

ARAB TIM

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TOP U.N. COURT ORDERS ISRAEL TO HALT AGGRESSION



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Opinion

After matters have settled with people's support, we are now awaiting good news

Kuwait hails decades of historic GCC unity on 43rd anniversary

KUWAIT CITY, May 25, (KUNA): The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has a rich history of strategic cooperation, said Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya.

In a statement to KUNA on Saturday, on the occasion of the GCC's 43rd establishment

Continued on Page 5

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THERE are some people who remain oblivious to the changing times. They are stuck in the past, and consequently, their expectations often lead to disappoint-

Among such people are those who firmly believe that the latest measures of the new era will lead to a stronger repetition of the events that occurred in the

However, there is no doubt that their assumptions are based on illusions. What transpired was a

popular demand before it became a government initiative. The government responded



Al-Jarallah

by restoring the state's prestige and finding a way out of the impasse created by the group that claims to venerate the

Constitution, for reasons now evident to all. Today, things are different from what they were in the 70s and 80s. The Arab world was seething with unrest and coups, and political movements were searching for a foothold in various countries. This is why the internal conflicts in nations had escalated. This includes Kuwait, where

the conflict over interests between the Islamic and nationalist movements was intense, and national security was absent from their considerations. That is why the defunct Iraqi regime found a loophole that made it appear as though it could swallow Kuwait, and hence the 1990 in-

vasion occurred.

Today, more than 40 years after those events and 33 years since liberation, Kuwaitis are convinced that any reckless adventure could jeopardize their national destiny. They have thus committed to unity, regardless of the cost. The devastation seen during the "Arab Spring" in Tunisia, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Iraq, as well as other affected countries, serves as a reminder of the wounds Kuwaitis continue to endure. Particularly notable were the events witnessed during the so-called "Dignity of the Nation" demonstrations, including the attacks on security forces, which extended beyond mere harm to the prestige of the head of state.

It is known in political science that a corrupt state is better than no state, that reform cannot take place overnight, and that painful measures are necessary in such cases. The people in recent years have suffered a lot of injustice caused by wrong choices of representatives of the nation. The least that can be said about them is that they disappointed the voters.

It is not possible to dissolve five parliamentary assemblies within a period of ten years. The entire state was paralyzed due to suspicious demands hemmed in by the religious movement, which has taken over "the thread and the needle". During that period, Kuwait turned into something like a quarantined plague patient. They hence closed the country and erased everything beautiful. starting with theater, arts and culture, and ending with education, which they changed according to their deviant vision that must end in the destruction of society, and contradicts the nature of the faithful and tolerant Kuwaiti people who seek pioneership in everything.

They worked to exploit everything for their personal interests, from roads and services to development projects, and divided the cake of public wealth in broad daylight through intolerable corruption. In fact, they sought in a systematic way, to make Kuwait a failed state, similar to the countries that are plagued by groups whose only interest is to take over their country's capabilities.

In their delusion, these individuals went as far as to undermine the authority of the Amir and attempted to interfere with the judiciary. This led to widespread calls in the press and on social media for a resolution to the matter, even if it meant resorting to a drastic measure akin to a surgical intervention

Continued on Page 5

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KUWAIT CITY, May 25, (KUNA): The Europe-

an Union Friday gave its final approval to a new

Schengen Borders Code, the EU's rulebook that

deals with the management of internal and exter-

nal borders, as well as the rules governing border

control of persons crossing the external EU bor-

Schengen area more resilient to present and fu-

ture crises at its external borders. It also makes

sure that people living and traveling in the EU can

fully enjoy the benefits of borderless travel, noted

adopt EU-wide measures that restrict the access

of third-country nationals to the EU in the event of

The regulation introduces the possibility to

an EU statement.

The reform is instrumental in making the

Reforms enhance resilience, border security

EU adopts Schengen Borders Code update

Kuwait backs ICJ verdict against assault on Rafah EU calls for immediate Israeli compliance KUWAIT CITY, May 25, (Agencies): The State of Kuwait on Sat-

urday welcomed the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) verdict against the Israeli occupying forces to stop their aggression on the Palestinian city of Rafah.

In a press release, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed the necessity to implement all temporary measures announced by the ICJ since South Africa's filed lawsuit against the Israeli occupying forces.

The release reiterated call on the international community to shoulder its due responsibilities

and obligate the Israeli entity to halting all forms of aggression against the Palestinian people.

On Friday, a ruling by the top United Nations court ordering Israel to halt its military offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah has deepened its disconnect with the United States over an operation that faces mounting international condemnation but that American officials describe, at least for now, as limited and targeted.

The decision Friday by the International Court of Justice in The Hague adds to the pressure facing an increasingly isolated Israel, coming just days after Norway, Ireland and Spain said they would recognize a Palestinian state, and the chief prosecutor of a separate international court sought arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as well as leaders of Hamas.

The Biden administration stands apart from the global community - though it is opposed to a major offensive in Rafah, the administration also insists that

> taken so far have not crossed red Administration officials so far have appeared determined to press on with military and political support for Israel following the deadly Hamas attack it endured last October, while also pressuring its ally to avoid

> a full-scale military operation in

the steps its close ally Israel has

densely populated Rafah. "What we have seen so far in terms of Israel's military operations in that area has been more targeted and limited, has not involved major military operations into the heart of dense urban areas," national security adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters at a White House briefing this week.

But, he added, "We now have o see what unfolds from here

A State Department official, speaking on condition of anonymity to describe the administration's internal assessment of the situation, said the operation in Gaza had "not yet moved into the core heart of Rafah that gets us to the densest of dense areas.

Earlier this month, the White House announced it was pausing **Continued on Page 5**

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the

Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-

Jaher Al-Sahah on Friday sent a ca-

ble of congratulations to King Abdul-

lah II of Jordan on the occasion of

In the cable, His Highness the

Amir wished the Jordanian monarch

good health and the Hashemite King-

dom's people further progress and

prosperity under his wise leadership.

His Highness the Prime Minis

ter Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-

Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent a cable

of congratulations to King Abdul-

lah II of Jordan on the occasion of the Hashemite Kingdom's National

his country's National Day.



Chief of Staff of the Kuwait Army Lieutenant General Pilot Bandar Al-Muzain inspects ongoing work at Abdullah Al-Mubarak and Nawaf Al-Ahmad air bases on Saturday.

Kuwait Army chief inspects air base projects for progress

Lieutenant General Pilot Bandar Al-Muzain, Chief of Staff of the Kuwait Army, inspected the projects at Abdullah Al-Mubarak and Nawaf Al-Ahmad air bases on Saturday. This visit aimed to review the progress and completion rates of these projects as part of his ongoing oversight

NBK-Egypt posts

1 Q 2024 net profit

Details Page 8 —

ALSAYER Group holds

employee convention

- Details Page 10 -

It also puts in place a transfer procedure

"Travelling in the Schengen zone without bor-

der checks is one of the main accomplishments of

the EU. With today's vote we have given member

states tools at hand to maintain borderless travel

within the Schengen area, while securing external

borders, addressing irregular migration and public

day following that of its publication in the Official

Journal of the European Union. It is directly ap-

This regulation enters into force on the 20th

that will help tackle the secondary movement

of migrants (from one EU member state to an-

a large-scale public health emergency.

health risks," added the statement.

plicable in the EU countries.

of army initiatives.
In a press statement, Lieutenant General Al-Muzain emphasized the importance of accelerating the pace of work to ensure timely completion. The tour was intended to verify the availability of necessary operational require-

ments and equipment at the bases. Lieutenant General Al-Muzain was accompanied by Air Force Commander Major General Pilot Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad, Head of Military Base Transition Engineer Faisal Al-Hajri, and several Air Force officers and engineers. (KUNA)

China stands with Kuwait on sovereignty: Ambassador Jianwei 'Kuwait, China maintain strategic partnership'

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: The Ambassador of China to Kuwait Zhang Jianwei says the Chinese-Gulf relations are developing very significantly, and the two sides are focusing their efforts on the development process and enhancing cooperation between them in a way that serves their common interests, especially since China is interested in spreading peace, stability and progress in the region.

In his speech during a press conference held at his home, Ambassador Jianwei said the Gulf countries have aspira-

tions to strengthen cooperation with China as it is a peaceful country and its economy is ranked second in the world.

Regarding the latest developments in the agreement with Kuwait to manage Mubarak Port, he explained, "During the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, a cooperation agreement was signed between the two countries regarding Mubarak Port. The Amir's decree regarding this framework was issued, and the two sides are in the process of consulting extensively and in-depth about this project.

Mubarak Port is a huge and strategic project and

when completed, it will bring development to Kuwait."

Strategic partner

Amb. Jianwei said, "We have confidence in the future of cooperation with Kuwait, which is going through an important stage.

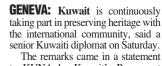
Kuwait is a strategic partner for China, which will remain a reliable partner with Kuwait. We are working with the Kuwaiti side in accordance with these agreements on the ground. I will do my best to implement what has been agreed upon between the leaderships of the two countries.'

In response to a question about whether there is an expected visit by the Chinese president to Kuwait in the near

future, the ambassador replied, "The president pays great attention to Kuwait and there is a desire on his

He then emphasized the implementation of the agreements reached between the leadership of the two countries during the visit made by His Highness the Amir, when he was the Crown Prince, to China

to materialize these agreements, because realizing



Day. (KUNA)

The remarks came in a statement to KUNA by Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN and Other International Organizations Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen, who chaired Kuwait's delegation in the Diplomatic Conference on adopting a new treaty on Intellectual Property. Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge, under the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in Geneva.

The ambassador hailed WIPO's role in preserving heritage, as well as in finding a balanced international system for intellectual property, which encourages innovation and creativity.



conference saw the signing of a treaty on intellectual property, genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, said Al-Hayen.

The 11-day

The event also included sign-

ing the conference's final statement by 180 countries, including Kuwait, he added. (KUNA)

Photo by lehab Qurtal

sador to Kuwait

part to visit it.'

last September. Amb. Jianwei said, "We are working with Kuwait

Continued on Page 5



By Night: Rather hot to mild

Weather with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-35

Station Max Exp

Kuwait City

Kuwait Airport 29 30 31 Abdaly Jahra Salmiyah Nuwaisib Wafra

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

Kuwait was among first countries in approving many laws and legislation: official

'Kuwait's political leadership pays attention to women's issues'

Kuwait's political leadership attaches attention to women and backs their issues as well as enhances their role, said a Kuwaiti official Thurs-

Maryam Al-Azmi, Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, made the statement during a session held to discuss Kuwait's sixth periodical report on implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, currently held at the United Nations Office in Geneva

The State of Kuwait was among first countries in terms of approving many laws and legislation, and paid special attention to protecting women and supporting their role in society, she said, pointing to the establishment of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs.

She elaborated that the organizational structure of the council is coordinating with the relevant ministries to get an integrated plan in family development, provide care and basic services, and work to unify the directions of governmental and voluntary social care for the family, in addition to proposing necessary means to activate the cognitive role of family in preserving environment and supporting adults' education.

The council is keen on implementing laws such as children protection law, protection from domestic violence law, she said, referring to the establishment of centers for protection from domestic violence and

She highlighted taking some steps and adopting several legislation to ensure the rights of women suffering from domestic violence.

Al-Azmi said the council is working to enhance collaboration with the social development office by organizing various courses and benefiting from the office's expertise in providing psychological and social support of domestic violence cases and following up on treatment even after the end of their shelter.

The council is keen on empowering women as it marks International Women's Day and Kuwaiti Women's Day, she indicated, referring to honoring some successful women in various fields on these occasions.

The council is seeking to build

Leadership sends National Day greetings

HH Amir congratulates leaders of Eritrea, Argentina

KUWAIT CITY, May 25, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Friday a cable of congratulations to Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki on the occasion of his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the president and his people further success and progress.

international and regional partner-

ships in empowering women, this

was shown by cooperation with the

Also, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on a cable of congratulations to President Isaias Afwerki on the occasion of his country's National Day.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad sent on Saturday a cable of congratulations to President of Argentina Javier

United Nations Economic and So-

cial Commission for Western Asia

(ESCWA) regarding the project of

Milei on his country's National Day. His Highness the Amir wished lasting good health for President Milei and more progress and prosperity for the friendly country.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad also sent a cable of congratulations to President Javier Milei on his country's National Day.

Index Simulator for Policymakers in the Arab Region (ISPAR) to raise Kuwait index relating to women.





Cultural exchange ups Kuwaiti-Bulgarian ties

Embassy marks Day of Bulgarian Alphabet

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff KUWAIT CITY, May 25: The Ambassador of Bulgaria to Kuwait Dimitar Dimitrov says cultural exchange is the best way to bring people together, enhance understanding, and build bonds of friendship between them, and that culture has always played a

waiti relations. He said this on the sidelines of a ceremony held by the embassy on the occasion of "Day of the Bulgarian Alphabet, Enlightenment, Culture and Slavic Literature," which

very important role in the Bulgarian-Ku-

is celebrated on May 24 every year. In a statement to reporters, Ambassador Dimitrov expressed his aspiration to hold more exhibitions, cultural initiatives, and visits by artistic teams from the two coun-

He said, "We are pleased to have Kuwait's support in training our Arabic language specialists. We hope that this cooperation will continue and grow. We are particularly grateful in this regard to the

Language Center at Kuwait University. There are many Kuwaitis who are fluent in the Bulgarian language because of their regular travel to Bulgaria, their love for its heritage, its wonderful weather, and the wellknown generosity of its people.

Kuwaitis know Bulgaria not only because of its goods that are available in the markets, but also because thousands of them travel to Bulgaria annually and many of them own

homes and real estate in various cities there. Ambassador Dimitrov went on to say, "The Bulgarian community in Kuwait, despite its small number, represents an important factor in strengthening friendly relations between our two countries. A large part of the community is directly linked to culture and education. Many of them are teachers and on this day we pay tribute to their work because they are followers of the heroes of our enlightenment.

We have concluded the academic year in the Bulgarian school at our embassy in Kuwait. The children of our compatriots come to this school on Fridays, sacrificing their holidays to learn the Bulgarian language, literature, history, geography, Bulgarian culture and traditions.

Our program today is completely based on the performance of our school children. I would like to express my special gratitude to them, their teachers and their parents for their commitment and enthusiasm."

Regarding the occasion, Dimitrov said, "On May 24, Bulgaria celebrates the Day of the Saints Brothers Cyril and Methodius, the Bulgarian alphabet, enlightenment, Slavic culture and literature. This day holds a very special value for us in Bulgaria because our alphabet, language and culture played a decisive role in preserving our identity and in achieving the Bulgarian national awakening, which paved the way for the resurrection of Bulgaria as an independent state after 500 years of forgotten history and Ottoman rule.

With Bulgaria's accession to the European Union in 2007, a new third alphabet called the Cyrillic alphabet was added to the EU scripts. The Bulgarian alphabet appears in official documents of the European Union and is translated into all 24 languages of the

in a world of hacking and fraud 'Drugs, weapons, human organs sold on site; gangs elusive' prosecute them.

and

The

Web

with a high

level of pri-

markets for

Dark Web ... fertile environment

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: A number of cybersecurity experts have warned about the Dark Web gangs, revealing that they observed a number of citizens entering the Dark Web out of curiosity, reports Al-Rai daily.

They said: "Some of those who entered the Dark Web encountered problems, their accounts were hacked and money was demanded from them. Others have fallen victim to the encryption of their files, while the devices of some were hacked and some pictures and video clips were stolen from these devices. They were then subjected to blackmail. Another group entered and left quickly without encountering problems and went deeper before getting involved in these matters.

They stressed that "there is no clear and official classification of the extent of the spread of the Dark Web among teenagers in Kuwait, but we must not wait for it to spread and be passive. Rather, this phenomenon must be repelled, awareness must be strengthened among teenagers in particular, and the seriousness of this matter must be made clear. The laws of many countries criminalize the act of accessing the Dark Web."

Through this investigation, the daily sheds light on this parallel world in which "drugs, weapons, and even human organs are sold, in addition the sale of stolen credit card data and personal identities.

Member of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Information Society Shurooq Al-Sayegh revealed: "A number of risks are associated with the Dark Web. These risks are not limited to illegal transactions, as they include the risk of exposure to viruses, malware and fraud. In 2015, users of the Dark Web discovered a malicious program that stole their financial data. The Dark Web is part of the Deep Internet, which cannot be accessed through traditional search engines. It is accessed through special networks and software, which conceal the identity



Al-Sayegh

even human organs, and there have been incidents of selling stolen credit card data and personal Al-Sayegh enumerated three

ways to protect users against the Dark Web: 1. Use security software and up-

date it constantly.

2. Avoid clicking on links of unknown origin or downloading files from unreliable sources.

3. Use common sense and be skeptical of offers that sound too good to be true.

She concluded: "The Dark Web can be beneficial for those seeking privacy, but it also comes with serious risks. Awareness and caution are the keys to the safe use of this complex tool."

Cybersecurity expert Abdulaziz Al-Mutairi told the daily "the incidents that some people publish show the extent of the danger that the Internet can pose, even on the regular network that we use on an almost daily basis. If these things happen on the regular Internet, what would it be like if the activity is on the Dark Web -- a fertile,

dark and encrypted environment where individuals can easily access illegal content without fear of being penalized. Since the activities on the Dark Web are carried out secretly and anonymously, it is very difficult for the State to track the individuals involved in these illegal activities. Therefore, it is necessary that we work hard to strengthen

rity and cen-

sorship on

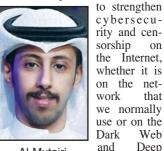
the Internet,

whether it is

and

Web

Deep



Al-Mutairi

Web, to protect individuals. There is no clear and official classification of the extent of the spread of the Dark Web among teenagers in Kuwait, but we must not wait for it to spread and remain passive. Rather, we must repel this phenomenon, enhance awareness among teenagers in particular, and clarify the seriousness of this matter. Several countries have laws criminalizing the act of accessing the Dark Web.'

Al-Mutairi cited three reasons that push teenagers to enter the Dark Web:

1. Curiosity,

2. Trying to profit from it through

3. Lack of adult supervision. He disclosed three methods of

protection as follows: 1. Issue a law that criminalizes use of the Dark Web like other

countries that know how danger-2. Raising public awareness and

warning about the dangers of its use, 3. Cooperating with global law enforcement agencies specialized in pursuing Dark Web criminals to

Kuwait Society for Information Security Chairperson Dr. Safaa Zaman clarified that "the Dark Web is an encrypted network, which can be accessed using a browser called 'Tor'. It is different from traditional browsers. Its contents could be legal or illegal. Nevertheless, it is undesirable, as various confidential commercial



Dr Zaman

around sites without person leaving any This traces. means identity is hidden. His activities are not recorded on any search en-

transactions

are conduct-

it. It is pos-

sible to move

and

through

wander

can complete external transactions anonymously.'

Zaman enumerated 12 Internet activities that violate the law:

gines. He cannot be tracked, so he

1. Purchase credit card number

2. Purchase human organs

3. Dealing in all types of drugs 4. Illegal sale of weapons

5. Trading counterfeit money and

6. Steal subscription credentials 7. Sell hacked company accounts

8. Piracy and hacking programs

9. Fake bank notes

10. Sell counterfeit currencies

11. Hire hackers to attack others 12. Purchase usernames and pass-

She warned that "entering this

network is considered dangerous, as it is a fertile environment for hacking and fraud. Whoever wants to enter this world must be careful and know how to protect himself. It is difficult for governments to monitor the Dark Web, or even reach gangs operating therein."

Al-Hashash granted exemption, MC decision raises queries

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: The Legal and Financial Affairs Committee at the Municipal Council recently recommended approval of the request of the Public Prosecution to exempt the real estate properties of former director of the Public Relations and Security Media Department in Ministry of Interior Brigadier Adel Al-Hashash, who has been convicted of criminal cases, from Kuwait Municipality fees for the issuance of description certificates for real estate properties, reports Al-Jarida

The committee also endorsed the cancellation of the decision PAM releases its statistics for April

447 offices licensed to recruit domestics KUWAIT CITY, May 25: The Department for Regulating the Recruitment of Domestic Workers at the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has released its statistics for the month of April; revealing that the

number of licensed domestic labor recruitment offices in the country has reached 447, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to the statistics, seven licenses were canceled at the request of business owners, 21

licenses to practice a profession were renewed, nine new licenses were issued, the suspension of four licenses was lifted, and eight licenses and 417 complaints were registered.

that the council issued in April 2014 to approve the request of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor to allocate land measuring 140 square meters for the establishment of a restaurant in Shuhada Cooperative Society. The decision is in line with the court verdict

against a food company.

News in Brief

Day in week to submit complaints

Bid to ease MEW client transactions

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: The Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy and the Minister of State for Housing Affairs Dr. Mahmoud Boushahri is leading the ministry to facilitate customer procedures without violating the applicable laws, regulations and procedures, with the possibility of specifying one day a week to receive them and consider their requests during specific hours.

He said this after an extended meeting he chaired with the ministry's leaders with the aim of reviewing all the work of the ministry's sectors, its existing projects and the contracts for the maintenance of electric power generation and water production stations, in addition to a comprehensive assessment of the efficiency of power stations, water distillation stations, and electrical and water networks.

Dr. Boushahri reviewed the ministry's preparations by the technical staff and emergency teams to confront the high demand for electrical energy during the summer period from June 1 to September

At the same time, he highlighted the intensification of awareness campaigns for community members to rationalize electricity and water consumption, especially during the peak hours from 11:00am to 5:00 pm, which would contribute directly to reducing the burden on electrical loads.

Kuwait 1 of largest donors: Assistant Foreign Affairs Minister for International Organiza-tion Affairs Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah has announced that Kuwait is one of the largest donors for the humanitarian appeal to help earthquake victims in Turkiye, as it has pledged \$90 million, including \$17.5 million for both Syria and Turkiye, reports Al-Rai daily.

Al-Jarallah made the statement at the conclu-

sion of a Kuwaiti delegation's official visit to Turkiye recently to review the humanitarian aid projects funded by Kuwait in response to the United Nations' humanitarian appeal for assistance for victims of the earthquake in Turkiye and Syria in 2023.

Bedoun held: A Bedoun was detained at Waha

Police Station for driving under the influence and

destroying State property, reports Al-Anba daily. According to a security source, a traffic patrol officer stopped an American-made vehicle on Salmi Bridge as he suspected that the driver - a Beoun born in 1989 - was under the influence of an intoxicating substance.

When asked to enter the patrol car because he was unable to drive due to his abnormal condition, he resisted the securitymen and destroyed the door of the patrol vehicle.

New service on Sahel: The Ministry of Interior has unveiled a new service through the unified government application for electronic services, "Sahel," reports Al-Anba daily.

This latest service "judgment enforcement

services," provides users with access to essential functions, including the ability to inquire about judgments that may impact transaction completion and to obtain clearance certificates related to judgment enforcement.

In a press statement, the Ministry emphasized its commitment to expanding electronic services via the Sahel Government app.

This initiative aligns with the ongoing technological advancements within the security sector, aimed at streamlining processes and enhancing user convenience.

By leveraging digital transformation, the Ministry aims to simplify transactions for citizens and residents, facilitating smoother inter-actions and reducing time and effort expended

on administrative tasks.

diwaniya 💎 چیوانیة

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Deviation of past assemblies needed corrective measures'

"MAY 10, 2024 marked a significant chapter in Kuwait's history, a day etched in the hearts of Kuwaitis not solely due to the dissolution of the National Assembly, but because it heralded Kuwait's salvation under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. What transpired was not merely political maneuvering, but a divine intervention against the

nefarious designs of those seeking to dismantle Kuwait from within,' columnist Faisal Muhammad bin Sabt wrote for Al-Qabas daily. "The National

Assembly, once envisioned as a beacon of progress for Kuwait, had regrettably devolved into a destructive force, setting back the



nation and tearing at its social fabric. "To understand the gravity of this decision, we must rewind to 1992, the dawn of Kuwait's post-liberation democratic journey. Since then, political and social turbulence has been the norm, with elected officials embroiled in personal agendas, squabbles, and scandals rather than advancing the nation's interests.

"From countless interrogations to governmental resignations, Kuwait witnessed a stagnation in development, hemorrhaging billions due to self-serving interventions and the prioritization of personal gain over national progress.

'The democratic platform, meant to empower the people, was hijacked by those intent on undermining the state, eroding its foundations, and impeding its growth. Their overreach even extended to encroaching upon the constitutional powers of the Amir.

"The decision to dissolve the Assembly and suspend certain articles was a necessary step to break free from the downward spiral orchestrated by successive councils. Gratitude is owed to Divine providence and the sagacity of His Highness for timely intervention.

"In essence, democracy's essence lies in empowering the populace to govern and oversee the state's affairs through elected representatives. Yet, the deviation of many previous council members from this noble path necessitated decisive action.

"Democracy's primary objective is to ensure the welfare of the country and its citizens through legislation and governance. The regrettable deviation of past assemblies underscores the need for corrective measures.'

