shapiro and his accompanying delegation during their official visit to the country

The meeting involved an exchange of views on various issues, with a focus on recent developments in both regional and international arenas.

The statement highlighted Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef's appreciation for the enduring and robust friendly relations between the State of Kuwait and the United States of America. The continuous cooperation between the two nations across various domains, particularly in defense matters, was acknowledged and commended.

The meeting was also attended by the United States Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Karen Sasahara, underscoring the significance of the diplomatic ties between the two

### **GTD** issues list

# 29 firms for compulsory motor insurance okayed

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The General Traffic Department has released a list of 29 approved insurance companies authorized to issue compulsory motor insurance policies, which cover civil liability arising from traffic accidents, reports Al-Anba daily. Among the most notable companies on the list are:

Kuwait Insurance Company Gulf Insurance Group Al Ahlia Insurance Company Warba Insurance First Takaful Insurance Wethaq Takaful Insurance Bahraini Kuwaiti Insurance Gulf Insurance and Reinsurance Kuwaiti Qatari Insurance

# **Traffic signal violation** leads to discovery of liquor bottle & Shabu

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: Authorities have apprehended an expatriate and a citizen on charges of possessing and using narcotic substances, following a traffic light violation, reports Al-Anba daily. The seized items have been handed over to the General Administration for Narcotics Control.

The confiscated items included a chemical bag, a roll of Shabu, and a bottle of water that had been filled with local liquor. According to a security source, the citizen was detained in the Abu Halifa area after running a red light. Upon his arrest, it was discovered that he was behaving abnormally and had a bag with some kind of chemical in his possession.

Meanwhile, another expatriate was apprehended in the Al-Jleeb area while walking on foot. During his arrest, authorities found alcohol and a bag containing Shabu.

Both individuals have been referred to the General Administration for Narcotics Control for further investigation

# 9-kilo drugs, 5,600 narcotic pills, alcohol seized from nine people

Police nab elderly woman for engaging in witchcraft

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The **General Administration for** Narcotics Control successfully apprehended nine individuals of various nationalities across six separate cases.

The operation resulted in the confiscation of approximately 9 kilograms of various narcotic substances, including chemicals, shabu, hashish, and marijuana. Additionally, authorities seized 5,600 psychotropic pills, 314 bottles of alcohol, and sums of money derived from drug sales, reports Al-Anba daily.

Upon confronting the defendants with the seized items, they confessed that the drugs and alcohol were intended for trafficking and personal use. The individuals, along with the confiscated items, were handed over to the relevant authorities to initiate the necessary legal proceedings against them.

Girl injured in accident: A girl, born in 2019, sustained serious injuries when a four-wheeldrive vehicle driven by a 21-year-old citizen ran over her in Shubrat Al-Khudhar, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The girl was with her family when the accident happened. She is now confined at Farwaniya Hospital. The citizen was referred to Sulaibiya Police Station for interrogation and other legal measures.

# **Court rejects appeals**

### Officers in torture case freed on bail of KD 10K

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The Court of Appeals refrained from imposing punishment on a brigadier general and a lieutenant colonel in the Ministry of Interior and released them on bail of KD10,000 for good behavior; after sentencing them to four years in prison for torturing juveniles.

The Public Prosecution charged the defendants with torturing and beating two juveniles to force them to confess and give statements and information about the accused in a felony case. These juveniles stated they did not remember the circumstances of a video clip related to the case that was shown to them. Meanwhile, the Constitutional Court,

headed by Judge Fouad Zuwaid, has rejected the appeal against the unconstitutionality of Nationality Law No. 44/1994, considering that naturalized citizens are originally Kuwaitis, due to the lack of interest among those who filed the appeal.

In another context, the court rejected all electoral petitions in view of the absence of a litigant due to the dissolution of the National Assembly.

Construction worker dies: A construction worker, born in 1988, died when he was der construction in Mutlaa, reports Al-Anba The colleagues of the expatriate, iden-

electrocuted while working in a house un-

tified only as AJA, informed the Operations Unit at the Interior Ministry about the incident. Accordingly, paramedics and security per-

sonnel rushed to the location where the paramedics confirmed the worker's death. His body was referred to the Forensic Medicine

Case No. 36/2024 was registered under the title, 'Death by Electrocution'. Investigations are underway to establish the circumstances leading to the worker's electrocu-

Woman held for witchcraft: Officers

from the Criminal Investigation General Department in the Interior Ministry arrested an elderly woman for engaging in witchcraft and sorcery, reports Al-Rai daily.

A security source told the daily that a person filed a report against the 70-year-old woman of unspecified nationality practicing witchcraft and sorcery in exchange for large sums of money.

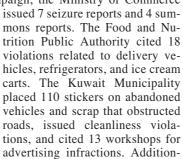
The department granted legal permission to arrest the woman after she was caught red-handed with magical tools in her possession. She is currently detained at the investigation office for further questioning.

# **GTD Fahaheel campaign**

Power to 23 workshops cut

# Several people nabbed, dozens of violations issued; vehicles seized

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The General Traffic Department, in collaboration with several relevant authorities, conducted extensive security campaigns, recently, targeting workshops and garages in the Fahaheel Industrial Area. These efforts led to the issuance of 130 various traffic violations, impounding of 3 vehicles causing excessive noise, the disconnection of electricity to 23 workshops, and the arrest of 6 individuals for residency law violations, reports Al-Seyassah daily. During the campaign, the Ministry of Commerce



Al-Foudari

ally, they ticketed 14 abandoned vehicles and scrap pieces, and fined 12 street vendors operating in front of workshops. The Public Authority for Industry reported 11 workshops for housing law violations and summoned 6 more for further ac-

The campaign was overseen by the Acting Director General of the General Traffic Department, Brigadier General Jamal Al-Foudari, the Assistant Brigadier General for Technical Affairs, Ghazi Abu Qaba, Brigadier Ashraf Al-Amir, and several leaders from the participating agencies and ministries.



# **Municipal Council focuses on flexibility** and rapid development in 19th session

Newly elected members sworn in

By Enas Awadh

Al-Seyassah /Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: Flexibility, consensus and speed of achievement, along with their profound implications, were the broad topics that dominated the atmosphere in the 19th regular session of the second term of the Municipal Council, which was held recently under the chairmanship of Abdullah Al-Mahri.

The session started with the swearing in of the two members who won in the 2024 supplementary elections in the sixth (Khaitan) and ninth (Ahmadi) districts: Walid Khaled Al-Dagher Al-Rashidi and Fahad Al-Khaneen Al-Ajmi

This was followed by the council's announcement

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: Minister of Justice,

Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-

Wasmi has confirmed the launching of a new on-

line service through Sahel application, reports Al-

of verdicts on his criminal cases issued by the First

Instance Court, Court of Appeals or Court of Cas-

The new service allows the user to obtain a copy

of its nomination of council member Fahad Al-Khaneen to be a member of Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorate committees, as well as the

nominated as member of the Farwaniya and Jahra governorate committees, in addition to the Legal, Financial and Land Liberation committees.

The council also discussed responses to the members' questions. It referred to the Reform and Development Committee the question of Deputy Chairman of the council Khaled Al-Mutairi regarding the parking of heavy vehicles in the yards of residential areas for consideration.

It postponed discussion of the question submitted by

Photo by Mohammad Morsi

Al-Wasmi stressed that the ministry is keen on

In another development, Al-Wasmi has referred

acting Undersecretary of the Justice Ministry

Hashem Al-Qallaf for retirement as per the latter's

enhancing online services in the interest of the



Photo from the Municipal Council's 19th regular session.

MoJ launches new online service

Technical Committee. Council member Walid Al-Dagher Al-Rashidi was

council's decision to operate a historic hotel or Kuwaiti restaurant in an old Kuwaiti house in Salmiya, Hawally Square, Block No. 11, Uhud Street, House No. 10. The council referred the following to the executive

to allocate a bank site in Block Four, Mishref.

body:

It rejected the request of a citizen to amend the

■ Proposals of Abdullatif Al-Daei Al-Awwal on studying rain torrents before allocating new cities, especially the residential cities; and temporary allocation of a walkway in Kaifan, Block Seven.

Proposals of Fahad Musaed Al-Abduljader Al-Awal on amending the fees stipulated in the Temporary Exhibitions Regulations No. 930/2019 and the parking lot opposite the Public Authority for Civil Information.

■ Proposal of Abdullah Awaid Al-Enezi to establish entrance and exit to the Teachers Association branch in Mangaf along Fahaheel Expressway.

Meanwhile, council member Fahad Al-Khanin said

he will focus on presenting vital proposals aimed at improving the quality of services in Kuwait in general and in the new residential cities; particularly Sabah Al-Ahmad, Wafra and Umm Al-Hayman resi-He added his priorities in the next phase include allocating land to establish a hospital in Sabah

Al-Ahmad residential area and present solutions to reduce the effects of environmental pollution in some areas in Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorates, in parallel with improving roads. Moreover, Deputy Chairman of the council Khaled

Al-Mutairi congratulated the two new members for winning the supplementary elections held last Saturday. He wished them success in their stint at the council, specifically in the committees where they were appointed as members.

He also affirmed that he submitted to the executive branch a question about allocating sites for parking heavy vehicles in the country.

He said the new sanitation regulations impose penalties on parking heavy machinery and equipment and it is unacceptable that these regulations are violated due to the lack of parking space; as they are parked haphazardly in various locations like schoolyards, close to homes and sidewalks.

He added the Ministry of Public Works approved his proposal to allocate sites for parking heavy equipment and machinery, but the latter reported that was not feasible. After discussing the issue in the Municipal Council, a decision was taken to refer the proposal to the Reform and Development Committee to implement it.

# **PM extends congratulations**

# Kuwait's HH Amir congratulates Chad prez on winning elections

KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday a cable of congratulations to the newly elected President of Chad, General Mahamat Idriss Deby.

In his cable, His Highness the Amir congratulated President Deby on winning the presidential elections, wishing him success and everlasting health, and further growth and development of bilateral relations between both friendly countries.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday a cable of congratulations to the newly elected President of Chad, General Mahamat Idriss Deby.



Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) Marzouq Al-Otaibi with the Ambassador of Tunisia to Kuwait Mohamed Karim

# Strengthening bilateral relations

# **Kuwaiti, Tunisian officials discuss** economic and labor cooperation

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) Marzouq Al-Otaibi recently met with Ambassador of Tunisia to Kuwait Mohamed Karim Boudali and his accompanying delegation, reports

During the meeting, Al-Otaibi praised the distinguished relations between Kuwait and Tunisia while affirming the commitment of PAM to further strengthen ties between the two

They also discussed ways to fortify

tries, as well as the recruitment of Tunisian workers. Al-Otaibi said the Kuwaiti labor market needs skilled workers in different fields.

On the other hand, Boudali expressed his gratitude for the efforts exerted by Kuwaiti institutions to help the Tunisian community in Kuwait. He then affirmed his country's intention to strengthen economic ties with Kuwait and provide skilled workers through the organized procedures, which will be carried out by PAM and the Embassy of Tunisia.

## **MoE** issues directive on structural modifications

# Education Ministry reaffirms commitment to flexible working hours for school staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (Agencies): The Ministry of Education has reaffirmed its commitment to the existing flexible working hours mechanism for all school staff, as announced earlier, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a statement, the Ministry clarified that the current fingerprint system remains unchanged, particularly concerning the recording of attendance and departure for both educational and administrative personnel

The exception applies to individuals involved in examination administration, whether onsite or offsite, given the

unique demands of their responsibilities. Furthermore, the Ministry emphasized the importance of accuracy in disseminating news and urged everyone to rely on verified sources and official Ministry accounts for information.

Earlier, the Ministry of Education has issued a directive urging school administrations to refrain from undertaking any engineering or structural modifications without consulting the competent engineering staff in the Department of Engineering Affairs within the respective educational district, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Hessa Al-Mutawa, the acting Undersecretary for Public Education, emphasized in a letter addressed to the directors of educational and religious education districts, that unauthorized modifications have resulted in adverse effects on school buildings and pose risks to the lives of building occupants.

Al-Mutawa underscored the imporance of ensuring that all engineering, structural, or electrical modifications are carried out under the supervision of the designated engineering authority responsible for managing engineering affairs and obtaining necessary approv-

This precautionary measure aims to safeguard the well-being of all individuals involved, preventing potential harm resulting from non-compliant work.

Moreover, the Ministry of Education has announced the commencement of the application process for interviews for educational supervisory positions through its website, with the deadline set for Thursday, June 13.



KUNA photo

Ministry of Education building

# **Kuwait anticipates arrival of 800** Naimi sheep ahead of Eid Al-Adha

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Al-Wawan Livestock and Animal Feed Trading Company Menawer Al-Wawan has disclosed that the Kuwaiti market will soon receive 800 Naimi sheep from Jordan; indicating this is out of 10,000 sheep expected to enter the country before Eid Al-Adha.

Al-Wawan said the sheep will enter the country through Abdally border for the first time since 1990. He pointed out that the Kuwaiti market often suffer from sheep shortage, especially during Eid Al-Adha -- the animal sacrifice sea-

son; hence, the need for alternatives. He added the company tried to import sheep from Jordan through Saudi Arabia, but the road is currently blocked. He confirmed an agreement

has been reached to transport the sheep to Kuwait through Iraq, particularly Abdally border. He praised the assistance provided by Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC) and Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) in this regard.

He went on to say that sheep will be imported from Turkiye and Syria as well; in order to guarantee ample supply in the local market which, in turn, will reduce prices by at least 15 percent.

About the decision of the Australian agriculture affairs minister to suspend the export of sheep, Al-Wawan said his company does not import Australian sheep. He added his company imported 1,000 sheep from Somalia and 3,000 more are expected to reach the Kuwaiti market soon.



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## **Deadline set for end of July**

# Ministry of Health requires employees to update data

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The Ministry of Health has issued a directive for all its employees to update their personal data by the end of July. In an administrative circular, Acting Undersecretary Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi instructed assistant undersecretaries, district schools, and central administrations to ensure compliance with this update, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This initiative aims to enhance the ministry's employee database. The circular outlines specific procedures for updating the database, including:

Accessing the ministry's website

Authenticating through the "My ID" application
Entering and updating job data

Updating phone numbers and personal email addresses
Adding academic qualifica-

All required updates and document submissions must be completed by July 31, 2024.

Public engagement vital

# Ministry vows to tackle sluggishness surrounding long-pending draft laws

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: There is an inclination within the Ministry of Social Affairs to break the inertia surrounding long-pending draft laws, which, despite being completed years ago, remain shelved and obscured from public view, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Foremost among these are draft laws concerning civil society organizations, charities, and volunteer work. Ministry insiders emphasize the critical urgency of approving these laws, given that some have languished for over half a century, rendering their existing provisions inadequate to address the myriad contemporary challenges.

They stress the imperative of engaging representatives from public benefit associations in crafting these legislative projects to safeguard the operational freedom of non-governmental organizations --vital entities that deliver essential and diverse services to both society at large and their constituents.

Additionally, laws governing cooperation and aid demand fundamental amendments to certain articles. For instance, Law No. (118/2013) pertaining to cooperative

societies requires revision, particularly in light of over a decade having elapsed since its enactment.

Such amendments are essential to align with present realities and the dynamic changes witnessed during this period. Ensuring the Ministry possesses a broader oversight over cooperative society boards of directors, while preventing any misappropriation of shareholders' funds, is paramount to preserving this substantial edifice. With annual sales estimated at one billion dinars, cooperative societies serve as vital bastions for ensuring food security within the nation.

Furthermore, Law No. (2/2011) concerning public aid necessitates amendments to ensure aid distribution exclusively targets deserving recipients.

Rigorous scrutiny of all pending aid applications is essential to confirm that beneficiaries have settled any outstanding debts, safeguarding the integrity of public funds. These funds are sacrosanct and require meticulous stewardship to uphold their sanctity and ensure their effective utilization for the benefit of the populace.

# Future Kid Entertainment real estate firm unveils strategic expansion plan

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: Muhammad Al-Nouri, the CEO of Future Kid Entertainment Real Estate Company (Future Kid), revealed a new strategy aimed at fully exploiting all activities permitted to the company, including real estate investment, reports Al-Qabas doily.

This includes the creation of a real estate portfolio and targeting partner-

ships with unlisted companies operating in the restaurant and entertainment sectors, with a focus on acquisitions and mergers in the near future. Additionally, the company is undergoing a restructuring plan over the next three years to enhance its administrative, financial, and technical capabilities, ensuring a strong financial position and continuous business development.

# **Sheikh Fahad**

# Continued from Page 1

This is in addition to a new prisoner monitoring system -- an electronic bracelet for citizen prisoners, especially female citizens involved in civil and financial cases. Instead of families disintegrating, the mother is at home among her children and she is monitored round the clock.

All of these and more can address overcrowding in prisons that have become like human warehouses, because work is being done according to the letter of the law. Without a doubt, amending the law has become a necessity. This is the task of the current government, which must consider all legislation in order to modernize and develop them to be more humane and for the State to save a lot.

Undoubtedly, everyone appreciates the field work carried out by Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf. The man performs his duties humanely and we have seen the fruitful results of the measures he has taken.

Likewise, his field visits to all sectors in the ministries of Defense and Interior or the affiliated bodies usually result in immediate solutions to problems. This indicates high administrative awareness and understanding of what is good for the people.

The tasks assigned to ministers require working in the field, not at the ivory towers. Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf has proven this. In the same manner, Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila opened her office and the doors of the ministry to everyone. She allocated one day a week to receive the people's complaints.

In this regard, we remember once again the necessity of having a grievance office, as the case in most countries keen on ensuring justice among people

The office is directly linked to the leadership and complaints are scrutinized with the utmost precision, such that no official is unfair or there is no favoritism. In this way, we do not return to the corrupt practices of those who were using everything for their own interests under the pretext of representing the people.

# **Kuwait highlights**

# **Continued from Page 1**

He added that the meeting discussed various topics of common interests, including setting a media plan to spread awareness and preserve the gulf identity, as well as introduce artificial intel-

ligence and digitalization.

Muhaisen stressed the importance of exchanging information and experiences for the development of the media sector in the GCC countries, adding that Kuwait welcomes to host the upcoming meeting.

# **Kuwaiti-American**

# Continued from Page 1

between the two friendly countries.

It also mentioned that Kuwaiti Ambassador to the US Sheikha Al-Zain Nasser Al-Sabah and its counterpart Karen Sasahara and many other military officials from both sides participated in the signing ceremonies.

# **Condolences flood**

# Continued from Page 1

He pointed out that the martyr is a defender and supporter of Palestine and the people of Gaza against the usurping Zionist entity, stressing his martyrdom is a great loss for the Iranian people and the glorious Islamic nation.

Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Al-Nasser expressed his sincere condolences and sympathy to the Islamic Republic of Iran, its government and its friendly people. He asked Almighty Allah to cover them with His vast mercy and to inspire their families and loved ones with patience and solace.

Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Ambassador of Tajikistan Zabidullah Zabidov asserted: "The sad news hurt us and all the people of Tajikistan. We are deeply sorry." He affirmed that the late Ibrahim Raisi played an important role in expanding and deepening the friendly relations and cooperation between Tajikistan and Iran.

He added: "I offer my sincere condolences and sympathy to the Iranian people and the families of the martyrs in this great tragedy."

Ambassador of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Prince Sultan bin Saad Al-Saud, in his name and on behalf of the members of the delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, extended sincere condolences to the ambassador and members of the delegation of the Iranian Republic in Kuwait and the Iranian people.

Omani Ambassador Dr. Saleh Al-Kharusi expressed his deep condolences and sympathy to the Iranian leadership, government and people, wishing them patience and solace.

Qatari Ambassador Ali bin Abdullah Al-Mahmoud expressed his sin-



Minister of Public Works, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, Dr. Noura Al-Mishaan and the Vice Chairman and CEO of the National Bank of Kuwait

# NBK pledges KD 8 mln to boost Sharq area with new park and parking facility

# Initiative sets new standard for urban revitalization

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: In a significant push towards sustainable urban development, the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has committed KD 8 million to a transformative project in the Sharq area, in collaboration with Kuwait Municipality and Al-Shaab National Real Estate Company. This initiative will see the creation of a public recreational park and a multistory parking garage, aiming to enhance the urban landscape and address infrastructural needs.

The ceremonial signing took place at the headquarters of Kuwait Municipality, witnessed by Dr. Noura Al-Mishaan, the Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs; Mr. Isam Al-Sager, Vice-Chairman and Group CEO of NBK; and Eng. Saud Al-Dabbous, Director General of Kuwait Municipality. Representatives from the bank, Al-Shaab National Real Estate Company, and the Municipality were also present.

Spanning over 12,000 sqm, the new development will incorporate lush green spaces, a mix of soft and hard landscaping, and areas for public recreation. The accompanying parking facility is set to provide over 1,000 parking bays, significantly mitigating the persistent parking shortages and traffic congestion within the bustling Sharq business district.

This project aligns with the Kuwait National Development Plan (KNDP) and supports the objectives

cere condolences and described the

He expressed his deepest condo-

Chinese Ambassador Zhang Jian-

wei said: "I express my deep condo-

lences to the families of the deceased.

the government and people of Iran.

After assuming office, President

Raisi exerted tremendous efforts to

strengthen and develop the compre-

hensive strategic partnership between

Iran and China. His unfortunate

death is a huge loss for the Iranians.

The Chinese people have lost a dear

He expressed China's pride in the

traditional friendship between China

and Iran, believing that through the

coordinated efforts of the two sides,

the comprehensive strategic partner-

ship between China and Iran will con-

Amira Al-Hassan, Head of the Of-

fice of the United Nations Human Set-

tlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in

the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

countries stated: "With deep sorrow,

we received the news on the martyr-

dom of the President of the Islamic

Republic of Iran, his Foreign Affairs

Minister and the accompanying del-

egation. In my name and on behalf of

the members of UN-Habitat, I extend

my sincere condolences to the Iranian

people and the families of the martyrs

in this great affliction, praying to Al-

lah the Almighty to cover them with

los Manuel described the incident

as tragic, which claimed the lives of

the president and his foreign minister

who is considered a man of peace in

the Middle East and he resolved is-

sues peacefully, expressing his deep

sorrow on his behalf and on behalf of

South African Ambassador Maneli-

si Genge offered his deepest condo-

lences to the Iranian people and the

families of the victims. He wished for

patience and solace for the families of

the victims and peace and security for

Azerbaijani Ambassador Emil Karimov said: "We extend our deepest

condolences to the Republic of Iran."

He described the incident as sad as

the deceased, the delegation and

those accompanying him met with his

Azerbaijani counterpart before the ac-

cident. They had an important meet-

ing and successful talks took place

between them. I wish mercy for the

deceased and to grant their families

Iran and its people.

patience and solace.'

his country's embassy in Kuwait.

