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Opinion

King Hamad in front of Putin ... improvised speech with the utmost wisdom

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THE King of Bahrain Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa delivered an improvised speech to the Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Through this brief speech, the head of the current Arab Summit emerged as an advocate of humanity first, transcending his role as an advocate solely for the Arabs.

Particularly noteworthy is Bahrain's initiative for an international peace conference, which was initially agreed upon by Arab consensus, and is now echoing as a global imperative rather than solely an Arab one.

The events that unfolded in the region over recent years,

notably in Gaza over the past eight months, has put the region and the world in the hands of a demon.

This is undoubtedly the direct outcome of King Hamad bin Isa's steadfast pursuit of balanced policies at various levels - Bahraini, Gulf, Arab and international - spanning over a quarter of a century.

That is why the presence of Manama in those years among the decision-making capitals was remarkable. Its kings realized that

tolerance is the basis of relations between nations and fostering global peace begins with embracing openness

to people and resolving conflicts. They know that global stability cannot be achieved without peace in the Middle East.

From this perspective, the first visit following the conclusion of the Arab Summit was to Russia. This decision was motivated by Moscow's significance in Arab affairs as well as its status as one of the major global powers.

During this meeting, the Bahraini King very openly explained what the Arabs had agreed upon during their summit. This was what led the decision-making circles, not only in Russia, to receive his speech with great attention.

In the realm of international media, the sensitive Arab issues championed by Manama are currently overshadowing other issues. This necessitates everyone to be vigilant in scrutinizing every statement and action from the leadership of the Arab Summit, particularly concerning pressing humanitarian crises like Gaza and other pertinent Arab issues in a region that is brimming with turmoil.

King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa is known for his frank-

ness. He does not shy away from doors, because he relies on his skill - a large wealth of knowledge on various matters, and deep cultural understanding. Over the past years, he has worked with great effort to develop this elegant, peaceful and tolerant kingdom, and also restore its role in the world.

Back to his speech, there is no doubt that the Russian delegation, led by President Putin, felt as if the king was reading from a memorized book, or rather weaving royal material for an Arab dress characterized with frankness.

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Kuwait Amir receives PM, First Deputy PM

KUWAIT CITY, May 26, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, received at Seif Palace, Sunday, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir also received the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousuf Saud Al-Sabah.

5,501 residents warned

'Update addresses in 30 days or face fines'

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) has called upon approximately 5,500 individuals to review and update their residential addresses within 30 days, starting from today, Sunday, May 26.

The authority announced the cancellation of residential addresses for 5,501 people, either based on the property owner's approval or due to the demolition of the building.

Mansour Al-Mizan, the Director General of the Authority, stated in an interview with Al-Rai that a change in residential address invalidates the Civil Card.

Al-Mizan also noted that this process could be completed via the Sahel application, without the need to visit the Authority.

Al-Mizan urged government and private entities to verify the validity of the Civil ID Card and not to rely solely on the optical image of the

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Crackdown on forged certificates intensifies

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: A government source said examining employee certificates is a top priority, with a timetable for completion expected in the coming days, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The source revealed that higher directives have been issued to identify employees who refuse to submit their certificates, and legal measures will be taken against them.

The examination and audit process will be accelerated, and employees found to have forged their certificates will be referred to the Public Prosecution.

Three charges await those involved in certificate forgery: seizing public funds, forgery, and fraud to obtain unlawful gains and privileges.

The source noted that hundreds of employees who refused to submit their certificates have requested retirement, raising suspicions against them.

Their files and certificates will be scrutinized, and legal action will be taken against those suspected of fraud, even if they have been employed for years.

Some employees have claimed their certificates are with the hiring authority since their initial appointment. However, this excuse will not be accepted. All employees are required to submit their certificates automatically to avoid administrative procedures, which may include salary suspension and final warnings.

The government will implement other methods to detect forged certificates, searching archives for those who abstain from submitting their documents.

Legal penalties will be studied for those who fail to comply with the submission requirement, as submitting a forged document is a serious offense.

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Major Kuwait banks to lift 'loan ban' on expats

KD 250 minimum salary for gov't sector, KD 500 for private eligible

- Certain jobs, particularly those at risk of Kuwaitization, remain ineligible for financing
■ Eligible borrowers include judges, doctors, teachers, engineers, association employees, and technicians
■ Stability factors such as 10 years of service and employment at reputable companies reduce risk
■ Financial stability, including deposits, can qualify customers for loans exceeding 25,000 dinars
■ Increased competition among banks may attract more expatriate borrowers
■ Credit slowdown has prompted banks to ease lending restrictions for expatriates



Ministry of Public Works photo

Kuwait Public Works Minister urges punctuality

Clear path for projects implementation: Al-Mashaan

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: The Minister of Public Works and State Minister for Municipality Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan recently presided over a lengthy meeting with officials at the Ministry of Public Works to discuss various topics related to the ministry's work, including the implementation of current projects and the completion rates of these projects.

Al-Mashaan instructed the ministry's officials to remove all obstacles to the implementation of these projects stressing the necessity of adhering to contract specifications to ensure optimal completion and to fully benefit from these projects.

During the meeting, the sector heads reviewed the work plans for each sector and highlighted the most important works that must be completed within 100 days and during the current fiscal year 2024/2025.