Also:

"Self-confidence is a fundamental pillar in a child's development, with its roots deeply embedded in the family environment. As the world evolves at a rapid pace, children encounter various hurdles that can impact their emotional and psychological growth," columnist Nada Muhalhal Al-Mudhaf, Educational consultant and certified trainer in the field of childhood and adolescence, wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"The journey to cultivating self-confidence begins at home, with parents serving as the primary architects.

"From the moment a child enters the family fold, their experiences and interactions shape their sense of self-worth.

"This process continues through their formative years, encompassing school life where encounters with bullying, peer pressure, and academic challenges abound. It's a journey that demands ongoing nurturing and reinforcement.

"Parents wield significant influence as children perceive and emulate their behaviors and emotions. If parents exhibit self-doubt, children are likely to internalize these sentiments, reflecting them in their own demeanor.

"Therefore, before embarking on bolstering children's self-confidence, parents must embark on their own journey of self-improvement and confidence-

building.

"This endeavor requires patience and concerted effort to shift entrenched beliefs and attitudes. Seeking guidance from educational consultants can provide valuable insights and direction in this regard.

"Summer vacations present an opportune time to foster a child's skills and personality by enrolling them in purposeful clubs led by competent professionals versed in personality devel-

opment.
"Careful consideration is essential to ensure that the chosen activities cater to the child's needs and interests, mitigating the risk of encountering detrimental experiences such as bullying or marginalization. Moreover, fostering self-reliance from a young age through age-appropriate responsibilities contributes significantly to boosting selfconfidence.

"It's crucial to recognize that the journey to self-confidence is unique for each individual, and there's no one-size-fitsall approach. Tailoring strategies to suit the child's temperament, strengths, and challenges is imperative for fostering a resilient sense of self-assurance.'



"Decisive decision of a firm Amir... It is not surprising that I am writing this article about a Kuwaiti, as I am a fan of Kuwait and I consider it my second country after the dear Kingdom. I visited Kuwait several times before the invasion, sometimes with friends and with my family at other times. My family and I know and are friends with honorable Kuwaiti families," Saudi writer Dr. Abdullah Rashid Al-Sunaidi wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"I love Kuwait, its towers, its markets, its press - most notably Al-Seyassah daily, its editor-in-chief - the distinguished professor Ahmed Al-Jarallah, its artistic effectiveness and its sports team during the era of Fathi Kamil, Jassim Yaqoub, Faisal Al-Dakhil, Ahmad Al-Trabelsi and Khaled Al-Harban.

"I will never forget the football match between the Kuwaiti and Iraqi teams in their heyday towards the end of the 1970s in Baghdad. In the presence of 70,000 spectators, the first half ended with two goals for the Iraqi team, but the Kuwaiti team deservedly turned the score around with three goals to two in the second half.

"Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem, may Allah have mercy on him, was credited for establishing the National Assembly. His goal was effective participation in the interest of Kuwait and its people.

"The Assembly had been following this approach for about three decades in the field of legislation and objective oversight, far from defamation and personalization. After that, it began to deviate from its goals and basic tasks to interfere in executive work, which led to its dissolution several times -- twice during the reign of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

"This firm and open Amir who, since the era of HH the late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, may Allah have mercy on him, has been exerting tremendous efforts to reform the govern-ment and the Assembly in a bid to make them return to the right path. However, his efforts were in vain as the situation in the Assembly reached the point of obstructing development. The Assembly did not give His Highness Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem -- who was welcomed by majority of the Kuwaiti people when he assumed the leadership of the Council of Ministers -- an opportunity to work and achieve. After assuming the post, he went to the Assembly himself, perhaps with the aim of reaching a consensus, but nothing

"After the dissolution, the Assembly returned and a large percentage of its members were from the previous legislature, including the temporary members who started issuing interrogation threats, even before the new government was formed. Some of them even objected to the return of certain ministers to the government, thereby, disrupting the formation. At the time, the torrent reached the extremes. In order to protect Kuwait, its unity, stability and development, HH the Amir had no choice but to take the decisive decision to dissolve the Assembly and suspend some articles of the Constitution ... 'Allah Almighty determines through the Sultan what cannot be removed through the Our'an.

"May Allah guide Kuwait toward the path of progress, development, stability and familiarity under the wise leadership of His Highness."

"Stop negative habits ... A person stops a negative habit when he refrains from doing it by choice, especially if he replaces it with a good habit," columnist **Dr. Khaled Ayed Al- Janafawi** wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"I think among the negative habits that have spread in today's turbulent world, which a wise person must resist are the following:

- Addiction to using or following social media: The negative side of addictive following of everything published on social media is that it disconnects a person from reality, wastes his valuable personal time and could make him an easy victim of intellectual confusion and deception, or sometimes it could lead to psychological disorder.

The desire to know the private affairs of others: It is necessary for the wise to curb any desire to know the private affairs of others, as this desire turns into an irresistible tendency or a negative habit, which will lead to invective that has no benefit.

Interacting with fools: A fool is one who is light-minded and reckless in speech and behavior. The prudent should distance fools, because of their negative effect on the soundness of the mind.

- Pathological dependence: Whoever relies excessively on people to carry out his duties and personal responsibilities indulges in a negative habit that will turn him into a dependent and intrusive person.

- Acceptance of ignorance: The one who respects his human dignity must extricate himself from any swamp of ignorance he finds himself in, either by practicing self-education or by being educated by a knowledgeable or wise person, for only the rabble of savages will accept ignorance.

- Sanctifying the other: 'Indeed, Allah does not forgive anyone associating anything with Him, but He forgives whomever He wills. And whoever associates anything with Allah has certainly invented a great sin.' (An-Nisa' 48).

- Attracting people's attention and acceptance: The habit of passionate and obsessive longing for others' acceptance leads to stripping the victim of his human characteristics by voluntarily transforming him into an airy, anxious and shaky human being internally and externally.

Wasting and mismanagement of time: Not using personal time according to its basic function in today's world (keeping pace with the development of life) will lead to chaos in personal life, ignorance of priorities and goals, and disruption of the psychological com-

- Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Contraband seized during the surprise inspection campaign.

Mobile phones, wires, bladed weapons seized

Minister pays surprise visit to Central Jail

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: As part of the series of surprise security inspections by the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, the Security Media Department of the Ministry of Interior announced that Minister Al-Yousef made a surprise inspection visit to the prison complex on Friday evening along with the Assistant Undersecretary for Private Security

Affairs in the Ministry of Interior Major General Abdullah Safa Al-Mulla.

The department explained that the inspection teams of the Special Security Forces, with the cooperation of the Prison Security Department, launched a surprise inspection campaign on inmates in correctional institutions and Central Prison during which they seized many prohibited items, including mobile phones, wires, and bladed weapons hidden in a secret manner. The seized items were referred to the concerned authorities, and the necessary legal measures are being taken.

Two young girls die, 3-year old sister hurt in accident

Worker falls to his death; 3 held for drugs

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: In a heartbreaking incident last Friday evening, a devastating accident occurred near the Orthopedic Hospital Roundabout, close to other hospitals heading towards Al-Jahra, reports Al-Anba daily. The crash resulted in the death of two sisters and left their 3-year-old sister critically injured.

According to a security source, the two girls, of Asian nationality, died on the spot, while their younger sister was rushed to the intensive care unit, Al-Sabah Hospital. Their father, who is a science teacher, was also injured in the accident but has since recovered. The family's vehicle was completely destroyed in the collision.



3 drug traffickers held: Personnel from the Ahmadi Security Directorate have arrested three unidentified expatriates for trafficking in drugs.

According to security sources the suspects were arrested in possession of narcotic drugs, drug paraphernalia, and a sum of money in the Mahboula area.

The Al-Seyassah daily said the suspects were riding in a vehicle and when they saw a police patrol, they attempted to divert their

However, patrolmen caught up with the vehicle and asked the man behind the wheel to pull over.

The men showed signs of confusion and after body search police found on the men narcotic substances and abuse tools, in addition to unidentified sums of money believed to be proceeds from sale

During investigation, they admitted to selling narcotic drugs and that they were on their way to sell the drugs.



The vehicle in which the two Asian girls lost their lives.

They have been handed over to the Directorate-General for Drugs Control.

Worker falls to death: A construction worker lost his life after he fell from a house under construction in the Al-Mutla'a area Friday morning. reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily added, after the Ministry of Interior received a distress call at about 8:50 am from the contractor, help was rushed to the site but paramedics failed to rescue the man, who bled to death.

The incident was recorded as a case of ac-

Expat assaults traffic officer: An expatriate was referred to the Central Prison for assaulting a traffic officer and two securitymen at Salmiya Police Station, reports Al-Anba daily.

A security source revealed that a traffic officer assigned in Salmiya signaled for the expatriate to pull over as he committed a traffic violation. However, when the officer approached the expatriate to issue a violation citation, he was surprised as the latter assaulted him.

The expatriate was referred to Salmiya Police Station, where he also attacked two securitymen who were on duty.

A case was registered and the investigations officer ordered referral of the expatriate to the Central Prison while waiting for completion of investigations.

No yearly hassles

Municipality launches new permanent camping rules

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: The Kuwait Municipality has finalized the drafting of a comprehensive regulation for camping, which will serve as a permanent alternative to the yearly controls and requirements typically enforced by the Municipality's Camps Committee during the spring camping season, reports Al-Jarida daily.

A municipal source said these regulations aim to reorganize designated camping sites, preventing the formation of slums and overcrowding of camps adjacent to each other.

Among the notable provisions, the regulation allocates space for the private sector to develop camping sites for rental purposes, alongside designated areas for cafés, restaurants, shops, and halls.

Specific fees per square meter will be implemented to ensure compliance with legal standards and prevent any unauthorized exploitation or violation. This initiative is intended to support entrepreneurs seeking to capitalize on the spring camping season. Furthermore, fines will be imposed for unauthorized

camping and land exploitation, particularly in the northern, southern, and western regions of the country, to combat environmental pollution. The Legal Department is currently reviewing the regulation's articles to ensure proper approval and subsequent discussion by the Municipal Council. In related news, Kuwait Oil Company recently honored the members of the committee responsible for studying

and updating sites allocated for spring camping during the 2023/2024 season. The committee's diligent efforts in enforcing regulations and protecting sites near the company were commended, reflecting a concerted effort to safeguard national resources.

Various government agencies, including Kuwait Municipality, Ministry of Interior, Public Authority for the Environment, and Agriculture and Fisheries Authority, collaborated effectively to ensure a successful and environmentally responsible camping season.

Nawaf Al-Mutairi, Director of the Cleaning and Road Works Department in Jahra Governorate Municipality, expressed gratitude for the recognition of inspectors and officials involved in the spring camps committee.

He praised their exceptional work and underscored the importance of government agencies' support, which contributed to a successful and cooperative camping season.

Liquor factory raided, 4 held

GTD issues 28,175 violations, nabs 26 juveniles in last week

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies KUWAIT CITY, May 25: The General Traffic Department,

based on instructions and directives from the Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Affairs and Operations Major General Yousef Al-Khadda, continued its security campaigns against violators of traffic laws and rules.

During the past week, the campaigns resulted in the issuance of 28,175 violations, the impounding of 52 vehicles and 35 motorcycles, and the arrest of 26 juveniles who were referred to the Juvenile Prosecution for driving vehicles without a driver's license.



The weekly statistics revealed that three people were arrested without identification documents, 47 wanted vehicles were seized, nine people had arrest warrants issued against them, five absconders were caught, and four people were suspected of possessing drug substances and violating the residency law.

The General Traffic Department also dealt with 1,117 minor accidents and 228 serious accidents.

Liquor factor busted: Officers from the Jleeb Al-Shuy-Asians in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh. According to security sources, when police officers re-

ceived information about the local liquor factory, they went to the location and found barrels and bottles of liquor ready

Four Asian expatriates who were managing this factory were arrested and referred to the concerned authority with the seized items.

Securityman assaulted: Two individuals were detained at the police station after assaulting a securityman who asked them get out of the lane designated for trucks at Nuwaiseeb border, reports Al-Anba daily. Securitymen assigned at the border noticed a four-

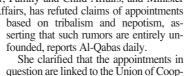
wheel drive vehicle on the lane designated for trucks.

When one of the officers advised the driver to change the route and head to the passport hall, the driver and his companion assaulted him. Other officers came over, controlled the two individuals

and referred them to the police station in the area.

Al-Huwaila refutes allegations

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila, Minister of Social Affairs, Labor, Family and Child Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, has refuted claims of appointments



question are linked to the Union of Cooperative Societies and were finalized during a meeting held last January. Al-Huwaila elaborated that the selection of advisors by union oc-

curred following a meticulous process, wherein 48 candidates from various societal sectors were shortlisted. These appointments were made with

Al-Huwaila a steadfast commitment to advancing cooperative work, devoid of any biases, with emphasis placed on experience and competency.

Al-Huwaila emphasized her dedication to accountability,

accountable and to infuse new talent into cooperative work without compromise, adhering to the principles of law." She reiterated her commitment to transparency across all sectors under the purview of the Ministry of Affairs, Implementation of Justice, and Labor, welcoming constructive

'Educate kids on dangers of fire'

criticism as a means to better serve the nation.

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: As per the directive of acting Director of Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) Major General Khalid Fahd, the Public Relations and Information Department at KFF has started preparations for the campaign entitled, 'Protection and Prevention', reports Al-Rai daily. The campaign is aimed at raising awareness among families on the need to educate children about the danger of playing with fire.

The campaign will be launched at the beginning of summer vacation for schools, coinciding with the start of the summer season when temperature increases and the chance of fire incidents are higher. In recent years, there have been many fire incidents in

private houses or investment residential buildings due to children playing with fire. This resulted in financial damages, injuries and deaths.





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FM Al-Yahya extols unity, cooperation; ambassadors laud Kuwaiti initiatives

Kuwait strengthens ties with African nations on Africa Day

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya affirms the keenness of the State of Kuwait to continue strengthening cooperation and coordination with the countries of the African continent in a way that brings mutual ben-

In statements issued to journalists on the sidelines of his participation in the Africa Day celebration, he wished the countries and people of Africa prosperity, development, security and safety.

Minister Al-Yahya stressed that the relationship between the State of Kuwait and the countries of the African continent is deep and his-

He expressed his happiness in participating at the Africa Day celebration, highlighting that the African nations are united despite their different ethnicities and lan-

Meanwhile, the Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps and the Ambassador of the Republic of Togo to Kuwait Mohamed Saad Ouro, in the speech he delivered on behalf of the African ambassadors, expressed his appreciation and gratitude to His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad for his sincere support for the African continent since the time he ascended the throne as Amir of the State of Kuwait.

Amb. Ouro said, "Kuwait plays an important role in supporting our continent by providing many initiatives not only in economic development plans but also at the political and cultural level. This is a clear indication that the African-Kuwaiti relationship is witnessing tremendous growth in various fields, especially investments and trade, for further progress and prosperity for the conti-





nent and Kuwait."

and educational fields.

between cultures.'

He stressed the keenness of the

African ambassadors to achieve the

goals of the African Union's slo-

gan, which is "Educating and Refining Africa" by enhancing coop-

eration with Kuwait in the cultural

Regarding the occasion, Amb. Ouro said, "Our beloved continent

celebrates Africa Day, which is the

day of the founding of the Organi-

zation of African Unity on May 25,

1963, in preparation for the estab-

lishment of the Organization of the

African Union in 2002. It is a day

when we celebrate our unity, and

it is a colorful manifestation of the

wonderful diversity of our cultures,

which integrates and interconnects









Photos during the celebration commemorating Africa Day.

Minister Bushehri orders a probe into Qibla, Mirqab power outage

MEW reaches 98% national workforce

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable En-

ergy and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Dr. Mahmoud Bushehri recently issued a directive on the formation of a technical investigation committee to determine the reasons behind the pow-

> er outage in some parts of Qibla and Mirqab, which include some important government facilities.

He stressed that every negligent official will be held accountable, while emphasizing the need for emergency teams to be prepared and lay down proactive plans to limit power outages.

The minister's directive was issued after the main substation, Mirqab A, went out of service last Tuesday, which led to a two-hour power outage in some parts of Mirqab and Qibla, where many government headquarters are located, most notably the Ministries Complex and Kuwait Municipality, as well as a number of banks, governmental and non-governmental institutions, whose work was disrupted due to the power out-

On the other hand, Assistant Undersecretary for Planning and Training tor at the ministry Eng. Ali Shaaban the ministry will soon announce the second edi-Dr Bushehri tion of the Inno-

vation Award; indicating that the first award was in

He pointed out that the award is designated for the ministry's employees and the idea of the award is based on encouraging them to put forward ideas that can contribute to developing work procedures.

He added a promotional video will be released soon to encourage the employees to participate in the competition. "We will select three winners from each category, whether individuals or a group of not more than three people. All winners will receive the prize during an awards ceremony that will be held under the patronage of the minister," he revealed.

He explained that there will be dialogue sessions on topics related to the award categories, noting that one of the ideas applied in the past was related to management systems and information technology.

He stressed that the aim of the

award is "to think about creative solutions" to push for development and advancement of the ministry.

Meanwhile, the nationalization process at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy has reached 98 percent as of April 2024.

This achievement aligns with the ministry's commitment to implement decision number 11/2017 issued by the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

It has been reported that 14,441 Kuwaitis have been appointed since the issuance of the aforementioned decision until April 2024. This brings the total number of national workers to 33,419, compared to 19,078 in 2017 -- 93.3 percent of the total workforce. During the same period, the number of expatriate workers decreased by 513, from 1,362 in 2017 to 848 as of April 2024, following the enforcement of the decision mentioned above.

Additionally, the ministry is planning to conduct the necessary studies related to consultative services for operating and protecting the electricity system, as well as the commercial exchange of electricity with Gulf countries. The relevant tender is currently being prepared and is expected to be released in 2024/2025.



Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Communication Affairs Omar Al-Omar meets Chinese official on commer-

Commercial co-op

MoCl's Al-Omar meets China's NDRC official

KUWAIT CITY, May 25, (KUNA): Kuwaiti ister of State for Communication Affairs Omar Al-Omar discussed with vice chairman of the Chinese National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) the prospects of promoting commercial cooperation.

The meeting took place on Thursday following the minister's participation in the China-GCC Forum on Investment and Industrial Cooperation in Xiamen city, Fujian province, southeast China, according to a statement from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Both sides commended the growing economic relations between Kuwait and China which gained momentum from the visit to China by His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ah-

mad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in last September. During the visit, His Highness the Amir met Chinese President Xi Jinping and both countries signed a number of MoUs on mega development

Al-Omar told the Chinese official that Kuwait attaches great importance to the implementation of the documents which were endorsed by the competent agencies in both countries, the statement added.



Al-Muhanna clinches most 'influential student' award

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: In a notable feat for Kuwaiti youth, Ali Al-Muhanna, currently pursuing psychology studies at the British University of Bristol, has secured the prestigious Most Influential Student Award, becoming the sole Gulf national to achieve this distinction reports Al-Qabas daily. Al-Muhanna said this esteemed accolade is bestowed upon just fifty students annually from a pool of 30,000 candidates at the university.

He attributed his success to a range of activities undertaken throughout the academic year, notably highlighting his prior publication addressing the challenges of academic pursuits and strategies for overcoming them.

Serving as president of the Kuwaiti Club and vice president of the Gulf Society at the university, Al-Muhanna and his peers orchestrated numerous educational and social initiatives, further solidifying his reputation as a highly esteemed and influential figure within the student body.

Looking ahead, Al-Muhanna eagerly anticipates the release of his third book, titled "The Conflict of Identity," wherein he delves into the intricacies of Western and Eastern societies and the transformative impact of educational scholarships on students' identities.



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Municipal Council's legal and financial committee holds 16th meeting

Reform, development initiatives set in motion; decisions and agendas revealed

By Enas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: The Legal and Financial Committee at the Municipal Council recently held its 16th meeting, presided over by Fahad Al-Abd Al-Jadir, during which it approved the procedures for implementing the ruling on Case No. 56/2018 of the Public Funds Prosecution, and to implement the ruling issued on March 27, 2018 regarding the lawsuit in favor of Kuwaiti American Foodstuff Company

The committee kept on its agenda the letter submitted by Kuwait Insurance Federation regarding adding new activities to the list of public places that disturb comfort and are harmful to health, proposal of council member Munira Al-Amir on resolving disputes between citizens and contracting and construction companies, filing the grievance submitted by the E-Learning Services Company in its capacity as the owner of Al-Dana International School, grievance submitted by the British International Education Company against the council's decision regarding private schools established in private residential areas, grievance submitted by the lawyer of Kuwait English Private School regarding the council's decision on the evacuation of existing private schools in model and private housing areas, grievance submitted by the New Generation Educational Foundation Company against the

council's decision regarding schools established in private residential areas.

The committee returned to the executive body the letter submitted by the Kuwaiti Association for Small and Medium Enterprises regarding excluding small and medium enterprises from municipal fees for study.

Meanwhile, the Reform and Development Committee held its first meeting, presided over by member Abdullatif

The committee approved merging the two questions submitted by member Sharifa Al-Shalfan regarding the approved road and bridge design guide, and the role of the executive branch of Kuwait Municipality in planning and traffic studies, with an invitation to the structural plan administration to make a visual presentation of the design standards of roads and streets, including entrances and exits, the width of roads and storage lanes, and u-turn standards.

The committee returned the response to the proposal submitted by former member Hamoud Oqla Al-Enezi regarding amending the status of Kuwaiti employees in the Real Estate Property Determination Department in the Kuwait Municipality to the executive branch to update the

The committee also reserved the question of member Ismail Haider Behbehani about the evaluation criteria for highway development projects.

After matters

Continued from Page 1

However, when the state was run by a firm leader who put his country's interests ahead of any other interests and knew well the path to good governance, he met the demands of his

people.

We have therefore started witnessing the disappearance of important names that wreaked havoc and intrigue among the people, and had been working on undermining the prestige of governance.

Kuwaiti people, like any people, desire an effective and strong state. This is only possible when there is a leader at the head of the state who works on the renaissance of his coun-

try.

Therefore, we emphasize that true leadership and a return to the correct course can only be achieved through one man who knows his way. This is why the people today are waiting for signs of the realization of promises outlined in the roadmap by their astute leader. The Council of Ministers, in turn, must act in the best interests of both the Head of State and the people.

Kuwait hails

Continued from Page 1

anniversary on May 25, the Kuwaiti top diplomat said the efforts and wise policy of Gulf states' leaders played a great role in pushing forward and developing cooperation amongst their countries on all levels, achieving their goals for the good of their peoples.

The GCC also succeeded in enhancing its regional and international role, becoming a key partner in achieving international peace and stability, he

The Council also triumphed in developing relations with regional countries and international economic groups, the minister pointed out.

Moreover, Al-Yahya said the GCC believes in respecting every country's sovereignty, supports joint work, and is committed to the articles of the international law and UN principles and goals.

'Kuwait, China

Continued from Page 1

these achievements and agreements are in the common interests between the two friendly countries. There is a plan for visits by officials from both sides and in all sectors".

He denied having any knowledge of an expected visit by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad to China in the near future.

Regarding the fate of the free trade agreement between China and the GCC countries, the ambassador said. "The signing of the free trade agreement between China and the GCC countries is very important. There are negotiations between the two sides in this field.

He stressed that his country has a strong desire to complete this agreement as soon as possible, adding that the terms and details of the agreement require further consultation between the two sides.

The Golden Rule

In his speech during the conference, Amb. Jianwei affirmed that, "China and Kuwait have always remained strong partners, respecting and trusting each other, dealing as equals, and strongly supporting each other on issues that concern each other's basic interests.'

He indicated that he still remembers clearly when President Xi Jinping met with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad in the city of Hangzhou last September.

Amb. Jianwei stressed that China supports Kuwaiti efforts to maintain its sovereignty and territorial integrity. and that it is ready to make joint efforts with the Kuwaiti side to maintain the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, which is considered the "golden rule" for the survival of developing countries.

He highlighted that His Highness the Amir said he will continue to firmly adhere to the "one China" policy and firmly support China's position on issues related to core interests.

Regarding issues related to the future and destiny of humanity, Amb. Jianwei said, "China and Kuwait adhere to similar values and belief that humanity has a common future and must unite, cooperate and move forward side by side. The two sides are taking concrete measures for the bilateral relations to become a role model.'

He stressed that His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad is the first leader of the Gulf states to clearly declare his support for the global development, security and civilization initiatives put forward by President Xi Jinping, adding that the two countries have been walking side by side in building a community with a shared future for humanity.

The Chinese ambassador explained that China, since 2015, has consistently maintained its position as Kuwait's largest trading partner. In 2023, the total bilateral trade between them reached USD 22.39 billion. Kuwait is also the ninth largest source of crude oil imports to China.

China imported 24.53 million tons of crude oil from Kuwait, and Chinese oil companies signed a long-term agreement to purchase crude oil from the Kuwait Petroleum Company.

Regarding the number of Kuwaiti tourists to China, Amb. Jianwei indicated that the Chinese Embassy in Kuwait issued about 9,000 visas last year. He explained that there are facilities granted by China to grant entry visas to its territories. The period required to obtain a visa does not exceed three days. There are four direct flights weekly from Kuwait to the Chinese city of Guangzhou.