Peru's Ambassador to Kuwait Car-

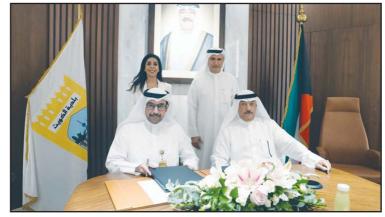
tinue to advance.

His vast mercy.

lences to the friendly Islamic Republic of Iran, asking Almighty Allah to

cover them with His vast mercy.

accident as a "huge tragedy."



Dr. Noura Al-Mishaan and Isam Al-Sager stand with Engineer Saud Al-Dabbous, the Director General of Kuwait Municipality, and Mohammed Al-Farhan, CEO of Al-Shaab National Real Estate Company.

of Kuwait Vision 2035 to establish Kuwait as a leading financial and commercial hub. It also responds to a recent call by Kuwait Municipality for private sector engagement in beautifying and improving Kuwait City's infrastructure.

# **Expected Benefits and Impact**

Scheduled for completion in approximately two and a half years, the project aims to deliver multiple benefits:

■ Easing Parking Shortages: Alleviating the acute lack of parking spaces in Kuwait City, as highlighted in recent traffic studies and the

Structural Plan which considers the region's ongoing and future urban developments.

Reducing Traffic Congestion: Building on solutions from a comprehensive traffic study conducted by a consortium of private companies, under the oversight of the Public Authority for Roads & Transportation.

■ Enhancing Public Spaces: The introduction of substantial greenery and landscaped areas will upgrade public services and pedestrian pathways, significantly enhancing the quality of urban life.

On this occasion, Mr. Al-Sager

remarked, "This initiative reiterates NBK's commitment to fostering sustainable development within the Kuwaiti economy and actively supporting the State's developmental ambitions." He further noted, "The development of a public park aligns with the State's climate action goals and our bank's mission to foster environmental, social, and economic welfare, in keeping with Kuwait's pledge towards achieving carbon neutrality."

"Moreover, constructing a wellequipped parking garage will address some of the critical traffic and parking challenges faced in Kuwait City," he added.

Mr. Al-Sager also highlighted that environmental protection remains a pivotal element of NBK's sustainability strategy, which integrates ESG standards across all operations to enhance value for all stakeholders.

In 2023 alone, NBK's social responsibility efforts exceeded KD 28 million, including significant investments like the KD 3 million donation towards the development and beautification of the Shuwaikh waterfront, which spans 1.7 km.

This initiative is expected to set a benchmark for private-public partnerships in urban development, reflecting a shared commitment to enhancing Kuwait's global standing and livability.

# **MoE** to integrate fingerprint system for school employees

# Improving transparency in attendance tracking

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The Ministry of Education disclosed that its Information Systems Department had integrated the attendance fingerprints of all employees within the Ministry's General Office and the educational regions and departments under its purview in February, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a letter addressed to the Un-

In a letter addressed to the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education, the Information Systems Department detailed that the integration of attendance fingerprints of all school employees had been effectively linked with the Civil Service Commission in a trial environment, pending activation.

The department affirmed its readiness to activate the attendance and departure fingerprint system for all school employees in the live environment of the Civil Service Bureau once five prerequisites are met. These prerequisites include the introduction of working hours for all school employees by the CSC and the subsequent linking of these working hours, both pre- and post-vacation, as prescribed by the commission.

Furthermore, the department highlighted the necessity of training the authority responsible for granting permissions, managing costs, and issuing exemptions for all school employees. T

This training is crucial to familiarize the administrative department within schools with the attendance and departure system implemented by the Civil Service Commission.

Directors-General of educational regions are tasked with overseeing this training process, ensuring that personnel are equipped to manage and monitor working hours for school staff, including administrative departments within schools, as well as vacation and working hours within the respective regions and the Ministry itself.

# Arab Planning Institute starts 2nd phase of leading businesses program in Tripoli

BEIRUT, May 21, (KUNA): The Kuwait-headquartered Arab Planning Institute has launched the second phase of the "the national program for disseminating the culture of leading businesses" in the northern city of Tripoli for backing up human resources.

Karim Darwish, the head of the API administrative apparatus, said in remarks to KUNA on Tuesday that the activity was opened with the training course, "your small venture from a no-

tion to operation and development," involving 53 participants who represented 42 foundations, societies and colleges.

The program's first stage was launched in January during a visit by the API Director-General Dr. Abdullah Al-Shami to Beirut.

Moreover, Darwish indicated that the program aims at encouraging the youth to launch private businesses, start-ups and medium projects. It also boosts competition and innovation among the youngsters.

Toufic Dabbousi, the Chair of Tripoli and Lebanese Chamber, in a statement at start of the training course, lauded the institute for encouraging initiatives and enterprises.

His remarks were echoed by Abdulrazzaq Al-Qarhani, the chair of "dar al-ilm and Ulemaa," noting that such activities contribute to re-developing Lebanon.

# PADA enforces strict adherence to disability rights law

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: According to an administrative circular issued by Al-Humaidi Al-Mutairi, the Acting Director of the Public Authority for Persons with Disabilities, employees of the authority are required to adhere strictly to the provisions of Article No. (67) of Law (8/2010) concerning the rights of persons with disabilities are at Al-Leith deille.

abilities, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This article prohibits any public employee or individual responsible for public service from intervening in any way with parties involved in the affairs of persons with disabilities, whether through orders, requests, recommendations, or any form of mediation.

Furthermore, the circular emphasizes that if any such intervention occurs, the concerned parties must notify both the Authority and the respective entity to which the implicated employee or individual reports. Legal actions will be taken against the individual in question as per the law.

Additionally, the circular reiterates that procedures for the treatment of a disabled person should only commence through the disabled individual themselves, their guardian, a first-degree relative, or someone possessing an official power of attorney on their behalf. These measures are in place to ensure the protection of the rights and interests of persons with disabilities as outlined by the law.

# **World News Roundup**

# **Europe**

### **Quake hits Italy**

# Germany's foreign minister visits Kyiv

KYIV, Ukraine, May 21, (AP): Germany's foreign minister arrived in Kyiv on Tuesday in the latest public display of support for Ukraine by its Western partners, although deliveries of promised weapons and ammunition from NATO countries like Germany have been slow and have left Ukraine vulnerable to a recent Russian push along parts of the front line.

Annalena Baerbock renewed Berlin's calls for partners to send more air defense systems, as Russia pounds Ukraine with missiles, glide bombs and rockets. Germany is the second-biggest supplier of military aid to Ukraine after the United States.

Ukraine's depleted troops are trying to hold off a fierce Russian offensive along the eastern border in one of the most critical phases of the war, which is stretching

into its third year.



ficials say they are still facing an alarming shortfall of air defenses against the Russian onslaught.

The Kremlin's forces have used their advantage in the skies to debilitate Ukraine's power grid, hoping to sap Ukrainian morale and disrupt its defense industry.

Baerbock, accompanied by Ukrainian Energy Minister Herman Halushchenko, toured a thermal power plant in central Ukraine that was heavily damaged on April 11. In the plant's scorched interior, workers of Centrenergo, a state company that operates the plant, were still scooping up rubble several weeks after it

#### Focusing

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the Kremlin's forces are still focusing their efforts on the eastern Donetsk province and northeastern Kharkiv region, where explosive-laden Russian glide bombs are wreaking destruction on military and civilian ar-

"This brings us back again and again to the need for air defense - for additional defense systems that could significantly mitigate the difficulties for our warriors and the threat to our cities and communities," Zelenskyy said late Monday on social media. Zelenskyy claimed Ukraine's forces are still in con-

trol of the contested areas, though Russia says it has captured a series of border villages. It was not possible to independently verify either

side's battlefield claims. Baerbock had planned to visit Kharkiv on Tuesday

but the trip had to be called off for security reasons, German news agency dpa reported.

Security Council rejects resolution: The United States said Monday that Russia last week launched a satellite that could be part of weaponizing space, a possible future global trend that members of the United Nations Security Council condemned even as they

failed to pass a measure against it. The Security Council resolution drafted by Russia rivaled one backed by the U.S. and Japan that failed last month. The rival drafts focused on different types of weapons, with the U.S. and Japan specifying weapons of mass destruction. The Russian draft discussed

all types of weapons. The US and its allies said the language that the 15-member council debated on Monday was simply meant to distract the world from Russia's true inten-

tion: weaponizing space. "The culmination of Russia's campaign of diplomatic gaslighting and dissembling is the text before us today," U.S. deputy ambassador Robert Wood told the council.



Austrian leader lauds UK's efforts: Austria's leader praised Britain Tuesday as a "pioneer" in outsourcing asylum proceedings to places outside Europe, citing a U.K. bill to send migrants to Rwanda as he hosted Prime Minister Rishi Sunak in Vienna.

Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer's conservative party has long taken a hard line on migration and faces a strong challenge from the far-right Freedom Party in an election expected this fall.

Nehammer said Austria and the United Kingdom, which left the European Union in 2020, are "strategic partners when it comes to being able to conduct asylum proceedings in safe third countries.

'The United Kingdom is a pioneer for this path, which will also be important for the European Union,' he said at a joint news conference with Sunak. "With the Rwanda model, it is a pioneer for us being able to put asylum proceedings in safe third countries on the European Union's agenda too."

Greek judge dismisses case: A Greek judge dismissed charges against nine Egyptian men accused of causing a shipwreck that killed hundreds of migrants last year and sent shockwaves through the European Union's border protection and asylum operations, after a prosecutor told the court Greece lacked jurisdic-

Shortly after the trial opened in the southern Greek city of Kalamata, public prosecutor Ekaterini Tsironi recommended that the charges be dismissed, saying that Greek jurisdiction could not be established because the overcrowded trawler sank outside Greek territorial waters.

More than 500 people are believed to have gone down with the fishing trawler, which had been traveling from Libya to Italy. Following the sinking, 104 people were rescued - mostly migrants from Syria, Pakistan and Egypt - and 82 bodies were recovered.

Quake hits southern Italy: A women's prison near Naples was evacuated as a precaution Tuesday following a 4.4 magnitude quake with an epicenter at an active volcano west of the southern Italian port city that forced hundreds of residents to sleep in tents or cars. No injuries and only minor damage was reported following the Monday evening temblor.

The quake was the strongest in recorded history around the Phlegraean Fields, a sprawling area of ancient volcanic centers near the Tyrrhenian Sea in a zone that encompasses western neighborhoods of Naples and its suburbs, said Giuseppe De Natale, a volcanologist of Italy's INGV National Geophysics and Volcanology Center. During the last major event in 1984, 40,000 residents were evacuated during a period of intense seismic activity as a precaution against a feared eruption that did not occur.



Rioters loyal to President Donald Trump rally at the US Capitol in Washington on Jan 6, 2021. As Trump makes a comeback bid to return to power, Republicans in Congress have become even more likely to cast doubts on President Joe Biden's 2020 victory. (AP)



Police officers inspect the site of the Russian missile attack, with a dead body in the (foreground), in the outskirts of Kharkiv, Ukraine on May 19. The missile hit a recreation area, killing five including one pregnant, and injuring 16. (AP)



**America** 

**Biden presses for trial delay:** Hunter **Biden** pressed for a delay in his federal gun case on Monday, asking an appeals court to pause the Delaware trial set to begin next

Defense attorneys for the president's son argued there isn't an urgent need to start the trial on the June 3 date set by the federal judge overseeing the case. They also cite the short time between the Delaware trial and the start of another trial on tax charges

Hunter Biden has pleaded not guilty to lying about his drug use in October 2018 on a form to buy a gun that he kept for about 11 days in Delaware. He has acknowledged an addiction to crack cocaine during that period, but his lawyers have said he didn't break the law.

The lawyers are asking the full 3rd US Circuit Court of Appeals to hear a bid to dismiss the prosecution. It was rejected by a three-judge panel that did not rule on the merits of his claims, but said the court doesn't have jurisdiction to review the matter. (AP)

Moose kills man: A 70-year-old Alaska man who was attempting to take photos of two newborn moose calves was attacked and killed by their mother, authorities said

The man killed Sunday was identified as Dale Chorman of Homer, said Austin McDaniel, a spokesperson for the Alaska Department of Public Safety.

The female moose had recently given birth to the calves in Homer.

"As they were walking through the brush looking for the moose, that's when the cow moose attacked Dale," McDaniel said.

The attack happened as the two were running away, he said. The second man, who has not been publicly identified, was unin-

That person did not witness the attack, so authorities cannot say if the moose killed Chorman by kicking or stomping him, or a combination. (AP)

Woman sentenced: A Pennsylvania woman pleaded guilty Monday to shooting a county prosecutor after a confrontation about a property transfer and was sentenced

to several years in prison. Porice Diamond Mincy pleaded guilty to aggravated assault for shooting Cameron

# **Politics**

# **Election deniers moving closer to GOP mainstream**

# Biden and Democrats raise \$51m in April

WASHINGTON, May 21, (AP): US President Joe Biden and the Democratic National Committee said Monday that they raised more than \$51 million in April, falling well short of the \$76 million that Donald Trump and the Republican Party reported taking in for the month.

Biden's reelection campaign said it had \$192 million in cash-on-hand as of the end of last month, which it said was higher than any Democratic candidate in history. But that was also roughly the same amount it reported having at the end of the year's first quarter on March 30 - suggesting the campaign was spending funds as quickly as it raised them.

April's totals were also down sharply from March, when the president's campaign and the DNC announced taking in more than \$90 million.

Biden and his party had routinely outraised his predecessor, but Trump's April haul was boosted by a recordsetting \$50.5 million his campaign reported taking in during a single event with donors early in the month at the Palm Beach, Florida, home of billionaire investor John Paulson.

That gathering was Trump's answer to a March event with former Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama at New York's Radio City Music Hall, where the Biden campaign reported raising \$26 million. Next month, meanwhile, Biden's campaign is planning a major Los Angeles fundraiser featuring Hollywood stars George Clooney and Julia Roberts.

Trump and the GOP reported raising more than \$65.6 million in March and closed out that month with \$93.1 million in cash-on-hand.

# **Allowed**

Biden's campaign says a large war chest has allowed it to undertake major advertising campaigns in key states, and to work with the DNC and state parties to better mobilize would-be supporters before November's election - far outpacing Trump's on-the-ground

Biden campaign manager Julie Chavez Rodriguez said April's haul "is giving us the resources necessary to invest in opening offices, hiring organizers and communicating across our battleground states in order to mobilize the coalition of voters who will decide

County District Attorney Paul J. Malizia in

The 32-year-old Brookville woman was

sentenced to four to eight years in prison.

the leg at Malizia's law office last June.

this election." The president's team says it now has

more than 150 coordinated offices with Democratic officials, and 500-plus coordinated staff in battleground states. Trump and the Republicans amassed

large fundraising advantages early in the 2020 cycle only to lose that election, however, and polls have shown Biden continuing to face low approval ratings as most voters say they'd rather

not see a 2020 rematch.

Still, Trump's personal finances have lately been strained by legal fees amid his indictments in four criminal cases, including the ongoing trail involving hush money payments to porn actress Stormy Daniels.

The Biden campaign said Monday night that April was its strongest month for recurring donors to date, which such donors contributing more than \$5.5 million during the month alone. It said 225,000-plus donors had committed to giving every month, which it said was more than 1.5 times the amount at this point in the 2020

Since Biden announced his reelection bid in April 2023, his team says 96% of all its donations have been less than \$200, and 1.8 million donors have now made nearly 4.9 million contribu-

# Also:

**WASHINGTON:** In the hours after the attack on the US Capitol on Jan 6, 2021, Ohio's then-Republican senator, Rob Portman, voted to accept President Joe Biden's win over the defeated former president, Donald Trump, despite Trump's false allegations that Biden only won because of fraud.

But as Trump charges toward his rematch with Biden in 2024, Portman has been replaced by Sen J.D. Vance, a potential vice presidential pick who has echoed Trump's false claims of fraud and said he'll accept the results this fall only "if it's a free and fair election."

South Carolina Sen Tim Scott and Florida Sen Marco Rubio, other possible VP picks, also declined to object to Biden's victory over Trump, but have been less committal this year. Rubio said recently if "things are wrong" with November's election, Republicans won't stand by and accept the

And the new speaker of the House,

Malizia was released from a hospital the day

Attorney General Michelle Henry,

whose office prosecuted Mincy, called it a

he was shot.

**Mike Johnson**, helped organize Trump's failed legal challenge to Biden's win. He demurred when asked if he believed the 2020 election was legitimate during an event with other Trump allies about the upcoming elec-

As Trump makes a comeback bid to return to power, Republicans in Congress have become even more likely to cast doubts on Biden's victory or deny it was legitimate, a political turnaround that allows his false claims of fraud to linger and lays the groundwork to potentially challenge the results in 2024.

A new report released Tuesday by States United Action, a group that targets election deniers, said nearly onethird of the lawmakers in Congress supported in some way Trump's bid to overturn the 2020 results or otherwise cast doubt on the reliability of elections. Several more are hoping to join them, running for election this year to the House and Senate.

"The public should have a real healthy dose of concern about the real risk of having people in power who've shown they're not willing to respect the will of the people," said Lizzie **Ullmer** of States United Action.

The issue is particularly stark for Congress given its constitutional role as the final arbiter of the validity of a presidential election. It counts the results from the Electoral College, as it set out to do on Jan. 6, 2021, a date now etched in history because of the violent assault on the U.S. Capitol by a pro-Trump mob.

In its report, States United found that in Congress, 170 representatives and senators out of 535 lawmakers overall can be categorized as election deniers. Heading into the fall elections, two new Senate candidates and 17 new House candidates already are on the ballot this fall seeking to join them.

It's not just Congress that has been seeded with people who supported trying to overturn Trump's 2020 loss, but the highest ranks of the Republican

"This is deeply alarming," said Wendy Weiser, the vice president for democracy programs at the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University. "A democracy can only function if the participants commit to accepting the results of popular elections. That is it. That's the entire political system.'

ney. (AP)

Man held without bail: A man charged with crashing two law enforcement vehicles during a police chase that concluded with gunfire from 11 officers should be held without bail until his trial, prosecutors said Monday.

"brazen act of violence," and noted Malizia

Henry's office said in a statement that

Mincy showed up without an appointment

at Malizia's office in rural Emporium, about

130 miles (209 kilometers) east of Erie, and

made some sort of demands concerning a

property transfer, a matter he handled as a

private practice lawyer, not as district attor-

has remained in office since the attack.

Gary Porter of Maine had been arrested on a warrant for theft on May 6 when he escaped police custody and set off a chaotic series of events in rural Paris, police said. Porter, wearing handcuffs and a hospital gown, stole a police vehicle, crashed it, then stole another before crashing that one and being returned to custody after an exchange of gunfire, police said.

Porter made his first appearance in court Monday after a series of delays. A judge ruled that probable cause has been established in the case and that Porter will remain in jail pending a June 4 hearing about revok-



Britain's King Charles III, (centre left), and Queen Camilla walk, during a visit to the Chelsea Flower Show at the Royal Hospital Chelsea in London on May 20. (AP)

### Lat/Am

### Haiti airport reopens

# Violence intensifies in Colombia; 6 hurt

BOGOTA, Colombia, May 21, (AP): Violence intensified in southwestern Colombia on Monday when a bomb blast injured six people in the city of Jamundi and an attack by insurgents on a police station in the rural town of Morales left at least two officers dead, according to police.

Colombia's government attributed the attacks to the FARC-EMC a rebel group that broke off from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and refused to sign a 2016 peace deal in which more than 14,000 rebels demobilized.

The group's western faction walked away from a



new round of peace talks with the government in April and has since staged a series of attacks on military and police, including a roadside bomb last Friday that killed an 11-year-Elizabeth Dickinson, a Co-

lombia analyst at the International Crisis Group, said Monday's attacks show that the EMC's western faction is trying to set itself apart by becoming "the only armed or criminal

group in Colombia that is directly attacking the state." Dickinson said the FARC-EMC's western front, which is led by commander Ivan Mordisco, could end up splitting from EMC groups in eastern Colombia that are still involved in peace talks with the govern-

"The split within the EMC is real and is likely to be permanent," she said. "We are headed towards a situation of atomization and fragmentation in the conflict which has pretty dramatic implications for civilians.'

With around 5,000 fighters the EMC is the third largest armed group in Colombia, behind the Gaitanista Self Defense Forces and the National Liberation Colombian President Gustavo Petro has tried to

hold peace talks with Colombia's remaining rebel groups since he was elected into office, under a strategy known as total peace.

The Petro administration has signed ceasefires with some of these groups and begun discussions on development programs and rural reforms.

Experts say the strategy has had mixed results. While the ceasefires have reduced violence between the military and armed groups, crimes like kidnap-ping, extortion and the recruitment of children have increased as armed groups continue to strengthen their grip over rural communities and fight for the control of illegal businesses that were abandoned by the FARC after the peace deal. Rebel groups like the

# FARC-EMC also continue to profit from illegal min-

ing and the drug trade.

**QUITO, Ecuador:** Five rescue dogs were honored by Ecuador's Fire Department on Monday at a ceremony formally retiring them after seven years of service and turning them over to new adoptive owners.

Lt Col Esteban Cardenas said the dogs - Ares, Kratos, Zeus, Titan and Gaia - were part of the first class of canines used by the department's rescue unit, which works with German shepherds and golden re-

Cardenas recalled some of their feats, including aiding in finding survivors of earthquakes and landslides across Ecuador and abroad, including a mission to Mexico in 2017.

He said veterinarian reports had suggested it was

time to retire the five dogs. "Today for us is a day of mixed feelings. We really would not want them to leave. We would have liked to have them with us in our ranks," Cardenas said.

The dogs' new owners were selected carefully after meeting certain requirements, he said.

Gaia's new owner, Valeria Zevallos, said she was amazed by her new pet's previous career of saving

"Many adventures await us now. After her work adventures, family adventures," she said. 

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: Haiti's main international airport reopened Monday for the first time in nearly three months after relentless gang violence forced authorities to close it.

The reopening of the Toussaint-Louverture airport in the capital of Port-au-Prince is expected to help ease a critical shortage of medications and other basic supplies. The country's main seaport remains badly affected. Gangs control 80% of the capital.

U.S.-based airlines are not expected to start using the airport until late May or early June.

The first commercial passenger flight since March left for Miami nearly two hours behind schedule, with sweating passengers complaining to local carrier Sunrise Airways about the lack of air conditioning until

Before Monday, the sole airport operating in Haiti was located in the north coastal city of Cap-Haitien. It was out of reach for many seeking to flee the country, with roads leading from Port-au-Prince controlled by gangs that have opened fire on cars and buses passing

The US government had evacuated hundreds of citizens by helicopter out of a hilly neighborhood in Port-au-Prince, as did nonprofit organizations, as gangs laid siege to parts of the capital. The attacks began on Feb. 29, with gunmen seizing

control of police stations, opening fire on the Port-au-Prince airport and storming Haiti's two biggest prisons, freeing more than 4,000 inmates.

Gangs since then have directed their attacks on previously peaceful communities, leaving thousands

More than 2,500 people have been killed or injured in Haiti from January to March, a more than 50% increase compared to the same period last year, according to the United Nations.

At the Couronne Bar near the sole airport gate operating on Monday, 43-year-old manager Klav-Dja Raphael welcomed her first clients. But her smile belied her fear.

'We are scared because they can still attack us here," she said. "We must come in. It's our job, but we're afraid." She recalled how bullets ricocheted through the airport the day it was attacked.

While the airport provided workers a month's wages, she was left unemployed for the rest of the time, relying on friends and family. She is anxious to join her 13-year-old son who lives in Florida with his father.

Other workers, including those at immigration, were all smiles, content to be finally back at work. "That was a long vacation!" one immigration agent said.



In this Dec 8, 2010 file photo, snow-covered Mount Fuji, Japan's highest peak at 3,776-meters tall (12,385 feet), is seen from an airplane window. Inset: A group of hikers climb to the top of Mount Fuji just before sunrise as clouds hang below the summit on Aug 27, 2019, in Japan. (AP)

## Climbing limits being set on Mount Fuji to fight crowds, littering

Those who want to climb one of the most popular trails on Japan's iconic Mount Fuji will have to book a slot and pay a fee as crowds, littering and climbers who try to rush too fast to the summit cause safety and conservation concerns at the picturesque stra-

The new rules for the climbing season, starting

July 1 to Sept. 10, apply for those hiking the Yoshida Trail on the Yamanashi side of the 3,776 meter- (nearly 12,300 feet-) high mountain that was designated a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site

Only 4,000 climbers will be allowed to enter the trail per day for a hiking fee of 2,000 yen (about

\$18). Of those slots, 3,000 will be available for online booking and the remaining 1,000 can be booked in person on the day of the climb, Yamanashi prefecture said in a statement via the Foreign Press Center of Japan on Monday. Hikers also have an option of donating an additional 1,000 yen (about \$9) for conservation. (AP)



Gaia demonstrates her skills at a retirement ceremony for dogs that served with firefighters in Quito, Ecuador on May 20. Five rescue dogs were honored by Ecuador's Fire Depart-ment on Monday at a ceremony forially retiring them after seven years of service and turning them over to new adoptive owners. (AP)



# Africa

3 officials killed in Cameroon: Gunmen suspected to be separatists on Monday shot dead three officials, including a mayor, in Cameroon's war-torn English-speaking region of Northwest, according to the army and officials.

Innocent Ngong -- mayor of Belo council, one of his deputies, as well as Aaron Aghi Ngong -- chief of basic education in Belo subdivision were ambushed and killed on their way to attend Cameroon's National Day celebration in the subdivision, the region's governor Adolphe Lele L'Afrique said.

"Measures have been taken to trace the authors of that killing and we will be informed on all the development concerning that situation," L'Afrique told reporters in Bamenda, chief town of the region. Cameroon celebrated the 52nd Nation-

al Day on Monday but separatist fighters in the country's Anglophone regions of Northwest and Southwest imposed lockdown to disrupt celebrations. (Xinhua)

PM appoints cabinet members: Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed reshuffled his cabinet on Monday, appointing Aisha Mohammed as the new minister of defense.

Mohammed, who previously served as minister of irrigation and lowlands, replaced Abraham Belay, who has now taken her former position.

This reshuffle marks Mohammed's return to the defense ministry, where she briefly served as the country's first female defense minister in October 2018. At that time, Abiy announced a 50 percent representation of women in the cabinet.

According to the Office of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, the new appointments are scheduled to officially take effect from Tuesday. (Xinhua)

**'140K displaced by conflict':** More than 140,000 people were internally displaced in Somalia in the past four months of 2024, mainly due to insecurity and conflict, the United Nations refugee agency

# Asia

# Australia, NZ evacuate nationals in New Caledonia

# Marles pledges support to Solomon Islands

NEWCASTLE, Australia, May 21, (AP): Australia's deputy prime minister pledged support to the Solomon Islands during a visit to the archipelago nation on Tuesday, as Canberra intensifies efforts to counter China's growing influence in the South Pa-

Richard Marles' trip to the capital, Honiara, was the first by an Australian government minister since Jeremiah Manele was elected Solomon Islands' new prime minister earlier this month.

Marles pledged to provide healthcare and border control support to the island nation and said at a news conference his visit provided an opportunity to discuss Solomons' "priorities and the way in which Australia can help and contribute.'

"Australia sought to be the Solomons' go-to security partner and had to work to earn that right. Hence, going to Solomon Islands quickly," said Marles, who is also Australia's defense minister.

Marles said Australia had pledged 50 million Australian dollars (\$33.3 million) for border management and a health center for mothers to access preand post-natal care.

The high-level visit comes at a time of increased competition for influence in the South Pacific. The Solomons became the first regional nation to sign a major policing pact with China in July, sparking concern among the island's traditional partners including Australia, New Zealand and the United States.

Solomon Islands lawmakers elected Manele as prime minister on May 2. The move was largely seen as a sign the country will maintain close ties with China that were developed under pro-Beijing former leader Manasseh Sogavare.

Manele has indicated the pact would remain under his government and that as leader he would put his nation's interests first.

# Also:

NEWCASTLE, Australia: Australia and New Zealand sent airplanes to New Caledonia on Tuesday to begin bringing home stranded citizens from

said on Monday.
The UN High Commissioner for Refu-

gees (UNHCR) said some 52,000 new

internal displacements were monitored

# **British man dies, passengers hurt on** S'pore flight after 'severe turbulence'

BANGKOK, May 21, (AP): A 73-year-old British man died and more than two dozen other pas-sengers were injured when a Sin-gapore Airlines flight from London was struck by severe turbulence and plunged 6,000 feet in the span of some few minutes Tuesday over the Indian Ocean.

The flight was then diverted and landed in stormy weather in Bang-

Authorities said the British man may have suffered a heart attack, though that has not been confirmed. His name was not immediately released.

The Boeing 777-300ER flight from London's Heathrow airport to Singapore, with 211 passengers and 18 crew members aboard, landed at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport at 3:45 p.m. local time, the airline said in a Facebook post.

Emergency medical crews rushed to help the passengers. Vidmedical crews eos posted on the LINE messaging platform by Suvarnabhumi Airport showed a line of ambulances streaming to the scene.

In a statement posted on Facebook, Singapore Airlines said that as of four hours after the emer-gency landing, 18 people remained hospitalized while another 12 were treated on outpatient basis. 

HK to watch platforms: Hong Kong's leader said Tuesday his ad-

ministration would keep monitoring for any non-compliance with a court order that bans a popular protest song, days after YouTube blocked access to dozens of videos of the tune in the city.

The ban targets anyone who broadcasts or distributes "Glory to Hong Kong" - popularly sung during huge anti-government pro-tests in 2019 - to advocate for the separation of the city from China. It also prohibits any actions that misrepresent the song as the national anthem with the intent to insult the anthem. Chief Executive John Lee said if the government found any instances of non-compliance, it would then notify the relevant internet platforms.

the violence-wracked French South Pacific territory.

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong said Australia had received clearance from French authorities for two flights to evacuate citizens from the archipelago, where indigenous people have long sought independence from France.

Hours later, a Royal Australian Air Force C-130 Hercules touched down in Noumea, the capital. The plane can carry 124 passengers, according to the Defense Department.

"We continue to work on further flights," Wong wrote on the social media platform X on Tuesday.

The Department of Foreign Affairs said 300 Australians were in New Caledonia. It did not immediately con-

firm whether the Australian-organized flights would also evacuate other stranded foreign nationals, believed to number in the thousands.

New Zealand's government also announced that it had sent a plane to New Caledonia to begin evacuating about 50 of its citizens.

"New Zealanders in New Caledonia have faced a challenging few days and bringing them home has been an urgent priority for the government," Foreign Affairs Minister Winston Peters said. "In cooperation with France and Australia, we are working on subsequent flights in coming days.

Noumea's international airport remains closed to commercial flights. Its reopening will be reassessed on Thurs-

were due to floods, and 5,000 were due to other reasons," the UNHCR said in its lat-

est update on displacement issued in the

Somali capital of Mogadishu. (Xinhua)

by the UNHCR-led Protection and Return Monitoring Network (PRMN) in April.
"Out of these (in April), 14,000 were caused by conflict or insecurity, 33,000

> Congo names 3rd American: Congo's army spokesman on Tuesday re-leased the name of the third American involved a foiled coup plot in Kinshasa, while family members in Utah gathered to mourn Christian Malanga, the eccentric leader of the brazen and ill-fated attack targeting the presidential palace over the

> Brig Gen Sylvain Ekenge told The Associated Press the third American was Taylor Thomson. It wasn't immediately clear whether Thomson was among those arrested or killed on Sunday morning following the attack on the palace and another on the residence of a close ally of President Felix Tshisekedi.

> Malanga, described as a naturalized American by Ekenge, was killed in a shootout at the palace after resisting arrest. The State Department said it could not confirm Malanga was a US citizen. The other two Americans involved were a convicted marijuana trafficker and Malanga's 21-year-old son, Marcel.



People dressed in ethnic costumes attend a cultural carnival in Guiyang, southwest China's Guizhou Province on May 18. (Xinhua)

#### oil surges

The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by 59 cents to USD 86.33 per barrel on Monday, an increase from USD 85.47 pb recorded last Friday, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Tuesday.

At the global level, the price of the Brent crude went down by 27 cents to USD 83.71 per barrel, the same case with the West Texas Intermediate, which went down by 26 cents to USD 79.80 pb. (KUNA)

KSE 100

DUBAI

**PAKISTAN** 

According to a report from the American 'Oil Price' website, citing research from Rystad Energy, the demand for oil is expected to continue rising in the medium term, as alternatives are not yet sufficiently developed or economically competitive to meet the increasing demand in trans-

portation and industrial sectors, reports Al-Qabas daily. In the transportation sector the electric vehicles (EVs) play a crucial role in estimating the impact on oil demand, with half of global oil demand coming from road passen-

While the proportion of EVs has increased since 2018, there was a 19% decline in global electric vehicle sales last year due to various factors including infrastructure challenges and consumer acceptance issues.

Despite setbacks, Rystad Energy anticipates a re-

surgence in the transformation of road transport, with automakers committing to producing millions of electric cars in the coming years. However, challenges remain in heavy goods transport, where batteries are still bulky and

charging times are lengthy.
Similar challenges are faced in the maritime shipping sector, where fuel with high energy density and safe storage and transportation are essential. Alternatives such as ammonia and methanol are not yet competitive with oil in terms of cost and energy density

In the meantime ,the fixed sectors, including petro-

chemicals, construction, agriculture, and others, represent a significant portion of global oil demand. These sectors rely on oil and natural gas liquids for various pur-

Demand for plastics is expected to rise, driven by the expansion of the global middle class, but recycling rates remain low. In the construction sector, oil remains essential for energy needs in regions without access to natural

In industries requiring high temperatures, such as steelmaking and cement production, hydrogen is considered a viable alternative, but it faces challenges due to high costs and lack of infrastructure.

#### **Market** Movements

Change Closing pts 4,075.18 75,105.69

JAPAN - Nikkei 225 PHILIPPINES - PSEi

21-05-2024

Change Closing pts 12,122.48 -122.75 38.946.93 6,633.66 27,224.80



oil demand expected to rise despite electric vehicle challenges

# **Boursa Kuwait partners with Jefferies** to highlight investment opportunities

Six Premier Market companies meet global investors

LONDON, May 21: In its continuous quest to showcase the Kuwaiti capital market and its standout listed companies as well as ignite investor interest in the unique opportunities it presents, Boursa Kuwait organized its twelfth **Corporate Day in London** in collaboration with Jefferies Financial Group, a world-renowned global investment banking and capital markets institution, on Monday, May 20, 2024.

The prominent event brought together six companies listed on the exchange with globally recognized asset management firms, investment banks, sovereign wealth funds, pension funds and other financial entities. Institutional investors were given an opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge about "Premier" Market entities, including Boursa Kuwait, the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), Gulf Bank, Mabanee, Jazeera Airways and HumanSoft, and through 36 meetings where the Kuwaiti companies presented their latest performance figures, ESG metrics business strategies, and outlook to financial analysts from these global institutions.

Speaking on behalf of the exchange, Boursa Kuwait's Head of Markets Sector Noura Al-Abdulkareem said, "Boursa Kuwait is committed to showcasing the investment opportunities in the Kuwaiti capital market and its standout listed companies that attract the interest of investors from around the world through its series of Corporate Days that are organized with world-renowned financial entities in the international capitals of finance. Access to long-



Naim Azad Din

term global capital is essential to the Kuwaiti capital market's sustainable growth and we will continue to explore opportunities that will provide transparency, enhance market liquidity and attract a greater range of investors to our marketplace.

During its meetings with prospective investors, Boursa Kuwait showcased its first-quarter performance as well as the underlying numbers of the Kuwaiti capital market, which saw tremendous growth in trading volume, jumping 68.65% from 8.52 billion shares to 14.36 billion shares. Additionally, traded value increased by 34.21% from KD 2.64 billion to KD 3.54 billion, while average daily traded value (ADTV) increased by the same percentage from KD 43.26 million in 2023 to KD 58.06 million. Furthermore, institutional investors made up 62% of the capital market in the first quarter of 2024 while international investors made up 15%, a testament to Boursa Kuwait's continuous efforts to develop the Kuwaiti capital market and promote it to investors worldwide.

Boursa Kuwait's Chief Financial Officer Mr. Naim Azad Din said, "Corporate Days are an integral part of Boursa Kuwait's strategy, as they



Noura Al-Abdulkareem

give the exchange, which has been self-listed on the "Premier" Market since 2020, a chance to showcase its financial and operational performance and highlight our initiatives in the field of ESG implementation and reporting. These events also give Boursa Kuwait a chance to tell its story to the international investment community as a leader in the region as well as a pioneer in the privatization efforts of the State of Kuwait and a successful tale in the privatization of stock exchanges in the Middle

"Boursa Kuwait's participation comes as part of the company's commitment to implementing the bestin-class standards and practices in the field of investor relations, as IR plays a pivotal role in developing business strategies and enabling investors access to vital financial and non-financial information that helps them make sound investment decisions and gives them insights into future outlooks and opportunities. We are grateful to Jefferies Financial Group for giving us this opportunity to tell our story and we look forward to more collaborations in the future," said Azad Din.

The 12th Corporate Day marks

the third collaboration between the Kuwaiti stock exchange and Jefferies Financial Group, and the first in 2024. In 2023, the two financial institutions partnered twice, once on a London Roadshow with the Kuwait Clearing Company that contributed to the implementation of several developmental projects to ease investor access and another time on a Corporate Day held in Dubai that saw the participation of 13 listed companies.

Boursa Kuwait has been a key driver in the development of the Kuwaiti capital market and the diversification of the national economy, in line with the goals of the "New Kuwait" vision. Since its inception, the company has worked diligently to create a thriving capital market that attracts local and foreign investors through a broad spectrum of new products and services, infrastructure upgrades, and market reform initiatives, as part of its multi-phase market development

Boursa Kuwait was fully privatized in 2019, the first government entity in the country to successfully undergo the process, bringing about greater levels of efficiency. It has also been self-listed since September 2020 and has made great strides in sustaining its operations and business continuity in the face of uncertainties and challenges.

The company has rolled out numerous market reforms and new initiatives as part of its comprehensive multi-phase market development (MD) plans and showcases some of the standout listed companies and the investment opportunities that reside in the Kuwaiti capital market through its series of Roadshows and Corporate Days, putting these companies in touch with some of the world's leading investment firms and financial institutions and highlighting their financial health and business strategies and outlooks, to help investors gain an in-depth understanding of the benefits and opportunities of investing in Kuwaiti companies.

### **Mixed performances in Gulf markets**

# Boursa Kuwait starts week with robust gains and high liquidity

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: Trading commenced on the Boursa Kuwait for the second session of the week with robust gains and heightened liquidity, surpassing one million dinars within minutes, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The focus was primarily on bluechip stocks alongside some smaller ones. However, this positive momentum was short-lived as leading stocks faced increased pressure, resulting in notable declines, notably in Agility and Boubyan Bank shares, each dipping over 1 percent.

As the session progressed, banking stocks, particularly National Bank, KFH, and Boubyan, encountered mounting pressure. Boubyan Petrochemicals shares also experienced losses, alongside Al-Tijaria, Al-Jazeera, Cables, and Human Soft, each declining by more than

A group of stocks remained stable, including Industries, International, Warba, and Projects, while the rise was limited to liquid stocks. Notably, Eid stock saw significant gains with liquidity exceeding 1.7 million dinars, climbing by 2.5 per-

Similarly, Mina experienced notable gains, emerging as the session's highlight with trades surpassing one million dinars, marking an increase of over 8 percent. Additionally, Consumer Products and Gulf Bank registered modest profits, while Arab Real Estate, GFH, Investments, and Rasiyat also saw gains, albeit to a lesser extent.

However, losses were evident among some previously strong performers, notably Future Kids, which experienced an 8 percent decline, and Innovest, down by 3.3 percent, with substantial trades exceeding 3.3 million dinars. The session concluded on a cautious note following the tragic incident of the Iranian President's helicopter crash, resulting in his demise along with several officials.

In the broader Gulf region, market indices displayed mixed performances. Markets with significant liquidity, such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and Abu Dhabi, faced losses, while Dubai, Bahrain, and Oman witnessed modest gains. Oil prices surged above \$84 per

barrel due to various factors, including the impact of the Iranian President's demise, while gold prices reached new historical highs, surpassing \$2,420 per ounce.

Anti-monopoly law boosts market

# **Surge in interior region** real estate transactions

ing the first four months of 2024, of 78.1%. Similarly, Khaldiya and the interior regions witnessed a Al-Qadisiya regions also witnessed significant surge in residential real substantial increases in trading valestate transactions, with a remark-able growth of 52.2% in transaction ue, reflecting the positive impact of anti-monopoly legislation on real value and a 24.1% increase in the number of properties sold compared to the same period in 2023, reports

Al-Qabas daily. The total value of real estate transactions in the interior regions amounted to approximately 108.2 million dinars, a substantial increase from 71.1 million dinars recorded during the same period in 2023. Moreover, the number of properties sold during this period rose to 108, compared to 87 properties in the first four months of 2023.

The implementation of the law combating the monopoly of vacant lands, ratified during the National Assembly's supplementary session on November 29, 2023, significantly impacted real estate transactions.

For instance, in January alone, 36 properties were sold in the interior regions, totaling 37.3 million dinars, accounting for 34.5% of the total real estate trades in the interior regions during the first four months of 2024.

Abdullah Al-Salem suburb emerged as the top-performing area in terms of trading value, experianti-monopoly legislation on real estate transactions.

Real estate experts emphasize the preference for interior areas due to personal preferences and increased demand, leading to higher prices even surpassing market rates. The implementation of anti-monopoly laws redirected investment from residential to other sectors, thereby increasing supply and reducing demand in the residential sector. However, despite the surge in

residential transactions in interior regions, areas like Yarmouk, Al-Rawda, Al-Mansouriya, Al-Shamiya, and Cordoba experienced declines in transaction value, highlighting varying market trends across different regions.

Meanwhile, Daiya and Al-Qadisiya regions witnessed significant increases in trading activity, indicating shifting market dynamics.

In conclusion, while the interior regions continue to attract investment and witness growth in residential real estate transactions, external factors such as regulatory measures and economic policies play a crucial role in shaping market trends and investor behavior.

# Chinese and Gulf collaboration fuels African investment growth

# Gulf Investments in Africa exceed \$100 bln over past decade

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The Economist Intelligence Unit's recent report highlights the significant transformation occurring in African investment, particularly with the surge in Gulf investments across the continent, notably from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar, often in collaboration with Chinese investors, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Key findings from the report underscore that Gulf companies are increasingly targeting investments in Africa's resource sectors such as oil, gas, mining, and agriculture.

Additionally, they are expanding their presence in vital sectors like infrastructure, transportation, renewable energy, digital infrastructure, manufacturing, and financial services.

The report emphasizes the determination of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar to expand their footprint across Africa, driven by strong incentives for closer trade and political relations between the Gulf and African countries.

These incentives include the availability of significant Gulf financing and the willingness of Gulf companies and investors to make substantial investment commitments in Africa.

Furthermore, the report highlights the evolving landscape of foreign in-

vestments in Africa, with China maintaining a significant presence due to its Belt and Road Initiative, while the US and EU have announced plans to enhance their investments in the region.

The Gulf countries have invested over \$100 billion in Africa over the past decade, representing approximately 30% of their total foreign direct investment abroad.

In terms of bilateral trade, the report notes a notable growth in intra-regional merchandise trade between Africa and the Gulf states, with the value reaching a record high of \$154 billion in 2022. This places the Gulf countries ahead of major trading partners like the US and India in bilateral trade with Africa. Traditionally, oil and gas sales constitute a significant portion of Gulf ex-

ports to Africa, while mining plays a crucial role in Gulf countries' imports from the continent. However, trade outside these sectors is expected to flourish, driven by the diversification of Gulf investments in Africa. Looking ahead, Gulf investments in infrastructure, transportation, and lo-

gistics partnerships will remain a major strategy for the Gulf states, aiming to benefit from the growing intra-trade and establish control over key import and export hubs connecting Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Europe.

# **Loai Mugames emphasizes importance of ethical procurement**

# Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait receives CIPS Corporate Ethical Procurement and Supply certification

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is pleased to announce receiving the Corporate Ethical Procurement and Supply cer-

> tification from Chartered In-

stitute of Pro-

Supply (CIPS),

the largest pro-

and

curement



fessional body in the world for procurement and supply, in recognition Mugames

of the Bank's commitment to ethical practices in its business op-

erations. The thorough process is designed for professionals who are accountable for upholding ethical codes of conduct in procurement and supply activities. Upon undergoing the specialized e-learning and assessment, ABK successfully demonstrated that it possesses the knowledge to address potential conflicts of interest, define tasks, and identify techniques available to achieve added value.

The certification was presented to Loai Muqames, CEO-Kuwait during a special ceremony held at ABK's head office

which was at-

tended by other

management

as well as CIPS

representa-

tives. Express-

ing his con-

tent, Mugames

said.

honored

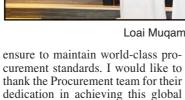
"We are

members



receive recognition that underscores our commitment to conducting business with integrity and responsibility. At ABK, we recognize the profound impact that ethical procurement has on our reputation and customer per-

He continued, "We endeavor to uphold our principles in all our interactions and strive to enhance our performance by regularly measuring and improving our performance to



In turn, Jassem Alshatti, Assistant General Manager of Procurement at ABK, said, "From inception, the Procurement team has always strived and aimed to implement worldclass procurement practices. We are pleased to be pioneers in Kuwait in this respect where this achievement demonstrates yet another milestone in our series of endeavors."