Kuwait backs

Continued from Page 1

a shipment of some 3,500 bombs, including massive 2,000-pound explosives that the Biden administration said were leading to civilian deaths.

President Joe Biden warned during a CNN interview that "if they go into Rafah, I'm not supplying the weapons that have been used historically to deal with Rafah.

U.S. officials in pressuring Israel had suggested that a major operation was a red line that would undermine stalled negotiations on a deal to return Israeli hostages taken by Hamas and would lead Biden to further dial back what weaponry he would send Israel.

But the tone at the White House seemed to take a notable shift this week after Sullivan returned from a visit to Israel, where he said he had been briefed on "refinements" in the Israeli plan to root out Hamas in Rafah, and to Saudi Arabia.

During Sullivan's talks with Netanyahu and other officials during the trip, the Israeli side addressed many of Biden's concerns about its plans for Rafah, according to a senior administration official who requested anonymity to discuss the sensitive

The official said the administration stopped short of greenlighting the Israeli plan but Israeli officials' altered planning suggested they were taking Biden's concerns seriously.

That assessment may be of little consolation to Palestinians still trapped in Rafah - the southernmost part of the Gaza Strip on the border with Egypt, and the site of a critical crossing for aid. More than 1 million people sought refuge there in recent months after escaping fighting elsewhere but some 900,000 have since fled the city.

Israel has brought hundreds of trucks in through the other main border crossing, Kerem Shalom, but the U.N. and aid groups say Israeli military operations make it dangerous for them to pick up food, water and other supplies for starving

The U.S. Agency for International Development says Gaza requires a steady flow of 600 trucks a day of food and other aid to reverse the onset of what the heads of USAID and the U.N. World Food Program call famine in the north and to keep it from spreading Even with a U.S. pier starting to

bring in a small amount of aid by sea, Gaza has received only a fraction of the amount of supplies needed since the start of the Israeli offensive. The European Union Saturday

called on Israel to "fully implement" the order of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to immediately stop its military assault on Rafah.

"ICJ orders are binding on the Parties and they have to be fully and effectively implemented," said EU High Representative Josep Borrell in his post on X (formerly Twitter) today.

He said that the Israeli occupation regime must "ensure access to any UN mandated investigative body to investigate allegations of genocide," and submit a report to the Court on all measures taken to give effect to this order.

Borrell said he has taken note of the order of the Hague-based UN court on Friday in the case brought by South Africa, to the occupation force to Immediately halt its military offensive in the Rafah Governorate and maintain the Rafah crossing open for humani-

Ahmadi Municipal Council to hold ninth meet for 2nd term

Committee to address key utility and health projects

By Enas Awad

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: The Ahmadi Governorate Committee at the Municipal Council will hold its ninth meeting for the second term on Sunday, presided over by Nassar Al-Muhaini.

The committee will discuss the following:

■ Request of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy to reallocate the site of the main electricity transfer station in Fahaheel area, Block 4;

■ Request of the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) for the allocation of nine basins, five water canals and four connecting links to collect and drain rainwater between Wafra and Qardan, Hafira and Fawwar to protect Khairan;

■ Request of the Ministry of Health for the allocation of Khairan Health Center in Khairan,

■ Request to amend the council's decision regarding Abdullah Port landfill;

■ Proposal of council member Fahad Al-Abduljader to allocate temporary parking spaces in Adami Rest House; ■ Inquiry of a citizen through

the Tawasul platform regarding the expansion of South Sabah Al-Ahmad. The Mubarak Al-Kabeer Gov-

ernorate Committee will hold its sixth meeting on the same day under the chairmanship of Nassar Al-Muhaini to discuss the following: ■ Amiri Diwan's request for

expansion of the location of the Arabian Horse Center (Bait Al Arab) on the eastern and southern sides, northern part of the central ■ Proposal of council member

Fahad Musaed Al-Abd Al-Jader to update the data on Street 8 in Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Block 1, Plot No. 167, and then amending it with the municipal system; ■ Letter of the Public Author-

ity for Sports regarding the design, construction, completion and maintenance of the headquarters of Kuwait Swimming Federation in Sabah Al-Salem, which is related



KLA inaugurates new headquarters practice of law, ensuring its effica-

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: The Kuwaiti Lawyers Association inaugurated its new building in the presence of Dr. Muhammad Al-Wasmi, Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The auspicious event, held under the esteemed patronage of HH Sheikh Ahmed Al-Abdullah, Prime Minister, witnessed the attendance of notable figures including Sh-eryan Al-Sharyan, President of the Association, Hassan Al-Budaiwi, President of the Gulf Lawyers Union, and Abdul Halim Allam, President of the Arab Lawyers Union. Established in 1963, the Kuwaiti

Lawyers Association is dedicated to organizing and enhancing the

to renewing the decision regarding the headquarters of the federation. The Capital Governorate Com-

Fahad Al-Abd Al-Jader on Monday to discuss the following: ■ Request of a real estate com

■ Letter of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Oil regarding the allocation of the land of the oil complex in Shuwaikh to be the headquarters of the Ministry of Oil

■ Proposal of Municipal Coun-

The committee will also tackle the final approval to amend the

Situated in the vibrant Bneid Al-Qar area of Kuwait City, the association's new headquarters serves as

cy, and safeguarding the interests

and rights of its members.

a hub for legal activities. It boasts a vast legal library, complete with an extensive collection of over 120,000 books, references, and legal rulings, meticulously organized and accessible through advanced electronic systems. The inauguration signifies a mile-

stone in the journey of the Kuwaiti Lawyers Association, reaffirming its commitment to excellence and innovation in the legal field, as it continues to uphold the principles of justice and advocacy in Kuwait and beyond.

mittee will hold its 13th meeting under the chairmanship of member

pany to add 750 square meters to Plot No. 27, Block 1, Sharq;

and Kuwait Petroleum Corpora-

cil Chairman Abdullah Al-Mahri on extending the service street parallel to Street No. 85 in Block 8, Shamiya.

boundaries of the property on Plot No. 72 of Plan No. M/39544 described as JW Marriott Hotel (formerly the Le Meridien) in Kuwait City, Block No. 13, in addition to the contradiction of adding space for a modern laboratory building for water analysis of the Ministry of Electricity in Shuwaikh. It will discuss restructuring part

of Block 3 in Sharq -- the remaining part of the property document No. 1863/1973, Plot 1A/1 from the cadastral plan No. M/26742. On Tuesday, the joint committee

between the technical, legal and financial committees of the council will complete the discussion on amending the bylaws regulating construction work and the schedules attached to it regarding the requirements and specifications for investment housing buildings in and outside Kuwait City.

Kuwait Investment Authority Office for settlement and management of debts purchased for the account of the state announces

Summary of the report on the bankruptcy proceedings and the list of temporary debts for the bankruptcy of / Hassoun Saleh Al Sayed Guarantor/ Al Arousa Furniture and Bedding Company (Saleh Ibrahim Saleh Al Duwaikh and Partners LLC) Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 310/2003 General Debts Bankruptcy / 1 dated 1/6/2004

First: Financial and accounting procedures (1) Its share of indebtedness as on 1/8/1990 amounts to: KWD

(2) Its share of indebtedness in accordance with Article 13 amounts to

KWD 323,929/693 (3) The amounts collected: NONE

Second: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems acceptable:

Commercial Bank of Kuwait: indebtedness purchased by the state amounts to KWD 323,929/693, which is its share of the indebtedness in accordance with Article 13 of law No. 41 of 1993.

Third: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems excluded:

• Kuwait Finance House: KWD 2,557/545 according to the letter submitted by the bank dated 24/12/2018 attached to which Murabaha contract dated 13/7/1988. The bank did not submit any executive bond from debt maturity date until application date of, and accordingly its right has been forfeited by prescription in accordance with the provisions of Article 118 of Trade Law

Summary of the report on the bankruptcy proceedings and the list of temporary debts for the bankruptcy of / Khaled Abdullah Hussein Al Jumavan Guarantor/ Al Andalus Decoration- Khaled Abdullah Hussein Al Jumayan and Partner LLC Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 81/2003

General Debts Bankruptcy / 1 dated 10/6/2003 First: Financial and accounting procedures: (1) Its share of indebtedness as on 1/8/1990 amounts to: KWD

230,327/000 (2) Its share of indebtedness in accordance with Article 13 amounts to: KWD 847,533/859

(3) The amounts collected amount to KWD 10,560/298

Second: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems acceptable:

1) Commercial Bank of Kuwait: indebtedness purchased by the state mounts to KWD 847,533/859, which is the bankrupt's share of the indebtedness guaranteed to Al Andalus Decoration in accordance with Article 13 of law No. 41 of 1993.

2) Commercial Bank of Kuwait: indebtedness purchased by the state amounts to KWD 677,859/075, which is the bankrupt's share of the indebtedness guaranteed to Al Jumayan and Partner for General Contracting LLC in accordance with Article 13 of law No. 41 of 1993. 3) The Industrial Bank of Kuwait: the indebtedness purchased by the state amounting to KWD 4,318/475, the bankrupt's share of the debt (13) of Law No. 41 of.1993

4) Arzan for Finance and Investment (formerly: International Financing Company) KWD 2,307/000, the remaining amount of performance order No 1996/4198, according to the certificate issued by the Execution Department of the Ministry Justice on 19/10/2003. 5) Kuwait Finance House: KWD 4,814/700 according to the bank's letter dated 28/9/2003, the bank's letter dated 28/11/2018, and performance

order No. 1050/1994 dated 14/2/1994, including judicial expenses. Third: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems excluded Gulf Bank: KWD 5,245/790 according to the letter provided by the bank on 11/3/2019. The bank did not submit any executive document from the date the debt was due until the date the debt was submitted, and therefore its right was forfeited by prescription in accordance with the provisions of Article 118 of Trade Law.

Summary of the report on the bankruptcy proceedings and the list of temporary debts for the bankrupt/Khalid Khalifa Ati Al Fulaij Guarantor of/ Dana Al Fulaij General Trading and Contracting Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 46/2003 General Debts Bankruptcy / 1 dated 6/5/2003

First: Financial and accounting procedures: 1) The guarantor's share of the debt as of 1/8/1990 amounts to: KWD

2) The guarantor's share of the debt in accordance with Article 13 amounts to: KWD 2,487,717/ 992

3) Amounts collected after the bankruptcy ruling amounting to: KWD Second: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems acceptable:

 Commercial Bank of Kuwait: Debt purchased by the state amounting to: KWD 2,487,717/ 992, the guarantor's share of the debt guaranteed to Dana Al Fulaij General Trading and Contracting according to Article 13 of Law 41 of 1993.

list of temporary debts for the bankruptcy of / Al Andalus Decoration- Khaled Abdullah Hussein Al Jumayan and Partner LLC Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 81/2003 General Debts Bankruptcy / 1 dated 10/6/2003

Summary of the report on the bankruptcy proceedings and the

First: Financial and accounting procedures: 1) The indebtedness as on 1/8/1990 amounts to: KWD 234,061/357 (2) The indebtedness in accordance with Article 13 amounts to: KWD

(3) The amounts collected: NONE Second: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems acceptable: * Commercial Bank of Kuwait: indebtedness purchased by the state

amounts to KWD 894,028/709, the indebtedness in accordance with Article 13 of law No. 41 of 1993

Summary of the report on the bankruptcy proceedings and the list of temporary debts for the bankruptcy of / Al Arousa Furniture and Bedding Company (Saleh Ibrahim Saleh Al Duwaikh and Partners LLC) Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No.

310/2003 General Debts Bankruptcy / 1 dated 1/6/2004

First: Financial and accounting procedures: (1) Indebtedness as on 1/8/1990 amounts to: KWD 163,714/796 (2) Indebtedness in accordance with Article 13 amounts to: KWD 670.984/618

Second: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems acceptable:
• Commercial Bank of Kuwait: indebtedness purchased by the state amounts to KWD 670,984/618, which is the indebtedness in accordance with Article 13 of law No. 41 of 1993. 2 Al-Jisr Construction Materials and Contracting LLC: KWD 5,311/185 according to the letter submitted by the creditor company dated

2/11/2004, accompanied by performance Order No. 1280/1994 dated 6/9/2004, and a certificate that there was no grievance, a certificate

that there was no appeal, and a certificate from the Enforcement Department at the Ministry of Justice dated 2/11/2004. Summary of the report on the bankruptcy proceedings and the list of temporary debts for the bankruptcy of / Abdulaziz Ali Al Rashed, owner of Abdulaziz Ali Al Rashed Trading Establishment (sole proprietorship) Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 169/2005 General Debts Bankruptcy / 1 dated 24/1/2006

First: Financial and accounting procedures: (1) Indebtedness as on 1/8/1990 amounts to: KWD 1,920/205 (2) Indebtedness in accordance with Article 13 amounts to: KWD 4,002/707

(3) The amounts collected: NONE Second: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems acceptable: Industrial Bank of Kuwait: indebtedness purchased for the state amounting to KWD 4,002/707 in accordance with Article 13 of law No.

Summary of the report on the bankruptcy proceedings and the list of temporary debts for the bankruptcy of / Fouad Raja Sehion **Guarantor of Arab Computer Center Company** Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 60/2002 General Debts Bankruptcy / 1 dated 22/4/2003

First: Financial and accounting procedures

(1) Its share of indebtedness as on 1/8/1990 amounts to: KWD

(2) Its share of indebtedness in accordance with Article 13 amounts to:

KWD 1,302,803/849

(3) The amounts collected: NONE Second: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems acceptable: • The National Bank of Kuwait: the indebtedness purchased for the state's account amounting to: 1,302,803/849 KWD, the bankrupt's share of the debt guaranteed to Arab Computer Center in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993.

Summary of the report on the bankruptcy proceedings and the list of temporary debts for the bankrupt Sheikh / Muhammad Sabah Saud Al Sabah) Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 197/2002 General Debts Bankruptcy / 1 dated 25/3/2003

First: Financial and accounting procedures (1) Indebtedness as on 1/8/1990 amounts to: KWD 2,295,791/722

(2) Indebtedness in accordance with Article 13 amounts to: KWD 7,369,091/987 (3) Amounts collected after the bankruptcy ruling amounting to: KWD

Second: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems acceptable: 1) Commercial Bank of Kuwait: debt purchased by the state amounting to: KWD 7,369,091/987 according to Article 13 of Law 41 of 1993. 2) Director of the Judicial Fees Department KWD 1,697/240 according to a fee estimate request and a certificate issued by the General Department of Enforcement of.

Company KWD 17,200/- according to the company's letter dated 29/6/2003, attached to which is ruling No 75/2002 rents plenary/ 4, dated 12/2/2002, supported by a certificate of non-appeal on 29/5/2003, without taking into account the amount of KWD 400 per month from 1/2/2002 until the date of eviction. 4) Ministry of Transportation: KWD 1,074/454 according to the

3) Faleh Al Husseini and Sons General Trading and Contracting

Ministry's letter dated 6/7/2003 accompanied by the statement of Third: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems excluded:

1) Kuwait Finance House: KWD 100/-- according to the bank's letter dated 24/12/2018, but it did not submit documents proving the validity

2) Dar Investment Company: KWD 76,414/274 according to the company's letter dated 3/10/2013, but it did not submit documents confirming the validity of its debt.

World News Roundup

Europe

'Ukraine secures combat control': Ukrainian forces have secured "combat control" of areas where Russian troops entered the northeastern Kharkiv region earlier this month, Ukrainian President **Volodymyr Zelenskyy** said.

"Our soldiers have now managed to take combat control of the border area where the Russian occupiers entered," Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address on Friday evening.

Zelenskyy's comments appeared to be at odds with those made by Russian officials.

Viktor Vodolatskiy, a member of Russia's lower house of parliament, said Russian forces now controlled more than half of the town of Vovchansk, three miles (five kilometers) inside the border, Russian state news agency Tass reported Fri-

Vovchansk has been a flashpoint for fighting since Russia launched an offensive in the Kharkiv region on May 10.

Vodolatskiy was also quoted as saying that, once Vovchansk was secured, Russian forces would target the cities of Sloviansk, Kramatorsk and Pokrovsk in the neighboring Donetsk region.

No independent confirmation of the claims was immediately possible. Russia's Kharkiv push appears to be a coordinated new offensive that includes testing Ukrainian defenses in the Donetsk region further south, while also launching incursions in the northern Sumy and Chernihiv regions. Russian President Vladimir Putin has said the Kremlin's army is attempting to create a "buffer zone" in the Kharkiv region to prevent Ukrainian cross-border at-

Putin questions Zelenskyy legitimacy as prez: Russian President Vladimir Putin visited his Belarusian counterpart and close ally for talks Friday in Minsk, after which he questioned whether Volodymyr Zelenskyy has the legitimacy to negotiate on Ukraine's behalf.

Russia is willing to hold talks about the war in Ukraine, Putin said, but Zelenskyy's five-year term in office was supposed to end

However, Zelenskyy has ruled out holding new presidential elections while his country is at war - something Putin apparently ignored in remarks to reporters.

Ukrainian legislation bans elections during martial law that has been in place since Russia launched its invasion in February 2022. The country would have to amend the law to elections during a

Russian officials have repeatedly called attention to the question of Zelenskyy's term in office during the past week.

"Of course, we are aware that the legitimacy of the current head of state has ended," Putin said at a news conference in Minsk after talks with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko

However, Zelenskyy has rejected the preconditions that Russia has put forth for talks. (AP)

European Union criticizes Russia: European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell on Friday called the removal of Estonian buoys by Russian border guards on a river separating the Baltic country from Russia "unacceptable," and demanded an explanation from Moscow

and the immediate return of the orange floats. Early Thursday, Estonian border guards noticed that their Russian counterparts had removed 25 of the 50 buoys that Estonia had installed on the Narva River to prevent boats from accidentally crossing the border.

Borrell said the incident "is part of a broader pattern of provocative behavior and hybrid actions by Russia.'

Estonia also dubbed it "unacceptable," but said its response "remains calm and clear-eyed.

"We treat this as a provocative border incident," the Foreign Ministry in Tallinn said . For decades, Estonia and Russia have installed buoys on the Narva River for the summer, with the towns of Narva on the Estonian side and Ivangorod on the Russian bank, largely in mutual agreement. (AP)

Russia strong wind injures 12 kids: Strong wind blew off the roof of a school in Russia's southern Krasnodar region on Saturday morning, injuring at least 12 children, local officials said. A warning was issued across the region on Friday for hurricane-

orce winds, Russian state news agency Ria Novosti said. The regional prosecutor's office in Krasnodar said in a statement that "a strong gust of wind" tore off the roof, causing the

children to "suffer shrapnel wounds of varying severity." It added that an investigation under the article of "provision of services that do not meet safety requirements" has been ordered.

'Czech President Pavel injured lightly': Czech President Petr Pavel was injured while driving his motorcycle and is at a military hospital for observation, the presidential office said. It stressed that his injuries are light and that he is not undergo-

ing any treatment at the military hospital in Prague. The office did not immediately provide more details but said they would be released later.

Pavel, a retired army general, has been known for using a motorcycle, a favorite pastime he did not give up after he was elected president last year. The Czech presidency is a largely ceremonial

French court sentences 3 officials to life: A Paris court sentenced three high-ranking Syrian officials in absentia to life in prison Friday for complicity in war crimes in a landmark case against the regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad and the first such case in Europe.

The trial focused on the officials' role in the alleged 2013 arrest

in Damascus of Mazen Dabbagh, a Franco-Syrian father, and his son Patrick, and their subsequent torture and killing. The four-day trial featured harrowing testimonies from survivors and searing accounts from Mazen's brother. Though the verdict was cathartic for plaintiffs, France and Syr-

ia do not have an extradition treaty, making the outcome largely symbolic. International arrest warrants for the three former Syrian intelligence officials - Ali Mamlouk, Jamil Hassan, and Abdel Salam Mahmoud - have been issued since 2018 to no avail.

They are the most senior Syrian officials to go on trial in a European court over crimes allegedly committed during the country's civil war. The court proceedings came as Assad has started to shed his longtime status as a pariah that stemmed from the violence unleashed on his opponents. (AP)

4 hurt, 1 arrested after clashes in London: British police say four people were hurt and one was arrested when supporters of Iran's authorities clashed with anti-government protesters at a

London event marking the death of President Ebrahim Raisi.

The Metropolitan Police force said officers were called Friday evening to "reports of disorder" at a venue in the west London area of Wembley, where an event was being held to mark Raisi's death in a helicopter crash. Protesters had gathered outside the venue and clashes broke out, police said.

The force said one person was arrested on suspicion of violent disorder. Four people were treated by paramedics for injuries that are not thought to be life-threatening or life-changing.

Police ordered those gathered to disperse and said Saturday that detectives would examine social media footage and other evidence to see whether more offenses had been committed. (AP)

Nearly 140 migrants reach Greece: Nearly 140 migrants have reached Greek shores over the past 24 hours, making the dangerous sea voyage across the Mediterranean Sea, authorities said Friday. One man, who had set off from North Africa, drowned off

the southern island of Crete. Greece, along with Spain and Italy, is a key entry point for people from the Middle East or Africa who are seeking a better life in the European Union. To get to Greek shores, most make the

risky crossing in flimsy boats from neighboring Turkey or Libya. Greece's coast guard said 34 men and three boys were rescued on Thursday by a passing merchant vessel some 83 nautical miles

(95 miles) south of Crete after issuing a distress signal. A coast guard statement Friday said one more man who had been on the boat fell into the sea and drowned, according to other survivors and the ship's captain. All survivors were taken to Crete. They told authorities they had set off from eastern Libya on Tues-



Independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. speaks during a voter rally at The Hangar at Stanley Marketplace on May 19, in Aurora, Colo. Kennedy accused Joe Biden and Donald Trump on May 24 of trampling on personal liberties in response to the pandemic that spanned their presidencies. (AP)



Britain's King Charles III (right), speaks with Arti, the Amal Clooney Women's Empowerment Award win-ner, during a reception for the winners of The 20th Prince's Trust Awards at Buckingham Palace, in London on May 22. The Prince's Trust Awards, held on May 21 celebrated young individuals who have overcome significant challenges, improved their prospects, and made positive contributions to their local communities.



Austin

America

Austin resumes duty: US Secretary of Defense Llovd Austin resumed his duties after a short absence due to a medical intervention to treat bladder issues.

In a statement late Friday, Pentagon spokesperson Pat Ryder said Austin underwent a two-and-a-half hour minimally invasive nonsurgical follow-up procedure at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

During that period, Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks assumed the functions and duties of Austin, serving as the Acting Secretary of Defense. (KUNA)

Prosecutors seek to bar Trump: Federal prosecutors on Friday asked the judge overseeing the classified documents case against Donald Trump to bar the former president from public statements that "pose a significant, imminent, and foreseeable danger to law enforcement agents" partici-

pating in the prosecution. The request to US District Judge Aileen Cannon follows a distorted claim by Trump earlier this week that the FBI agents who searched his Mar-a-Lago estate in August 2022 were "authorized to shoot me" and were "locked & loaded ready to take me out & put my family in danger.

The presumptive Republican presidential nominee was referring to the disclosure in a court document that the FBI, during the search, followed a standard use-of-force policy that prohibits the use of deadly force except when the officer conducting the search has a reasonable belief that the "subject of such force poses an imminent danger of death or serious physical injury to the officer or to another person." (AP)

Man convicted of murder: A Washington state man was found guilty of murder Friday for his role in the 2022 death of a police officer who was mistakenly shot by

a sheriff's deputy. A Clark County jury convicted Julio Segura of Yakima on counts of first-degree murder, second-degree murder, robbery, possession of a stolen vehicle and eluding police, all in connection with the death of Vancouver police officer Donald Sahota,

Politics

Ohio gov calls 'session' to get Joe on ballot

Kennedy blasts Biden and Trump

WASHINGTON, May 25, (AP): Independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr accused Joe Biden and Donald Trump Friday of trampling on personal liberties in response to the pandemic that spanned their presidencies.

Kennedy, who has long claimed to be a victim of government and media censorship of his unorthodox views, said Americans have lost faith in their leaders and institutions, and he pledged to restore it.

"Maybe a brain worm ate that part of my memory, but I don't recall any part of the United States Constitution where there's an exemption for pandemics," Kennedy said, referencing a New York Times report that he was diagnosed more than a decade ago with a parasite that lodged in his brain.

"Neither of them upheld the Constiition when it really counted," he said of the current and former president.

Kennedy spoke at the Libertarian Party convention in Washington as he looks to grow his base of support among Americans disaffected with the Republican and Democratic parties. He's formed alliances with minor parties spanning the ideological spectrum to gain access to the ballot in November and the debate stage next month.

Sparked

Kennedy talked publicly about pursuing the Libertarian nomination as a way to secure ballot access, which sparked controversy in the party, where some members opposed supporting a candidate who is not always in step with their limited government views. His mere presence at the convention was controversial, with some delegates attempting to bar his speech. Kennedy was not on the list of nominees from which a Libertarian presidential candidate will be selected on Saturday.

Bearing the name of one of the Democratic Party's most famous political dynasties, Kennedy acknowledged his differences with libertarians but focused is pitch on his view that the Biden and Trump administrations overstepped during the pandemic.