In turn, CIPS highlighted ABK's role as a frontrunner in the industry for promoting proper business practices. Hari Haran Laxminarayan, Head of professional development at CIPS MENA, said, "This certification represents a mark of distinction. We commend ABK for their dedication to their core values and integrating ethical principles into their procurement and supply op-

The certification sheds light on the importance of evaluating and enhancing operational performance, thus emphasizing the Bank's dedication to excellence in all its dealings. ABK's achievement reaffirms its proficiency, further establishing it as a trusted leader in the banking



Loai Mugames receiving the certificate in the presence of Jassim Al-Shatti and ABK Management Team.

### Kuwait's Q1-2024 credit facilities expand to KD 48.1 billion

# GCC banks' Q1-2024 revenue falls amid higher interest rates

#### By Kamco Invest

The impact of elevated interest rates was reflected in the latest quarterly results for listed banks in the GCC with total revenue for the sector down for the first time in 12 quarters during Q1-2024. The fall in revenues came from q-o-q decline in net interest income as well as non-interest income during the quarter. The quarter registered flattish growth in total interest income that reached USD 50.5 Bn with yield on credit averaging at 4.3%, in line with the trend over the last three quarters, whereas a small increase in interest expense resulted in a marginal decline in net-interest income. This was also reflected in the cost of funds that reached 4.5% at the end of Q1-2024, one of the highest on record for the GCC banking sector, from an average of 4.2% during Q4-2023 and much smaller 2.5% during Q1-2023. Non-interest income also witnessed a decline during the quarter after a fall in other interest income more than offset a growth in management fees and commission income during O1-2024.

Meanwhile, lending growth continued in the region despite higher borrowing costs. Data from central banks in the GCC showed higher q-o-q lending for all the GCC country aggregates. The data showed Saudi Arabia registering the strongest quarterly growth in Q1-2024 at 3.3% while gross credit data for UAE banks showed a growth of 1.1% during the first two months of the year. Data on listed banks showed gross loans reaching a record high of USD 2.02 Trillion at the end of Q1-2024, registering a q-o-q growth of 1.8% while aggregate net loans reached USD 1.92 Trillion after a sequential growth of 2.3%. On the other hand, customer deposits grew at a much stronger pace during the quarter as depositors eyed higher interest income. Total customer deposits reached USD 2.45 Trillion at the end of Q1-2024 after witnessing the biggest q-o-q growth in four quarters at

Bottomline performance for the GCC banking sector remained steady with a healthy q-o-q growth of 11.8% and a yo-y growth of 10.5% to reach USD 14.4 Bn during Q1-2024. The strong growth came despite a fall in revenues during the quarter and reflected a fall in total operating expenses coupled with a steep fall in quarterly impairments. Total loan loss provisions booked during the quarter reached a five-year low level of USD 2.3 Bn as compared to USD 3.5 Bn during Q4-2023.

**Highlights – GCC Banking Sector** This report analyzes the financials reported by 57 listed banks in the GCC for the quarter ended Q1-2024. Data for individual banks have been aggregated to the country level. Some of the key observations from the most recent financial quarter for the GCC Banking Sector includes the following:

#### Higher for longer rates to continue in the US; EU to see cuts sooner

The latest statement from the US Fed showcased efforts to maintain a neutral messaging instead of expressing view on either side i.e. being either dovish or hawkish. This reflects the elevated inflation levels in the US as the disinflation process seems to have been facing obstacles, indicating that rates are expected to be maintained and managed at current levels before clear signs of declining inflation are visible. At the granular level, there were data that indicated the impact of elevated interest rates. For instance, jobless claims increased in the US, industrial production was subdued last month and probably lower than the headline numbers and there was continued impact on real estate activity due to higher mortgage rates.

Headline inflation for April-2024 was up 0.31% m-o-m as compared to a monthly growth of 0.38% during the previous month. The y-o-y growth came in at 3.4% as compared to a growth of 3.5% during March-2024, resulting in the first decline in three months. Core inflation also showed progress with a m-o-m growth of 0.3% while the y-o-y growth came in at 3.6% vs. 3.8% during March2024. The difference indicated higher energy prices during the month, while food prices remained flat. Core services inflation remained elevated but there was progress on housing rental front that showed signs of weaking. In terms of economic activity, the US manufacturing PMI was the lowest since the start of the year at 50.0 points, indicating slowing industrial activity.

On the other hand, the ECB seems to remain on track to implement its first rate cut at its June-2024 policy meeting, taking the deposit facility rate down to 3.75%. This would indicate a lag of at least three to five months between ECB and US rate cuts. The latest inflation reading for the Euro area showed disinflationary pressure with headline inflation at 2.4% during April-2024, in line with the previous month whereas core inflation declined to 2.7% from 2.9% in March-2024. Services inflation, which remained stubbornly high above the 4% mark over the previous five months, dropped to 3.7% during April-2024.

Loan growth continued unabated

**during Q1-2024** Data from GCC central banks showed that despite higher interest rates, outstanding credit facilities in region continued to show growth during Q1-2024 led by a broad-based growth across the seven country aggregates. The gains as compared to last year was solid with all countries witnessing healthy growth in lending. Saudi Arabia witnessed a y-o-y growth of 10.7% while banks in Bahrain and Qatar showed y-o-y growth of over 4%. The resilient lending growth in the region reflected a strong project pipeline with aggregate contract awards in the GCC increasing by 20.3% y-o-y during Q1-2024 to reach USD 45.0 Bn as compared to USD 37.4 Bn during Q1-2023. Similarly, manufacturing activity data from Bloomberg (Markit Whole Economy Surveys) showed PMI figures stayed strong during the quarter above the growth mark of 50 for Dubai, Saudi Arabia and UAE at the end of Q1-2024. The manufacturing activity in Saudi Arabia remained robust with PMI at 57.0 points during March-2024. UAE also boasted strong PMI figure of 56.9 points in March-2024 while Dubai showed a faster growth with a PMI of 58.0. Qatar, meanwhile, has shown subdued manufacturing activity during the quarter with PMI averaging at 50.7

points during the quarter. Data from Saudi central bank showed continued growth in lending in Q1-2024, with outstanding credit facilities witnessing the fastest q-o-q growth in six quarters at 3.3% to reach SAR 2.7 Trillion backed by growth in most sectors during the quarter. From among the prominent sectors, outstanding credit facilities for the Real Estate Activities increased by 9.8%, Building Construction increased by 5.9% Mining and Quarrying by 11.2% and Wholesale Trade by 5.9%. Total personal facilities increased by 2.2% to reach SAR 1.3 Trillion at the end of the quarter. Gross credit for the UAE banking sector increased by 1.1% during the first two months of the year to reach AED 2.0 Trillion at the end of February-2024. The increase during February-2024 was mainly led by growth in domestic credit that more than offset a decline in foreign credit as against higher foreign credit in January-2024 and flattish domestic credit growth during the month.

Domestic credit for the Qatari banking sector increased by 1.9% q-o-q during Q1-2024 to reach QAR 1.3 Trillion. The growth was mainly led by higher lending to Public Sector and Services

KUWAIT CITY, May

21: Cryptocurrency mar-

kets experienced a surge

in prices, fueled by inves-

tor optimism surround-

ing US monetary policy

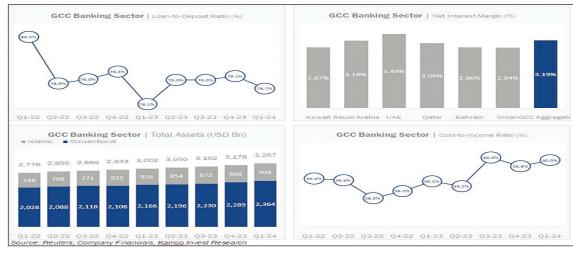
and anticipation of the

**Securities and Exchange** 

Commission's decision

regarding Ethereum ex-

change-traded funds, re-



that more than offset decline in lending to Real Estate, Industry and Contractors. Outstanding credit facilities in Kuwait increased by 0.8% q-o-q during Q1-2024 to reach KWD 48.1 Bn. The increase was led by a broad-based growth in lending during the quarter including Construction, Trade and Real Estate sectors that more than offset decline in Public Services and Other.

Listed bank lending growth continues but with mixed trends

Aggregate lending by listed banks in the GCC continued to show q-ogrowth during Q1-2024 backed by growth in four out of six markets in the GCC. Aggregate gross loans reached a new record high of USD 2.02 Trillion, up 1.8% q-o-q and 8.1% y-o-y, mainly led by strong growth in banks mainly in Saudi Arabia and UAE that more than offset a q-o-q decline in lending reorted by banks in Bahrain and Kuwait. Saudi Arabian banks grew gross loans at the fastest pace of 3.5% q-o-q during Q1-2024 to record the biggest loan book of USD 689.7 Bn as compared to USD 667.0 Bn at the end of the previous quarter. UAE-listed banks were next with a growth of 2.7% with gross loans reaching USD 568.4 Bn while Oman-listed banks reported a growth of 1.8% to reach total lending of USD 68.4 Bn at the end of Q1-2024. In terms of type of banks, conventional banks growth in lending during the quarter at .7% to reach gross loans of USD 1.41 Trillion while Islamic banks recorded a marginal decline of 0.1% to reach USD 0.61 Trillion.

### Deposit growth at four quarter

high
Total customer deposits reported by listed-GCC banks continued to show growth for the twelfth consecutive quarter during Q12024 to reach a new record high of USD 2.45 Trillion as compared to USD 2.4 Trillion at the end of Q4-2023. The trend in customer deposits at the country level was similar to gross loans, with decline in two out of four countries in the GCC. UAE-listed banks recorded the biggest q-o-q growth durng Q1-2024 at 5.6% with total customer deposits reaching USD 803.2 Bn, the biggest in the GCC. Omani banks were next with a growth of 4.4% followed by Saudi and Qatari-listed banks with total customer deposits of USD 767.5 Bn and USD 414.4 Bn, respectively. For the Kuwaiti banking sector, recent reports suggested that banks are making efforts to increase local private sector deposits by leveraging their relationships with key clients and liquidity holders. The efforts are aimed at securing low-cost funding as the sector prepares for an expected increase in economic activity. Data from central bank showed that private sector deposits account for the bulk of the deposits in Kuwaiti banking sector accounting for more than 40% of total sector deposits.

Meanwhile, banks in the region also face higher cost of funding in the local market. This has forced banks to look at international markets for debt issuance.

A report from Fitch showed that coupon on Saudi banks' five-year senior unsecured issuance averaging at 5.1% which is well below the three-month SIBOR rate of 6.2%. Data on fixed income issuance showed regional banks/financial services companies issuing USD 24.5 Bn in US Dollar denominated bonds/ sukuk during the first four months of 2024 as against USD 32.9 Bn for the full year 2023 and USD 16.4 Bn in 2022. The issuances are aimed at financing the steady growth in investments and infrastructure developments plans in the region by diversifying funding sources.

Loan-to-deposit ratio reaches multi-quarter low levels

The aggregate loan-to-deposit ratio for the GCC banking sector declined to the lowest in four quarters at the end of Q1-2024 to reach 78.7%, a decline of 40 bps from 79.1% recorded at the end of Q4-2023. The decline in the ratio reflected a steep increase in customer deposits during the quarter as against a relatively smaller increase in loans. at the aggregate GCC level. At the country level, the performance was mixed with three out of six countries witnessing a higher loan-to-deposit ratio. Omanlisted banks showed the biggest decline in the ratio with a decline of 310 bps to reach 80.8% at the end of Q1-2024. UAE-listed banks were next with a decline with a decline of 160 bps to reach 66.5%, the second lowest in the GCC. Saudi-listed banks showed the biggest improvement in the loan-to-deposit ratio with a growth of 90 bps reaching 88.3%, the highest in the GCC.

#### Net interest income impacted by higher cost of funds

Aggregate net interest income reported by banks listed in the GCC witnessed its first decline in four quarters to reach USD 21.3 Bn in Q1-2024 from a record high reported in the previous quarter. The marginal q-o-q decline of 0.4% in Q1-2024 reflected net interest income declines in three out of six countries in the GCC. Omani banks reported the biggest increase of 1.7% with net interest income reaching USD 0.6 Bn during the quarter. Saudi-listed banks were next with a marginal growth of 0.7% to register net interest income of USD 7.1 Bn. On the other hand, Qatari banks reported the biggest decline during the quarter at 2.6% to reach USD 3.5 Bn followed by Bahrain and UAE-listed banks at USD 0.7 Bn and USD 7.1 Bn, respectively. In terms of yo-y growth, the growth in net interest income was strong at 7.7% reflecting elevated interest rates levels in the GCC, in line with most other global economies

Total bank revenues decline for the first time in 12 quarters

Total bank revenue for GCC-listed banks witnessed the first decline since Q1-2021 during Q1-2024 reaching USD 31.4 Bn during the quarter as compared to a record high of USD 32.0 Bn during Q4-2023. The decline reflected fall in both net interest income as well as non-interest income during the quarter. Total interest income reached a

record high during the quarter at USD 50.5 Bn; however, continued increase in interest expense that reached USD 29.3 Bn during the quarter, more than offset the growth in interest income. At the country level, net interest income was higher in three out of six countries. Qatari banks reported the biggest decline of 2.6% followed by Bahrain and UAE-listed banks with q-o-q declines of 0.7% and 0.5%, respectively. On the other hand, Omani banks reported the biggest increase of 1.7% followed by Saudi-listed banks with a growth of

Aggregate non-interest income declined for the first time in six quarters during Q1-2024 to reach USD 10.2 Bn vs. USD 10.7 Bn in Q4-2023. The decline reflected double-digit fall in noninterest income in three countries while Kuwait and Saudi reported healthy growth of 22.1% and 9.9%, respec-

#### LLP reaches 5-year low during Q1-2024

After witnessing a steep increase in impairments during Q4-2023, the GCC banking sector booked the lowest impairments in five years during Q1-2024. Aggregate impairments reached USD 2.27 Bn during the quarter, registering a 34.4% q-o-q decline as compared to USD 3.5 Bn during Q4-2023. At the country level, the decline was broad-based with five out of six country aggregates showing double digit declines while only Saudi Arabian banks showed a higher q-o-q impairments. UAE-listed banks reported the biggest absolute decline in impairments that reached USD 0.52 Bn during Q1-2024. Qatari banks also reported a decline of 0.25 Bn or 26.4% with impairments reaching USD 0.71 Bn, the highest in the GCC during the quarter. Saudi-listed banks registered a 13.1% growth in impairments that reached USD 0.66 Bn, the highest in

four quarters. Meanwhile, the cost of risk (ratio of 12-month provisions vs. average loans) continued to remain low as compared to recent quarters at 0.55% for the aggregate GCC banking sector. The low ratio as compared to historical levels indicate recoveries, strong economic indicators as well as stable asset quality. The ratio was highest in the case of Omani banks at 0.92% in Q1-2024 followed by Qatari banks at 0.88%. The ratio was the lowest in the case of Kuwaiti and Saudi-listed banks at 0.36% while UAE-listed banks showed slightly higher cost of risk of 0.58%.

# Operating costs recede to a 3-quar-

Aggregate operating expenses for listed banks in the GCC declined during Q1-2024 after reaching a record high during the previous quarter. Total operating expenses reached USD 12.5 Bn during Q1-2024 after falling by 4.5% as compared to the previous quarter. The decline was seen in five out of six countries, with only Kuwaiti banks seeing an

increase during the quarter. Costs for Bahraini banks declined by 19.6% q-oq during Q1-2024 reflecting a decline in operating expenses reported by almost all listed banks in the country. This was followed by mid-single digit declines for Qatari and UAE-listed banks. Saudi banks also lowered operating costs by 4.2% to USD 3.9 Bn during Q1-2024. Kuwaiti banks, meanwhile, saw a 7.7% increase in operating costs that reached USD 1.5 Bn mainly reflecting a steep increase in expenses reported by KFH.

However, despite a fall in operating expenses during the quarter, the cost-to-income ratio for GCC banks showed a marginal increase during Q1-2024 mainly led by higher costs for the twelve-month period. The cost to income ratio for the aggregate sector reached 40.0% in Q1-2024 as compared to 39.8% during Q4-2023. The increase reflected an increase in the ratio for four of six country aggregates. The biggest increase was seen in Kuwait and Qatar while Saudi Arabian and Bahraini aggregates showed marginal increase of 40 bps. The cost to income ratio was the lowest in the case of Qatari banks at 38.2% followed by UAE and Saudi Arabian banks at 38.4% and 39.4%, re-

## NIM peaked during the quarter at

The aggregate net interest margin reported by GCC-listed banks have remained stable for the last four quarters at 3.2% indicating the peak for the ratio as the higher interest rates over the last four quarters are fully priced. The ratio showed minimal changes at the country level, indicating a saturation point for the sector as both lending and cost of deposit and funding reflect elevated interest rate levels. UAE once again ranked first in the GCC in terms of NIMs that reached 3.49% in Q1-2024 as compared to 3.52% during Q4-2023. The higher margins as compared to gulf peers reflect ample liquidity that allows UAE banks to capitalize on the tightening interest rate cycle with more modest asset growth. Saudi Arabian banks were next with a NIM of 3.18% followed by Qatari and Kuwait banks at 3.06% and 2.87%, respectively. We expect NIM to come under pressure as the cost of funding in the local markets remains high as banks make efforts to attract depositors.

# GCC banking RoE sees consistent

Aggregate return on equity (RoE) for the GCC banking sector continued to show improvement during Q1-2024 reaching one of the highest levels over the last few years at 13.5% as compared to 13.4% at the end of Q4-2023, reaching prepandemic levels. The ratio also improved in terms of y-o-y comparison by strong 110 bps supported by an increase in aggregate 12-month profitability coupled with a relatively smaller growth in shareholders' equity. Total shareholder equity reached USD 410.4 Bn at the end of Q1-2024, registering an decline of 0.9% as compared to Q4-

At the country level, UAE-listed banks once again topped in the region with the highest RoE at the end of Q1-2024 at 16.9% closely followed by Saudi Arabian and Qatari banks with RoEs of 12.8% and 12.7%, respectively. The biggest y-o-y growth in RoE was also seen for UAE-listed banks at 280 bps which was mainly led by elevated profits as well as a relatively smaller growth in total shareholders' equity. ROEs for Kuwaiti banks stayed elevated at a double-digit level of 10.4% while Bahraini and Omani banks reported RoEs at 9.6% and 8.7%, respectively. The current higher-for-longer expectation for GCC banks could limit further gains in RoE for regional banks and any cut in rates would lower the drag coming from higher cost of funding and support RoE

# **New currency**

# Zimbabwe to up gold production

HARARE, May 21, (Xinhua): Zimbabwe is targeting to increase its gold production following the adoption of the gold-backed currency Zimbabwe Gold (ZiG), a senior government official said on Monday.

"The ZiG currency is anchored to gold reserves. It then becomes very critical to ensure that we unlock the full potential of our gold resources, and of our gold sector," Mines and Mining Development Minister Winston Chitando said while addressing the media during a gold mobilization workshop send-off program held in

Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe. According to him, Zimbabwe's gold mining sector is targeting to raise production to 40 metric tons this year from 30.1 metric tons delivered last year.

# Italy's economy 'performs well'

ROME, May 21, (Xinhua): The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said that while Italy had good recoveries from economic shocks in recent years, the economy's prospects were

only "moderate" going forward.
In its annual Staff Concluding Statement, the IMF said that Italy recovered from the back-to-back shocks of the coronavirus pandemic and the spike in energy prices sparked by the Ukraine crisis and that as of the end of the first quarter of this year, its economy was 4.5 percent larger than before the pandemic "a stronger performance than in other large euro-area countries," the IMF said in a statement.

That growth, the fund said, was fueled by a recovery in tourism, tax credits, and projects funded by European Union (EU) pandemic recovery loans and grants.

# Cryptocurrency markets surge amidst optimism and regulatory anticipation

Bitcoin's price rose by 1.40% to reach \$67,114.00

# Saudia ramps up tourism push

# Saudi Arabia's national carrier places an order for more than 100 new Airbus jets

RIYADH, May 21, (AP): Saudi Arabia's national airline ordered more than 100 new Airbus jets, a reflection of the kingdom's ambitious drive to lure more tourists.

Saudia Group, which represents the Saudia airline and its budget carrier Flyadeal, said Monday that it ordered 105 aircraft from the French aerospace company's A320neo family of jets, including 12 A320neos and 93 A321neos. That brings Saudia Group's Airbus aircraft order backlog to 144 of the

A320neo family planes.

Saudia said it is increasing flights and seat capacity across its existing 100-plus destinations to meet the country's goal of attracting more than 150 million tourists by 2030.

In February, Airbus reported healthy results for its commercial aircraft business in its latest annual earnings report and set a target of 800 commercial aircraft deliveries, 67 more than in 2023.

Airbus's fortunes contrast with

struggles at U.S. rival Boeing, which seemed finally to be recovering from two crashes of Max jets in 2018 and 2019 that killed 346 people in Indonesia and Ethiopia. But on Jan. 5, a door plug blew out of an Alaska Airlines 737 Max 9, and the company has been reeling ever

Airbus has benefitted from its decision to launch the A321neo, a single-aisle aircraft with 180 to 230 seats. "Neo" stands for new engine option, meaning highly fuel efficient engines that save airlines money on one of their biggest costs. Boeing rushed to match it with the Max, a 737 equipped with new, more efficient engines, only to run into a myriad of technical issues.

Despite Boeing's woes, Airbus is unlikely to extend its advantage in the Airbus-Boeing duopoly much further because the company already is making planes as fast as it can, with a backlog of more than

8,600 orders to fill.

Binance, founded by Zhang Ping Zhao, faced legal scrutiny from US authorities and admitted to violating anti-money laundering laws, resulting in a hefty \$4.3 billion compensation payout. Despite remaining the largest cryptocurrency exchange globally, Binance and BitMEX were excluded from this

their legal issues.

Forbes' list identified the top 20 trustworthy cryptocurrency plat-forms worldwide, including 7 in the US, 4 in Europe and Japan, and others in South Korea, Singapore, Dubai, and Hong Kong. Notable platforms on the list include Gemini, BitFlyer, Bitstamp, and

ports Al-Jarida daily. Bitcoin's price rose by 1.40 percent to reach \$67,114.00; Ethereum climbed by 1.10 percent to \$3,103.80, and Ripple saw a 0.44 percent increase to 51.22 cents.

Despite Bitcoin's recent gains of over 10 percent in the past week, driven by optimism regarding the potential end of the US monetary tightening cycle following a slowdown in annual inflation in April, some traders remain cautious due to the ongoing volatility in the cryptocurrency market this year.

Investors are eagerly awaiting the SEC's decision on the launch of Ethereum Traded Funds by "Van Eck" and "ARC/21 Shares"

on the twenty-third and twentyfourth of this month, respectively. Meanwhile, Coinbase secured

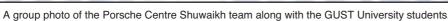
the top spot on Forbes' list of the most reliable cryptocurrency platforms, attributed to its high level of regulation despite ongoing civil lawsuits with the SEC.

Bitcoin's recent price surge, now trading above \$60,000, has been supported by flows attracted by US exchange-traded funds based on its spot price. These funds, offered by companies like Fidelity and Black-Rock, have injected credibility and confidence into the industry following a series of bankruptcies in 2022, including the collapse of the FTX exchange and the conviction of its founder.

year's Forbes classification due to









Porsche Centre Shuwaikh team introducing the all-new facility to the students.



Porsche Centre Shuwaikh team introducing the all-new facility to the students.



A glimpse from the workshop given to GUST University



GUST University students exploring the all-electric Por-



GUST University students exploring Porsche Centre Shu-

### Behbehani Motors celebrates seven decades with educational initiative

# Porsche Centre Shuwaikh welcomes GUST students for immersive brand experience

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: Behbehani Motors Company - Porsche Centre Shuwaikh, an industry leader and pioneer in automotive engineering and sports car technology, recently hosted a group of marketingstudents from the Gulf University of Science & Technology (GUST) for an all-day educational tour at its new facility located in Shuwaikh. This initiative aligns with Porsche Centre Shuwaikh's (PCS) commitment to youth-led sustainability, aiming to foster and mobilize an empowered Kuwaiti youth, capable of shaping a sustainable world for future generations.

Porsche Centre Shuwaikh sought collaboration with GUST to organize a facility tour for marketing majors, to diversify their business knowledge and expand their horizons on the automotive sector and its latest offerings. Porsche Centre Shuwaikh's collaborative efforts with GUST exemplify their unwavering dedication to enriching the educational experiences of Kuwaiti students.

Paying homage to almost seven decades of continued success in Kuwait, representatives at Porsche Centre Shuwaikh inaugurated the students' tour of the facility with a brief overview of the international brand, and its association with Behbehani Motors Company since 1957. Key milestones, including the pivotal year of inception, were highlighted, showcas-

KIB reveals Al Dirwaza weekly draw 'winners'

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the winners of the weekly draw held of the beginning of each month. under the Al Dirwaza account's 2024 campaign, which is distinguished by the highest number of winners throughout the year. The thirdweekly draw, based on customers' April deposits, recently took place in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as well as representatives from the Bank. The KD 1,000 prize was awarded to Mafaz Asad Mansour Alebrahim, Murtadha Abdulsamad Ali Alsaffar, Naji Salem Wadeed Alsubaiei, Dalal Abdulwahed Abdulrahman Alhadhoud, and Alaa Dawoud Sulaiman Alkhashti, whilst the KD 500 prize was awarded to Ayman Mubarak Jassim Mubarak, Doaa Ibrahim Mohamed Elsherif, Nadiah Mohammad Zaid Aladwani, Manal Hasan Saleh Atieh, Mohammad Falah Ali Alazemi, Mahmoud Mefleh Mohammad Mabsalt, and Ahmad Sadeq Mohammad Altarakmah.

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

automatically deposited into the customer's account within the first day

Al Dirwaza account holders eligible to enter the weekly, monthly and annual draws on the condition of maintaining at least KD 100 in their account. For the weekly and monthly draws, each KD 1 that has completed a full month's cycle in the account will count for one chance, and chances are calculated based on the lowest monthly balance preceding the draw. As for the mega draw, chances are calculated for each KD 1 that completes a twomonth cycle in the account – based on the lowest two monthly balances prior to the draw.

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

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

ing Porsche's enduring presence and contribution to Kuwait's automotive landscape. Students witnessed firsthand how the company has been synonymous with luxury, performance, and innovation, consistently exceeding customer expectations.

The students also learned about the legendary Porsche 356 which marked Kuwait's debut in sports car sales, with the opening of the first Porsche dealership in the Middle East, ranking as only 9th worldwide.

GUST's marketing students continued to explore Porsche Centre Shuwaikh's newly developed facility, capturing its dynamic and captivating environment. Porsche Centre Shuwaikh's impressive showroom covers 2,800 square meters, serving as the centre piece that highlights Porsche's diverse lineup of vehicles, from E-mobility to Pre-owned vehicles, SUVs, and sports cars. Students also visited the facility's spacious service reception area, spanning 3,600 square meters, to ensure a seamless and welcoming experience for customers.

Home to the Classic Porsche Cars Collection, Porsche Centre Shuwaikh treated the students to an engaging tour of its 850-square-meter on-site museum. Students delved into the rich heritage of Porsche and its continuous evolution, admiringthe private collection showcase of special Porsche vehicles built by Porsche's Kuwaiti importer, the Behbehani family.

Students expressed exceptional admiration for this part of the facility tour, as the remarkable exhibition combines rare and special Porsche vehicles, displayed with digital technology to immerse visitors in the brand's rich history.

As the tour went on, students continued to gain a deeper understanding of Porsche's ongoing dedication to innovation and technology. To promote and encourage sustainable mobility solutions, students were also introduced to Porsche E-Performance models available in Kuwait. This included interactive discussions on charging times and docking procedures, equipping students with firsthand knowledge of this rapidly developing automotive segment.

The students' tour culminated with a fascinating exploration of Porsche Centre Shuwaikh's services facility, witnessing the intricate workings of the service department. As they entered the extensive workshop, covering 5,900 square meters, students experienced cutting-edge technology at the standard bays, including the brand-new dialogue bays in the inspection station, which further increases Porsche's accuracy levels of vehicle diagnostics. Porsche's skilled technicians introduced the students to the meticulous craftsmanship and care provided to maintain and service every Porsche to the highest service standards.

From technical operations to customer service protocols, students gained valuable insights into Porsche's commitment to excellence in every aspect of its business. This gave students an overall understanding of how Porsche Centre Shuwaikh offers a world-class automotive experience, encompassing sales, service, and genuine parts. A notion that verified Porsche's commitment to exceptional customer care and vehicle maintenance to those students.

Lauding the initiative, Mr. Hany Marie, General Manager of Porsche Centre Kuwait, said: "At Porsche Centre Shuwaikh, we firmly believe in empowering the future generation, by nurturing young talents and providing opportunities to learn and grow. Hosting facility tours at Porsche Centre Shuwaikh underscores our ongoing commitment to supporting the educational development of Kuwaiti youth and fostering a passion for innovation and excellence.

Mr. Hany Marie concluded his remarks by expressing gratitude and appreciation to all who contributed to the success of this initiative. "We are truly thrilled to have hosted marketing majors from the Gulf University of Science & Technology on this educational tour. We are confident that this experience will leave a lasting impression on the GUST marketing students and contribute significantly to their academic journey", added Mr. Hany Marie.

Porsche Centre Shuwaikh remains steadfast in its dedication to making a meaningful impact in the community and inspiring generations of leaders and innovators for a sustainable future. The state-of-the-art facility not only sets new standards in luxury automotive retail and service but also stands as a testament to sustainability and green technology. This is evidenced by the facility's use of specialised water recycling and solar panels to generate renewable energy. Electric vehicle chargers are also installed throughout the facility to echo the company's forward march toward a sustainable future for the automotive industry.



Anowd Hamad Muthaib and Waleed Esbaitah flanked by team members during the signing of the memorandum of understanding.

Eng. Anowd Muthaib highlights importance of recycling partnership

# stc partners with Tadwire to launch E-waste recycling initiative

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced that it has signed an MoU with Tadwire, Kuwait's first recycling facility of its kind. Supported by the Kuwait National SME Fund, Tadwire will support stc's sustainability initiative for the year 2024, focusing on ways to reduce the waste footprint in its offices, operations, and the community. Additionally, the initiative aligns with stc's extensive corporate social responsibility framework, which is comprised of several key pillars, one of which focuses on environmental preservation. To commemorate the exclusive MoU,stc held

a signing ceremony at its headquarters that was attended by executives from stc and Tadwire. Through the partnership, stc and Tadwire will collaborate on various initiatives that will spread awareness on environmental responsibility and sustainability by collecting electronic waste and recycling it to reduce its negative impact on the environment. Signing the MoU is in line with our corporate strategy to achieve the various objectives defined under the Company's 2024 sustainability program, which is a top priority for the Company, and also aligns with Kuwait's 2035 Vision.

The eWaste recycling initiative will include a

number of activities that aim to educate and spread awareness on the importance of recycling to preserve the environment. Considering that stc, as well as other players in the market, have increased their growth based on the demand for new electronic products, such as smartphones, routers, entertainment devices, and others, it is essential for individuals to understand how to properly dispose of their old electronic waste. Through its role as a pioneer in the market, stc, in collaboration with Tadwire, aims to take the lead in advocating this mission as well as educate the public on the benefits of recycling in general.

Commenting on the partnership, Eng. Anowd Hamad Muthaib, Acting Chief Strategy Officer & Chief Transformation and Synergies Officer at stc, said, "stc implements sustainable standards across its core functions, whether they are directly related to the business or related to the community. We are proud to partner with the first recycling facility of its kind in Kuwait that handles various materials. Our goal is to support the community by enlightening them on the positive sustainable impacts of recycling and how it can lead to preserving the environment and natural resources. This year, stc is focusing on the core attributes behind its sustainability program which also aligns with the Company's longstanding CSR framework."

Muthaib further added, "On behalf of stc, I

would like to thank the team at Tadwire for their support and effort which led to the signing of this MoU that will prove to be fruitful for both parties. As pioneers within our industry, we believe in the power of forming strong collaboration with key partners that share the same vision and goals as stc. Our commitment to sustainability is unwavering, and we believe that through collective efforts, we can achieve a significant impact for our community and stimulate lasting change for the future generations.'

Waleed Esbaitah from Tadwire, said, "We are excited to be working alongside stc in spreading awareness on the importance of recycling different materials within our community. Our vision at Tadwire is to set the benchmark for sustainable environmental protection in Kuwait, and having a partner like stc along our side will surely accelerate this vision. When we first began our journey, we noticed the lack of recycling facilities in Kuwait that could cater to various waste sources like e-waste. When launching our facility, our objective was to fill this gap and lead by example. Today, by partnering with stc, we are not only expanding our reach but also enhancing the impact of our efforts across the nation. Having said that, we look forward to collaborating with stc under the new partnership and are eager to see where this journey will take us.'



KIB Al Dirwaza account

the 1980s, "pure fiction" and vowed legal action following its premiere at the Cannes Film Festival. Steven Cheung, Trump campaign spokesperson, said in a statement that the Trump team will be file a lawsuit "to address the blatantly false

assertions from these pretend filmmakers.' "This garbage is pure fiction which sensationalizes lies that have been long debunked," Cheung said. "The Apprentice," which premiered Monday in Cannes, stars Sebas-

tian Stan as Trump. The central relationship of the movie is between Trump and Roy Cohn (Jeremy Strong), the defense attorney who was chief counsel to Joseph McCarthy's 1950s Senate investigations of suspected communists

In the film, directed by the Iranian Danish filmmaker Ali Abbasi, Cohn is depicted as a longtime mentor to Trump, coaching him in the ruthlessness of New York City politics and business. Early on, Cohn aided the Trump Organization when it was being sued by the federal government for racial discrimination in housing.

"The Apprentice," which is labeled as inspired by true events, portrays Trump's dealings with Cohn as a Faustian bargain that guided his rise as a businessman and, later, as a politician. Stan's Trump is initially a more naive real estate striver, soon transformed by Cohn's education.

The film notably contains a scene depicting Trump raping his wife, Ivana Trump (played by Maria Bakalova). In Ivana Trump's 1990 divorce deposition, she stated that Trump raped her. Trump denied the allegation and Ivana Trump later said she didn't mean it literally, but rather that she had felt violated.

That scene and others make "The Apprentice" a potentially explosive big-screen drama in the midst of the U.S. presidential election. The film is for sale in Cannes, so it doesn't yet have a release date.

After the premiere, Abbasi addressed the Cannes audience, saying "there is no nice metaphorical way to deal with the rising wave of fas-

"The good people have been quiet for too long," he said. "So I think it's time to make movies relevant. It's time to make movies political

Listing wars in Gaza, Ukraine and Sudan, Abbasi, whose previous film "Holy Spider" depicted a serial killer murdering women in Iran, warned of trouble ahead.

"In the time of turmoil, there's this tendency to look inwards, to bury your head deep in the sand, look inside and hope for the best - hope for the best, hope for the storm to get away," Abbasi said. "But the storm is not going to get away. The storm is coming. The worst times are coming."

CANNES, France: Studio Ghibli, the Japanese anime factory of surreal ecological wonders that has for 39 years spirited away moviegoers with tales of Totoros, magical jellyfish and floating castles, was celebrated Monday by the Cannes Film Festival with an honorary Palme

In the 22 years that Cannes has been handing out honorary Palmes, the award for Ghibli was the first for anything but an individual filmmaker or actor. (This year's other recipients are George Lucas and Meryl Streep.) Hayao Miyazaki, the 83-year-old animation master who founded Studio Ghibli in 1985 with Isao Takahata and Toshio Suzuki, didn't attend the ceremony, but he spoke in a video message taped in Japan.

"I don't understand any of this," said Miyazaki. "But thank you." At Cannes, where standing ovations can stretch on end, the fervor that greeted Ghibli's emissaries - Goro Miyazaki (son of Hayao) and Kenichi Yoda - was nevertheless among the most thunderous receptions at the festival. Thierry Fremaux, Cannes' artistic director, walked across the stage of the Grand Théâtre Lumière filming the long ovation, he said, for a video to send to Miyazaki.

"With this Palme d'Or, we'd like to thank you for all the magic you've brought to cinema," said Iris Knobloch, the president of the festival, presenting the award.

# **Variety**



This image released by Searchlight Pictures shows Emma Stone, (left), and Joe Alwyn in a scene from 'Kinds of Kindness.' (AP)

# **Film**

**TALLINN, Estonia:** A Russian court on Monday opened the trial of a theater director and a playwright accused of advocating terrorism in a play, the latest step in an unrelenting crackdown on dissent in Russia that has reached new heights since Moscow sent

Zhenya Berkovich, a prominent independent theater director, and playwright Svetlana Petriychuk have been jailed for over a year. Authorities claim their play "Finist, the Brave Falcon" justifies terrorism, which is a criminal offense in Russia punishable by up to seven years in prison. Berkovich and Petriychuk have both repeatedly rejected the accusations against them.

Monday that she staged the play in order to prevent terrorism, and Petriychuk echoed her sentiment, saying that she wrote it in order to prevent events like those depicted

pointed out at court hearings before the trial that the play was supported by the Russian Culture Ministry and won the Golden Mask award, Russia's most prestigious national theater award. In 2019, the play was read to inmates of a women's prison in **Siberia**, and Russia's state penitentiary service praised it on its website, Petriychuk's lawyer has said.

ANKARA, Turkey's Turkey's president took a swipe at the Eurovision Song Contest on Monday, accusing the annual event of allegedly encouraging "gender neutralization" and threatening the

traditional family.

In a speech following a Cabinet meeting, Recep Tayyip Erdogan described participants at the contest as the "Trojan horses of social corruption" and said his government was right to keep Turkey out of the pan-European pop competi-

troops into Ukraine.

Berkovich told the court on

The women's lawyers have

The case against Berkovich and Petriychuk elicited outrage in Russia. An open letter in support of the two artists, started by the independent Novaya Gazeta newspaper, has been signed by more than 16,000 people since their arrest. The play, the letter argued, "carries an absolutely clear anti-terrorist sentiment." (AP)

# The unstoppable duo of Hollywood

# Stone and Lanthimos' magic continues

CANNES, France, May 21, (AP): Before a journalist has even lobbed a question, Emma Stone and Yorgos Lanthimos spit out a string of overlapping answers.

"We have a great relationship," begins Lanthimos.
"We just love working together," adds Stone. "It was cool to do a modern-day piece." "Going back to some of the early stuff," says Lanthimos. "A throwback," says Stone. "Our relationship has evolved over time," Lanthimos adds.

"Totally," says Stone.

Stone and Lanthimos have by now honed their patter. They're just barely removed from the Oscar campaign for "Poor Things," which culminated in four Academy Awards, including best actress for Stone. Just two months later, they're back together at the Cannes Film Festival with "Kinds of Kindness," their third feature together and fourth film, counting the 2022 short "Bleat."

"We do have a bit of a double act going on," shrugs

Their collaboration has by now become so regular, and the talking points so scripted, that it would be easy to take it for granted. Minutes before they sat down for an interview in Cannes, a press release went out with the news that Lanthimos and Stone will soon begin shooting another movie together, titled "Bugonia."

Opposite as they may seem - one a 35-year-old star from Arizona, the other a 50-year-old arthouse filmmaker from Athens - they've rapidly formed one of the movies' strongest director-actor partnerships, a collaboration based on a shared sense of absurdity and a willingness to go, full-tilt, to some very strange places.

For Stone, the connection she feels with Lanthimos isn't so different than the one she does with Nathan Fielder, the darkly deadpan comedian of "The Curse."

"I don't say this lightly even though I know it's easy to use this word flippantly: They're both geniuses,' says Stone. "They are. I think it's just an innate thing. It can't really be taught or described. It's just a way of seeing society and people. You're actually both drawn to themes of: Why is this social structure like this? Why do we have these rules? How are we supposed to

function within them?" You can grasp a similar attitude in Lanthimos and Stone's opening volley of answers to unasked questions, disarming the regular rhythms of an interview. Or in how Stone, every bit the movie star, constantly

undercuts herself with self-deprecating sarcasm. But you can most see it in their movies together. The aggressive period farce of "The Favourite." Bella Baxter's childlike experience of social mores in "Poor Things." In "Kinds of Kindness," a triptych of extreme tales of controlling relationships, Lanthimos, working again with screenwriter Efthimis Filippou, continues his idiosyncratic examinations of social conformity.

"I got inspired by reading 'Caligula' by Camus," Lanthimos says. "I just started thinking about one man's control over other people's lives. Then I thought it would be interesting to explore on a more personal level how that would feel, having someone be in total control over your life, even in the most minute detail."

# **Opportunity**

"Kinds of Kindness," which Searchlight Pictures will release June 21 in theaters, was an opportunity for Stone (aside from "Bleat") to work with Lanthimos in the style of his earlier films ("The Lobster," "The Killing of a Sacred Deer") with Filippou.

"It was the chance to finally be in that version of Yorgos' mind," Stone says. "Before I met him, obviously, those were the only ones I had seen.

The two had discussed making "Kinds of Kindness" before "Poor Things," but shot it in the aftermath of their Oscar-winner during its lengthy post-production process due to the film's large amount of special ef-

"Do you remember we made this as fast as we could because we were like, 'I don't know what the hell is going to happen on "Poor Things?" Stone reminds Lanthimos.

'Everyday after work, we'd talk about it. How was it? Did you watch the rushes? What do you think?" continues Stone. "And he's like: 'This is a disaster. Every single day. And I'd go, 'OK, that's what I

Alternatively, "Kinds of Kindness," Stone says "was free and happy and everyone's going to love this.

That might be surprising for anyone's who's seen the three-hour "Kinds of Kindness," which uses largely the same company of actors across all three stories. (Among them: Jesse Plemons, Willem Dafoe and Margaret Qualley.) The three parts take stories of work-life balance, spousal suspicion and sexual abuse to severe, surreal lengths.

For Stone, "Kinds of Kindness" extends a run of daringly unconventional projects, including "The Curse" and Jane Schoenbrun's "I Saw the TV Glow," which she produced, at a time when Stone could, by herself, help greenlight nearly anything.

"The common denominator of the things I've been a part of are that they're things I want to watch," Stone says. "That's the only gauge that I have. If it's not something that I would be like, 'I gotta go see this the day it comes out,' then it's probably not a good fit for me.

But she and Lanthimos may be shifting the bar for what constitutes "mainstream." The brutal extremes of "Kinds of Kindness" have led to some, in comparing it to "Poor Things," referencing their last one - an unabashedly profane coming-of-age tale about a dead woman reanimated with a child's brain - like it was some kind of all-audiences crowd pleaser.

"It's so funny to hear people talk about 'Poor Things' like the conventional film that we made, says Lanthimos, smiling. "I get a little bit irritated but then I go, no wait, it's great that people consider 'Poor Things,' like, a normal thing. We couldn't get it made for 12 years.'

Yet at this point, Stone and Lanthimos' collaboration is so continuous that the projects can bleed into each other. Take Stone's already viral dance in "Kinds of Kindness," a moment splashed through the film's trailers. That was initially just something Stone was doing in between scenes on "Poor Things."

"She would put on a song and dance like crazy," says Lanthimos. "I was like, 'I want you to do this in

'Kinds of Kindness."

It was an apparent reference to Swiss singer Nemo who won the 68th Eurovision Song Contest earlier this month with "The Code," an operatic pop-rap ode to the singer's journey toward embracing a nongender identity. The 24-year-old singer became the first nonbinary winner of the contest that has long been embraced as a safe haven by





"At such events, it has become impossible to meet a normal person," claimed Erdogan, whose ruling Justice and Development Party

the LGBTQ community.

finds its roots in Turkey's Islamic movement and whose government has grown less tolerant of LGBTQ rights in recent years. (AP) 

**BEIJING:** Chinese comedy "The Last Frenzy" continued to top the daily box office chart in the Chinese mainland on Monday, data from the China Movie Data Information Network showed.

The film, exploring life's choices in the face of death, raked in 24.84 million yuan (about 3.50 million US dollars) on the 20th

day of its release. It was followed by the action crime thriller "Twilight of the

Warriors: Walled In" with 17.05 million yuan of daily box office Romance film "18x2 Beyond

Youthful Days" came in third with a daily earning of 16.08 million yuan. (Xinhua)

# People & Places

## **People**

### **OpenAl voice disabled**

# 'Eerily similar' voice enrages Johansson

NEW YORK, May 21, (Agencies): OpenAI on Monday said it plans to halt the use of one of its Chat-GPT voices that "Her" actor Scarlett Johansson says sounds "eerily similar" to her own.

In a post on the social media platform X, OpenAI said it is "working to pause" Sky - the name of one of five voices that ChatGPT users can choose to speak with. The company said it had "heard questions" about how it selects the lifelike audio options available for its flagship artificial intelligence chatbot, particularly Sky, and wanted to address them.