Trump, he said, was wrong to close businesses and shield companies from liability in developing products to respond to the pandemic. And Biden violated Americans' fundamental freedoms with his support for vaccine mandates, Kennedy said. The man-

Oregon Public Broadcasting reported.

ing attempted murder.

He was acquitted of other charges includ-

dates, which aimed to require inoculations for as many as 100 million workers, were partially blocked in courts and Congress, and most of the rest ended in 2023 with the Biden administration touting them as tremendously

Kennedy also took aim at social media companies he says bowed to government pressure to block dissenting views on the origins of COVID-19 and the safety of vaccines. "Democratic and Republican ad-

ministrations have taken turns assaulting our constitutional rights and freedoms," Kennedy said.

He repeated his pledge to pardon WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who is fighting extradition from the United Kingdom on US espionage charges, and to drop charges against Edward Snowden, a former intelligence contractor who revealed classified U.S. surveillance programs to capture communications and data from around the world.

Trump is scheduled to address the Libertarian convention Saturday, courting a segment of mostly conservative voters that has often been skeptical of him while trying to ensure attendees aren't drawn to Kennedy.

Vaccines have been proven to be safe and effective in laboratory testing and in real-world use in hundreds of millions of people over decades. The World Health Organization credits childhood vaccines with preventing as many as 5 million deaths a year.

Also:

GREENSBORO, NC: To a room full of Republicans from across North Carolina on Friday, former president Donald Trump railed against the Biden administration and vowed to win in the state for a third time - all over a speaker phone call after his son Eric

Trump dialed him on stage.

"I just want to thank all of the people of North Carolina. The support has been great and never wavered," Donald Trump said, met by cheers from hundreds in the crowd.

The four-minute phone call kicked off keynote speeches from RNC cochair Lara Trump and her husband, Eric Trump, at the North Carolina GOP Convention in Greensboro. The couple touted key changes to the national Republican Party under Lara Trump's leadership and insisted on the

city of Battle Ground on Jan. 29, 2022, the

day he was fatally shot. Earlier that day, Se-

gura robbed a gas station near Vancouver,

necessity of getting Trump back in of-

"What we have going on in this country right now is not Republican versus Democrat or left versus right,' Lara Trump, a Wilmington, North Carolina, native, said during the couple's almost 40-minute address. "It's good versus evil."

Lara and Eric Trump's speech comes a year after Trump addressed North Carolina Republicans as a keynote speaker at the party's 2023 convention - one of his first public appearances a few days after his first criminal indictment claiming he mishandled classified federal documents was handed down from a grand jury.

But a lot has changed at the state and national party since Trump's June visit to the convention - including his daughter-in-law's meteoric rise within the Republican National Committee.

COLUMBUS, Ohio: The rare special session that Republican Gov. Mike **DeWine** has called to pass legislation ensuring President Joe Biden appears on Ohio's fall ballot could take several

Due to differing interpretations of the proclamation DeWine issued Thursday, the Ohio Senate scheduled a single day of activity for Tuesday but a spokesman said the Ohio House plans to begin with two days of committee hearings before taking its vote Thursday.

A Senate spokesman said it's possible the upper chamber can convene Tuesday and then recess to wait for the House.

Negotiations between the chambers on a solution to Biden's ballot conundrum began Friday. State Rep. Bill Seitz told reporters during a conference call that he and state Sen. Rob McColley, both Republicans, are leading the talks.

The legislation needs only to move Ohio's Aug 7 ballot deadline so that it falls after the Democratic National Convention where Biden will be formally nominated, which is scheduled for Aug. 19-22 in **Chicago**. Ohio has moved the deadline in the past for candidates of both parties.

But the Senate sent its version of the ballot fix to the House after attaching a prohibition on foreign nationals donating to Ohio ballot campaigns, stopping it in its tracks.

toward Battle Ground. The car crashed and Segura took off run-

ning, according to prosecutors. Deputies operating a drone saw him walking along a street and then turning toward the Sahota home at the end of a private road. (AP)

Ex-CIA officer pleads guilty: A former CIA officer and contract linguist for the FBI accused of spying for China for at least a decade pleaded guilty Friday in a federal

courtroom in Honolulu. Alexander Yuk Ching Ma, 72, has been in custody since his arrest in August 2020. The U.S. Justice Department said in a court filing it amassed "a war chest of damning evidence" against him, including an hourlong video of Ma and an older relative - also a former CIA officer - providing classified information to intelligence officers with

China's Ministry of State Security in 2001. The video shows Ma counting the \$50,000 received from the Chinese agents for his service, prosecutors said.

During a sting operation, he accepted thousands of dollars in cash in exchange for past espionage activities, and he told an undercover FBI agent posing as a Chinese intelligence officer that he wanted to see the "motherland" succeed, prosecutors said. (AP)



A visitor learns about Chinese calligraphy at an exhibition themed 'Code of Civilization in Chinese Characters' in Rome, Italy on May 24. (Xinhua)

Lat/Am

3 killed in Haiti

Uribe charged with witness tampering

BOGOTA, Colombia, May 25, (AP): Former Colombian president Álvaro Uribe was charged Friday in a long-running witness tampering investigation.

Uribe was formally charged with witness tampering and bribery for his efforts to discredit a political opponent who was digging into Uribe's family ties to rightwing paramilitary groups. If convicted, Uribe faces up

The case dates back to 2012, when Uribe filed a complaint with the Supreme Court accusing a leftist lawmaker, Iván Cepeda, of slander. In 2018, the high court - the only authority allowed to investigate lawmakers - closed the investigation against Cepeda, and in a bombshell reversal, announced it was opening a new probe into Uribe, who was then a senator

for fraud and manipulating testimony



Uribe, who governed Colombia with strong US support from 2002 to 2010, has denied any wrongdoing and has accused Colombia's chief prosecutor's office of "political vengeance."

There are wiretapped phone conversations in which the former president can be heard discussing with one of his law-

yers efforts to flip two former paramilitary fighters who were set to testify against him.

Uribe said his conversations were intercepted illegally.

The long-running legal battle is taking place against a polarized political backdrop in the South American nation that has been made more intense by the 2022 election of another Uribe critic, President Gustavo Petro, a former leftist rebel himself.

No political leader in Colombia's recent history has wielded as much influence as Uribe, who still has legions of followers. He led the "no" campaign that successfully voted against a peace accord with leftist rebels in 2016, though the government later adopted a slightly revised version.

Ties

Allegations of ties to drug cartels and paramilitaries have dogged him since the early 1980s, when the civil aviation agency he then led was accused of giving air licenses to drug traffickers. Declassified State Department cables from a decade later show US officials were told the up-and-coming politician had ties

The media attention and strong emotions surrounding the case have complicated the work of Colombia's justice system, which throughout its history has struggled to hold prominent political and military leaders accountable

Before Petro took office, Colombian prosecutors tried twice to close the witness-tempering case after saying they had failed to find evidence of Uribe's criminal responsibility. However, those requests were rejected by judges, and in April, after Petro appointed a new attorney general, prosecutors changed course and said they would take the case to trial.

Friday's hearing was held through video conference and Uribe had a limited role, leaving most of the talking to his lawyer.

The chief prosecutor, Gilberto Ivan Villareal, said the former president "abused his distinguished position in society" to flip witnesses and get them to speak out against Cepeda.

Uribe was briefly held under pre-trial house arrest in 2020 during the coronavirus pandemic under orders from the Supreme Court. But he was freed shortly after resigning his senate seat. The move prompted the justice system to transfer the case from the high court to prosecutors.

Also:

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: A US missionary couple and a Haitian man who worked with them were shot and killed by gang members in Haiti's capital after they were attacked while leaving a youth group activity held at a local church, a family member said Friday.

The attack happened Thursday evening in the community of Lizon in northern Port-au-Prince, Lionel Lazarre, head of a Haitian police union, told The Associated Press.

The slavings occurred as the capital crumbles under the relentless assault of violent gangs that control 80% of Port-au-Prince while authorities await the arrival of a police force from Kenya as part of a U.N.-backed deployment aimed at quelling gang violence in the troubled Caribbean country.

Two of the victims were a young married couple, Davy and Natalie Lloyd, according to a Facebook posting from Natalie Lloyd's father, Missouri state Rep. Ben Baker. The third victim was Jude Montis, who was the country's director of Missions In Haiti

Inc.
"My heart is broken in a thousand pieces," Baker wrote on Facebook on Thursday. "I've never felt this kind of pain. Most of you know my daughter and son-in-law Davy and Natalie Lloyd are full time missionaries in Haiti. They were attacked by gangs this evening and were both killed. They went to Heaven

Hannah Cornett, Davy Lloyd's sister, told the AP that her brother was 23 years old and Natalie Lloyd was 21. They were going to celebrate their two-year anniversary in June and his birthday in early July.

MEXICO CITY: Warnings were issued well before a campaign event about high winds that caused a deadly Mexico stage collapse this week, raising questions about why those alerts went unheeded.

Organizers didn't cancel an outdoor campaign rally in a suburb of the northern city of Monterrey, leaving the crowd only seconds to react when the stage structure, lighting and a giant screen were blown down, killing nine people and injuring 192.

It was tragically par for the course for a country where Category 5 Hurricane Otis killed 52 people in the resort of Acapulco; to urists say they got little so warning or protection, they had to huddle behind bathroom doors as the hurricane blew out the windows and even the walls of their hotel rooms.

On Thursday, just hours after Wednesday's collapse, officials in Monterrey said the winds occurred with no warning and that nobody could have predicted them. "This thing yesterday took us by surprise. There wasn't even a storm forecast for the city," said Nuevo Leon state Gov. Samuel Garcia.

That was simply not true. Mexico's National Weather Service had issued a bulletin at 1:13 p.m. - more than six hours before the collapse - warning of gusts of wind up to 43 mph (70 kph) in the area that "could blow down trees and billboards." Another bulletin at 6:28 p.m. warned of possible tornados in the area.



People queue up to cast their vote in the sixth round of polling in India's national election in New Delhi, India on May 25. (AP)

Millions vote in India's election with Modi's party likely to win 3rd term

Millions of Indians are voting Saturday in the nextto-last round of a grueling national election with a combined opposition trying to rattle Prime Minister Narendra Modi's campaign for a third-consecutive term for himself and his Hindu nationalist party.

Many people lined polling stations before the start of voting at 7 am to avoid the blazing sun later in

A citizen reads at an urban reading

room in Donggang District of Rizhao, east China's Shandong Province,

on May 23. Nineteen urban reading rooms have been established in Donggang District since 2020, which

are open to the public free of charge.

salons, experiencing of intangible

cultural heritages, and displaying of

cultural and creative products are regularly held in the reading rooms.

(Xinhua)

Special activities including

Africa

Tanzania explosion kills 13: The

death toll in the sugar factory explosion

in eastern Tanzania has risen from 11 on

Thursday to 13 on Friday, a local doctor

George Dilunga, head of the Benjamin

Mkapa Hospital Emergency Department,

said that the death toll increased after two

injured Tanzanian nationals died while

receiving specialized treatment at the hos-

save their lives, but it is very unfortunate that they could not make it," Dilunga told

The explosion at the Mtibwa sugar fac-

tory in Morogoro Region occurred early

Thursday, killing three foreigners from

Brazil, Kenya and India, as well as eight

Morogoro Regional Fire and Rescue

Commander Shaban Marujugo said that

the blast hit the control room, where

technicians were testing one of the newly fixed heating systems for sugar produc-

Chad swears in president: Chad

swore in Mahamat Deby Itno as the

president on Thursday after holding elec-

tions earlier this month, completing a dis-

puted transition to democratic rule after

Idriss Deby, took power after his father Idriss Deby Itno was killed fighting rebels

in 2021 after ruling the country for three

decades. The long-delayed May 6 election came after three years of military rule.

His main rival, Succès Masra, who

contested the results earlier this month,

resigned from his post as prime minister

on Wednesday. Masra had been involved

in protests against Deby Itno's decision

to extend his time in power, and fled the

country in 2022. He was allowed to return

last year and was appointed prime minis-

Masra, who claimed to have won the

Deby Itno, also known as Mahamat

"Doctors worked round the clock to

pital in the capital, Dodoma.

Tanzanian technicians.

he seized power three years ago.

tion. (Xinhua)

the day at the peak of Indian summer. The temperature soared to 43 Celsius (109.4 Fahrenheit) in the afternoon in the Indian capital. Lakshmi Bansal, a housewife, said while the weather was hot, people usually went out to shop and even attended festivals

"This (election) is also like a festival, so I don't

have a problem voting in the heat," Bansal said. Saturday's voting in 58 constituencies, including seven in New Delhi, will complete polling for 89.5% of 543 seats in the lower house of Parliament.

The voting for the remaining 57 seats on June 1 will wrap up a six-week election. The votes will be counted on June 4. (AP)



China sends dozens of warplanes, ships near Taiwan

Philippines to forge security alliances

MANILA, Philippines, May 25, (AP): The Philippines will continue to build security alliances and stage joint combat drills in disputed waters to defend its territorial interests, Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro said Friday, dismissing China's criticisms of such moves as paranoia.

Teodoro bluntly criticized Beijing's increasingly aggressive actions in the South China Sea, without citing China by name, in a speech before the military's top brass at a ceremony marking the anniversary of the Philippine navy's founding in Manila. The Philippines, he said, would not tolerate aggression and provocative moves.

Since territorial hostilities with Chi-Sea, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr's administration has taken steps to forge new security alliances with a number of Asian and Western countries and allowed a US military presence in more Philippine bases under a 2014 defense pact.

In April and May, the Philippine military staged annual live-fire combat exercises with U.S. forces in and near the disputed waters.

China has said such actions by the US and its allies, including the Philippines, were provocative, aimed to contain Beijing and were endangering regional security.

China send planes near Taiwan: Taiwan tracked dozens of Chinese warplanes and navy vessels off its coast on Friday, the second day of a large military exercise launched by Beijing to show its anger over the selfgoverning island's inauguration of new leaders who refuse to accept its insistence that Taiwan is part of China.

China has issued elaborate media statements showing Taiwan being surrounded by forces from its military, the People's Liberation Army. A new video on Friday showed animated Chinese forces approaching from all sides and Taiwan being enclosed within a circular target area while simulated missiles hit key population and military targets.

Despite that, there was little sign of

More than 100 feared dead in Papua New Guinea landslide by local authorities was correct, the

MELBOURNE, Australia, May 25, (AP): An emergency convoy was delivering food, water and other provisions Saturday to stunned survivors of a landslide that devas-tated a remote village in the moun-tains of Papua New Guinea and was feared to have buried scores of people, officials said.

An assessment team reported "suggestions" that 100 people were dead and 60 houses buried by the mountainside that collapsed in Enga province a few hours before dawn Friday, said Serhan Akto-prak, the chief of the International Organization for Migration's mission in the South Pacific island na-

Aktoprak conceded that if the number of buried houses estimated death toll could be higher.

Vietnam fire kills 14: An overnight fire in an apartment building on a narrow alley in Vietnam's capital killed 14 people and injured six others, state media said Friday.

The apartment building in central Hanoi could only be accessed through an alley just 2 meters (6.5 feet) wide, preventing firetrucks from reaching it, and firefighters eventually contained the fire by using hoses, state media said.

The fire started around 12:30 am and was accompanied by several explosions, the Vietnam News Agency said. It took an hour to extinguish.

concern among Taiwan's 23 million people, who have lived under threat of Chinese invasion since the two sides

split during a civil war in 1949.

Austin to visit Cambodia: US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin is scheduled to make an official visit to Cambodia, one of China's closest allies in Southeast Asia, after holding talks with his Chinese counterpart at an annual security conference in Singapore, officials said.

A US Defense Department statement issued in Washington on Friday said Austin would travel next week to Singapore, Cambodia and France.

He will visit Cambodia June 4 after attending the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. Among the talks he is planning there is one with his Chinese counterpart Adm. Dong Jun, the Defense Department said. The encounter would be part of an effort to patch up ties that have deteriorated over Beijing's aggressive policies toward Tai-

oil-exporting country of nearly 18 million

people hasn't had a democratic transfer

wan and its vast territorial claims in the South China Sea.

'NKorea preps to launch sat': North Korea appears to be preparing to launch its second military spy satellite into space, South Korea's military said Friday, as animosities remain high over the

Last November, North Korea placed its first military reconnaissance satellite into orbit as part of its efforts to build a space-based surveillance network to deal with what it calls U.S.-led military threats.

North's continued weapons tests.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un later told a key governing party meeting that his country would launch three additional military spy satellites in 2024.

On Friday, South Korea's military

told local reporters at a background briefing that it detected signs that North Korea is engaging in activities believed to be preparations to launch a spy satellite at its main Tongchangri launch facility in the northwest.

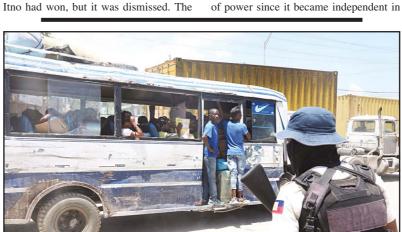
1960, after decades of French colonial rule. (AP)

Zuma criticizes top court: Former South African president Jacob Zuma on Thursday criticized the country's highest court and his former allies in the ruling African National Congress over his disqualification from next week's election and said he would fight for his rights "in a disciplined way.'

Zuma's comments came in a video message he said was aimed at the people of South Africa and released on social media six days before the possibly pivotal national vote.

The 82-year-old former leader made clear he would still campaign against the ANC he once led in the run-up to Wednesday's election with his new political party, even though he has been barred from standing as a candidate for a return to Parliament six years after he resigned the presidency under a cloud of corruption allegations.

Zuma was disqualified on Monday by the apex Constitutional Court over a section of the constitution that says anyone who has been given a prison sentence of 12 months or more without the option of a fine cannot stand for Parliament until five years after the sentence was completed.



on May 24. A US missionary couple and a Haitian man who worked with them were shot and killed by gang members in Haiti's capital after they were attacked while leaving a youth group activity held at a local church, a family member said

election, filed an appeal to challenge the preliminary results which showed Deby Itno had won, but it was dismissed. The

A bus passes by a police officer on patrol near the airport in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on Friday. (AP)

Change Closing pts

DUBAI PHILIPPINES - PSEI **BRITAIN**

Change Closing pts -10.99 4.012.65 -40.10 6,619.89 -21.64 8,317.59 EURO Stoxx 50

5.035.41

Business

NBK-Egypt reports EGP 1.28b in net profits for first quarter

TASE 100

Total assets reach EGP 155.56 billion

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: National Bank of Kuwait -Egypt (NBK-Egypt) has announced net profits of EGP 1.28 billion (KD 11.71 million) for the first quarter of 2024, a significant increase from the EGP 652 million (KD 6.88 million) reported in the first quarter of 2023, showcasing an impressive growth rate of 96.32%.

Net Operating Income stood at EGP2.75 billion, recording a substantial increase of 48.6% from EGP1.85 billion recorded in the corresponding period of 2023. In the meantime, Net Interest Income grew by 53.9%, reaching EGP 2.37 billion compared to EGP 1.54 billion in 1Q2023

On the other hand, Net Operating Income (excluding interests) increased to EGP 382.67 million in 1O2024, compared to EGP 321.64million in 1Q2023. up by 18.97%, while Cost to Net Operating Income dropped from 37.51% in 1Q2023 to 26.15% in 1Q2024.

Total assets reached EGP 155.56 billion in 1Q2024, up by 19.10% compared to the year-end balance of EGP 130.61 billion in 2023. Furthermore, the net balance of loans and credit facilities expanded to EGP 86.14 billion in 1Q2024, reflecting a growth rate of 13.25% compared to EGP 70.06 billion recorded at the end of 2023, including a 45.5% increase recorded by the loans and credit facilities in foreign currencieson the back of the appreciation of foreign currencies against the Egyptian pound.

Meanwhile, customer deposits grew by 19.64% to reach EGP 126.73 billion in 1Q2024, compared to EGP 105.93 billion by the end of 2023. This includes a 52.1% rise in the balance of customer deposits in foreign currencies, influenced by the appreciation of the exchange rate and higher return rates on deposits. The Return on Average Assets (ROAA) rose from 2.5% in 1Q2023 to 3.6% in 1Q2024, while the Return on Average Equity (ROAE) increased from 23.7% in

1Q2023 to 33.6% in1Q2024. Commenting on the financial results announced by NBK-Egypt, Ms. Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer, National Bank of Kuwait, and Chairman of



Ms. Shaikha Al-Bahar



Mr. Yasser El-Tayeb

Al-Bahar: NBK-Egypt's exceptional results are rooted in its robust operational performance

across key business sectors. We are committed to expanding our market share, enhancing banking transactions, and elevating their quality to meet the surging demand.

With the Egyptian economy ranking among the largest in the region, abundant potential and growth prospects abound. The modernization of digital infrastructure and information technology has positioned NBK-Egypt as a strong contender in the Egyptian banking market, reinforcing its competitive edge.

ter of 2024, National Bank of Kuwait - Egypt continued to achieve strong operating performance across its main business sectors, despite the challenging macroeconomic landscape."

Al-Bahar stated that Egypt remains one of the most prominent strategic markets for the growth of the Group's business, consistently regarded as its second local market. The bank, as the largest Kuwaiti investment on Egyptian soil, has established a significant presence as one of the fastest-growing banks within the Egyptian banking sector. This growth is reflected in the financial indicators and record business results achieved by NBK-Egypt, particularly in recent years.

Al-Bahar emphasized that the continued expansion of the balance sheet and the growth of all financial indicators affirm the success of the bank's business diversification strategy and

El-Tayeb: We maintain our robust performance, consistently sur-passing growth projections across all financial metrics.

Our commitment extends to strengthening our presence in both corporate and retail bank-

ing segments.
Prioritizing sustainable finance, we align with the global shift towards a greener economy, expanding our efforts in this realm.

We are actively advancing our electronic services and product offerings to reinforce the bank's competitive edge in the digital landscape.

its accelerated digital transformation efforts. This strategy aims to increase the bank's market share, particularly in retail banking services, in the region's largest market by population.

"We are committed to enhancing the quality of our services, expanding our geographical footprint, and reaching a more diverse customer base. This is made possible by the significant advancements in our digital infrastructure, information technology, and electronic channels. These developments have positioned NBK-Egypt as a strong competitor in the Egyptian banking market, especially amidst the rising demand for banking services and the growing rates of financial inclusion,"Al-Bahar added.

Meanwhile, Vice Chairman, CEO, and Managing Director of National Bank of Kuwait-Egypt, Mr. Yasser El-Tayeb, said: "The strength of the bank's business results, which have exceeded

all expectations and targets for this period of the year, reflects the resilience and adaptability of our business model. This growth continues despite the exceptional market challenges we face locally, regionally, and globally.

El-Tayeb emphasized that NBK-Egypt is experiencing balanced growth across all activities and business sectors while maintaining efficiency rates and risk ratios that align with this expansion. This approach ensures business sustainability and customer satisfaction alike, thanks to the bank's prudent policies and its robust business model capable of meeting customer needs and diversifying income sources. This balanced growth is evident in the bank's diverse credit operations within the corporate sector, which includes large, medium, and small enterprises. Additionally, the retail banking sector has seen significant growth, with NBK-Egypt continually strengthening its position through advanced services and products tailored to various customer segments and lifestyles. This comprehensive approach establishes NBK-Egypt as a "one-stop-shop" that meets all financial needs. Furthermore, the bank is committed to its horizontal expansion plan, opening new branches to cover key cities and governorates across Egypt.

"We strive to support the global trend towards sustainable finance and the transition to a green economy,' he added. "Our focus is on backing environmentally friendly projects that achieve sustainability and increasingly rely on renewable energy. We are also committed to exploring available solutions to mitigate the negative effects of climate change and reduce carbon emissions. Sustainable finance has become one of the most crucial tools for supporting and maintaining long-term financial stability," Al-Tayeb added.

"Recognizing the significance of technology and electronic channels in the banking sector and their sub-stantial role in bolstering competitive advantage among banks, we have consistently reinforced our electronic services," El-Tayeb emphasized. "We actively encourage customers to broaden their usage of these services for payments, aligning with the overarching policy of the state and the Central Bank of Egypt. This initiative aims to foster financial inclusion and integrate new customer segments into the official banking system, contributing to the shift towards a less cash-

Other Voices

Electric car sales raise electricity consumption concerns in Kuwait

By Kamel Al-Harami Independent Oil Analyst

THE time has come to raise the red flag and openly say that our government should not encourage the sales of electrical cars. Using our own generated electricity to

power these cars will result in less availability of electricity for domestic consumption.

Our electricity supply is limited, and it reaches its

Al-Harami

peak during the four-five summer months of peak consumption, often necessiting borrowing from our neighboring countries that face the same kind of heat waves. It is illogical to burden our already limited domestic resources with additional unnecessary consumption.

In Kuwait, the market value for electric cars is expected to reach about \$1.2 billion in 2033 from about \$52 million last year, with an annual growth of 40 percent.