Among those raising questions was Johansson, who famously voiced a fictional, and at the time futuristic, AI assistant in the 2013 film "Her."



Johansson

Johansson issued a statement saying that OpenAI CEO Sam Altman had approached her in September asking her if she would lend her voice to the system, saying he felt it would be "comforting to people" not at ease with the technology. She said she declined the offer. 'When I heard the released

demo, I was shocked, angered and in disbelief that Mr. Altman would pursue a voice that sounded so eerily similar to mine that my closest friends

hansson said. She said OpenAI "reluctantly" agreed to take down the Sky voice after she hired lawyers who wrote Altman letters asking about the process by which the

and news outlets could not tell the difference," Jo-

company came up with the voice. OpenAI had moved to debunk the internet's theories about Johansson in a blog post accompanying its earlier announcement aimed at detailing how Chat-GPT's voices were chosen. The company wrote that it believed AI voices "should not deliberately mimic a celebrity's distinctive voice" and that the voice of Sky belongs to a "different professional actress." But it added that it could not share the name of that professional for privacy reasons.

#### Response

In a statement sent to The Associated Press following Johansson's response late Monday, Altman said that OpenAI cast the voice actor behind Sky "before any outreach" to Johansson.

"The voice of Sky is not Scarlett Johansson's, and

it was never intended to resemble hers," Altman said. "Out of respect for Ms. Johansson, we have paused using Sky's voice in our products. We are sorry to Ms. Johansson that we didn't communicate better.

San Francisco-based OpenAI first rolled out voice capabilities for ChatGPT, which included the five different voices, in September, allowing users to engage in back-to-forth conversation with the AI assistant. "Voice Mode" was originally just available to paid subscribers, but in November, OpenAI announced that the feature would become free for all users with

And ChatGPT's interactions are becoming more and more sophisticated. Last week, OpenAI said the latest update to its generative AI model can mimic human cadences in its verbal responses and can even try to detect people's moods.

OpenAI says the newest model, dubbed GPT-4o, works faster than previous versions and can reason across text, audio and video in real time. In a demonstration during OpenAI's May 13 announcement, the AI bot chatted in real time, adding emotion - specifically "more drama" - to its voice as requested. It also took a stab at extrapolating a person's emotional state by looking at a selfie video of their face, aided in language translations, step-by-step math problems

GPT-40, short for "omni," isn't widely available yet. It will progressively make its way to select users in the coming weeks and months. The model's text and image capabilities have already begun rolling out, and is set to reach even some of those that use Chat-GPT's free tier - but the new voice mode will just be available for paid subscribers of ChatGPT Plus.

While most have yet to get their hands on these newly announced features, the capabilities have conjured up even more comparisons to the Spike Jonze's dystopian romance "Her," which follows an introverted man (Joaquin Phoenix) who falls in love with an AI-operating system (Johansson), leading to many complications.

Altman appeared to tap into this, too - simply posting the word "her" on the social media platform X the day of GPT-4o's unveiling.

Many reacting to the model's demos last week also

found some of the interactions struck a strangely flirtatious tone. In one video posted by OpenAI, a femalevoiced ChatGPT compliments a company employee on "rocking an OpenAI hoodie," for example, and in another the chatbot says "oh stop it, you're making me blush" after being told that it's amazing.

That's sparked some conversation on the gendered ways critics say tech companies have long used to develop and engage voice assistants - dating back far before the latest wave of generative AI advanced the capabilities of AI chatbots. In 2019, the United Nations' culture and science organization pointed to "hardwired subservience" built into default female-voiced assistants (like Apple's Siri to Amazon's Alexa), even when confronted with sexist insults and harassment.

"This is clearly programmed to feed dudes' egos." The Daily Show senior correspondent Desi Lydic said of GPT-40 in a segment last week. "You can really tell that a man built this tech."

# Also:

**NEW YORK:** Chinese pianist **Ju Xiaofu** made his debut at Carnegie Hall in New York City, the United States, on Sunday evening with the audience amazed by his performance.

Ju showcased his talent with a program featuring works by 19th and 20th-century composers including Janácek, R. Schumann, Debussy, and Liszt.

Titled "Waldeinsamkeit," which translates to "forest solitude" in English, the program and performance itself transported the Zankel Hall of Carnegie Hall to the wintry landscapes of Czechia, Germany, France,

"Xiaofu's expressive piano playing achieved new levels of depth, particularly in the Liszt Sonata. The moving sections were both technically remarkable and emotionally resonant, a testament to his consummate artistry," said David Witten, piano professor at the

Montclair State University.

Ju not only showcased his virtuosity as a pianist but also his depth as a poet and an artist, said Liu Qianci, producer of the concert and founder of Paulus Hook Music Foundation.



This image released by Focus Features shows Marisa Abela as Amy Winehouse in a scene from 'Back to Black.' (AP)



Oriana Sabatini poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'The Shrouds' at the 77th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Monday, May 20. (AP)



# **Variety**

**NEW YORK:** Two top editors at Penguin Random House are leaving as the country's leading trading publisher continues to transform during a period of uncertain revenues and generational change.

The Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, a Penguin Random House division, announced Monday the departures of Alfred A. Knopf publisher Reagan Arthur and Pantheon/Schocken publisher Lisa Lucas. A publishing official who was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity, said that the restructure was for financial reasons. Knopf and Pantheon/Schocken are two of the industry's most established literary publishers and Arthur and Lucas two of the most widely liked editors.

The book market has softened since early in the pandemic, when sales surged amid shutdowns in the entertainment industry and beyond. In a year-end company letter sent in December 2023, Penguin Random House CEO Nihar Malaviya referred to "very difficult and challenging" changes facing the company. On Monday, Knopf Doubleday publisher Maya Mavjee said the latest "realignment" was "necessary for our future growth."

"Our new structure -- consisting of a nimble, concentrated leadership team -- will enable us to meet the trials of an ever-shifting marketplace, hone the shape and focus of our imprints, and continue to allow us to do what we do best: publish great books," Mavjee said.

Jordan Pavlin, currently Knopf's editor in chief, will now also serve as publisher. At Pantheon, vice president-editorial director Denise Oswald will report to the publisher of Doubleday, Bill Thomas.

Over the past few years, much of Penguin Random House's leadership team has retired, died or otherwise departed. CEO Markus Dohle left after the publisher's purchase of rival Simon & Schuster was blocked in 2022 by a federal judge, and numerous longtime officials accepted buyouts. Arthur's immediate predecessor at Knopf, Sonny Mehta, died in 2019. One of Knopf's most celebrated editors, Robert Gottlieb, died last year. (AP) 

**BEIJING:** If you ask Gen Z what the current fashion craze in China is, "new Chinese style" will probably be a quick answer. After gaining immense popularity during this year's Spring Festival, the organic blend of traditional Chinese aesthetics and modern style continues to Film

# Chasing Amy: From 'Industry' to 'Back to Black'

# Abela's deep dive into Winehouse

LONDON, May 21, (AP): There's no point asking Marisa Abela to sing Amy Winehouse songs at karaoke. Her friends have already tried and failed.

But you can see her sing - and become - Winehouse in the new film "Back to Black," which opened in the

US recently.
Abela, best known for the sex, drugs and banking TV series "Industry," did not want her performance to feel like a mere impersonation of the iconic British singer. She spent four months learning to sing in Winehouse's specific vocal style (two hours a day, five days a week), play guitar (one hour a day, three times a week) and move like her through "intense" physical train-

Abela immersed herself in Winehouse's life and music until, she says, it was "annoying." Deciding to give her flatmates a break from the sound of her guitar practice ("at the beginning everything sounded terrible") or watching performances on a loop ("over and over again"), she relocated to Camden.

It's the area in north London where Winehouse lived and died and where she is still much loved and remembered. Her image and music are everywhere.

"She was out and she was at pubs and at restaurants and, you know, singing when she shouldn't have been sometimes. And also when she should have been," Abela says.

"Back to Black," directed by Sam Taylor-Johnson, follows the experiences that led Winehouse to write the album of the same title. It shows her rise to fame from her debut album "Frank" to her triumph at the 2008 Grammys. Away from music, we see her Friday night family dinners and the heartbreak of her relationship with Blake Fielder-Civil (played by Jack O'Connell).

Abela is now 27, the same age

charm hearts during the spring and summer

seasons, becoming a new buzzword in the

New Chinese-style clothing is typically

defined as attire that seamlessly integrates tra-

ditional Chinese elements with contemporary

styling. It not only encapsulates traditional

aesthetics and cultural heritage but also inte-

grates materials, techniques, and technologies

On social media platforms like Douyin

and Xiaohongshu, the "new Chinese style"

commerce data from short video platform

Kuaishou showed that in the first quarter

remains a fervent topic of discussion. E-

domestic consumer market.

stemming from modern science.

Winehouse was when she died in 2011. The actor met The Associated Press recently at Camden's traditional pub and music venue The Dublin Castle, a well-known Winehouse hangout and a filming location for "Back to Black."

"It was important to her to be in Camden always," Abela says. "Everyone has stories and that's really help-

The actor remembers coming in for a pint after she booked the job, just to get a feel for the place. Winehouse played gigs there and would pop behind the bar to pull pints. There are signed photos to landlady Peggy Conlon proudly displayed behind the bar (they had to be removed for filming).

Abela describes how the tabletops and sticky floors that Winehouse once trod upon infused realism into the scenes that featured extras standing around with take drinks in their hands

# Legacy

"There's just an amazing history to these venues, especially the music venues that she was a part of and then be-

came a part of her legacy," Abela says.

The only problem with making a movie about Winehouse in Camden: It's impossible to hide behind the closed doors of a movie set.

So Abela was caught by the paparazzi, as Winehouse was, walking around in the rain, sporting red lipstick, backcombed black hair and ballet slippers, "basically barefoot." But when the time came, she embraced the towering stilettos the singer would wear onstage.

"Those heels are just insane," Abela says. "She did an incredible job staying upright in those heels, especially with that hair, I mean, it's not light. It's a heavy piece on your head."

It was even suggested that the actor wear sneakers, when her feet were out of shot during a scene recreating Winehouse's 2008 Glastonbury per-

Chinese style" increased by 700 percent

compared to the same period last year,

while orders for Han Chinese clothing

"Our orders are booked six months in

advance, with a compound annual growth

rate of over 100 percent in revenue," said

**Lin Qi**, inheritor of the craftsmanship for

making horse-faced skirts and the founder

of a clothing brand. The horse-faced skirt

is a type of Hanfu featuring a high and flat

front and pleated sides that originated in the

Song Dynasty (960-1279) and prevailed in

the Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368-1911).

In 2016, Lin started creating unique

increased by nearly 300 percent.

formance, for safety reasons. "But it changes your physicality so

much to be in trainers running. So, no, I'll stay in the heels, thanks very much," Abela decided.

Taylor-Johnson met with Winehouse's family, but says they had no artistic control over the film. It was written by Matt Greenhalgh, who also wrote biopics of Joy Division's Ian Curtis (2007's "Control") and John Lennon (2009's "Nowhere Boy"). A big Winehouse fan, Taylor-Johnson says she knew early on in the audition process that Abela could channel and bring "forth the feeling of Amy."

Abela says she poured "blood, sweat and tears" into the role is because she knew first hand how much Winehouse meant to people.

Growing up in a Jewish family, living in small village outside Brighton on England's south coast, Abela went to a Church of England school and didn't know other Jewish people.

"I didn't see any cool women out there rocking the Star of David. And then, like, Amy Winehouse is out and about. And that was just so cool to me," Abela recalls.

"Back to Black" topped the box office twice when it opened in the UK and Ireland last month. Abela isn't reading reviews, but admits the thought of what Winehouse would think of her kept her awake at night. Eventually, she came to the conclusion that the singer would at least respect the amount of work she put into her

performance. She insisted on singing for real, if they decided she was good enough, as a way to "unlock" Winehouse. But, for now, Abela has no plans to capitalize on her singing lessons.

"It's not how I choose to express myself artistically," she says. "I don't think we're going to see an album from me any time soon.

dozen pieces in a year. In just a few years, the annual sales volume of horse-faced

skirts her company made has soared to an impressive 100,000 pieces. Reflecting on this remarkable growth, Lin said, "The market has undergone notable changes. Currently, a significant portion of her clientele are young people. (Xinhua) 

**BEIJING:** Chinese comedy "The Last Frenzy" continued to top the daily box office chart in the Chinese mainland on Sunday, data from the China Movie Data Information Network showed. The film, exploring life's choices in the

face of death, raked in 18.95 million yuan (about 2.67 million US dollars) on the 19th day of its release.

It was followed by action crime thriller "Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In" with 15.46 million yuan of daily box office sales.

American sci-fi "Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes" came in third with a daily earning of 13.78 million yuan. The Chinese mainland's box office revenue totaled 96.91 million yuan on Sunday. (Xinhua)

**BEIJING:** A museum was inaugurated Saturday in Beijing to provide the visually impaired people with tactile and auditory experiences. The museum, with an exhibition area of about 1,050 square meters, displays over

700 exhibits. Set within the China Braille Library, it also features a section for popularizing ophthalmology knowledge. At the inauguration ceremony, Lai Wei,

head of China Braille Press, pledged efforts to build the museum into a comprehensive hub, encompassing an educational base, an exhibition center, and a center for research. exchange, and culture and leisure for the visually impaired people. (Xinhua)



Diane Kruger, from left, director David Cronenberg, and Vincent Cassel pose for photographers at the photo call for the film 'The Shrouds' at the 77th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Tuesday, May 21. (AP)

## Early research drives a color noise buzz

# Can pink, brown sounds improve your sleep and memory?

NEW YORK, May 21, (AP): You may have heard of white noise used to mask background sounds. Now, it has colorful competition.

There's a growing buzz around pink noise, brown noise, green noise - a rainbow of soothing sounds - and their theoretical effects on sleep, concentration and the relaxation response.

The science is new with only a few small studies behind it, but that hasn't stopped thousands of people from listening to hours of these noises on YouTube and on meditation apps that provide a palette of color noises with paid subscriptions. To understand pink noise, start with white, the most famil-

iar of the color noises. White noise is similar to static on a radio or TV. Sound frequencies audible to the human ear. It gets its name from white light, which contains all the visible color wave-

But the high frequencies of white noise can sound harsh. Pink noise turns down the volume on those higher frequencies, so it sounds lower in pitch and more like the natural sound of rain or the ocean.

Brown noise sounds even lower in pitch, giving it a pleasing, soothing rumble. Pink and brown, like white, have standard definitions to

audio experts. Other color noises are more recent creations with very flexible definitions.

White noise and pink noise may provide small benefits for

ing to a recent review of limited ADHD studies. In theory, it wakes up the brain, said ADHD researcher and co-author Joel Nigg of Oregon Health & Science University in Port-

"The noise provides stimulation to the brain without providing information, and so it doesn't distract," Nigg said. White noise has been used to treat ringing or buzzing in

the ear, called tinnitus. Scientists at Northwestern University are studying how short pulses of pink noise can enhance the slow brain waves of deep sleep. In small studies, these pink-noise pulses have shown promise in improving memory and the relaxation re-

Pink noise has a frequency profile "very similar to the distribution of brain wave frequencies we see in slowwave sleep because these are large, slow waves," said Dr. Roneil Malkani, associate professor of neurology at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

If Northwestern's research pans out, it could lead to a medical device to improve sleep or memory through personalized pulses of pink noise. But many scientific questions remain unanswered, Malkani said. "There's still a lot of work we have to do.'

If color noises feel calming and help you drown out distractions, it makes sense to use them. Keep them at a quiet level, of course, to prevent hearing loss and take "plenty of breaks for the ears to rest," Nigg said.

### **Minerals affect health**

# Is hard water bad for Over 3,000 dead in contaminated you and your home?

**By Sarah Blank and Timothy Ellis** Iowa State University

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

When you turn on your faucet to get a glass of water or wash your face, you're probably not thinking about what's in your water - besides water. Depending on where you live and whether you have a water-softening system, your water might contain dissolved minerals such as calcium and magnesium. And these minerals can play a role in whether certain pollutants such as lead stay out of your water.

The more dissolved minerals, the "harder" your water. But is hard water actually good or bad for you?

As engineering researchers who study water quality, we have seen the effects - both good and bad - that soft and hard water can have on everything from plumbing systems to the human body.

Hard water is water that contains dissolved minerals such as calcium, magnesium, iron and manganese. Soft water contains lower concentrations of these minerals.

Hardness is measured in terms of calcium carbonate, CaCO2, which is used as a reference point for comparing different minerals.

The amount of these minerals in a city's water supply varies by region. It depends on both where the water is coming from and how the water is treated.

Communities that source their water from wells rather than surface water such as lakes, streams, rivers and reservoirs often start with hard water pretreatment. As groundwater moves through the soil to a well, it picks up minerals. At the same time, areas where the types of rock and sediment are more prone to dissolving in water may have harder water.

Water that's too hard or too soft could damage pipes and lead to health and aes-

Since hard water has a higher mineral concentration, minerals can build up in pipes, which leads to clogged pipes in homes and public water systems. Hardness also creates more deposits at higher temperatures, so hot water heaters are prone to mineral buildup. In areas with hard water, water heaters have a shorter life span.

But hard water can help, too. While minerals from hard water can clog pipes, a thin layer of mineral deposition in water lines can protect you from ingesting toxins that could seep in from the pipe itself. Water without any minerals can play a role in pipe corrosion, because without a thin, protective layer of minerals, the water may start to eat away at the pipes, releasing metals from the pipes into the water. Drinking this water might mean ingesting metals such as lead, copper and iron.

While water that is too soft or too hard can have different effects on water lines, there is more chemistry than just hardness that plays a role in pipe corrosion and clogging. So, there's no specific hardness level that is a cause for concern. Water treatment plants take the appropriate measures to adjust for different hardness levels.

on your skin and hair.

your skin dry. The minerals in hard water strip moisture from skin and create

Hard water can also strip the hair of moisture, leaving it dry and coarse. Dry hair is more prone to frizz, tangles and breakage. Mineral deposits can also build up on the hair and scalp, clogging your hair follicles and leading to dandruff and slowed hair growth.

#### Constipation

water-softening systems. A water-softening system may help hair and skin dryness and buildup. But many of these systems trap and replace calcium and magnesium with sodium, a mineral that does not contribute to water hardness, to water's sodium content may be a concern for anyone on a low-sodium diet.

Other than aesthetic and water heater concerns, drinking hard water is actually good for you and doesn't come with any serious adverse side effects.

For example, the extra magnesium and calcium you consume in hard water may provide a gentle solution to digestive issues and constipation.

prone to osteoporosis.

Researchers have also found that drinking hard water has been associated with a decrease in cardiovascular disease-related mortality. Magnesium helps regulate your cardiac muscles, while calcium keeps the sodium-potassium balance in your cardiac muscles in check, which they need to function.

don't worry too much. Water treatment plants take appropriate measures to ensure safe water for the communities they

To learn more about the water hardness in your area, you can contact your local water treatment plant about its specific water treatment process. Private well owners can contact their state government to find out the testing recommendations for their area. (AP)

Whether you use hard or soft water to wash up can also have noticeable effects

Hard water is more likely to leave deposits that clog pores.

Many households have their own lower overall hardness. Increasing the

Also, researchers have found positive correlations between the hardness of drinking water and bone health. Since calcium is an essential mineral in bones, individuals in areas with drinking water that has more calcium may have higher bone mineral density and may be less

Whether you have hard or soft water,

blood scandal in UK, inquiry finds LONDON, May 21, (AP): British authorities and the country's public AZ to produce cancer killer

tens of thousands of patients to deadly infections through contaminated blood and blood products, and hid the truth about the disaster for decades, an inquiry into the UK's infected blood scandal found Monday.
An estimated 3,000 people in the

health service knowingly exposed

United Kingdom are believed to have died and many others were left with lifelong illnesses after receiving blood or blood products tainted with HIV or hepatitis in the 1970s to the early 1990s.

The scandal is widely seen as the deadliest disaster in the history of Britain's state-run National Health Service since its inception in 1948.

Responsibility (cross head) Former judge Brian Langstaff, who chaired the inquiry, slammed successive governments and medical professionals for "a catalogue of failures" and refusal to admit responsibility to save face and expense. He found that deliberate attempts were made to conceal the scandal, and there was evidence of government officials destroying documents.

'This disaster was not an accident. The infections happened because those in authority - doctors, the blood services and successive governments - did not put patient safety first," he said. "The response of those in authority served to compound people's suffering.

# **Apologized**

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak apologized to the victims and said the report's publication marked "a day of shame for the British state.'

Campaigners have fought for decades to bring official failings to light and secure government compensation. The inquiry was finally approved in 2017, and over the past four years it reviewed evidence from more than 5,000 witnesses and more than 100,000 documents.

Many of those affected were people with hemophilia, a condition affecting the blood's ability to clot. In the 1970s, patients were given a new treatment that the U.K. imported from the United States. Some of the plasma used to make the blood products was traced to high-risk donors, including prison inmates, who were paid to give blood samples.

Because manufacturers of the treatment mixed plasma from thousands of donations, one infected donor would compromise the whole batch.

The report said around 1,250 people with bleeding disorders, including 380 children, were infected with HIV -tainted blood products. Three-quar-

# Experts find new way to starve brain tumor cells

Deadliest NHS disaster uncovered

JERUSALEM, May 21, (Xinhua): An international team of researchers has revealed a mechanism for how cells survive at a low sugar state, which holds potential for developing new ways to treat brain cancer, researchers said on Monday.

From humans to bacteria, living organisms need sugar to survive. Cells make fat from sugar and grow. When sugar is low, cells stop making fat or burn themselves out.

Scientists use the term glucose starvation to describe the situation when the sugar levels in a cell drop below the threshold that allows its proper ex-Cancer cells also feed on sugar to

grow. However, they have less sugar as the blood flow to the tumor tissue is weaker than normal tissues, putting cancer cells in a constant state of glucose starvation. In the new study, researchers from

Germany, and Belgium started their research on how cancer cells can overcome glucose starvation and manage to survive and thrive. In the study published in Nature Communications, the researchers re-

ported a protein-based mechanism that regulates the rate at which the cell produces fat according to its energy status. The researchers observed that a protein named 4EBP is produced at higher levels in cancer cells compared to normal tissue. They cultivated human,

of 4EBP and found that they didn't survive glucose starvation Meanwhile, they found that the gene encoding 4EBP is very active in brain tumor cells. The cerebrospinal fluid in the brain contains very little glucose. Therefore, brain tumor cells need to

mouse, and yeast cells with low levels

be equipped with such mechanisms to deal with sugar starvation. The researchers pointed out that the mechanism is exploited by cancer cells, particularly brain cancer cells, to survive in tumor tissue and generate

aggressive tumors. They then muted the expression of 4EBP in brain tumor cells and implanted them into mice brains. The mice implanted with the edited cells presented

ters of them have died. Up to 5,000 others who received the blood products developed chronic hepatitis C, a a higher survival rate than the control

The researchers said that the finding holds potential for developing novel treatments for some cancers in the future.

In future studies, they plan to develop a molecule that will block 4EBP, forcing glucose-starved tumor cells to keep making fat and burn themselves out, making it possible to target just the cancer cells and not affect healthy cells in treatments. Enditem

### Also:

SINGAPORE: AstraZeneca will invest 1.5 billion US dollars in building a manufacturing facility in Singapore for antibody drug conjugates (ADCs), the biopharmaceutical giant announced Monday.

AstraZeneca aims to begin design and construction of the manufacturing facility by the end of this year, with targeted operational readiness from

ADCs are next-generation treatments that deliver highly potent cancer-killing agents directly to cancer cells through a targeted antibody, according to the company.

PRAGUE: The Czech Republic has recorded nearly 15,000 cases of whooping cough, or pertussis, and six infected people have died since the beginning of this year, according to the State Health Institute (SZU).

In its epidemiological situation resaid the central European country has reported rising cases of whooping cough, a highly contagious respiratory disease, since the start of the year, with weekly cases surpassing 1,000 for nine consecutive weeks since March 18.

In the May 13-19 week, 1,383 cases were recorded, bringing the total to

Local media say that this year's outbreak in the country of 10.9 million people has been the most severe since the 1960s. The outbreak is mainly attributed to less effective vaccines for teens and a decrease in overall vaccination rates.

Meanwhile an estimated 26,800

others were also infected with hepa-

sions, often given in hospitals after childbirth, surgery or an accident, the report said.

"I am truly sorry," Sunak told a packed and silent House of Commons. "Today's report shows a decades-long moral failure at the heart of our national life. From the National Health Service to the civil service, to ministers in successive governments, at every level the people and institutions in which we place our trust failed in the most harrowing and devastating way.'

He vowed to "right this historic wrong" and said details of a compensation package, expected to total 10 billion pounds (\$12.7 billion), would be announced Tuesday.

The report said many of the deaths and illnesses could have been avoided had the government taken steps to address the risks linked to blood transfusions or the use of blood products. Since the 1940s and the early 1980s it has been known that hepatitis and the cause of AIDS respectively could be transmitted this way, the inquiry said.

## Donor

Langstaff said that unlike a long list of developed countries, officials in the U.K. failed to ensure rigorous blood donor selection and screening of blood products. At one school attended by children with hemophilia, public health officials gave the children "multiple, riskier" treatments as part of research, the report said. Patients (cross head)

He added that over the years authorities "compounded the agony by refusing to accept that wrong had been done," falsely telling patients they had received the best treatment available and that blood screening had been introduced at the earliest opportunity. When people were found to be infected, officials delayed informing them about what happened.

Langstaff said that while each failure on its own was serious, taken "together they are a calamity.

Andy Evans, of campaign group Tainted Blood, told reporters that he and others "felt like we were shouting into the wind during the last 40 years.

"We have been gaslit for generations. This report today brings an end to that. It looks to the future as well and says this cannot continue," he said.

Diana Johnson, a lawmaker who has long campaigned for the victims, said she hoped that those found responsible for the disaster will face justice - including prosecution - though the investigations have taken so long that some of the key players may well have died since.



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# Young batter earns a spot as traveling reserve

# IPL hot shot Fraser-McGurk in Australia's T20 WC squad

BRISBANE, Australia, May 21, (AP): Hyped as the next David Warner by astute judges of his phenomenal batting talent, Jake Fraser-McGurk will have to settle for being next in line if Australia needs backup at the Twenty20 World Cup.

His extraordinary Indian Premier League form wasn't enough to supplant anyone in the preliminary 15man Australian squad that was announced May 1, but did earn him a spot as a traveling reserve for the tournament next month.

#### CRICKET

Australia coach Andrew McDonald confirmed the squad on Tuesday - with Warner, Travis Head and skipper Mitch Marsh remaining first choice top-order batters - and added Fraser-McGurk and Matthew Short as injury

"There's no doubt what he did in the IPL, he lit it up," McDonald told Australia's SEN radio. "He's an extraordinary talent (and) there's no doubt that he did turn our heads

The 22-year-old Fraser-McGurk soared into Australia's selection calculations with 330 runs at an almost surreal strike-rate of 234 for the Delhi Capitals. His four half-centuries included two off 15 balls as he shredded bowling attacks.

He got his IPL break because of an injury to Warner, thanks to some input from former Australia captain Ricky



Jake Fraser-McGurk

Ponting, but he couldn't unseat the 37-year-old veteran for the global T20 World Cup starting June 1 in the U.S. and Caribbean.

And while McDonald conceded Fraser-McGurk was a "huge discussion" for the World Cup when he was running hot, he said the young batter didn't quite fit into the mix selectors had been working on since Australia lost the title in 2022.

Warner has been bothered by hand injury that disrupted his IPL season, but McDonald said Australian selectors have "no fears that he won't be fit and fully available.

It's likely to be the last World Cup for Warner, who burst onto the international scene in 2009 as a hard-hitting,

in a major limited-overs tournament came at the ICC Knockout Trophy in

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, May 21, (AP): Black Caps fans are bracing themselves for an emotional journey when the Twenty20 World Cup begins next month in the United States and West Indies, looking forward to the tournament with a mixture of hope and

That mixed outlook, leaning towards pessimism, is based on New Zealand's experience of cricket's limited-overs World Cups, many of which have taken fans on an emotional roller-coaster before ending in disappointment.

New Zealand reached the final of the 2021 T20 World Cup, losing to Australia in the United Arab Emirates, and the semifinals of the 2016 and 2022 tournaments. The Black Caps reached the final of the 50-overs Cricket World Cup in 2015 and 2019 and the semifinals in 2007, 2011 and 2023.

In total the Black Caps have reached the ICC World Cup semifinals seven times. But New Zealand's only win

rapid scorer and became one of the most enduring batters in test and limited-overs cricket.

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

Kenva in 2000.

Narrow misses over the years have sowed the seeds of pessimism among New Zealand fans. But New Zealand's competitiveness in world tournaments, including its win in the inaugural World Test Championship, also have nourished hope.

New Zealand has had the ability to assemble rounded squads with depth in all disciplines which is the prerequisite for tournament success.
"When you go to World Cups, you

want experience and you want people who know what it's like," Black Caps head coach Gary Stead said.

New Zealand has that experience. Its squad will be led by Kane Williamson in his sixth T20 World Cup and fourth as captain. Tim Southee will lead the seam attack in his seventh Twenty20 World Cup, supported by Trent Boult

Matt Wade and Josh Inglis were

The regular pace bowling trio of Pat

Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Ha-

picked as wicketkeepers and Ashton Agar returns to the squad as a second

spinning option to Adam Zampa.

zlewood will have support from Nathan Ellis as well as allrounders Cameron No. 3 and Glenn Maxwell at No. 4 in the lineup, with Tim David likely to fill Green, Marsh and Marcus Stoinis. the finisher role further down the order.

NZ Black Caps fans look to Twenty20 World Cup with hope, trepidation

Australia, the 2021 T20 World Cup champions, will open against Oman at Barbados on June 5.

The Australians are the defending champions in the ICC's World Test Championship and in the 50-over

New Zealand has depth and variety in its spin and seam attacks. The

batting lineup also is experienced and

deep, featuring both power and grit.
"We've got bowlers who provide

us with a really varied lineup as well

- left-armers, right-armers, spinners who go both ways," Stead said. "That

CRICKET

"If we play well and play with smarts

then hopefully it will be a tournament

we can win." The one notable omis-

sion in the New Zealand squad is that

of a specialist wicketkeeper. Stead has

chosen not to take wicketkeeper and

opening bat Tim Seifert but to delegate

the keeping duties to Devon Conway

and Finn Allen and, at a pinch, Rachin

point as Conway goes into the tourna-

That pinch might come at some

Ravindra or Glenn Phillips.

balance part is important.

ment with a thumb injury and Allen with a recent back injury. Stead is con-

fident both will be fit in time. Other factors of importance in a world tournament are the conditions and schedule. New Zealand is well placed when it comes to the first: 13 of its squad played in its last tour to the West Indies and six played in the

Caribbean Premier League. It faces Afghanistan in its first match in Guyana and co-host the West Indies in its second, followed by Uganda and Papua New Guinea before the Super 8

"Afghanistan in Guyana on a wicket that traditionally turns will possibly be

a match that will be crucial," Stead said. The Afghanistan match begins the journey for Kiwis watching at home mostly in the morning or early afternoon local time. The first step, to reach the Super 8, seems a relatively easy one. But it has been taking the final

that has been so difficult in the past.

World Cup.

Australia squad: Mitch Marsh (captain), Ashton Agar, Pat Cummins, Tim David, Nathan Ellis, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Glenn Maxwell, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, Matt Wade, David Warner, Adam Zampa. Reserves: Jake Fraser-McGurk, Matthew Short.

# Harris shines late to give Sun 88-84 win over winless Fever



Indiana Fever forward Aliyah Boston (7) and Connecticut Sun forward Brionna Jones (42) tie up the ball in the second half of a WNBA basketball game

# Liberty improve to 4-0 for first time in 17 yrs with victory over S Storm

INDIANAPOLIS, May 21, (AP): Indiana Fever star Caitlin Clark showed her persistence Monday night. She fought through an injured

left ankle, foul trouble, even the frustration that led to an uncharacteristic late technical foul to get her team position for its first win.

Then she lamented what the Fever could not finish.

Tyasha Harris scored 13 of Connecticut's final 18 points Monday night, including two free throws with 10.9 seconds left and the game tied, to give the Connecticut Sun an 88-84 victory over still winless Indiana.

"I think you could see the progress we're making and that's why this one hurts a lot. We were right there and we had plenty of opportunities to go win the game and you don't," Clark said. "We've played the top teams in the league and we were right there with the Sun today.'

Indiana's brutal schedule already has included two games against last season's WNBA runner-up, the New York Liberty, and two more against the Sun, who had the league's thirdbest record last season.

The result has been a predictably

difficult learning curve - four straight losses, the first three by double digits - for a young team led by the league's newest star, who played in front of yet another announced sellout Monday

And when Clark crumpled to the floor with 5:37 left in the first half, grabbing at her lower left leg and grimacing in pain until the game was stopped a few moments later, the Fever's chances looked lost yet again.

# **BASKETBALL**

But after limping directly into the tunnel near the team bench, retaping her ankle and going through halftime warmups with her teammates, Clark was back - and looked more like the two-time national college player of the year during the final quarter than she had during the first 15 quarters of her pro career.

Clark finished with 17 points and five assists, all in the final 10 minutes, while making 5-of-11 shots and three 3-pointers, including a go-ahead 3 from the Gainbridge Fieldhouse logo that gave Indiana a 70-68 with 7:15 to go and brought the crowd to its feet.

"That was a big shot," she said. "We got the crowd going. I mean, that crowd was incredible."

But on a night Alyssa Thomas fell just short of a second triple-double against Indiana this season - 24 points, 13 rebounds and nine assists - and Harris had 16 points, three 3s and the decisive scoring flurry, Indiana's miscues were just too costly.
With Indiana clinging to a 76-75

lead with 3:37 to play, Clark turned the ball over and drew her fifth foul when she tried to fight for the ball. She was called for a technical, too, when she shouted at the refs in frustration and the Sun took full advantage.

Connecticut tied the score when DaWanna Bonner made one of two free throws, took the lead 46 seconds later on Harris' three-point play, made it 82-78 on Harris' 3 with 2:04 to go and broke an 84-84 tie with two more free throws from Harris.

Indiana had a chance to tie the score but, Aliyah Boston missed a layup in the waning seconds and Thomas closed it out with two free throws.

Bonner had 22 points and DiJonai Carrington scored 13 for the Sun. Kelsey Mitchell matched Clark's numbers with 17 points and five as-

sists, while Nalyssa Smith scored 13 and Temi Fagbenle added 11 points and 10 rebounds. Boston scored 10. "This is what you expect from a

young team, a lot of growing pains ear-

ly on, a lot of ups and downs," Thomas said. "But they have to be proud of how they responded with a hard schedule to start the season. They did a great job today.

# Liberty 74, Storm 63

In New York, Sabrina Ionescu scored 20 points and the New York Liberty beat the Seattle Storm improving to 4-0 for the first time in 17 years.

Breanna Stewart added 16 points and 11 rebounds for New York, which last won its first four games to start a season in 2007. The Liberty, who are coming off an appearance in the WNBA Finals last season, won their first five contests that year before struggling to a 16-18 mark.

Jewell Loyd led Seattle (1-3) with 13 points and nine rebounds.

New York led 50-40 midway through the second quarter before scoring the next seven points, including five by Ionescu, to extend the advantage to 17. The Storm trailed by 15 going into the fourth quarter before scoring the first six points to get within nine, but that's as close as they could come.

New York ran out to a 27-15 lead after one quarter as Ionescu had six points and five assists in the first 10 minutes. The Storm were playing the second half of a back-to-back, as they played in Washington on Sunday.

# **Paris Olympics**

# Siblings 'bid' to make US water polo teams

WALNUT, May 21, (AP): Chase Dodd started swimming when he was just a kid. Once he began playing water polo, he was hooked.

When Ryder Dodd got a chance to follow his older brother, he was in.

"When I was around 6 years old, my mom was just like, 'You want to hop in and play?" Ryder Dodd said. "And I was like, 'Yeah, of course I do."

That's how it started for the Dodds, the very beginning of their road to USA Water Polo and, quite possibly, the Paris Olympics this summer. For Dylan, Quinn and Ella Woodhead, it's a similar story.

# **WATER POLO**

The U.S. water polo teams for this year's Olympics could have a much deeper connection than just a mutual love of their grueling sport. Chase and Ryder Dodd are trying to make the men's roster, alongside Dylan and Quinn Woodhead, while Ella Woodhead is in the mix for the loaded women's squad.

The women's team is going to be announced on May 30, and the men's team will be unveiled on June 18.

"It's interesting, just seeing the brotherly dynamic," U.S. men's captain Ben Hallock said, "how they're different, how they're similar, what makes them special. ... So sort of seeing the traits that make them so good, but also a little bit of bickering and competitiveness is also fun to see."

Dylan Woodhead, a 6-foot-7 defender who turned 25 in September, made his Olympics debut when the U.S. finished sixth in Tokyo. Quinn, a 6-4 attacker, turns 24 next month, and Ella, a 5-10 defender, is 20.

"To have my brother here who I grew up playing with basically my whole career, it's just special," Dylan Woodhead said. "My sister, too, going through the same process, it's just people that you're more comfortable with. ... Playing with Quinn and talking through things with Ella, you can be brutally honest and that's invaluable in this line of work."

The Woodhead siblings are from Northern California. Their mother, Laura, was a swimmer at Stanford, and their father, Jeff, was a rower at California. Dylan and Quinn helped the Cardinal win NCAA title in 2019, and Ella will go back to Stanford after redshirting this season to try out for the U.S. team. The siblings grew up going to the Big Game - the annual college football

showdown between Stanford and Cal. Dylan and his dad rooted for the Bears, and Ella and Quinn joined their mom in cheering for the Cardinal.

"(Dylan) was the first one to decide on Stanford, so kind of flipped the tide right there," Quinn said.

A grinning Dylan offered a careful description of his father's reaction to his college choice.

"I don't know if he ever told me, but my mom said, 'You know, it really hurt him,'" he cracked. "I think he's OK with it now, there are worse schools to pick than Stanford in his

ly start on swimming through their mother. They had a pool in their backyard, and they played water basketball games that occasionally resulted in Ella being put in a headlock by one of the brothers to keep her from scoring.

Dylan, Quinn and Ella got an ear-

With water polo, the brothers "found a really good community when we first started playing that we really enjoyed," Quinn said. Ella vividly remembers going to their games as a kid.

"I was like 7 and 8, up in the stands, watching Dylan and Quinn play, taking stats on my own. Homemade stat sheet that I made," she said. "So I think before I started playing, I kind of just fell in love with the tactical aspects of the game.'

The Woodhead siblings act as a sounding board for each other as they try to get better at water polo. Dylan and Ella talk about playing defender,

and Quinn offers tips on shooting. Dylan and Quinn also are very competitive, especially when they run into each other at U.S. practice. It's a similar dynamic with Chase and Ryder Dodd,

who are from Southern California. Chase Dodd, a 6-3 attacker who turned 21 last month, scored 39 times for UCLA during the 2022 season before taking this year off to train with the U.S. team. Ryder, an 18-yearold attacker, is considered one of the sport's rising prospects.



fender Dylan Woodhead, are interviewed after a training session, Wednesday, Jan. 17, 2024, in Mt. San Antonio College in Walnut, Calif. (AP)

# Change Name

I, Mohammed S/o Burhanuddin Holder of Indian Passport V5164748 Issued at Kuwait on 20-3-2022 resident of Vajihi Mohalla Patela Road Siraj Commette Opposite, Dungarpur Rajasthan has changed my name from Mohammed to Mohammed Khandwala in all my Documents, I will be known by Name Mohammed (Given Name) Khandwala (Surname)

### Stenhouse could face suspension after throwing punch at Busch after All-Star Race NORTH WILKESBORO, May 21, (AP): Ricky Stenhouse Jr. threw a right hook at Kyle Busch, and suddenly, an otherwise

boring All-Star Race at North Wilkesboro Speedway had NASCAR fans buzzing heading into next weekend's marquee Coca-Cola 600 at Charlotte. Busch had wrecked Stenhouse on the second lap of the \$1 million race Sunday night in a move that looked like retaliation for how Stenhouse had raced him earlier.

Stenhouse drove his damaged Chevrolet to

Busch's pit stall and parked it, and with no way to get out of the track while the race was going on, stewed in street clothes for hours until Busch arrived at his hauler.

That's when Stenhouse, after a brief conversation, threw a right hook at the driver of the No. 8 Chevrolet, setting off a brief melee that involved members of each driver's crew - and Stenhouse's father. The brawl was eventually broken up, but not before more words were exchanged from both sides and Stenhouse vowed, "I'm going to wreck you at Charlotte."
"Bring it," Busch replied. "I suck as bad as you," implying that both drivers are not having great seasons.

The antics could result in a suspension for Stenhouse, the 2023 Daytona 500 champion, other crew members and possibly his father. Busch also could face a penalty if NASCAR determines that he deliberately caused the wreck.

Stenhouse's fury was evident the moment he parked in Busch's pit stall, then

climbed the pit stand ladder and had words with members of his crew. As Stenhouse climbed down and walked away, his car had to be towed from pit road.

"I parked it there because I figured Kyle would do something similar," Stenhouse said.

Later, during an interview with Fox Sports, Stenhouse indicated he would confront Busch after the race.

And then he did. Stenhouse, dressed in yellow shorts

and a gray T-shirt, waited for Busch in the infield and confronted him face-toface before unleashing a punch. Security jumped in and pulled Stenhouse away, falling backward over a tire, while Busch likewise wound up on the ground. Stenhouse's father, Ricky Sr., got into the fracas and appeared to take at least one of Busch's punches.

Stenhouse could be heard yelling "Dad!" numerous times, but he couldn't

# E-sports enthusiasts from around the world will compete over seven rounds to qualify for a spot in the finals

# TOYOTA GAZOO Racing unveils details of TGR GT Cup 2024 e-motorsports tournament

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: TOYOTA GAZOO Racing (TGR) has unveiled details of the TOYOTA GAZOO Racing GT CUP (TGR GT Cup) 2024, an innovative global e-sports tournament which sees the TGR lineup participate in a series of competitive races throughout the season. Seven qualifying rounds will take place in 'Gran Turismo 7' for Play-Station®5 and PlayStation®4, with the top 24 global players set to qualify for the grand final to be held in conjunction with the Gran Turismo World Series in December.

Now in its sixth year, the TGR GT Cup offers players around the world the chance to showcase and refine their virtual racing skills and represent their country on the world gaming stage. Organized by TGR, Toyota's dedicated division for highperformance vehicles and motorsports, the online tournament adapts to the ever-evolving realm of e-sports and virtual motorsport globally. Its objective is to maximize its e-sports and facilitate widespread access to the excitement of virtual racing events, attracting enthusiasts from diverse backgrounds, whether novices or seasoned motorsports fans.

This season, the final qualifying round will bring together vehicles from Subaru Corporation (SUBA-RU), Nissan Motor Corporation, Honda Racing Corporation, and Mazda Motor Corporation, partners in the Super TaikyuWaigaya Club from the Super Taikyu series, thus promoting real motorsports and e-motorsports at the same time. Furthermore, Toyota and Lexus brand vehicles will also be used in addition to the existing GR



The qualifying round will kickoff with the Virtual GR86/BRZ Cup alongside round partner SUBARU

Round 2 will feature a race with HEVs, one of the diverse green transportation options offered as part of Toyota's multi-pathway approach

Date	December	
Locatio n	To be held offline in conjunction with the Gran Turismo World Series	
Race Overvie W	The race will be carried out inviting the top 24 drivers: 21 from among those achieving the highest three total scores in Rounds 1 – 7 of online races from the five regions specified by the Gran Turismo World Series, and 3 from the TGR allotment (regional finalists). *	
Driver Details	Region	Number of selected drivers
	Europe, Middle East and Africa	9
	North America	3
	Central & South America	3
	Asia	4
	Oceania	2
	TGR allotment*	3
		24

to achieving carbon neutrality. The Toyota Prius, the world's first massproduced HEV and a driving force behind their global popularization, will also make its first appearance in this competition. Round 7 will bring together a variety of vehicles beyond the boundaries of manufacturers, including TGR's LEXUS RC F GT3, which is making its first appearance in the LMGT3 class of the FIA World Endurance Championship.

Every user who enters the event will receive an in-game GR010 Hvbrid Electric Hypercar with the 2024 matte black color scheme, which represents TGR's drive for victory and its continuous efforts to make everbetter cars that constantly evolve through global motorsports participation. Continuing from last year, the structure of the competition will use a league system according to the skill level of the drivers in order to make it easy for everyone, even beginners, to participate. The top-level GT1 League will be followed by two leagues: GT2 and GT3.