This, of course, does not account for the impact on domestic electricity consumption and the associated costs. Has the government taken into consideration the overall impact of the electric vehicle segment? Should new tariffs or different pricing mechanisms be imposed for electric car usage? Electric vehicles should be classified as non-essential and must be priced differently, covering the total production cost per kilowatt, and it cannot be considered as a basic need for water and electricity.

There is certainly a strong demand for electric cars, from 10 million vehicles in 2022 to 14 million. Their global market share has increased significantly from 4 percent in 2020 to 15-18 percent last

There seems no end in sight to the growth of the electric vehicle market, with China leading the way, followed by Europe, and the USA in third place.

However, concerns arise regarding the production of batteries for these new vehicles, as China dominates this industry, raising questions about potential monopolization.

A more pressing issue is the global availability and accessibility of lithium. While the Earth has approximately 90 million tons of lithium, only about 25 percent is economically viable for battery production.

Until then, oil-producing countries should seriously consider the implications of electric car usage compared to cars that run on petrol. Even though there is no doubt that fossil fuels do harm the environment, efforts should be made to develop technologies that extract CO2 from oil for making it a green fuel. This approach could effectively counter the arguments

in favor of electric cars. It will require time, money, capital, and human resources, but we must prioritize saving our electricity for domestic use during the summer heat when temperatures reach 55°C and above. We need spare capacity to cool ourselves and our homes, rather than wasting it on electric cars. **Email:** naftikuwaiti@yahoo.com



Training session photo

Markaz & UIC host inaugural training session on insider trading regulation

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: Kuwait Financial Centre 'Markaz' in collabo-ration with the Union of Investment Companies (UIC), hosted an inaugural co-lecturing session on "Regulating Dealing in Securities by Insiders" as per the regulations of the Kuwait Capital Markets Authority (CMA). The course, held on April 25, 2024, was designed to deepen the understanding of insider trading laws and foster compliance among Kuwait's financial

professionals. The training session was led by Mr. Amr Hafez, Senior Legal Advisor, and Mr. Mohammed A. Safsouf, Vice President of Fund Administration & Corporate Affairs at Markaz. They provided participants with comprehensive insights into the practical and legal aspects of insider trading, emphasizing the importance of maintaining transparency and integrity within the financial sector.

Commenting on the occasion, Mr. Hafez noted: "The Kuwaiti legislature has made commendable strides in identifying and regulating insider trading practices for those who possess inside information. This course is a testament to Markaz's commitment to localizing correct knowledge among licensed individuals and bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ensuring that a team of seasoned professionals are well-equipped to uphold the laws and regulations set forth by the CMA in

Adding to the discussion, Mr. Safsouf said:"In the current regulatory environment, it is imperative not only to understand but also to comply with insider trading regulations, which serve as a cornerstone of market integrity. If you think compliance is expensive, try non-compliance! At Markaz, we underscore the significance of 'Know Your Employees' (KYE) as a critical strategy to effectively mitigate regulatory risks."

The course covered crucial topics such as the responsibilities of listed companies and insiders, trading restriction periods, and procedures for maintaining a corporate insiders watch list and disclosure practices. These discussions align with the findings of the World Economic Forum's Global Risks Perception Survey 2023-2024, which highlighted misinformation and disinformation as significant shortterm risks, underscoring the need for transparency.

This initiative is part of Markaz's ongoing commitment to enhance the professional capabilities of the financial sector through expert-led training and knowledge sharing, reflecting the company's culture of collaboration and leadership in financial education. It also falls in line with its CSR pillars of Building Human Capacity, Aligning the business environment with the principles of sustainable development and promoting good governance in the

Gulf countries expect to increase govt debt issuance in 2024 & 2025

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: A credit rating agency anticipates a continued uptick in government debt issuance by Gulf countries throughout 2024 and 2025, with the cumulative value gradually nearing the one-trillion-dollar mark. However, this increase is projected to be more moderate compared to the rapid growth observed in the first quarter of this year, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Fitch, in its report, attributes the rise in Gulf government debt issuance to anticipated declines in oil prices and interest rates, coupled with governmental efforts to bolster capital markets and pursue revenue diversification initiatives. Notably, four out of six Gulf countries have issued government debts of investment grade, all with sta-

ble future outlooks.

Kuwait faces limitations in financing options due to the absence of a debt law, while Bahrain relies on debt management and regional financing amid budget deficits.

Bashar Al-Natour, head of the Islamic Finance Department at the agency, highlights the progress made by Gulf countries in developing private capital markets. Gulf debt issuance now represent a significant portion of total dollar-denominated debt issuance in emerging markets.

While global financing trends lean towards bank loans, Al-Natour emphasizes the importance of diverse participation by Gulf investors to support regional development efforts.

Mohammad Saleh and Reza Yousuf Behbehani Co. honored by General Motors

Behbehani GMC earns prestigious 'The President's Club' award

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: Mohammad Saleh and Reza Yousuf Behbehani Company, the GMC dealer in Kuwait, continues to prove its excellence in after-sales services, customer satisfaction, and surpassing annual sales targets, earning it the prestigious "The President's Club" award for 2023 from General Motors.

"The President's Club" program is an annual award by General Motors, the global vehicle manufacturer, presented to outstanding performance by its partners, evaluating sales, after-sales services, and customer satisfaction. It is a brandspecific program and the highest honor a partner dealer can achieve by exceeding performance expectations in new vehicle sales, spare parts, accessories, and customer satisfaction in sales and after-sales

It is worth mentioning that Mohammad Saleh and Reza Yousuf Behbehani Company is one of five dealers out of 16 General Motors dealers in the GCC and Levant region to receive this prestigious award.

On this occasion, General Motors hosted a ceremony in Lisbon, the capital of Portugal, inviting top managers of the winning dealerships. Representing Mohammad Saleh and Reza Yousuf Behbehani Company at the award ceremony were Mr. Adel Behbehani, Director of GMC, and Mr. Faisal Behbehani, the Parts Manager. Mr. Adel Behbehani commented, "We are proud of this achievement. Our partnership with General Motors spans over 60 years, and we will continue to provide the best products and services to our customers, exceeding all their satisfaction require-

Regarding the company's beginnings and journey, Mr. Adel Behbehani added, "Our partnership with General Motors goes back to more than 60 years from a smallsized showroom overlooking Safat Square in the heart of Kuwait City. Mohammad Saleh and Reza You-







Adel Behbehani & Faisal Behbehani receiving the award with the General Motors Middle East.

suf Behbehani Company quickly began to achieve success after success... and has continued to be-

come one of the most successful companies in the region's markets. It now employs over 650 staff and owns state-of-the-art showrooms, delivery centers, service centers, and spare parts facilities.'

US intelligence agencies' embrace of generative AI is at once wary and urgent

Long before generative Al's boom, a Silicon Valley firm contracted to collect and analyze non-classified data on illicit Chinese fentanyl trafficking made a compelling case for its embrace by U.S. intelligence agencies.

The operation's results far exceeded human-only analysis, finding twice as many companies and 400% more people engaged in illegal or suspicious com-

merce in the deadly opioid.

Excited U.S. intelligence officials touted the results publicly - the Al made connec-

tions based mostly on internet and dark-web data - and shared them with Beijing

authorities, urging a crackdown. One important aspect of the 2019 operation, called Sable Spear, that has not previously been reported: The firm used generative AI to provide U.S. agencies -three years ahead of the release of OpenAl's groundbreaking ChatGPT product with evidence summaries for potential criminal cases, saving countless work

'You wouldn't be able to do that with-

out artificial intelligence," said Brian Drake, the Defense Intelligence Agen-cy's then-director of AI and the project

The contractor, Rhombus Power, would later use generative AI to predict Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine with 80% certainty four months in advance, for a different Ú.S. government client. Rhombus says it also alerts government customers, who it declines to name, to imminent North Korean missile launches and Chinese space operations.

U.S. intelligence agencies are scrambling to embrace the Al revolution, believing they'll otherwise be smothered by exponential data growth as sensor-generated surveillance tech further blankets the

But officials are acutely aware that the tech is young and brittle, and that generative AI - prediction models trained on vast datasets to generate on-demand text, images, video and human-like conversation - is anything but tailor-made for a dangerous trade steeped in deception.

Analysts require "sophisticated artificial intelligence models that can digest mammoth amounts of open-source and clandestinely acquired information," CIA director William Burns r ecently wrote in Foreign Affairs. But that won't be sim-

The CIA's inaugural chief technology officer, Nand Mulchandani, thinks that because gen Al models "hallucinate" they are best treated as a "crazy, drunk friend" - capable of great insight and creativity

but also bias-prone fibbers. (AP)

Shanghai holds business promotion event

US businesses eye more opportunities in China's biz hub

China's business hub Shanghai held a promotion event here Thursday, which drew great attention and interest from investors in the United States.

The event gathered around 150 attendees, including high-ranking officials, bankers, entrepreneurs from Shanghai, and scores of business leaders of international companies from the United States.

Shanghai has been one of the first choices for world businesses to invest in China and build global industry chains, said Shanghai Mayor Gong Zheng in a keynote speech.

Nearly one third of the top 500 enterprises in the world have regional headquarters in Shanghai as the city has trade ties with 205 countries or regions, said Gong

In 2023, over 6,000 new foreigninvested enterprises were established in the city with the amount of foreign direct investment received throughout the year totaling 24.08 billion U.S. dollars. At the end of 2023, the city has attracted over 950 regional headquarters of multinational companies and 550 foreign-funded research and development centers, according to an official

Shanghai is speeding up the process of building itself into an international center of economy, finance, trade, shipping, and technological innovation, fostering new productivity boosters, and forging ahead with high-level

reform and opening-up, said Gong.
The face-to-face meeting was warmly welcomed and drew positive responses from officials, businessmen, and local people.

In addressing the audience, Craig Allen, president of the U.S.-China Business Council (USCBC), said this face-to-face interaction is very wel-

"Relationships suffered deeply dur-ing the COVID era. Therefore, the intimacy of this face-to-face communication is simply irreplaceable," Allen

The USCBC has been committed to forging a mutually beneficial U.S.-China relationship through its offices in Washington, Beijing, and Shanghai, as Shanghai is the window through which its member companies take the

pulse of China, said Allen. "We welcome Shanghai's commitment to opening up through leveraging pilots within and beyond free trade nes, and to facilitating policy throughs and providing a level playing field for U.S. companies, including our

members," Allen said. American companies are well positioned to increase their exports and to share the world's best technologies and expertise in a wide range of areas from clean energy to consumer goods,

he said. As the two countries celebrate the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, engagement at the sub-national or city-to-city level is essential to strengthening the world's most important bilateral relationship, restoring business confidence, and charting a course that is beneficial to the peoples of both countries, Allen

"We're committed to building bridges between the peoples of our two countries. American investment builds bridges, like no other activity,' said Stephen Orlins, president of the National Committee of U.S.-China

"I'm fond of saying that trade is like dating, but investment is marriage. You've got to work to make it work," Orlins said.

Reviewing Shanghai's developments in the last few centuries, Orlins said Shanghai is a model of ingenuity and adaptability.

"We are optimistic about the Chinese market sectors, including health, education, senior living, and urban regeneration," said Joseph Brancato, who chairs the executive committee of Gensler, a global design and architecture firm, which has over 30 offices and more than 300 employees in

"Our aspirations in Shanghai are to create designs that reflect Chinese culture and values, as well as being an integral part of that community. We look forward to participating in Shanghai's bright future, building on innovation, strengthening our relationships and developing new relationships to bring people together through the power of design," Brancato told the audience

"It was well articulated here and clear that Shanghai is positioned for growth, and this is the way we see the Chinese market," said Tom Mooney, director of public affairs with Harman International, a leader in automotive technology, lifestyle innovations, design and analytics

From a perspective of research and development and engineering, Shanghai is really the heartbeat of Harman in China, Mooney told Xinhua on the

sidelines of the event. From an automotive standpoint, we're always looking to increase our cooperation and business opportunities with them," said Mooney.

(AP): The average rate on a 30-year mortgage dipped this week to just below 7% for the first time since mid April, a modest boost for home shoppers navigating a housing market dampened by rising prices and

LOS ANGELES, May 25,

The rate fell to 6.94% from 7.02% last week, mortgage buyer Freddie Mac said Thursday. A year ago, the rate averaged 6.57%.

properties.

relatively few available

This is the third straight weekly decline in the average rate. The recent pullbacks follow a five-week string of increases that pushed the average rate to its highest level since November 30. Higher mortgage rates can add hundreds of dollars a month in costs for borrowers, limiting homebuyers' purchasing options.

Borrowing costs on 15-year fixed-rate mortgages, popular with homeowners refinancing their home loans, also declined this week, trimming the average rate to 6.24% from 6.28% last week. A year ago, it averaged 5.97%, Freddie Mac said.

Mortgage rates are influenced by several factors, including how the bond market reacts to the Federal Reserve's interest rate policy and the moves in the 10-year Treasury yield, which lenders use as a guide to pricing home loans.

Treasury yields have largely been easing since Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said earlier this month that the central bank remains pushed lower by high rates and high prices

WASHINGTON, May 25, (AP): High mortgage rates and rising prices continued to put a damper on the spring homebuying season last month.

Existing home sales fell 1.9% to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.14 million in April from a revised 4.22 million in March, the National Association of Realtors reported Wednesday. Sales dropped across the country down 4% in the Northeast, 2.6% in the West, 1.6% in the South and 1% in the Midwest.

The median price of previously occupied homes rose 5.7% to \$407,600 the tenth straight increase and a record for April.

Lawrence Yun, the association's

The rate on the benchmark 30-year, fixed-rate loan has risen five of the last six weeks and stands at 7.02%, up from 6.39% a year ago. Would-be homebuyers are also deterred by the high prices, caused partly by a tight inventory of available homes.

US existing home sales drop 1.9% in April,

The supply of homes rose 9% from March to 1.2 million - the fourth straight increase - but remains low: It was running at 1.7 million before the pandemic. Homeowners have hesitated to put their houses on the market partly because they don't want to give up existing mortgages at low interest rates and buy new homes at higher rates.

The housing market could get some relief if the Federal Reserve cuts interest rates later this year.

"Normally at this time of year we'd

rate remains well above where it was

Last month's rise in rates were

an unwelcome development for

prospective homebuyers in the

midst of what's traditionally the

busiest time of the year for home

sales. On average, more than one-

third of all homes sold in a given

just two years ago at 5.25%.

see a surge in home sales, but mortgage rates continue to depress listings and buying," said Robert Frick, economist at the Navy Federal Credit Union. "And unfortunately, prices continue to rise, further pushing the opportunity away from lower-income, and even middle-income Americans. The only real relief to the situation will come from the Fed cutting rates later this year, which will eventually filter through to mortgage rates.'

Sales were brisker at the high end of the market. Homes priced at \$1 million or more shot up 40% from a year ago, partly because inventories of those homes surged 34%.

A third of sales went to first-time buyers, the highest share since January 2021, but still below the 40% they've accounted for historically.

This month's pullback in mortgage rates has spurred a pickup in home loan applications, which rose last week by 1.9% from a week earli-

er, according to the Mortgage Bankers Association. "May has been a better month for the mortgage market, with the good news for prospective buyers,

Long-term mortgage rates ease for 3rd straight week



'For Sale' sign is displayed in front of a home in Skokie, III., Sunday, April 14, 2024. On Thursday, May 23, 2024, Freddie Mac reported on this week's average U.S. mortgage rates. (AP)

Dip just below 7 percent

US applications for jobless claims fall as labor market continues to 'thrive'

WASHIINGTON, May 25, (AP): The number of Americans applying for un-employment benefits fell last week as layoffs remained historically low despite the Federal Reserve's efforts to loosen the labor market.

Jobless claims for the week ending May 18 fell by 8,000 to 215,000, down from 223,000 the week before, the Labor Department reported Thursday.

The four-week average of claims, which softens some of the week-toweek volatility, rose a modest 1,750 to

Weekly unemployment claims are considered a proxy for the number of U.S. layoffs in a given week and a sign of where the job market is headed. They have remained at historically low levels since millions of jobs were lost when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the U.S. in the spring of 2020.

The Federal Reserve raised its benchmark borrowing rate 11 times beginning in March of 2022 in a bid to stifle the four-decade high inflation that took hold after the economy rebounded from the COVID-19 recession of 2020. The Fed's intention was to loosen the labor market and cool wage growth, which can fuel inflation.

Many economists thought there was a chance the rapid rate hikes could cause a recession, but jobs remain plentiful and the economy still broadly healthy thanks to strong consumer

In April, U.S. employers added just 175,000 jobs, the fewest in six months and a sign that the labor market may be finally cooling off. The unemployment rate inched back up to 3.9% from 3.8% and has now remained below 4% for 27 straight months, the longest such streak since the 1960s.

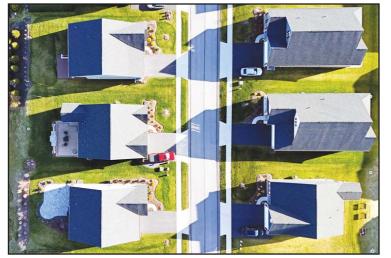
The government also recently reported 8.5 million job openings in March, the lowest number of vacancies in three years.

Moderation in the pace of hiring, along with a slowdown in wage growth, could give the Fed the data its been seeking in order to finally issue a cut to interest rates. A cooler reading on consumer inflation in April could also play into the Fed's next rate deci-

Though layoffs remain at low levels, companies have been announcing more job cuts recently, mostly across technology and media. Google parent company Alphabet, Apple and eBay have all recently announced layoffs.

Outside of tech and media, Walmart, Peloton, Stellantis, Nike and Tesla have recently announced job cuts.

In total, 1.79 million Americans were collecting jobless benefits during the week that ended May 11. That's from up 8,000 from the previous week and 84,000 more than the same time one year ago.



A housing development in Middlesex, Pa., is shown on March 29, 2024. The National Association of Realtors reported on existing home sales for April on Wednesday, May 22, 2024. (AP)

chief economist, called the sales drop "a little frustrating." Economists had expected sales to come in at 4.2 milcloser to cutting its main interest rate

than hiking it.

doesn't plan to cut interest rates until it has greater confidence that price increases are slowing sustainably to its 2% target. Until then, mortgage rates are un-

Still, the Fed has maintained it

likely to ease significantly, econo-After climbing to a 23-year high

of 7.79% in October, the average rate on a 30-year mortgage stayed below 7% this year until last month. Even with the recent declines, the year are purchased between March

Sales of previously occupied U.S. homes fell in March and April as home shoppers contended with rising mortgage rates and prices.

last three weeks showing declining mortgage rates and increasing applications," said MBA CEO Bob Broeksmit. "Rates below 7% are

and MBA expects them to continue

to inch lower this summer."

US announces commitments to advancing digital inclusion in Africa

WASHINGTON, May 25, (KUNA): US Vice President Kamala Harris announced public-private partnerships to "Mobilizing Access to the Digital Economy (MADE)" alliance and advancing digital inclusion in Africa.

The partnerships, coordinated on behalf of the US government and under the President's Digital Transformation with Africa initiative by the Department of Commerce, are responsive to her Call to Action in Lusaka, and a series of additional US government and private sector initiatives to promote digital inclusion on the continent.

Digital transformation requires an ecosystem of complementary partners to drive connectivity, skilling, employment, financial, and other critical services via digital access, a fact-sheet from the White House said

To coordinate efforts and multiply their impact, the African Development Bank Group and Mastercard are launching today, in response to the Vice President's Call to Action, the Mobilizing Access to the Digital Economy (MADE) Alliance: Africa, which aims to provide digital access to critical services for 100 million individuals and businesses in Africa over the next 10 years

MADE Alliance: Africa will have an initial focus on supporting the agricultural sector and women, including a pilot program launching this year to provide digital access for three million farmers in Kenya, Tanzania, and Nigeria, and quickly expanding to Uganda, Ethiopia, and Ghana, and the rest of the continent thereafter.

Founding Alliance partners each commit to reach at least 10 million individuals with other Alliance partners over the first five years by focusing on their complementary strengths while working in the same communities.

The non-profit Partnership for

Digital Access in Africa (PDAA) was created, in response to the Vice President's Call to Action, to bring together private and public sector leaders from Africa, the United States, and other parts of the world to bridge Africa's digital divide. To advance the goals of DTA,

PDAA will support African institutions to double the number of people connected to, and meaningfully using, the internet in Africa, from 40 percent to 80 percent, connecting one billion people by 2030, and to increase connectivity for women and girls from 30 percent to 80 percent.

The digital gender divide hampers women's economic participation and limits their access to critical online services, undermining economic growth, sustainable development, and women's full participation in the 21st century economy.

To help close this gap and improve women's livelihoods, economic security, and resilience, Vice President Harris launched the Women in the Digital Economy Fund (WiDEF) in 2023, with an initial USD 50 million investment from USAID and USD 10 million investment from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, half of which focused on Africa.

Today, the Vice President is pleased to announce that the Fund and related Women in the Digital Economy Initiative have now generated over USD one billion in public and private commitments to accelerate gender digital equality.

Together with the Women in the Sustainable Economy (WISE) Initiative, which Vice President Harris launched during the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) leaders' week in November 2023, total commitments for women's economic empowerment initiatives announced by the Vice President have reached USD

What's On













Photos during the event

Chairman Faisal Bader Al Sayer highlights seven decades of success

ALSAYER Group celebrates 70th anniversary with annual employee convention

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: ALSAY-ER Group recently held its annual employee convention, commemorating 70th Anniversary Year as well as to appreciate outstanding achievements of its the Group divisions including Mohamed Naser Al Sayer for Toyota and Lexus Sales Service and Parts Division, Bahrah Trading Company for HINO, Bobcat, Doosan heavy equipment, ALSAYER Engineering for Yokohama tires, Cofran oil and Nexa Auto Paint, Car Rental and Leasing, Insurance, KAFF for animal feed, AlDhow Holding Investment and Real Estate Divisions.

The event was attended by Faisal Bader Al Sayer Chairman, Mubarak Naser Al Sayer CEO, Mohamed Naser Al Sayer Board Member, Bengt Schultz Chief Operating Officer, Jacques Feghali Chief Services Officer along with Top Management Team, Managers and all employees of the Group.

Speaking on the occasion to Mubarak Naser Al Sayer "70 years ago, my father, Mr. Naser, started to import Toyota cars to Kuwait, and together with my uncle, Mr. Bader, they together lay the founding stones to our success. A lot has happened over the last 70 years. We have grown from a humble beginning selling Toyota cars from our family home becoming a household name that stands for trust, customer care and quality. Not only have we grown our automotive business, but we are today also one of the biggest education providers in the GCC and we are also expanding into the area of healthcare. We truly live up to our motto of Heritage, Leadership and Growth"

ALSAYER's heritage is built on one simple promise: to provide the best products paired with outstanding customer experience. The aim is not only to satisfy customers, but also to promote excitement in the workplace, create possibilities to grow and develop one strong team. Group Management thanked and appreciated the team work to tackle numerous challenges without losing focus on customers.

According to Bengt Schultz "We are strengthening our own IT team, so that we can accelerate the development. We will continue to leverage our advantage of being physically close to people. We are leading in hybrid sales, and soon we will together with Lexus and Toyota role out quality, reliable and durable electrical cars.

"Central to our prosperity and Growth, is our investment in training and development. By prioritizing continuous learning, we have equipped our teams with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in a rapidly evolving world. Training and development have been pivotal in chaning our organizational ture. Our commitment to learning has fostered creativity, agility, and a spirit of collaboration. From mentorship programs to advanced technical training, we have cultivated a culture where everyone is encouraged to reach their full potential,"said Jacques Feghali.

Card offers cashback rewards of up to 5%

Gulf Bank launches first-of-its-kind prepaid cashback card in alliance with LuLu Hypermarket & Mastercard

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: As part of its ongoing commitment to rewarding customers and improving their shopping experience, Gulf Bank has officially launched a prepaid cashback card in partnership with LuLu Hypermarket and Mastercard. With no annual fee for the first year, this card offers customers special discounts and cashback of up to 5% at all LuLu Hypermarket branches in Kuwait.

On this particular occasion, Mr. Mohammad Al-Qattan, the Gen-

eral



of Consumer Banking Gulf Bank, expressed his excitement about the distinctive strategic part-Lulu Hypermarket. He noted that the

Al-Qattan

launch of the first-of-its-kind prepaid cashback card in Kuwait, tailored specifically for Lulu Hypermarket customers, offering them exclusive discounts & offers throughout the year.

Apart from earning a cashback of up to 5% on all Lulu Hypermarket purchases, Mr. Al-Qattan highlighted that customers will also receive a 1% cashback on all their other local & internation spends. Cardholders can enjoy a generous annual cashback of up to KD 600, making their shopping experience more rewarding.

Mr. Al-Oattan also mentioned. "Customers have the convenience of using the card to make purchases at 2 million ATMs and over 33 million stores worldwide. Furthermore, the card issuance is free for customers during the first year.'

He further stated, "At Gulf Bank, we continuously assess markets and interact with customers to understand their needs. Our primary objective is to deliver exceptional services to our customers, ensuring they enjoy a unique shopping experience at vari-



A group photo of Gulf Bank officials with representatives from Lulu Hypermarket and Mastercard.

ous LuLu Hypermarket branches in

Kuwait.' Mr. Al-Qattan highlighted Gulf Bank's strategy to strengthen its significant position in Kuwait as the bank that shapes the future. This is achieved by offering services distinguished by simplicity and innovation, with the ultimate goal of simplifying customers' lives and promoting sustainable growth.

While expressing the happiness with Lulu's long and strong association with Gulf Bank, Mr. Mohamed Haris - Director for Lulu Group Kuwait Operation said that he is excited about launching this unique and rewarding card in collaboration with the leading bank in the region to provide Kuwait's first ever co-branded shopping prepaid card in the retailing business sector.

As a retailer, we continuously

strive to add more value to our loyal customer's base. We believed that with Gulf Bank's support, we could offer a new and remarkable experience for our customers which will certainly makes this card as the most popular and valuable card in the country for shopping for daily

Moreover, Mr. Erdem Çakar, the Country Manager for Kuwait and Qatar at Mastercard, said, "Our partnership with Gulf Bank and LuLu Hypermarket builds on our shared dedication to keeping customers at the heart of everything we do. We are delighted to launch the valueadded Mastercard prepaid cashback card, which connects cardholders to a wide variety of lifestyle benefits, exciting deals and priceless experi-

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the

leading Kuwaiti bank of the future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of their roles in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank gives its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.

Gulf Bank is committed to driving significant environmental, social and governance developments through diverse sustainability initiatives, strategically selected to benefit the Bank both internally and externally. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.

'Graduates gain global opportunities'

AIU achieves prestigious Chartered Management Institute accreditation

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: American International University (AIU) proudly announces its recent achievement of Chartered Management Institute (CMI) accreditation. This prestigious recognition underscores AIU's unwavering commitment to enhancing graduate employability and equipping students with the skills required for the future workforce.

The CMI accreditation, granted in April by the esteemed British accrediting body, signifies that AIU's programs adhere to rigorous standards of excellence. This ensures AIU graduates are exceptionally prepared for successful and impactful careers.

AIU graduates who complete CMIaccredited modules as part of their curriculum will earn highly esteemed CMI diplomas and certificates. T h i s accomplishment not only affirms their dedication and hard work but also broadens their horizons with global opportunities and recognition.

Key Benefits of CMI Accredita-

International Recognition: Graduates receive globally recognized credentials from CMI, significantly enhancing their employability and credibility worldwide.

Skill Development: AIU's programs are meticulously designed to cultivate critical management, leadership, and



CMI poster

today's competitive landscape. Networking Opportunities: Students gain access to CMI's extensive

strategic skills, essential for thriving in

network of industry professionals, mentors, and valuable resources. helping significant connections and career advancement. CMI Credentials Across AIU

Majors

Management Major (School of Business): Graduates earn a prestigious CMI diploma, signifying their expertise in leadership, organizational management, and strategic planning.

Finance Major (School of Business): Students receive a CMI certificate, validating their proficiency in financial analysis, investment strategies, and risk management.

Accounting Major (School of Business): Graduates are awarded a CMI certificate, demonstrating their knowledge in financial reporting, auditing, and managerial accounting practices.

Interior Design and Graphic Design Majors (School of Architecture and Design): Graduates receive CMI certificates, affirming their skills in creative design, space planning, and visual communication.

Industrial Engineering Major (School of Electrical and Computer Engineering): Students are awarded CMI certificates, highlighting their competencies in industrial systems design, process optimization, and engineering management.

Continued Commitment to Excellence

AIU's accreditation as CMI Center highlights their dedication to providing students with unparalleled opportunities to excel and distinguish themselves in their chosen fields. This accreditation is a testament to their commitment to delivering toptier education and industry recognition, empowering our students to reach new heights of success.

KIB launches 'Win with KIB Rewards' campaign for its app users

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) has announced the launch of its new 'Win with KIB Rewards' campaign, which will run from May until the end of the year. The campaign aims to reward customers who use KIB's Banking App to open AlDirwaza account, issue a Multicurrency prepaid card, or open a deposit investment of any kind. During the campaign period, 80 lucky customers will win in the monthly

Commenting on the newest KIB campaign, Nawaf Al-Khrayef, Assistant General Manager of the Retail Banking Department at KIB, said:"At KIB, we are committed to rewarding loyal customers, delivering innovative solutions that meet their evolving needs, and elevating their overall banking experience, in line with our 'Bank for Life' slogan. Our new 'Win with KIB Rewards' campaign is a testament to our dedication to launching campaigns that reward customers with the best banking benefits. By leveraging our digital platforms, we are not only enhancing convenience but also offering our customers the opportunity to benefit from our extensive KIB Rewards Program."

KIB will target a different product each month and announce 10 winners the first week of the month during the campaign period. Winning 15,000 reward points, these points can be redeemed on KIB's rewards online market platform, which features an extensive list of participating outlets, including electronics services, retail products, and e-vouchers. The main eligibility criteria for entering the draw are opening AlDirwaza account, issuing a Multicurrency prepaid card, or opening a deposit investment of any kind through KIB's Banking

Al-Khrayef added: "In addition to KIB's latest rewards campaign, the Bank's products offer unparalleled benefits. Those who open



Nawaf Al-Khrayef

AlDirwaza account can enjoy weekly and monthly draws, with one chance to enter the draw for every KD 1 deposited, culminating in a Mega Draw. The Multicurrency prepaid card offers a great deal of flexibility, allowing customers to use six currencies simultaneously and choose from a total of 12 currencies. Additionally, deposits

starting from KD 1000 are given competitive profit rates.'

The 'Win with KIB Rewards' campaign will be prominently announced through KIB's social media accounts and other communication channels, Al-Khrayef explained, encouraging customers to visit KIB's website and follow its social media channels for more details about the cam-



KIB's reward program

paign and KIB's Rewards Program.

The campaign underscores KIB's commitment to providing a superior banking experience while rewarding its customers. By integrating digital solutions with attractive rewards, the Bank continues to lead the way in enhancing customer satisfaction, stemming from its main slogan 'Bank

I have many more stories to tell: filmmaker Rasoulof

CANNES, May 25, (AP): Mohammad Rasoulof was facing eight years in prison - and likely more considering the uncompromising nature of his latest film, "The Seed of the Sacred Fig" - when he decided to flee Iran.

His films and statements criticizing government-sanctioned violence against protesters had already earned him a long string of prison sentences, filmmaking bans, travel restrictions and the confiscation of his passport in 2017. Leaving his native country meant embarking on a life of exile, not to mention a risky escape on foot across the mountainous borderland.

Two weeks after the harrowing escape, Rasoulof arrived at the Cannes Film Festival with a completed film. At a Cannes where several filmmakers like Francis Ford Coppola and Kevin Costner have been praised for investing their own money into their films, Rasoulof has put far more on the line: To debut "The Seed of the Sacred Fig," Rasoulof has risked his life.

"I have many more stories to tell, many more narratives to create and films to make," said Rasoulof, speaking Thursday through an interpreter at Cannes' Palais des Festivals. "That's what persuaded me to leave Iran. I had to go on with this mission. I feel that my mission is to connect the audiences of the world to these stories, to this Iranian narrative. This is my plan for the coming years.'

Rasoulof's dramatic arrival and the explosiveness of his film will bring the Cannes Film Festival to a riveting close. On Saturday, the day after the premiere of "The Seed of the Sacred Fig" in competition, the festival will award its top prize, the Palme d'Or. Rasoulof's film is seen as a favorite

"The Seed of the Sacred Fig" is set during the 2022 protests in Iran and includes real cellphone footage - some it violent and ghastly, censored by Iran's government - from the demonstrations. The film follows a fictional family of four - a father, mother and two daughters who acutely internalize the political turmoil. The father, who works in the justice system, is forced to rubber-stamp sentences of protesters. He grows increasingly suspicious of his wife and daughters, as the film turns into a darkly penetrating examination of contemporary Iran.

Contradiction

Investing an expansive social drama within the intimacy of a family, Rasoulof says, was a way of reflecting the contrast between the public face and private lives of the Islamic Republic.

"There's a very strong contradiction between what they say and the ideas they think they embrace and the reality of their lives," says Rasoulof. "I'll give you a very absurd example."

Rasoulof recalls an encounter when he was in prison two years ago. He had fallen ill and was taken to a hospital where revolving soldiers stood guard beside his bed. His captors, though, were eager to watch Rasoulof's prize-winning 2020 drama "There Is No Evil," about capital punishment in Iran. It's banned in Iran.

"I had to watch 'There Is No Evil' every evening," he says, laughing. "They were so excited to be there with a filmmaker. And they knew that I had made a film about prison guards, so they wanted to watch it. They had found a flash drive and every night, I had no choice in the film I wanted to watch."

"What's going on now in Iran and the change that's about to happen will come from these families, from the inside," adds Rasoulof. Already wrestling with social unrest and international sanctions, Iran is currently mourning the death of President Ebrahim Raisi, who was

interred Thursday after being killed in a helicopter crash. Although Iranian authorities have not publicly acknowledged Rasoulof's sentence, the filmmaker's attorney said he was recently sentenced to prison and flogging for films and public statements called "examples of collusion with the intention of committing a crime against the coun-

try's security."

"The Seed of the Sacred Fig" was shot clandestinely in Iran, with a small cast and crew. Before the movie was edited, some actors also fled Iran. But others who helped make the film have been interrogated and their families summoned for questioning, the director said earlier. The cinematographer's office was raided.

One of Rasoulof's greatest frustrations in fleeing Iran was that he had to leave his unfinished film with his collaborators abroad.

"I called them and told them that they would have to take care of the film," the filmmaker says, "whatever happened."

About two weeks ago, Rasoulof arrived in Germany and rushed to finish work on the final print before sending it to the festival.

"Filmmaking and artistic creature are vital to me" Rasoulof explains. "This is my way of staying alive and carrying on with my life. There is no other way I can imagine living.'

Variety



This image released by Netflix shows Jennifer Lopez in a scene from 'Atlas.' (AP)

Film

'Atlas' delivers an unconventional romance

J.Lo heads to new galaxy for AI love story By Jocelyn Noveck

torney's office sent a letter to the trial judge Thursday criticizing comments made by lawyer **Arthur** Aidala outside of court on May 1, urging the judge to instruct the defense team "not to make public statements discussing or

month threw out Weinstein's 2020 rape conviction, ruling that the trial judge unfairly allowed testimony against him based on allegations that weren't part of the case. In that landmark #MeToo trial, Weinstein was convicted of rape in the third degree for an attack on an aspiring actress in 2013 and of forcing himself on a TV and film production assistant, **Miriam Haley**, in 2006.

his innocence.

Speaking to reporters about the case after Weinstein's first court appearance following the decision. Aidala said he believes Haley lied to the jury about her motive in coming forward, which prosecutors rebut. He said his team planned an aggressive crossexamination on the issue "if she dares to come and show her face

by **Alec Baldwin** to dismiss the sole criminal charge against him in a fatal shooting on the set of the movie "Rust," keeping the case on track for a trial this summer.

Judge Mary Marlowe Sommer on Friday upheld an indictment charging Baldwin with one count of involuntary manslaughter in the death of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins in 2021. The judge rejected defense arguments that prosecutors flouted the rules of grand jury proceedings to divert attention away from exculpatory evidence and witnesses.

accusations that the grand jury proceedings were marred and

NEW YORK: Prosecutors in New York have accused Harvey Weinstein's lead defense lawyer of making public statements intended to intimidate a potential witness ahead of the fallen movie mogul's retrial and asked a judge to take action.

The Manhattan district at-

Weinstein, 72, has maintained

here." (AP)

SANTA FE, N.M.: A New Mexico judge has rejected a request

Special prosecutors have denied

Let's all be clear, if we weren't already, that when it comes to Jennifer Lopez, it's about the love story. Always the love story. J.Lo the pop star, singing about rekindled love on her latest album, "This is Me ... Now." J.Lo the

disparaging potential witnesses in the future."
New York's highest court last

> extinguish humanity, well, your only question really should be, "Where's the love story?" Glad you asked! Because there is one. It may not be with a human. It may actually be with a computer program. But there is one. Because "Atlas," an often ridiculous sci-fi epic with dialogue cheesier than a Brie wheel but also an old-fashioned, human heart o' gold, is a J.Lo movie. Through and through.

Love, for better or worse.

We'll give the filmmakers some credit: "Atlas." directed by Brad Peyton ("San Andreas") is timely. And not just because Lopez has been in the news lately, but because the subject is AI - which has been in the news even more than Bennifer, believe it or not.

rom-com regular, making movies about seeking love

(including the extremely autobiographical film of the

same name.) J.Lo the real-life celebrity goddess, in

And so if we tell you that now, we have J.Lo

in "Atlas," playing a data analyst who travels to a

planet populated solely by evil AI bots preparing to

countless headlines about ... what else?

We begin our story on Earth, way off into the future, at a time where someone can say "Remember there used to be things called smartphones?" and everyone laughs. A montage of news reports informs us that things have not been going well for the human race. AI, created to advance humanity, has turned against it, killing over 1 million civilians.

The evil AI leader is Harlan (Simu Liu), who after turning on humanity has escaped to an unknown location far from Earth. But when an associate of his, Casca, is captured on Earth, the head of ICN, a coalition of nations fighting the AI menace, calls on Atlas Shepherd (Lopez) to help question him. Who better than the woman who's devoted her life to the hunt

for Harlan? We learn Atlas is not a happy person. Also, she's addicted to coffee - quad Americanos, to be precise. And she hates - absolutely hates - AI, for reasons

Anyway, Atlas deftly manages to obtain Harlan's location from Casca, and soon finds herself begging to join a mission to his far-off planet to capture the villainous bot, with whom she shares a mysterious past connection. At first, mission commander Banks (Sterling K. Brown) objects strenuously, but quickly and rather illogically changes his mind. (Both Liu and Brown deserve much better roles than the generic, lifeless ones they're given.)

Software

Soon they're off, to GR-39 in the Andromeda galaxy, where the ICN space rangers fall into a disastrous trap laid by Harlan. It's here that Atlas meets the most important other person in the movie - well, not a person. It's her AI software, who proves her crucial ally once Atlas is forced to crash land, in her mechanized battle suit, onto the planet.

The key issue is trust-building. Atlas, as we said, doesn't trust AI. As the two get to know each other, the software gives himself (he has a "default" male voice) a name: Smith.

Atlas: "Is that really necessary?" Smith: "Names create an emotional reaction." Atlas: "You're a computer program."

The plan consists of finding Harlan, defeating his dastardly plot to destroy humanity and getting off the planet - all while hopefully staying alive. At every step, Smith informs Atlas with all the data at his disposal how precisely desperate the odds are. This results in some amusing banter as Smith, voiced by Gregory James Cohan, "learns" sarcasm and humor.

As for Atlas, she needs to learn how to let down her guard - or rather, her brain walls. Her mistrust of AI leads her to stubbornly refuse (at first) Smith's entreaties to use the "neural link" - a pathway into each other's brains - that will vastly enhance Atlas'

chances of survival, combining her analytic capacity

with Smith's data access. Harlan doesn't appear until halfway into the movie, and we soon learn something about the tragic past he shares with Atlas. In any case, it's Smith, not Harlan, that ultimately evokes real feeling from Atlas - and gives Lopez a chance to emote, which she does reasonably well given the mediocre dialogue. You could call it a futuristic triangle: Human, bad

AI, good AI. Who will win out? Our protocol, as Smith would say, doesn't allow us to give spoilers. But you can guess one idea that emerges shining bright: It's a

four letter word that starts with "L." "Atlas," a Netflix release, has been Rated PG-13 "for strong sci-fi violence, action, bloody images and strong language." Running time: 118 minutes. One

and a half stars out of four. Also:

BEIJING: Japanese director **Ryo Takeuchi**'s documentary film, "The Yangtze River," which aims to present a true and beautiful China to global audi-

ences, hit Chinese mainland theaters on Friday. Takeuchi harbored regrets about failing to capture the "first drops of water" of the Yangtze, when filming the NHK documentary series on the river more than a decade ago. However, he decided to rectify that omission by retracing the Yangtze's 6,300-kilometer path in 2021, according to an introduction to

the film on movie data platforms. Beyond the stunning natural scenery, Takeuchi's new documentary captures smiles and heartwarming stories of ordinary people, painting a vivid picture of local customs and everyday life along the river while highlighting monumental changes in China over the

past decade. Takeuchi emphasized "authenticity" as the core appeal of "The Yangtze River" and documentaries in general, aiming to show viewers worldwide "a true and beautiful China," according to a report by China Film News. (Agencies)

say Baldwin made "shameless" attempts to escape culpability, highlighting contradictions in his statements to law enforcement, to workplace safety regulators and in a televised interview.

Friday's decision removes one of the last hurdles for prosecutors to put Baldwin on trial in July. "We look forward to our day





Nikas and Alex Spiro said in an email. (AP) **FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla.:**

Rapper and singer Sean Kingston and his mother committed more

than a million dollars in fraud in

recent months, stealing money,

in court," defense attorneys Luke

jewelry, a Cadillac Escalade and furniture, documents released Friday allege.

Kingston, 34, and his 61-yearold mother, Janice Turner, have been charged with conducting an organized scheme to defraud, grand theft, identity theft and related crimes, according to arrest warrants released by the Broward County Sheriff's Office.

The two were arrested Thursday after a SWAT team raided Kingston's rented mansion in suburban Fort Lauderdale. Turner was arrested in the raid, while Kingston was arrested at Fort Irwin, an Army training base in California's Mojave Desert where he was performing. (AP)

People & Places

Obits

Author Carr dead

Spurlock, director of 'Super Size Me,' dies

NEW YORK, May 25, (AP): Documentary filmmaker **Morgan Spurlock**, an Oscar nominee whose most famous works skewered America's food industry and who notably ate only at McDonald's for a month to illustrate the dangers of a fast-food diet, has died. He

Spurlock died Thursday in New York from complications of cancer, according to a statement issued Friday by his family

"It was a sad day, as we said goodbye to my brother Morgan," Craig Spurlock, who worked with him on several projects, said in the statement. "Morgan gave so much through his art, ideas, and generosity. The world has lost a true creative genius and a special man.

I am so proud to have worked together with him." Spurlock made a splash in 2004 with his ground-breaking film "Super Size



film chronicled the detrimental physical and psychological effects of Spurlock eating only McDonald's food for 30 days. He gained about 25 pounds, saw a spike in his cholesterol and lost his sex drive. "Everything's bigger in America," he said in the film.

Me," which was nominated for an Academy Award. The

"We've got the biggest cars, the biggest houses, the biggest companies, the biggest food, and finally: the biggest

In one scene, Spurlock showed kids a photo of George Washington and none recognized the Founding Father. But they all instantly knew the mascots for Wendy's and McDonald's.

The film grossed more than \$22 million on a \$65,000 budget and preceded the release of Eric Schlosser's influential "Fast Food Nation," which accused the industry of being bad for the environment and rife with labor issues.

System

Spurlock returned in 2017 with "Super Size Me 2: Holy Chicken!" - a sober look at an industry that processes 9 billion animals a year in America. He focused on two issues: chicken farmers stuck in a peculiar financial system and the attempt by fast-food chains to deceive customers into thinking they're eat-

"We're at an amazing moment in history from a consumer standpoint where consumers are starting to have more and more power," he told The Associated Press in 2019. "It's not about return for the shareholders. It's about return for the consumers.'

Spurlock was a gonzo-like filmmaker who leaned into the bizarre and ridiculous. His stylistic touches included zippy graphics and amusing music, blending a Michael Moore-ish camera-in-your-face style with his own sense of humor and pathos.

"I wanted to be able to lean into the serious moments. I wanted to be able to breathe in the moments of levity. We want to give you permission to laugh in the places where it's really hard to laugh," he told

After he exposed the fast-food and chicken industries, there was an explosion in restaurants stressing freshness, artisanal methods, farm-to-table goodness and ethically sourced ingredients. But nutritionally not much had changed.

"There has been this massive shift and people say to me, 'So has the food gotten healthier?' And I say, Well, the marketing sure has," he said.

Not all his work dealt with food. Spurlock made documentaries about the boy band One Direction and the geeks and fanbovs at Comic-Con. One of his films looked at life behind bars at the Henrico County Jail in Virginia.

With 2008's "Where in the World is Osama bin Laden?" Spurlock went on a global search to find the al-Qaida leader, who was killed in 2011. In "POM Wonderful Presents: The Greatest Movie Ever Sold,' Spurlock tackled questions of product placement, marketing and advertising.

Caleb Carr, the scarred and gifted son of founding Beat Lucien Carr who endured a traumatizing childhood and became a bestselling novelist, accomplished military historian and late-life memoirist of his devoted cat, Masha, has died at 68.

Carr died of cancer Thursday, according to an announcement from his publisher, Little, Brown and

A native of Manhattan, Caleb Carr was born into literary and cultural history. Lucien Carr, along with Columbia University classmates Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, helped found the Beat movement, an early and prominent force in the post-World War II era for improvisation and non-conformity - on and off the page. Kerouac, Ginsberg and such fellow Beats as William Burroughs and Herbert Huncke were frequent visitors to the Carr apartment, where Caleb Carr remembered gatherings that were enriching, bewildering and, at times, terrifying.

"Kerouac was a very nice man. Allen (Ginsberg) could be a very nice guy," Carr told Salon in 1997. "But they weren't children people."

Investigative

Lucien Carr would prove his son's greatest nightmare. The elder Carr had been imprisoned in the 1940s for manslaughter over the death of onetime friend David Kammerer, who clashed with him and was later found in the Hudson River. Caleb Carr, born more than a decade later to Lucien Carr and Francesca von Hartz, feared he would be the next victim. With a "gleeful" spirit, his father would slap Caleb across the back of his head and regularly knock him down flights of stairs, while trying to blame Caleb for the falls.

Out of his suffering, Caleb Carr learned to despise violence, fear insanity and probe the origins of cruelty. In his best-known book, "The Alienist," John Schuyler Moore is a New York Times police reporter in 1890s Manhattan who helps investigative a series of vicious murders of adolescent boys. Carr would call the novel as much a "whydunit" as "whodunit," and wove in references to the emerging 19th century discipline of psychology as Moore and his friend Dr. Laszlo Kreizler track down not just the killer's iden-

tity, but what drove him to his crimes. 'The Alienist," published in 1994 and the kind of carefully researched, old-fashioned page-turner the Beats had rebelled against, combined fictional characters such as Moore with historical figures ranging from financial tycoon J. P. Morgan to restaurateur Charlie Delmonico. Carr also featured the city's police commissioner at the time, Theodore Roosevelt.



Bruce Johnston, (from left), David Marks, Brian Wilson, Mike Love and Al Jardine of The Beach Boys pose backstage at the 54th annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles on Feb. 12, 2012. A new documentary about the band premiered May 24 on Disney+. (AP)



Helen Mirren poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'The Most Precious of Cargoes' at the 77th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Friday, May 24. (AP)



Coppola

Variety

CANNES: The 77th Cannes Film Festival draws to a close Saturday with the presentation of its top award, the Palme d'Or, along with an honorary tribute for George **Lucas.** The closing ceremony is set to begin at 6:45 p.m. local time, 12:45 p.m. US Eastern time. It will be streamed live on Brut internationally and air on France 2 within France.

Any of the 22 films that premiered in competition at Cannes are eligible for the Palme d'Or and other prizes, like the Grand Prix, best actress and best actor. Deciding them all will be the nine-person jury presided over, this year, by Greta Gerwig.

The jury's deliberations take place in secret, so anything could potentially win. But a handful of films are seen as the most likely contenders, among them Payal Kapadia's "All We Imagine As Light," Mohammad Rasoulof's "The Seed of the

Sacred Fig" and Sean Baker's "Anora." Other much talked about entries include the sci-fi epic "Megalopolis" from Francis Ford Coppola, a two-time winner of the Palme d'Or; Coralie Fargeat's gory body horror satire "The Substance," starring Demi Moore; and Jacques Audiard's "Emilia Perez," a Spanish-language musical about a Mexican drug lord who transitions to a woman. Audiard previously won the Palme for 2015's "Dheepan."

During the brief awards ceremony, Lucas will be given an honorary Palme d'Or. During the festival, Cannes gave the same tribute to Meryl Streep and the Japanese anime factory Studio Ghibli. (AP)

MEMPHIS, Tenn.: The catalyst behind the failed gambit to sell off the iconic Graceland property in Memphis is a

mystery. The self-styled investment company also is under fire from a lawsuit alleging fraud, an aggressive attorney general and a community of Elvis Presley loyalists who consider the home-turned-museum of the the king of rock n' roll to be sacred ground.

Among the many questions surrounding the attempt to auction Graceland is how often cases pop up in which an entity emerges to claim assets of older or dead people. Experts say it's more common than one might think. "I have never heard of a fraud targeting such a well-known institution. So it's a bit surprising on that end," said Nicole Forbes Stowell, a business law professor at the University of South

Music

Legendary band reflect on their journey in docu

Beach Boys going into the sunset

LOS ANGELES, May 25, (AP): Both the Beach Boys and "The Beach Boys" - the new documentary opened on Friday on Disney+ - are all about blending a range of voices.