Nobuyuki Takemura, Chief Representative of Middle East & Central Asia Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, commented: "The TOYOTA GAZOO Racing GT CUP is an innovative platform that once again brings together the world's gaming elite in a true showcase of skill, talent and determination. We look forward to another exciting season that will bring greater attention to the potential of this gaming genre. Toyotaremains dedicated to actively participating in e-Motorsports activities, fostering broader engagement across naQualifying Round Details GR86 RZ '21 28-Apr Suzuka Circuit Subaru BRZ S '21 12-Rd. WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Prius G '09 GR010 HYBRID '21 24 Heures du Mans Racing circuit GR Supra Race Car '19 MAZDA3 Gr.4 Nürburgring GP Subaru WRX Gr.4 (Gr.4 Select) SF23 Super Formula / Honda SF23 Super Formula / Toyota SF23 Super Formula / Honda Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya GP SF23 Super Formula / Qualifyir Toyota SF23 Super Formula / Honda SF23 Super Formula / Toyota GR Yaris '20 GR Yaris '20 11-Aug **Grand Valley South** GR Yaris '20 GR Yaris '20 Honda NSX Gr.3 Lexus RC F GT3 '17 MAZDA RX-VISION GT3 CONCEPT 25-Aug Fuii International Speedway Nissan GT-R NISMO GT3 Subaru BRZ GT300 '21

tions and generations, ensuring that the joy of motorsports transcends traditional boundaries. Thank you to our customers, loval fans, and enthusiastic TGR GT Cup participants for helping make this year's edition

The TGR GT Cup 2024 will run

from April to December 2024. The outline of the competition for participants aged 17 or younger is set to be announced at a later date. Detailed information including the circuits to be used in each round will be published on the TGR GT Cup section of the TGR official website.

# Leverkusen's 2 steps from soccer immortality start in Europa League final against Atalanta

EL has been a regular drama for Bayer

#### DUBLIN, May 21, (AP): Bayer Leverkusen is two games from European soccer immortality.

The new champion of Germany has two cup finals in four days - starting Wednesday in the Europa League against Atalanta - to complete a previously unthinkable unbeaten season in domestic and continental competition.

On Saturday, Leverkusen will be heavily favored to win the German cup final against a Kaiserslautern team that finished 13th in the second division. not so far from falling into relegation

And so the biggest remaining challenge for coach Xabi Alonso's team is game No. 52 of 53, in Dublin against an Atalanta that is finishing the season

It feels fitting because the Europa League has been a regular drama for Leverkusen.

Three times in six games in the knockout rounds the team was 2-0 down deep into the second half and still behind entering stoppage time: In both round of 16 games against Qarabag and in the semifinals return leg against Roma.

# **SOCCER**

In another streak-saving Europa game, at West Ham in the quarterfinals, Leverkusen was set to advance on aggregate score yet needed an 89th-minute goal by wing-back Jeremie Frimpong to draw 1-1 and stay unbeaten.

"We don't want to wait until the last seconds of the game," said Patrick Schick, whose three stoppage-time goals against Qarabag in March were key to advancing 5-4 on aggregate. "We would like to make it clear, really, earlier."

There have been other stellar teams in European soccer who added the elite Champions League to their domestic league title, unlike Leverkusen playing in the second-tier Europa League.

Still, Manchester United in 1999, Inter Milan in 2010, Barcelona in 2011 and Manchester City last year were wealthy clubs whose success could have been expected. Each started their season with established, star-packed teams led by coaches - Alex Ferguson, Jose Mourinho, Pep Guardiola - who'd already won multiple domestic and European trophies.

This is Alonso's first full season coaching at the top level. His team was in relegation trouble last season. There was no superstar transfer signing in the offseason.

"For me it's very special," the 42-year-old Alonso said last week. "My first title as a coach was the Bundesliga. It was super, it was very special. But a title in Europe would be wonderful and hopefully we will be able to say that.'

Alonso twice won the Champions League as an elegant midfielder, with Liverpool and then Real Madrid, who will play Borussia Dortmund for this season's Champions League title. That June 1 final at Wembley Stadium is between two teams involved in the failed Super League breakaway in 2021 -Madrid driving it forward, Dortmund declining its invitation.

Bayer Leverkusen and Atalanta were nowhere close to being invited to the breakaway three years ago and today represent soccer projects that won respect from neutral fans across



Tian Yajuan (2nd R) of China and her teammate Zhou Zhaoqian (3rd L) compete during Women's 1500m T54 Final at the Para Athletics World Championships held in Kobe, Japan. (Xinhua)

# China adds 2 golds on Day 5 at Para Athletics Championships

China took two gold medals and continue to lead the medal tally at the Para Athletics Champion-

ships here on Tuesday. Wen Xiaoyan won the women's 100m T37 final in 12.27 seconds, setting a new world record and adding to her gold medal from Saturday's long jump T37 event.

Wheelchair racer Zhou Zhaoqian bagged gold in the women's 1,500m T54 final in three min-

utes and 33.86 seconds, followed by compatriot Tian Yajuan in 3:33.91.

In the women's javelin F56 final, Lin Sitong claimed bronze by setting the new Asian record with a throw of 22.68 meters.

Day 5 of the nine-day event saw China top the medal tally with 15 golds, 13 silvers and 13 bronze medals

The World Championships, held in East Asia

for the first time, serve as a 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 pandem-

# 'We have an economic situation that is nothing like 25 years ago'

# Xavi's painful truth likely to cost him his job

MADRID, May 21, (Xinhua): FC Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez currently sits on the brink of losing his job as the club sinks ever-deeper into an atmosphere of chaos, as some struggle to come to terms with the club's economic reality.

Xavi is clear about the situation of a club that has deep debts and which has also taken out huge loans to pay for the vast remodeling of the Camp Nou

Speaking ahead of Barca's visit to Almeria a week ago, Xavi highlighted that financial fair play rules in Spain have limited his club's spending to a salary cap of 204 million euros (222 million U.S. dollars) a year. This is 99 million lower than Atletico Madrid's 303 million euro limit and over three and a half times less than Real Madrid, who can spend over 727 million euros.

"The situation is difficult, it is very complicated, especially to compete with the biggest rivals, such as Real Madrid in Spain or Europe," said Xavi ahead of the Almeria game.

Financial fair play limitations also mean that it is almost impossible for Barcelona to strengthen their squad effectively for next season. The way things stand, Barca have to bring in four euros in sales or savings for every

one euro they are allowed to spend. "We have an economic situation that is nothing like 25 years ago, when a coach could come here and say, 'I want him and him and him'. It's not

like that now," explained the coach. The club are working so that this can

be changed to a one-to-one basis, but even that would mean every new arrival would have to be paid for by a departure, and any further loans the club takes out would only serve to further increase the financial pressure.

"We aren't in the same situations as teams that have a better 'fair play' or economic situation as us. Fans have to understand this. I understand it and I have spoken to [club president] Joan Laporta and [sporting director] Deco,"

continued Xavi. He could have added that the situation also causes uncertainty in the dressing room as high-earning players, especially those whose sale would bring in much-needed cash, start to

wonder what the future holds. Brazilian winger Raphinha - one of Barca's better players this season - is likely to be sold as he has admirers in the Premier League, Frenkie de Jong is also clearly a saleable asset, while the wages of Inigo Martinez and Robert Lewandowski mean the club wouldn't



Leverkusen's Josip Stanisic (center), scores a goal during the Europa League second leg semi-final soccer match between Leverkusen and Roma at the BayArena in Leverkusen, Germany. (AP)

be unhappy to see them leave.

Even central defender Ronald Araujo - a player who looked set to be vital for many years in the heart of the Barcelona defense - could be on the market, and it looks as if the doubts over his future haven't helped the Uruguayan's form in the run into the end of the season.

Meanwhile, the club continues to leak stories about possible signings for the summer, such as Athletic Bilbao's Nico Williams. This is despite the fact that Williams decided to sign a new contract with a release clause of 55 million euros in November 2023, rather than hold on and move to Barcelona for free this summer.

It's pie in the sky and Xavi knows it, which is probably one reason he has given chances to youngsters such as Fermin Lopez and the excellent Pau Cubarsi and Lamine Yamal, with others such as Hector Font likely to step forward next season.

However, Laporta returned to the club after the economic chaos of Josep Maria Bartomeu promising to bring back economic stability and the glory days on the pitch.

Deco is meant to oversee the construction of another 'dream team' and they continue to sell this to the supporters and the press. Xavi is the spoke in the wheel: he is the voice saying "It isn't like that. Our spending cap is less than a third of Real Madrid's and only 60 percent that of Atletico Madrid."

# **'Gifted talents'**

# France the Euros 'favorites': Lahm

BERLIN, May 21, (Xinhua): 2024 UEFA Euro tournament director Philipp Lahm called 2018 FIFA world champion France the favorite team to win this summer's tournament.

"They have got a remarkably well-equipped squad full of gift-ed talents," the 40-year-old told Xinhua in a recent interview.

From the 2014 world champion's perspective, the 2000 European champion's most challenging issue is "to get the power on the pitch as a team over the entire tournament." The 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar has proven that "teamwork" makes national teams achieve a higher level. "The Qatar World Cup delivered several examples of teams performing beyond expectations such as Morocco." Lahm mentioned the robust team spirit of Argentina and Croatia. "Argentina lost their first group encounter but fought back and everyone in the team was willing to provide his best for the benefit of the team." Lahm mentioned Spain, England, Portugal and Germany as the fiercest competitors aside from France. The German added he is hoping for a tournament surprise "like we saw from the Iceland team in 2016." The 113 times capped former defender praised the development of the German team under the coach Julian Nagelsmann and sporting director Rudi Voller.

# **SOCCER**

The recent success in the form of two victories over the Netherlands and France is triggering hopes to possibly repeat the so-called 2006 FIFA World Cup "summer fairytale." "Voller is an identification figure for all fans and a people's catcher," he said calling German head coach Nagelsmann "a young talented coach" having found a tactical approach the recently struggling national team "is getting along with perfectly." But Lahm sees challenges ahead "as you have to prove your upswing in a long and demanding tournament." Lahm said Nagelsmann has changed the national teams' nomination procedures "as he is appointing position-bound specialists for the various positions." The Euro director expressed his hopes to create "a feeling of togetherness" for the host nation coming along with the message "football is uniting nations as millions of foreign fans join in and celebrate." A tournament like the Euro 2024 is a great opportunity for fans of different nations "to get to know each other and their way of life. Football is a sport uniting the world," he added.

Lahm praised German football's "ability for competition as robustness has been a trademark for German football ever since." Nagelsmann from Lahm's perspective has found a "core for his team, an axis carrying the team." The former Bayern captain is convinced that "everything is possible for our team." The mood of nations can make a difference, he added. As for Germany, "it seems we saw a bud burst due to the latest success when it comes to people's enthusiasm and support." The former Bayern defender called safety and mobility the biggest challenges when running an event such as the Euro. "The Euro is a great opportunity to bring people together, especially in times like this as we need optimism to create a promising future for all."



The players of Bologna pose for a photo as they celebrate their admission to the Champions League for next season after Bologna and Juventus ended up drawing 3-3 at the Dall'Ara stadium, in Bologna,

# Sports

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# Juve rally from down Kroos to retire from soccer after Euro 2024 to draw with Bologna

Verona guaranteed Serie A status

'A tough decision, but that the timing felt somehow perfect'

MADRID, May 21, (AP): Toni Kroos will retire from soccer after trying to give Real Madrid yet another Champions League trophy and lead Germany to the European Championship title at

The 34-year-old German midfielder said Tuesday it was a tough decision, but that the timing felt "somehow perfect."

"I always wanted to leave at the peak of my abilities and I know, and from a lot of examples you see, that it isn't easy, that you can miss that point in time very quickly," Kroos said on a podcast he hosts with his brother.
"I never wanted to have the feeling at

the end that the club, the fans, the people around me would have to tell me, 'That's three years sitting on the bench.'

Madrid thanked Kroos and hailed his achievements with the team.

"Real Madrid would like to express its gratitude and affection to Toni Kroos, a player who will go down in Real Madrid history as one of our club and international football's greatest legends," the club said.

Kroos was a World Cup champion with Germany in 2014 in Brazil, and had a successful career with Bayern Munich as well, helping it win one Champions League and three German

Madrid will face Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League final on June 1 in London. His European trophies with Madrid came in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2022. He won the Champions

#### **SOCCER**

League with Bayern in 2013.

Kroos has been with Madrid since 2014, helping it win 22 titles, including four European Cups and four Spanish leagues. He made 463 appearances with the club, which called the midfielder "a key player in one of the most successful periods of Real Madrid's 122-year history."

"Toni Kroos is one of the great players in Real Madrid history and this club will always be his home," club president Florentino Pérez said.

Madrid said Kroos will remain forever in the hearts of every fan "thanks to his mastery of the game and the fact he has given his all for our jersey, a steadfast example of the values of Real Madrid."

Kroos' contract with Madrid was expiring at the end of this season and the club and the player had reportedly been negotiating an extension.

Kroos said in February he agreed to

play for Germany at Euro 2024 after a request from coach Julian Nagelsmann. He has not played for for the national team in almost three years, since Germany's loss to England in the second round of the last European Championship.



**Reds confirm Slot:** Liverpool have confirmed Feyenoord coach Arne Slot as their new

head coach with an announce-

ment on their official website. "Liverpool Football Club can announce Arne Slot has agreed a deal to become the club's new head coach, formally taking up the position on June 1, 2024, subject to a work permit."

Slot's arrival to replace Klopp has been an open secret in recent days and Jurgen Klopp even lead the supporters at Liverpool's Anfield Stadium in chanting his name as he said 'goodbye' after a Sunday's 2-0

win over Wolverhampton Wanderers, which ended the season. Slot joins Liverpool after three years at Feyenoord in Eredivisie title which was their first title in six years, and this

which he led them to the 2023 year he followed that success by leading them to the Dutch Cup in April. (Xinhua) 

Schnellinger dies at 85: Karl-Heinz Schnellinger, who played for West Germany at four World Cups including the 1966 final, has died. He was 85.

The German soccer federation and Schnellinger's former club Cologne both said Tuesday he had died, without giving further details.

A left-sided defender, Schnellinger played 17 games for West Germany at the World Cups in 1958, 1962, 1966 and 1970, and made a total of 47 international appearances.

The closest Schnellinger came to the World Cup trophy was in 1966, when his German team lost 4-2 to England in extra time. Four years later, he scored his only career international goal in a thrilling 4-3 extra-time loss to Italy in the semifinals that was nicknamed

the "Game of the Century". At a time when international soccer transfers were rare, Schnellinger spent most of his career playing for Italian clubs. He won the European Cup in 1969 as Milan beat Dutch club Ajax 4-1 in the final.

Schnellinger also won the West German national title with Cologne in 1962, the Italian Cup four times with Roma and Milan, the Italian league with Milan in 1968 and the European Cup Winners' Cup twice with Milan. (AP)



Bologna's Adama Soumaoro, (left), and Juventus Federico Chiesa battle for the ball during the Serie A soccer match between Bologna FC and Juventus FC at the Dall'Ara Stadium, Bologna, Italy. (AP)

Marco Baroni's men are four points clear of the relegation zone with one game to go.

Meanwhile, Verona guaranteed

its Serie A status for another season

**SOCCER** 

after beating Salernitana 2-1.

last two games.

they hadn't.

making.

win over Juve in 26 years.

Salernitana and Sassuolo are already down and Verona's win means Udinese, Empoli, Frosinone and Cagliari are fighting to avoid ioining them.

Verona's third win in five games was timely given its last league match is against champion Inter Milan, which has lost only twice all

Tomas Suslov's second goal in the league was the opener, and Darko Lazović crossed for Michael Folorunsho to poke home from close range on the stroke of halftime.

Giulio Maggiore scored a consolation for the home side in the final

Just two days after celebrating its Serie A title win, Inter Milan and its fans face a nervous wait to see what will happen with the club.

Club owner Suning and Inter president Steven Zhang could lose control of the Nerazzurri if they fail to repay a debt of nearly 400 million euros (\$434 million) to American investment fund Oaktree.

That sum stems from a loan and interest - taken out three years ago, shortly after Inter won its last league title.

Unless it is repaid, Oaktree could take over the Serie A champion.

Zhang has tried to extend the deadline for the loan repayment and come up with alternative solutions with Oaktree but without success.

"I can only guarantee that the club is very solid," Inter CEO Giuseppe Marotta said on Sunday, amid a party atmosphere at San Siro as Inter was presented with its 20th league title. "Whatever decision the Zhang

family takes, it will be for the good of the club that they love.'

If - as expected - the deadline is not met, Oaktree will complete the acquisition of Inter in the next few days although it is unclear whether the American fund will keep the club long term or look for a buyer. In 2018, Milan was taken over by

American fund Elliott Management after previous owner Li Yonghong missed the deadline to repay part of

Elliott had been expected to sell the club, with a number of parties reportedly interested, but it kept hold of it for five years before selling to RedBird Capital Partners last year, shortly after Milan won the Serie A title.

Rashford left out of England's provisional Euro 2024 squad

# **Ronaldo to lead Portugal into record sixth Euros**

LISBON, Portugal, May 21, (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo is set to make a record sixth appearance at the European Championship with Portugal's squad.

Ronaldo was among the 26 players picked for the tournament in Germany by coach Roberto Martínez on Tuesday.

The 39-year-old Ronaldo first played in the competition in 2004, and led the national team to the title

There had been some doubts about whether Ronaldo would continue playing with the national team after the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, but he has remained a key player in Martínez's squad.

Also in the list was veteran Pepe, the 41-year-old Porto defender who will play in his fifth Euro.

Among those not included were forward Francisco Trinção, midfielder Pedro Gonçalves and striker Ricardo Horta. Raphael Guerreiro was dropped after injuring his ankle with Bayern Munich a few weeks

# SOCCER

Two of the surprises included forwards Pedro Neto of Wolverhampton and Francisco Conceição

Portugal is in Group F with the Czech Republic, Turkey and Georgia. It will play three warmup games in June against Finland, Croatia and Ireland.

Patrício (Roma)

celona), Nélson Semedo (Wol-Gonçalo Inácio (Sporting Lis-

Forwards: Cristiano Ronaldo

Messi to lead team No place for Dybala as Argentina name Copa squad

BUENOS AIRES, May 21, (Xinhua): Chelsea midfielder Enzo Fernandez has been named in Argentina's squad for the Copa America in the United States despite spending the past month recovering from groin surgery.

Fernandez has not played since he was substituted off in Chelsea's 5-0 Premier League loss to Arsenal at Emirates stadium on April 23.

But he has returned to training ahead of schedule and is expected to be fully fit for Argentina's Copa America opener against Canada in Atlanta, Georgia, on June 21.

As expected, the Albiceleste squad is led by eighttime Ballon d'Or winner Lionel Messi and also includes Liverpool midfielder Alexis Mac Allister, Atletico Madrid enforcer Rodrigo De Paul and Benfica winger Angel Di Maria.

But there was no place for forward Paulo Dybala, who was overlooked despite his 16 goals and 10 assists in 38 games for Roma this season.

Following the duel with Canada, Argentina will face Chile before ending the Copa America group stage with a clash against Peru.

The reigning Copa America and World Cup champions will finalize their preparations for the tournament

with friendlies against Ecuador on June 9 and Guatemala five days later.

Argentina squad: Goalkeepers: Franco Armani (River Plate), Geronimo Rulli (Ajax), Emiliano Martinez (As-

**Defenders:** Gonzalo Montiel (Nottingham Forest), Nahuel Molina (Atletico Madrid), Leonardo Balerdi (Marseille), Cristian Romero (Tottenham Hotspur), German Pezzella (Real Betis), Lucas Martinez Quarta (Fiorentina), Nicolas Otamendi (Benfica), Lisandro Martinez (Manchester United), Marcos Acuna (Sevilla), Nicolas Tagliafico (Lyon), Valentin Barco (Brighton) Midfielders: Guido Rodriguez (Real Betis), Leandro Paredes (Roma), Alexis Mac Allister (Liverpool), Rodrigo De Paul (Atletico Madrid), Exequiel Palacios (Bayer Leverkusen), Enzo Fernandez (Chelsea), Giovani Lo Celso (Tottenham Hotspur) Forwards: Angel Di Maria (Benfica), Valentin Carboni (A.C. Monza), Lionel Messi (Inter Miami), Angel Correa (Atletico Madrid), Alejandro Garnacho (Manchester United), Nicolas Gonzalez (Fiorentina), Lautaro Martinez (Inter Milan), Julian Alvarez (Manchester City).

of Porto.

Goalkeepers: Diogo Costa (Porto), José Sá (Wolverhampton), Rui

Defenders: João Cancelo (Barverhampton), Diogo Dalot (Manchester United), Danilo Pereira (Wolverhampton), Nuno Mendes (Paris Saint-Germain), Pepe (Porto), Rúben Dias (Manchester City), António Silva (Benfica),

Midfielders: Bruno Fernandes (Manchester United), João Neves (Benfica), Palhinha (Fulham), Otávio (Al Nassr), Rúben Neves (Al Hilal), Vitinha (PSG), Bernardo Silva (Man City)

(Al Nassr), Diogo Jota (Liverpool), Francisco Conceição (Porto), Gonçalo Ramos (PSG), Joao Félix (Barcelona), Pedro Neto (Wolverhamp-

ton), Rafael Leão (AC Milan) Meanwhile, Marcus Rashford was left out of England's provisional squad for the European Championship. The Manchester United striker has paid the price for a disappointing season at club level and was not part of Gareth Southgate's 33-man squad.

Jordan Henderson and Reece

James were also left out. But Rashford is arguably the big-

gest name to be omitted - especially after enjoying a career-best campaign two season's ago when scoring 34 goals for club and country.

It has been a different story over the past year when he has managed just eight goals for a United team which suffered its lowest-ever Premier League finish - eighth.

**England Squad** 



England manager Gareth Southgate speaks during a press conference at St George's Park, Burton upon Trent after England's training squad was announced ahead of Euro 2024 soccer tournament. (AP)

Goalkeepers: Dean Henderson (Crystal Palace), Jordan Pickford (Everton), Aaron Ramsdale (Arsenal), James Trafford (Burnley)

**Defenders:** Jarrad Branthwaite (Everton), Lewis Dunk (Brighton & Hove Albion), Joe Gomez (Liverpool), Marc Guehi (Crystal Palace), Ezri Konsa (Aston Villa), Harry Maguire (Manchester United), Jarell Quansah (Liverpool), Luke Shaw (Manchester United), John Stones (Manchester City), Kieran Trippier (Newcastle United), Kyle Walker (Manches-Midfielders: Trent Alexander-

Arnold (Liverpool), Jude Bellingham (Real Madrid), Conor Gallagher (Chelsea), Curtis Jones (Liverpool), Kobbie Mainoo (Manchester United), Declan Rice (Arsenal), Adam Wharton (Crystal

Forwards: Jarrod Bowen (West Ham United), Eberechi Eze (Crystal Palace), Phil Foden (Manchester City), Anthony Gordon (Newcastle United), Jack Grealish (Manchester City), Harry Kane (Bayern Munich), James Maddison (Tottenham Hotspur), Cole Palmer (Chelsea), Bukayo Saka (Arsenal), Ivan Toney (Brentford), Ollie Watkins (Aston Villa)

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