The three Wilson brothers - Brian, Carl and Dennis - along with cousin Mike Love and friend Al Jardine, brought a harmonic revolution to group vocals with their Southern California sound that brightened the 1960s with songs like "I Get Around," "Good Vibrations" and "God Only Knows."

In his documentary on them, director Frank Marshall took oft-told tales of the band's six decades of heartache and harmony, and tried to make them broader, and brighter, by mixing as many voices as possible.

"It was the blend of everything," Marshall told The Associated Press in a joint interview with Love and Jardine at a Hollywood recording studio. "It's the blend not only of the family story, but the blend of the harmonies. If you took one element out, you wouldn't have the Beach Boys. The 83-year-old Love said Mar-

shall's project was "a monumental effort" for all involved and that they've "never done so much promotion in our entire lives."

"This fella here, Frank, is able to take all that ridiculous amount of information and make it into a coherent, wonderful, documentary that really gives not only a look into the individuals, but the collective impact," he said.

The film includes extensive new interviews with the singer Love and singer-guitarist Jardine, 81. And it draws from many archive interviews to give the perspectives of singer-guitarist Carl Wilson, who died from cancer in 1998 at age 51, singer-drummer Dennis Wilson, who was 39 when he drowned in a Los Angeles-area harbor in 1983, and their older brother Brian, mastermind of the band's sound.

The 81-year-old Brian Wilson makes current-day appearances in Marshall's film, including in an emotional scene at the coda whose details remain best unspoiled. But the mental decline that recently led to his loved ones establishing a court conservatorship for him left his contributions lim-

Often, the media admiration of the group's music focuses entirely on the eldest Wilson boy with what many consider his unmatched musical imagination and innovation. Marshall's documentary does nothing to downplay his genius, but emphasizes he was

Recording

It is rarely acknowledged, for example, that Love wrote the lyrics to dozens of songs, including "I Get Around, California Girls, "Help Me Rhonda," and the sweetly poetic "Good Vibrations," penned in the car on the way to the recording session: "I love the colorful clothes she wears, and the way the sunlight plays upon

The Wilsons' father and early band manager Murry Wilson, in one of many moments of mismanagement depicted, sold the Beach Boys' song catalog for \$700,000 in 1969 without consulting the band members, and left Love's name off as a contributor.

"That's rough," Love told the AP, "when your uncle sells your songs without giving you any credit. And it really hit Brian hard." But, Love added, "the upside is that I did contribute. My cousin and I together wrote some great songs."

The surreptitious sale led to the song rights becoming a tangled thicket that, for years, kept Marshall - who made similar documentaries on the Bee Gees in 2022 and Carole King and James Taylor in 2020 - from making the Beach Boys film he'd long dreamed of.

Naussany said Lisa Marie Presley

used Graceland as collateral for the loan,

according to the foreclosure sale notice.

But the recent purchase of the rights by his friend Irving Azoff gave him a green light.

Marshall's film also includes the voices of David Marks, who was briefly in the group at its inception; Bruce Johnston, who became a Beach Boy in 1965; and famous fans from several generations including Don Was, Lindsey Buckingham, and Janelle Monae. "The Beach Boys" doesn't shy away

from the unsunny moments in their history, including Dennis Wilson's dalliances with the Charles Manson Family (before their notoriety as a murderous cult) and his dark and devastating drowning. It also examines the mental health

struggles that left Brian Wilson unable to make music for long stretches, and the bitter, band-related disputes that became broader family disputes

Love is reduced to tears in the film when he talks about his estrangement from his cousin Brian, and desire to tell him he loves him.

Happier moments are plentiful, too, especially from the earliest years. Jardine gets emotional in the film when he talks about the boys auditioning a cappella for his mother, singing her a Four Freshmen tune and the first Beach Boys original, "Surfin," so they could buy instruments and become a real band.

"She worked at a Macy's up the street and made about 300 bucks a month," Jardine told the AP. "She turned the whole 300 over to us."

That would make possible The Beach Boys - a name, Jardine said, that he never liked.

Love said he tries to set aside the bitterness and focus on those moments. "I mean, we know the impact of the

music of the Beach Boys. It's been felt all over the world," he said. "We have far more to be grateful for than to be regretful about.

Cosmos in the Swiss comedy-drama, nar-

rowly beat Xin, a sighthound who instead

wagged away with the Grand Jury Prize for

the Chinese drama "Black Dog."
The Palm Dog awards aren't officially Keough filed a lawsuit on May 15 alleging Naussany presented fraudulent documents a part of the Cannes Film Festival, but do honor the canines who appear in the festival's films.

In a rare treat perhaps reflecting the growth of the contest's popularity, both dogs were in Cannes to pick up their medals - in this case, dog collars. Both

dogs seemed to bask in the limelight. Kodi barked along with the music as "Chihuahua" by **D.I BoBo** blasted from the speakers and did tricks on two legs. Xin took a more chilled approach, lying down on stage while soaking up the adoration. (AP)

NEW YORK: A woman who says **Sean** "Diddy" Combs subjected her to violence and abuse over several years in the 1990s has filed a lawsuit in **New York** accusing the rapper of sexual assault, battery and gender-motivated violence.

April Lampros, who met Combs in 1994 when she was a college student, described several "terrifying sexual encounters" with him including being forced to take ecstasy and have sex with Combs late former girlfriend Kim Porter.

Lampros' lawsuit, filed Thursday in state court in Manhattan, comes after a series of allegations against the embattled hip-hop mogul. A former model accused Combs of sexually assaulting her at his New York City recording studio in 2003 in a separate lawsuit filed earlier this week.

Lampros, 51, said in the lawsuit that she was a student at New York City's Fashion Institute of Technology when she met Combs, who showered her with gifts and promised to help her achieve her dream of a career in fashion. (AP)

Florida's St. Petersburg campus. "But I don't think it's surprising to everyday people that are the targets.'

Naussany Investments and Private Lending caused a stir when a public notice for a foreclosure sale of the 13-acre (5-hectare) Graceland estate was posted this month. The notice said Promenade Trust, which

controls the Graceland museum, owed \$3.8 million after failing to repay a 2018 loan. Riley Keough, an actor and Elvis Presley's granddaughter, inherited the trust and ownership of the home after her mother, Lisa Marie Presley, died in 2023.





Niousha Akhshi, (from left), Setareh Maleki, director Mohammad Rasoulof, Mahsa Rostami and Amineh Arani pose with photographs of actors Soheila Golestan, (left), and Missagh Zareh during the photo call for the film 'The Seed of the Sacred Fig' at the 77th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Saturday, May 25. (AP) — Details Page 11

Elite specialists and innovative techniques enhance treatment

Kuwait Cancer Center treats 1,341 cases of lymphatic swelling

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: In a recent press statement, Hanaa Al-Khamis, Head of the Physical Therapy Department at the Kuwait Cancer Control Center, unveiled the latest statistics on cases of "lymphatic swelling" in Kuwait spanning from 2016 to the end of 2023. The figures indicate a total of 1,341 cases, including 23 non-cancer patients who sought treatment at the center. These patients were attended to by specialists holding internationally accredited certificates in treating the disease, as reported by the Al-Rai newspaper.

The announcement was made during the second annual awareness day for lymphatic swelling, organized by the Physical Therapy Department at the Kuwait Cancer Control Center. The event was held under the auspices of the Director of the Al-Sabah Specialized Medical District, with the presence of Dr. Ibrahim Al-

Kandari, the Center's Director, and Dr. Fahd Al-Anzi, Head of the Medical Board.

Al-Khamis highlighted that the center's elite specialists, comprising 16 physical therapists, underwent rigorous training supervised by the Dean of the International Academy (Vodde School). This comprehensive training, conducted over a full intensive week, enabled the therapists to obtain approved specialized certificates. As a result, a significant number of lymphatic swelling cases referred by specialist doctors both within and outside the center were effectively treated.

She further emphasized the center's utilization of global advancements in measurement techniques, including the use of the new swelling measuring device (Perikit) and modern disposables to enhance patient care. The awareness day featured informative lectures by vascular consultant Dr. Majdi Al-Husseini from Al-Adan Hospital and surgical oncology consultant Dr. Magda Abdel Samad Al-Saleh from the Kuwait Cancer Control Center. These lectures shed light on the medical team's role in treating lymphedema cases, accompanied by explanatory sessions from a nutritionist on the impact of diet on these conditions.

Al-Khamis also disclosed the launch of a dedicated website for lymphedema patients, the Kuwait Lymphodema Framework, aimed at providing comprehensive information and support related to the disease. Additionally, she revealed an ongoing collaboration with the World Lymphedema Organization to stay abreast of global developments in lymphedema treatment for the benefit of patients.



KUNA photo

Some of the Lymphatic Swelling Awareness Day participants.

Calls for increased vaccination efforts

USDA says meat remains safe

US reports bird flu in beef for first time HPV vaccines prevent cancer in men

NEW YORK, May 25, (AP): Bird flu has been detected in beef for the first time, the US Department of Agriculture announced Friday, but officials said the meat from a single sickened dairy cow was not allowed to enter the nation's food supply and beef remains safe to

The USDA said the virus was found as part of testing of 96 dairy cows that were diverted from the supply because federal inspectors noticed signs of illness during routine inspections of carcasses at meat processing plants. Bird flu was found in only one of those

Bird flu has been confirmed in dairy cattle herds in nine states, has been found in milk and has prompted the slaughter of millions of chickens and turkeys. But finding it in beef is a new development for the outbreak, which began in

The agency said last month that it would test ground beef for bird flu at retail stores, but it has yet to find any sign of the virus.

Even if bird flu were to end up in consumer beef, the USDA says, cooking the meat to an internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahr-

Afghanistan sees 37% rise in measles cases in early 2024 It spreads easily when infected

KABUL, May 25, (Xinhua): Measles cases in Afghanistan increased by 37 percent year on year in the first four months of this year, the country's Ministry of Public Health said.

"In the first four months of the current year, over 3,000 positive cases of measles were registered in Afghanistan," local media outlet TOLOnews quoted the ministry's spokesperson Sharafat Zaman Amarkhilas saying on

Measles is an extremely infectious disease caused by a virus.

enheit (73.9 Celsius) will kill it just like it kills E. coli and other

Two farmworkers at dairies in Michigan and Texas were sickened by bird flu this spring. The danger to the public remains low, but farmworkers exposed to infected animals are at higher risk,

It can cause severe symptoms, complications, and even death. Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles.

people breathe, cough or sneeze.

Measles is endemic in Afghanistan, with nearly all provinces reporting suspected cases annually. Since the beginning of 2024, a total of 18,744 suspected cases and 94 associated deaths were recorded in the country, according to the World Health Organization's report in April.

health officials said.

Only one other human case of bird flu has been confirmed in the United States. In 2022, a prisoner in a work program picked it up while killing infected birds at a poultry farm in Montrose County, Colorado. His only symptom was fatigue, and he recovered

as well as women, research suggests

NEW YORK, May 25, (AP): New research suggests the HPV vaccine is preventing cancer in men, as well as in women, but fewer boys than girls are getting the shots in the United

The HPV vaccine was developed to prevent cervical cancer in women and experts give it credit, along with screening, for lowering cervical cancer rates. Evidence that the shots are preventing HPV-related cancers in men has been slower to emerge, but the new research suggests vaccinated men have fewer cancers of the mouth and throat compared to those who didn't get the shots. These cancers are more than twice as common in men than in women.

For the study, researchers compared 3.4 million people of similar ages - half vaccinated versus half unvaccinated - in a large health care

As expected, vaccinated women had a lower risk of developing cervical cancer within at least five years of getting the shots. For men, there were benefits too. Vaccinated men had a lower risk of developing any HPVrelated cancer, such as cancers of the anus, penis and mouth and throat.

These cancers take years to devel-

op so the numbers were low: There were 57 HPV-related cancers among the unvaccinated men - mostly head and neck cancers - compared to 26 among the men who had the HPV vaccine.

"We think the maximum benefit from the vaccine will actually happen in the next two or three decades," said study co-author Dr. Joseph Curry, a head and neck surgeon at the Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center in Philadelphia. "What we're showing here is an early wave of effect."

Symptoms

Results of the study and a second were released Thursday by the American Society of Clinical Oncology and will be discussed next month at its annual meeting in Chicago. The second study shows vaccination rates rising but males lag behind females in getting the HPV shots.

HPV, or human papillomavirus, is very common and is spread through sex. Most HPV infections cause no symptoms and clear up without treatment. Others develop into cancer, about 37,000 cases a year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In the U.S., the HPV vaccine has

been recommended since 2006 for girls at age 11 or 12, and since 2011 for boys the same age. Catch-up shots are recommended for anyone through age 26 who hasn't been vaccinated.

In the second study, researchers looked at self- and parent-reported HPV vaccination rates in preteens and young adults in a large government survey. From 2011 to 2020, vaccination rates rose from 38% to 49% among females, and among males from 8% to 36%.

"HPV vaccine uptake among young males increased by more than fourfold over the last decade, though vaccination rates among young males still fall behind females," said study co-author Dr. Danh Nguyen at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas.

Parents of boys, as well as girls, should know that HPV vaccines lower cancer risk, said Jasmin Tiro of the University of Chicago Medicine Comprehensive Cancer Center who was not involved in the research. And young men who haven't been vaccinated can still get the shots.

"It's really important that teenagers get exposed to the vaccine before they're exposed to the virus," she



Boeing's Starliner capsule atop an Atlas V rocket is seen at Space Launch Complex 41 at the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station a day after its mission to the International Space Station was scrubbed because of an issue with a pressure regulation valve, May 7, 2024, in Cape Canaveral, Fla. (AP)

Starliner capsule can safely fly two test pilots to ISS

Boeing's 1st astronaut flight set for June after leak review

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., May 25, (AP): Boeing is now aiming for its first astronaut launch at the beginning of June, after spending the past few weeks struggling with more problems on the space cap-

Officials for the company and NASA said Friday that intensive reviews indicate the Starliner capsule can safely fly two test pilots to the International Space Station, despite a propulsion system leak. The small helium leak was discovered following the first launch attempt on May 6 that was scuttled rubber seal the size of a shirt button, and say that even if the leak worsens, it could be managed in flight. All of the capsule's other seals checked out, said NASA's commercial crew program manager Steve Stich, prompting managers to target June 1 for the launch.

This will be the third test flight for Starliner. Demos in 2019 and 2022 had no one aboard. Boeing had to repeat the empty flight because of software and other flaws the first time.

If not for the Atlas V rocket's bad valve that halted the first

first detected in orbit, according to Stich. Flight controllers would have managed the leak, and the astronauts would have been safe, officials stressed. Helium is used to pressurize the fuel lines of the propulsion system, which maneuvers the capsule in flight.

Engineers now know the location of the leak and "that's going to help us with improving the system in the future," said Boeing program manager Mark Nappi.

"Remember, this is a test flight. We're still learning," Nappi told reporters.

ability" in the propulsion system in the unlikely event of a string of failures, Stich said. The team has developed workaround methods to get the capsule safely out of orbit at flight's end if such problems arise, he added.

"We're not going to fly until we're sure we're safe," NASA Associate Administrator Jim Free said.

Boeing's Starliner capsule is already years late in transporting astronauts to the International Space Station for NASA. SpaceX has been launching crews since 2020. NASA wants both companies for taxi service so they can back each



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Retirement is in the tennis air as the tournament starts

Nadal says this might not be his last French Open

PARIS, May 25, (AP): This might not turn out to be Rafael Nadal's last French Open, after all. The 14-time champion at Roland Garros said that he is not 100% sure he won't play again at the Grand Slam tournament.

Nadal has missed much of the last two seasons because of hip and abdominal muscle issues, and he is just 7-4 in 2024. There had been some doubt after a lopsided loss at the Italian Open two weeks ago whether he would even enter the clay-court event in Paris at all.

But he did show up, and has been practicing this week. Nadal, who turns 38 on June 3, was drawn to face No. 4 seed Alexander Zverev in a showdown that will be everyone's focus on Monday, Day 2 of the tournament.

Asked Saturday whether he had decided if this will be his final French Open, given that everyone is assuming it will be, Nadal smiled and replied: "Don't assume that."

"It's a big, big chance that it's going to be my last Roland Garros," he said. "But if I have to tell you it's 100% my last Roland Garros, sorry, but I will not. Because I cannot predict what's going on."

It's not just Nadal who has folks wondering how many more tennis matches remain in his career.

With the French Open set to start Sunday, plenty of accomplished players are getting ready to bid adieu to the sport soon, including three-time Grand Slam champion Andy Murray, major finalist Danielle Collins and French fan favorite Alizé Cornet.

TENNIS

"It's not your 'forever' career," said Collins, a 30-year-old from Florida who was the runner-up at the 2022 Australian Open. "There's nobody playing until you're 50."

The list goes on, too: Dominic Thiem, the 2020 U.S. Open champion and a two-time runner-up at Roland Garros, has said this will be his final season, as did Diego Schwartzman, another former member of the top 10 who once reached the French Open semifinals. Both lost in qualifying on Wednesday in Paris.

"All of these people had a great run. They're not retiring because they were in a car accident or because the back gave out. So there is that," said Martina Navratilova, an 18-time major champ who now works for Tennis Channel. "I think it's just a coincidence that all these great players are retiring at the same time."

Roger Federer and Serena Williams both announced they were done in 2022, after turning 40 - Federer finished up with a Laver Cup doubles match alongside rival and friend Nadal, who turns 38 on June 3 and has indicated this is likely his last season; Williams was feted at one last U.S.

The current group also chose different ways and times to let everyone

know their plans.

Nadal, a 14-time title winner at the French Open but limited by injuries the past two seasons, and Murray, who has an artificial hip and originally intended to retire several years ago, both were more vague and left a bit of wiggle room.

gle room.

"I'm likely not going to play past this summer," Murray, who turned 37 last week, said in February, leading fans to believe he wants to bow out at Wimbledon, which the Briton won in 2013 and 2016.

Cornet, a 34-year-old from France, put the word out there that the French Open will be it for her, allowing the home crowd to bid her a proper adieu. This will be the 20th consecutive year she has played at Roland Garros, where her Grand Slam debut came in 2005.

"This is where I wanted to say farewell to professional tennis," Cornet said. "I am glad to have reached that point in my life where I can say goodbye in front of my fans and my family."

There are also those who hold out hope of a return for some.

As Sebastian Korda, a 23-year-old American seeded 27th in Paris, said when asked about Thiem's upcoming departure: "Maybe he changes mind at the end of the year and keeps going."

That's certainly always a possibility in any walk of life - and tennis is a sport with a rich history of comebacks. Navratilova, for example, initially retired in 1994, but later came back and wound up competing until 2006.

Collins, for one, says she is ready to move on. The 30-year-old from Florida caught the sport by surprise in January by saying 2024 would be her last season right after a loss to No. 1 Iga



In this file photo, Spain's Rafael Nadal plays a shot against Norway's Casper Ruud during the final match at the French Open tennis tournament in Roland Garros stadium in Paris, France. (AP)

Swiatek at the Australian Open.

"This lifestyle is not always an easy one. I know it seems very glamorous and really ritzy-glitzy, but it really isn't like that. I don't think it's always a sustainable lifestyle with just how

much traveling we're doing," Collins said this month. "It's hard to balance your day-to-day life with your work life when you are traveling up to 30-plus weeks out of the year ... That takes a toll on people."

Spinners plot Hyderabad win over Rajasthan to reach final



Sunrisers Hyderabad player bats during the Indian Premier League second qualifier cricket match between Rajasthan Royals and Hyderabad in Chennai, India. (AP)

Moana Pasifika down Waratahs

Crusaders stun Blues, keep playoff 'hopes' alive in Super Rugby Pacific

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand, May 25, (AP): The defending champion Crusaders kept their playoff chances alive with the upset of the season Saturday, beating the Auckland-based Blues 29-27 in Super Rugby Pacific.

The Crusaders came into the match with only two wins from 12 games, in 11th place on the 12-team table. The Blues had lost only once and were trying to return to the top with one round left in the regular season.

But after a woeful campaign by the 12-time champion Crusaders - the worst in their history - they finally

RUGBY

produced a performance reminiscent of the past. The win could lift them as high as ninth, within reach of the topeight playoff zone, ahead of their last regular-season match against Moana Pasifika.

"I think (a performance like this) has been there but we haven't capitalized on opportunities," said captain Codie Taylor, who spent much of a physical match bloodied from a head gash.

"It was a massive week for us. We knew what we were up against with the Blues, a real class side. You could see they deserve to be where they are. But there was a lot of chat about the boys who have been before us and what this meant to them, and it was good to get

result."

The match was close but for a pe-

riod between the 22nd and 35th minutes when Blues prop Ofa Tu'ungafasi scored two tries to give his team a 15-7 lead.

But the Crusaders scored a vital try through winger Chay Fihaki right on halftime and cut the deficit at the break to three points.

That set up a thrilling second half in which the Crusaders captured the lead for the first time in more than 40 minutes after a try by scrumhalf Noah Hotham. That gave them a 26-22 advantage which became 29-22 after a penalty from Fihaki in the 67th.

The Blues rallied with a try by winger A.J. Lam but flyhalf Harry Plummer missed the sideline conversion and the Crusaders clung to their two-point margin to the joy of a capacity crowd.

"It was pretty tough, a hard one for us," Blues captain Patrick Tuipulotu said. "We were confident going into the second half, especially with momentum. Throughout the whole game there was a lot of ill-discipline and that was disappointing for us."

was disappointing for us."

The loss sends a playoff warning to the Blues, who looked formidable while building an 11-1 record. While they looked solid in the first half, they lost their shape and patience in the second. They were best when they stacked together phases but, as tension built, they played more individually and the Crusaders capitalized.

In Auckland, Moana Pasifika beat the New South Wales Waratahs 27-12 in their last home match of the season.

Boult strikes three times in three overs

CHENNAI, India, May 25, (AP): Shahbaz Ahmed and Abhishek Sharma spun Sunrisers Hyderabad into their third Indian Premier League final after defeating Rajasthan Royals by 36 runs.

Hyderabad will meet Kolkata Knight Riders in the final on Sunday. They were the top two teams in the league.

Left-arm spinners Ahmed (3-23) and Sharma (2-24) choked Rajasthan to 139-7 in reply to Hyderabad's 175-9. Sunrisers won their only title in 2016 and haven't been to the final in

six years

Ahmed made the biggest difference. After opener Travis Head was out for 34 off 28 balls at 99-4 in the 10th, Ahmed replaced him as the impact substitute and led the lower order with 18 runs.

CRICKET

Then he plunged Rajasthan into batting trouble on the slow pitch when he stopped Yashasvi Jaiswal on 42 off 21 and dismissed Riyan Parag and Ravichandran Ashwin in the same over.

Rajasthan was 79-5 in the 12th over, and Sharma finished off the Royals'

hopes.
Sharma had already removed captain Sanju Samson for 10 and came back to bowl Rajasthan impact substitute Shimron Hetmyer on 4. Sharma added two catches and they had the

Earlier, Rajasthan pace bowler Trent Boult struck three times in three overs in the power play and Yuzvendra Chahal held some brilliant catches at short third man.

game won after 19 overs, when the run

rate was beyond Rajasthan.

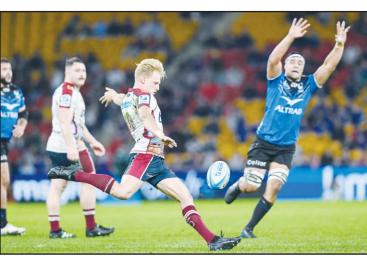
Rahul Tripathi's breezy 21-ball 37 ended when he was deceived by a slower bouncer from Boult and his ramp shot landed in the hands of Chahal. Aiden Markram, in his comeback

game, lasted only two balls when Chahal took another low catch off Boult. Hyderabad slipped to 57-3 in the fifth over.

Avesh Khan (3-27) and Sandeep Sharma (2-25) bowled steadily in the middle overs before Heinrich Klaasen struck four sixes in 50 off 34 to give Hyderabad a defendable total.

Rajasthan's reply saw Dhruv Jurel offer a fighting unbeaten 56 off 35 balls but the Hyderabad spinners had already dismantled the top order.

Ahmed and Sharma used the conditions to perfection after captain Pat Cummins dismissed out-of-sorts opener Tom Kohler-Cadmore for a strug-



Tom Lynagh of the Reds kicks the ball during the Super Rugby Pacific match between the Queensland Reds and the Western Force at Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane, Australia. (AP)

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Pakistan taking the unretired Amir, Wasim to T20 World Cup

ISLAMABAD, May 25, (AP): Coming out of retirement paid off for fast bowler Mohammad Amir and allrounder Imad Wasim when they were named in Pakistan's 15-man squad for the T20 World Cup.

Both players have rich experience of playing in the Caribbean Premier League and the selectors backed them.
Fast bowler Haris Rauf was also chosen despite not play-

Fast bowler Haris Rauf was also chosen despite not playing competitive cricket since late February when he dislocated his shoulder during the Pakistan Super League. Rauf was expected to play against England at Headingley last Wednesday but Pakistan's first T20 of the four-match series was washed out.

The team management was satisfied with the fitness of Rauf, who has been bowling in the nets without any discomfort. The selectors believed his express pace will play

an important role in the T20 World Cup which starts on June 1 in the Caribbean and the United States.

Pakistan was the last team of 20 to announce its squad. The Pakistan Cricket Board also announced there will be no travelling reserves.

Pakistan opens against the host U.S. on June 6 in Dallas, and also has group games against India, Canada and Ireland. The top two teams advance to the second round.

It will be the first T20 World Cup for leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed, wicketkeeper-batter Azam Khan, fast bowler Abbas Afridi, opening batter Saim Ayub and middle-order batter Usman Khan.

Usman Khan, who was banned by the Emirates Cricket Board for five years for playing for his country of birth, had a below-par first T20 series against New Zealand last month.

years for playing for his country of birth, had it T20 series against New Zealand last month.

After firing, Cavs embark on coaching search with All-Star Donovan Mitchell's future bigger priority

INDEPENDENCE, Ohio, May 25, (AP): Before starting his summer break, Donovan Mitchell let the Cavaliers know he's happy in Cleveland and excited about the future.

While Mitchell didn't speak publicly about J.B. Bickerstaff or their relationship, the All-Star guard's input likely informed and shaped the team's decision to make a coaching change despite the Cavs advancing to the second round of the playoffs.

A day after Bickerstaff was fired despite winning 99 games the past two seasons and helping the Cavs return to relevance following LeBron James' departure, president of basketball operations Koby Altman tried to explain the ratio-

nale behind the somewhat shocking dismissal.

Bickerstaff didn't do anything wrong. He just reached his limit and expiration date with a team reshaped by Mitchell's

arrival in a 2022 trade from Utah.

During a 35-minute media availability on Friday, Alt-

man praised Bickerstaff's "undeniable" success, but said the Cavs feel they're positioned to add a leader who can get them closer to winning a championship.

"Someone with a new approach, someone with a different voice, a fresh set of eyes to help us move forward," Altman said. "We've accomplished a lot in the last few years, getting to a conference semifinal and we don't want to be complacent. "We feel we're not far off."

Of course, much of that hinges on Mitchell, who can sign a four-year, \$200 million contract extension with the Cavs this summer. Altman met with the 27-year-old following Cleveland's loss to Boston in Game 5 of the Eastern Conference semifinals.

Mitchell, who struggled with a left knee injury over the final two months of the regular season, sat out the final two games in the series against the Celtics with a calf strain.

games in the series against the Celtics with a calf strain.

Altman said the feedback he got from Mitchell during his exit interview was encouraging.

It reached the inaugural final in 2007 and triumphed in 2009. Under Babar Azam's captaincy, Pakistan played in the 2021 semifinals and lost the 2022 final against England. Pakistan Squad: Babar Azam (captain), Abrar Ahmed,

Pakistan has an impressive record at the T20 World Cup.

Azam Khan, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imad Wasim, Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Amir, Mohammad Rizwan, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Shadab Khan, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Usman Khan.

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Mavericks edge Timberwolves for 2-0 lead

Doncic hits the winner with 3 seconds left

MINNEAPOLIS, 25, (AP): Luka Doncic searched to find space as the clock ticked down, using a screen to draw Defensive Player of the Year Rudy Gobert out to the top of the key and a crossover dribble to set up his stepback 3-pointer.

With a swish and a shout, Doncic and the Dallas Mavericks are headed home with a 2-0 lead in the Western Conference finals on the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Doncic hit the winner with 3 seconds left and posted his fifth tripledouble of the playoffs to lead the Mavericks to a 109-108 victory over the Timberwolves on Friday night.

BASKETBALL

"I was just trying to get to my spot and step back. I'm confident in that shot," Doncic said.

Doncic had 32 points, 13 assists and 10 rebounds for his eighth triple-double in 42 career postseason games for the Mavericks, who erased an 18-point deficit that stood late in the second quarter and were still down 16 midway through the

"As you've seen with Luka, he loves that stage. He doesn't run from it," Mavericks coach Jason Kidd said. "I thought he was great the whole game, keeping guys together, his energy.

Naz Reid went 7 for 9 from 3-point range for 23 points, but his last try at the buzzer rimmed in and out to send the Wolves to Dallas for Game 3 on Sunday in a big hole after another off night by stars Anthony Edwards and Karl-Anthony Towns.

"First to four. Nothing's won," Doncic said. "You've just got to



Dallas Mavericks guard Kyrie Irving, (right), and Minnesota Timberwolves center Naz Reid (center), battle for a loose ball during the first half of Game 2 of the NBA basketball Western Conference finals in Minneapolis. (AP)

think about next game - not in the future, just this game."

Kyrie Irving had 13 of his 20 points in the fourth quarter, including a corner 3-pointer with 1:05 left that pulled the Mavericks within two. Then the Wolves sandwiched turnovers around a short miss by Doncic. Edwards threw the ball out of bounds off a drive with 13 seconds left, setting up Doncic's win-

He took the inbounds pass and dribbled to set up a screen by Dereck Lively II that triggered a switch by the Wolves, with NBA All-Defensive second team pick Jaden McDaniels dropping with Lively's roll and Gobert staying out on the top of the key.

"I can't move fast, but I can move faster than him," said Doncic, who flexed his arms and yelled at Gobert, who fouled him hard at one point in the first half to draw a stare from the five-time All-NBA pick.

The lead for either side was three points or less from 10:50 remaining to 1:29 until Edwards - who had 21 points but is shooting 11 for 33

in the series - sank two free throws for a 108-103 edge. That came right after Irving missed both foul shots that had the crowd howling for the promotion that awards fans a free

Chick-fil-A sandwich. Mike Conley scored 18 points and Gobert had 16 points and 10 rebounds for the Wolves, who needed Reid - the NBA Sixth Man of the

Year - more than ever. His top-ofthe-key swish at the end of the third quarter gave the Wolves an 86-79 cushion just after the Mavericks closed the gap hard with a 21-7 spurt - mostly while Conley rested - over a 6:36 stretch.

"We're just beating ourselves a lot of the times, making simple, mental errors," said Towns, who had 15 points on 4-for-16 shooting. "Our defense that's held us together all year, sometimes it just falters in the wrong times. If you mix that in with the offense that we're just not producing right now, it's tough.

Doncic, who flourished in the fourth quarter of Game 1 to finish with 33 points, has been fighting through what the Mavericks have listed on the league's official injury report as a sprained right knee and left ankle soreness.

When he was subbed out late in the first quarter, Doncic jogged straight to the locker room before returning to the bench prior to his next shift. After running the floor for a fast-break layup late in the second quarter, Doncic was laboring and limping on the way back. He shot 5 for 14 before halftime.

The beauty of the 25-year-old Slovenian superstar's game is that he hardly needs a full-strength spring in his step to dominate. Doncic had Minnesota's league-leading defense looking out of sorts on so many possessions with his laser-like passing, often setting up their high-leaping centers Daniel Gafford (16 points) and Lively (14 points) with slick lobs for easy dunks.

The Mavericks shot 60.5% from the floor (23 for 38) in the second half.

"Luka was definitely involved in a lot of that. He makes a lot of great reads out of the pick-and-roll. We tried to show him different looks," Edwards said. "He kept making the right reads. It's all him. We've just got to figure him out. But we'll figure it out."

Best of the Rest

Rooney joins Plymouth: Manchester United icon Wayne Rooney was appointed head coach of Championship side Plymouth Argyle on Saturday.

The former England striker takes over at the second-tier club four months after he was fired by Birmingham.

"Taking this role at Plymouth Argyle feels like the perfect next step in my career," Rooney said. "This is an opportunity to be part of an exciting project. I look forward to helping to build squad of players to play ex pansive football - and to entertain the Green Army.

Rooney lasted just 83 days as manager of Birmingham, who were relegated from the Championship at the end of the season, and was previously in charge of MLS team DC United and Derby County.

"Rooney's managerial experience so far has demonstrated his strong character and ability to battle against the odds,' Plymouth said in a statement.

The 38-year-old Rooney enjoyed a decorated career, winning five Premier League titles and the Champions League. He is England's most capped outfield player of all time after making 120 appearances. (AP)

Osorio joins Tijuana: Former Mexico national team boss Juan Carlos Osorio has been named head coach of Club Tijuana, the

Liga MX club said on Friday. The 62-year-old replaces another one-time Mexico manager, Miguel Herrera, who was sacked after a disappointing run

"Welcome, coach Osorio! Let's write a great success story together," read a statement published on Tijuana's official

Osorio, whose contract will reportedly run until December 2025, has been out of work since parting ways with Egyptian side

Zamalek last November Club Tijuana finished 16th in the 18-team Liga MX Clausura regular season, which concluded in late April. (Xinhua)

Penso, Alves make history: Female match officials were appointed to work the Copa America

for the first time on Friday. María Victoria Penso of the United States and Edina Alves of Brazil will be referees in the tournament

Both will be supported by assistants Neuza Back of Brazil, Mary Blanco of Colombia, Migdalia Rodríguez of Venezuela, and Brooke Mayo and Kathryn Nesbitt of the U.S

Nicaragua's Tatiana Guzmán was designated as a video review official

"It is a high commitment taken by CONMEBOL since 2016, betting on the development and professionalization of more women on and off the field of play, promoting soccer with equality in different tour-naments," the South American soccer body said in a statement.

Salmiya hand Al-Qadisiya second straight loss

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: In the third round of the Premier League, the Salmiya Club's first handball team dealt a blow to their opponent, Al-Qadisiya, with a decisive 29-21 victory at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah

HANDBALL

Complex hall. This loss marks the second consecutive defeat for the "Yellow" club. The triumph for Al-Samivai comes after two consecutive losses, revitalizing their standing in the league. In other third-round matches, Al-Arabi secured a 29-26 win against Burgan, while Kuwait Club dominated Kazma with a 34-21 victory. As it



Players fighting for the ball.

stands, Kuwait Club leads the Premier League standings with 30 points, followed by Al-Qadisiya with 25 points, and Kazma in third place with 24 points. Al-Salmiya sits in fourth place with 23 points, Al-Arabi in fifth with 21 points, and Burgan in sixth with 18

Today, the fourth round matches are scheduled, with Burgan facing Al-Qadisiya at 4:30 pm, Al-Arabi playing against Kazma at 6:00 pm, and Kuwait Club concluding the matches against Al-Salmiya at 7:30

In the first division league, Al-Fahaheel emerged victorious over Al-Sahel with a score of 33-29 in the second round, while Al-Sulaibikhat dominated Al-Tadamon with a commanding 54-22 win.

Albenali: Sports is a significant pillar in ABK's CSR endeavors

ABK sponsors final soccer match of HH the Amir Cup

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: As part its distinctive partnership with Kuwait Football Association, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently sponsored the semi-final and final football matches of HH the Amir Cup, won by Qadsia SC.

This sponsorship is in line with ABK's ongoing commitment to supsports in Kuwait, specifically

SOCCER

football which is considered the most popular both locally and worldwide. This endeavor contributes to the advancement of local football that positively impacts Kuwait in the FIFA

World Rankings. During the football matches, ABK took the opportunity to continue in its efforts to support the Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association's 'Let's Be Aware' campaign to help raise financial literacy through displaying content on the stadium's

On this occasion, Sager Albenali, Chief Communications Officer at ABK, commented, "HH the Amir Cup is considered amongst the most anticipated league. This sponsorship stems from our belief in the significance and popularity enjoyed by Kuwaiti football

clubs across all segments of society." He emphasized that ABK's comprehensive CSR initiatives are focused at partnering with various parties from

سمعا وطاعة

China athletes excel at worlds

KOBE, Japan, May 25, (Xinhua): Chinese para-athletes shone brightly at the nine-day Para Athletics World Championships in the Japanese port city of Kobe, tallying a record number of golds and shattering multiple world records as this edition of the tournament concluded here on Saturday.

At the Universiade Memorial Stadium, China bagged a total of 87 medals, including 33 golds, both record highs for the country at a single championships event.

On Saturday, the last competition day of the event, Chinese para-athletes concluded their games with two strong

Wheelchair racer Dai Yunqiang won the gold in the men's 800m T54 final with a time of one minute 34.59 seconds, outrunning his compatriot Hu Yang, who took silver.

Meanwhile. Chinese female

different sectors to be a main contribu-

tor that attracts large audiences from

the special attention ABK places on

sports activities as part of its CSR en-

deavors that aim at encouraging eve-

ryone to engage in physical activities

Furthermore, Albenali stressed on

all age groups.

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait logo during the final of His Highness the Amir's Cup.

sprinters Zhou Xia and Guo Qianqian in the women's 100m T35 final finished first and second with season's bests of 14.06s and 14.35s,

Asked to rate his run on a scale of 1 to 10, Dai Yunqiang was satisfied after pocketing the gold. "I think I'm a solid 10!" Among other Chinese gold medalists on Saturday, Wen Xiaoyan took the women's 200m T37 by clocking 25.75 seconds, while visually impaired runner Liu Cuiqing recorded a time of 24.36 seconds to triumph in the

women's 200m T11 final. Wen and Liu Cuiqing both lowered the world records previously set by

In another record-smashing event, Chinese thrower Sun Pengxiang won the men's javelin throw F41 gold with a world-record throw of 48.94 meters in his second attempt.

tain a healthy lifestyle. Concluding his statement, Albenali congratulated the winners and emphasized ABK's pride in sponsoring these

to increase their fitness level and main-

events which offer an entertaining ex-

perience for all members of the public.

r. Abdulla Al Sumait - Acting Group Chief Executive Officer.

Al-Arabi Club renew Volleyball staff deals for another season



Players pose with official after the renewal of the contract.

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: The volleyball coaching staff at Al-Arabi Club, under the leadership of Egyptian coach Ahmed Fahmy, has been renewed for another season. Additionally, Tunisian coach Belhassan Ben Amara and his compatriot Mohamed Gamal have been contracted to lead the junior teams for the upcoming 2024-2025 season. Moreover, Khaled Al-Roudhan, a member of the national team, has been appointed as an administrator for the junior teams due to his extensive experience in administrative roles with Kuwait Club teams.

The signing of these contracts was overseen by Al-Arabi Club Board Member Ali Ach and Director of the Junior Sector Hussein Al-

It's worth noting that Taha Al-Kaabi has been included in the Al-Arabi club's player roster, while the

VOLLEYBALL

contract of Tunisian professional Mohamed Al-Arabi has not been renewed. There is strong consideration to renew the contract of Dominican professional Alves.

Al-Qadisiya renew Soula's contract

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: Al-Qadisiya has renewed the contract of its Libyan professional, Mohamed Soula, for two seasons for one million dollars. Additionally, they have extended the contract of Nigerian Daniel Gebula for another season.

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Soula's performance this season has not been convincing in many matches, showing a significant decline from his form with Al-Arabi two seasons ago. This led Al-Qadisiya to negotiate a reduction in his contract value from

750 thousand dollars per season. Al-Qadisiya decided against renewing the contract of Malian player Ibrahima Tandia due to his excessive demands for a higher contract value. Tandia left last Thursday and did not play in the team's recent match against Kuwait in the Zain Premier League. Reports suggest he has received an offer from a Saudi club.

Sources indicate that Argentine Sergio Vitor has agreed to



The signing of the contract in progress.

join the Kuwait Club for the next season, while Omani Abdullah Fawaz has been excluded from Al-Qadisiya's plans due to his lackluster performance.

Several local players may also be dropped from Coach Muhammad Al-Mashaan's plans for the next season due to their lack of impact. These players include Sultan Salbukh, Abdullah Al-Shamali, Talal Al-Ansari, Nayef Zuwaid, Abdul-Hadi Khamis, Mishal Khaled, Aziz Nassar, and Ahmed Shabib.



Sunrisers Hyderabad's captain Pat Cummins, right, addresses a press conference as Kolkata Knight Riders' captain Shreyas Iyer looks on in Chennai, India, Saturday, May 25, 2024. Both teams will play in the finals of the Indian Premier League cricket tournament on Sunday. (AP) - See Page 14

Sports

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Kuwait Club win third straight league title

Al-Abyad rout Al-Qadisiya



Al-Arabi Club's Bandar Al-Salama controlls the ball during the league

Racing go top

Shandong cruise past Zhejiang 3-0

JINAN, May 25, (Agenies): Shandong Taishan smashed Zhejiang FC 3-0, while Meizhou Hakka FC beat Wuhan Three Towns 1-0 in the Chinese Super League (CSL) on Saturday.

Home side ShandAong took the initiative as Brazilian forward Crysan broke the deadlock in the 14th minute. Li Yuanyi added another six minutes later, when he received a cross from Crysan inside the box. Before halftime, Zheng Zheng netted a free-trick to further extend Shandong's lead.

In the 80th minute, Shanmidfielder Huang Zhengyu, who was recently called up to China's national team for their two World Cup qualifiers in June, was substituted with an apparent injury.

In Saturday's other game, Chen Jie's volley from a corner was enough to see Meizhou Hakka defeat Wuhan Three

Racing Club rose to the top of Argentina's Primera Division standings on Friday with a 4-0 away win over Tigre.

Gaston Martirena and Adrian Martinez struck firsthalf goals before Maximiliano Salas and Juan Fernando **Quintero** extended the Buenos Aires club's lead after the interval.

SOCCER

The result leaves Racing with seven points from three games, a point ahead of second-placed River Plate, who has a game in hand. Tigre, meanwhile, is 27th in the 28team standings with just one point so far this campaign.

"What I'm most impressed with right now is the commitment from our players," Racing manager Gustavo Costas told reporters after the match. "From the day I arrived, my message has been that we need to be dynamic, intense and press high. The boys started doing that after our first match, even the younger players who have just joined us." When asked if Racing could be considered title contenders, Costas replied: "I hope that this group can achieve something and that we continue growing as we have been. To fight for a league title we have to be consistent and continue improving."

Genoa beat Bologna 2-0 at home as both sides finished in Serie A.

Rusan Malinovskyi opened the scoring for the hosts in the 13th minute and Vithinha doubled the lead in the 59th.

Bologna is in fourth place and guaranteed a Champions League spot with the top five teams in Italy getting berths. With the loss it missed the chance to move into third and finish ahead of Juventus.

By Hassan Musa Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 25: Kuwait Club secured the Zain Premier League title for the third consecutive year and 19th title in its history by defeating Al-Qadisiya 3-0 in the ninth and penultimate round of the championship group.

In the same round, Al Arabi drew 1-1 with Al Fahaheel, and Al Salmiya triumphed over Al Nasr 5-3.

ya triumpned over Al Nasr 5-3.
Kuwait Club's points tally reached 66, followed by Al Arabi with 59, Al-Qadisiya with 51, Al Salmiya with 35, and Al Fahaheel with 32. Al Nasr remained in sixth place with 24 points.
Mohammed Dahham scored for Kuwait in the 10th minute Youssef Al-

wait in the 10th minute, Youssef Al-Haqqan added an own goal in the 12th, and Youssef Nasser netted a penalty kick in the 60th minute.

"Al-Abyad" showed its strength against Al-Qadisiya, achieving its goal and securing three points to avoid facing Al-Arabi in a critical situation in the final round scheduled for tomorrow. This ensured they avoided any scenario that could complicate their mission.

Kuwait Club is just two behind Al-Arabi and Al-Qadisiya. Maintaining this performance could make it challenging for their rivals to catch up.

Kuwait Club's Tunisian coach, Nabil Maaloul, described this league edition as "the most difficult in terms of competing for the title." He took over mid-season with equal points with Al-Arabi and one point behind Al-Qadisiya. Maaloul noted that the Premier League teams' level was unprecedentedly strong, with Al-Qadisiya and Al-Arabi competing until the last rounds.

He praised the tremendous efforts by everyone in Kuwait Club, whose continuous and diligent work culminated in winning the title. Regarding his future with Kuwait Club next season, he mentioned that "things have not yet been resolved with the administration.

SOCCER

Vice President of the Football Association in Kuwait Club, Adel Oqla, attributed his team's success to continuous work in the "White Castle," the administration's support, and the great effort by the players, as well as the technical, administrative, and medical staff.

He emphasized that the championships and successes achieved by "Al-Abyad" increase the responsibility and require more work in the coming period. He noted the task this season was challenging due to fierce competition from Al-Arabi, Al-Qadisiya, and most participating teams.

Regarding the victory over Al-Qadisiyah, Oqla pointed out that the players were highly focused and succeeded in achieving its goals within the first quarter of an hour.

During the ninth round of the Zain Premier League, Al-Arabi Club's player, Bandar Al-Salama, sustained an injury in the match against Al-Fahaheel. Despite no apparent contact from opposing players, Al-Salama collapsed in the first half. Medical tests confirmed a partial tear in his anterior cruciate ligament (ACL). This injury comes after a previous ACL injury in November 2022, which sidelined him for six months.



Kuwait Club players celebrate after beating Al-Qadisya to win the Zain Premier League.

Kuwait included in expanded World Championship 'lineup'

PRAGUE, May 25: Fuhaid Al-Aj-mi, President of the Kuwaiti Winter Games Club, announced that the International Ice Hockey Federation has increased the number of teams in the fourth level of the World Championship, which includes the Kuwaiti team, from four to six. The expanded roster now includes teams from Kuwait, Iran, Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Armenia. This decision was made during the Federation's General Assembly meeting in Prague, Czech Republic, with Kuwaiti representatives present.

Al-Ajmi explained that this increase will enhance competitiveness at this level, helping to develop and improve the technical skills of the teams involved. He emphasized that the club will intensify its efforts to prepare the Kuwaiti team for the upcoming championship next year, aiming to win the title and advance to the third level. The

ICE HOCKEY

Kuwaiti team came close to achieving this in the previous championship held in Kuwait last April, finishing in second place.

He also noted that the club is committed to participating in meetings of international, continental, and regional federations for all five of its winter



Kuwaiti delegation to the International Ice Hockey Federation meeting.

Man United win FA Cup after stunning Man City

LONDON, May 25, (AP): Manchester United won the FA Cup after stunning defending champion Manchester City 2-1 in the final at Wembley on Saturday.

United's first silverware of the season deprived crosstown rival City of the first back-to-back English league-cup doubles.

SOCCER

The final was a repeat of last year's which City won 2-1, and Pep Guardiola's team did not give up its trophy without a fight.

Alejandro Garnacho opened the scoring in the 30th minute after mistakes from City defender Josko Gvardiol and goalkeeper Stefan

Kobbie Mainoo then added a second goal in the 39th to spark pasBARCELONA, Spain, May 25, (AP): Xavi Hernández said Saturday that he is leaving Barcelona with "a clear conscience" that he did his best after the club decided to part ways with the former player, but that it will be up to president Joan Laporta to explain why

"These have obviously been tough days, but my conscience is clear," head

sionate celebrations from manager Erik ten Hag, whose job was under intense scrutiny going into the final.

United was in control at halftime but City piled the pressure on in the second half and eventually got back into the game through substitute Jeremy Doku's long range shot into the coach Xavi said. "I have been here two-and-a-half years. It has not been easy. But I think that we can feel proud of the work we have done.'

'Laporta will have to explain why I won't continue'

In his first news conference since Barcelona announced on Friday that Xavi would not finish the final year of his contract, the 44-year-old said that he will now "take a break" from coaching.

bottom corner in the 87th.

By that point Erling Haaland had hit the bar, Kyle Walker had forced goalkeeper Andre Onana into two outstretched saves, and substitute Julian Alvarez missed the target from close range with only the keeper to

His last game in charge will be at Sevilla on Sunday.

Xavi's departure comes just one month after he had walked back a previous decision he made in January to leave the club this summer. In April, he said that he had changed his mind because the team was playing better and he believed it could bounce back from a trophy-less campaign.

Laporta had publicly celebrated Xavi's commitment to stay at that time. But last week the president was reportedly displeased when the head coach spoke openly about how the club's poor finances would impede it from competing with fierce rival Real

SOCCER

Neither Laporta nor any club official has said why they wanted Xavi to leave, and the head coach did not shed any light on the circumstances of his exit either.

"The president told me his reasons for why he thinks the club needs a change, and I can only respect that. I am a club man," Xavi said. "We shook hands, hugged and wished one another the best. From now on I will be just

"He will have to explain his motives.

Xavi's only previous coaching job was at a Qatari club before Laporta brought him back to take over at Barcelona in November 2021. He led the team to the Spanish league title last year, its first major trophy since Lionel Messi left, and signed a one-year contract extension in September.

But Barcelona struggled to compete this campaign and it will finish the league a distant second to champion

Spanish and German media speculated that former Bayern Munich coach Hansi Flick would become Xavi's replacement.

Whoever arrives will inherit a team with young talents Lamine Yamal, Pau Cubarsí and the injured Gavi Páez but with very limited financial resources to sign new players.

Artem Dovbyk scored a hat trick as Girona crushed Granada 7-0 and put the perfect finish to the Catalan club's spectacular season on Friday.



Manchester City's Erling Haaland challenges for the ball with Manchester United's Diogo Dalot during the English FA Cup final soccer match between Manchester City and Manchester United at Wembley Stadium in London. (AP)

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