The minister also discussed projects within the development plan and the government's work program - the most prominent of which are Kuwait International Airport 'Passenger Terminal 2', railway link between Kuwait and Riyadh, Umm Al-Hayman purification station, Maternity Hospital, and radical solution for road maintenance in all governorates by floating 12 contract tenders.

She underscored the need to implement all relevant procedures as per the governance and digital systems to ensure enhanced transparency and integrity, as well as better services.

NCCAL, YPA collab

Bid to empower Kuwait's youth

KUWAIT CITY, May 26, (KUNA): National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) and Youth Public Authority (YPA) agreed on Sunday to work together to enhance creative economy among Kuwaiti youth.

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KUNA photo

Other Voices

ICC & ICJ - The courts of last resort

By Tareq Yousef AISHUMAIMRY

For weeks, the ICC has been targeted by Israeli government officials who expected the court to issue arrest warrants against Israeli leaders for war crimes and it is now clear that they were right to be concerned.

On May 20, 2024, ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan announced that he had applied for arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Galant, as well as the three Hamas leaders - including its leader, Yahya Sinwar.

The Public Prosecutor accuses Hamas leaders of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity resulting from the attack launched by Hamas on Israel on October 7, 2023.

As a standard practice, the International Criminal Court summons those responsible for crimes committed, and therefore accusing Hamas leaders of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity is a procedural part

of issuing an arrest request according to the evidence presented before the Public Prosecutor.

While Israeli crimes include using starvation as a weapon and withholding humanitarian aid from the civilian population in Gaza. It is now up to the Pre-Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court (which is made up of three judges) to issue arrest warrants according to the reasons presented to them by the Public Prosecutor to the Court, a decision that may take weeks or months to consider. Israel's response to the Public Prosecutor decision was to attack the International Criminal Court.

One might reasonably wonder whether the court has jurisdiction over Hamas leaders and Israeli government officials. Israel is not a party to the Rome Statute and the treaty that established the court, but the "State

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Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:19 Asr 15:20
Sunrise .. 04:51 Maghrib .. 18:39
Zohr 11:45 Isha 20:09

Local

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

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Hot with light to moderate freshening at times northerly wind to northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-45 km/h.
By Night: Rather hot with light

Weather

to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-35 km/h.	Abdaly	46	28
	Jahra	46	31
	Salmiyah	39	30
	Nuwaisib	43	26
	Wafra	45	26

Other Voices

Xinjiang is a wonderful land

By His Excellency the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the State of Kuwait Zhang Jianwei

ON May 28, the Chinese cultural and artistic delegation consisting of 60 artists will make a special visit to Kuwait, during which Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center will host the epic musical show entitled, "Xinjiang is a Wonderful Land." This is in addition to a photography exhibition entitled, "Xinjiang Under the Camera Lens," a souvenirs exhibition entitled, "Intangible Cultural Heritage of Xinjiang," and other activities.

The Chinese always say: "No one knows how vast and beautiful China is until he visits Xinjiang." Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region is located in north-west China, in the center of the Eurasian continent, with an area of more than 1.66 million square kilometers. It is the largest province in China in terms of area. Xinjiang has a vast territory; where mountains, lakes, grasslands and deserts together form a beautiful landscape, and where diverse ethnic groups live, creating a unique and attractive place. Xinjiang is an important station on the ancient Silk Road, the gateway to the West, and an important land for the exchange of civilizations between the East and West.

In Xinjiang, there is stability and unity among citizens. It is home to more than 25 million people of multiple ethnicities. It is one of the province-level administrative regions with the most ethnic groups in China. Although people in Xinjiang have different languages and customs; stability, harmony and common progress form the main tone of Xinjiang. All communities enjoy equal status regardless of population size, historical roots, level of development, or differences in customs and traditions. It is where people of various nationalities live together, study together, and work together. It is where the customs of social life and culture of all ethnicities are exchanged and integrated; including languages, foods, music and architecture, jointly creating a beautiful scene of national unity in the new era.

Harmony

In Xinjiang, there is harmony and freedom of religious beliefs. Respecting and protecting freedom of religious belief is a fundamental policy that the Chinese government has long adhered to. There are many religions in Xinjiang; including Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Catholicism, Taoism and Orthodox Christianity. The regular religious activities are sponsored by religious groups and citizens themselves and are protected by the law, which provides convenience for religious believers from all ethnic groups to obtain religious knowledge. The government of Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region has been organizing pilgrimage activities every year since 1996, taking into account the cancellation due to the Covid-19 epidemic at the time. It arranges charter planes annually; providing high-quality entry and exit services, medical treatment and food to ensure the smooth performance of Hajj for qualified Muslims of all nationalities. It has translated Holy Books including the Holy Qur'an and Al Bukhari Book to different languages for the believers.

In Xinjiang, the economic boom continues. Since the introduction of the Belt and Road Initiative, the Xinjiang government has been making great efforts to pioneer the opening-up of the inland border areas, and its economic strength continues to grow to new levels. As a core area for China-Europe freight trains and a core area of the Silk Road Economic Belt, the number of China-Europe freight trains passing through Xinjiang ports has so far exceeded 70,000. Tourism is thriving in Xinjiang, as the region received more than 265 million local and foreign tourists, setting a record high in 2023. Cotton production in Xinjiang represents more than 90 percent of cotton production in China. It has been able to achieve mechanization, digitization and intelligence in production. Nearly 7,000 cotton harvesting machines were built in 2023, bringing the automated harvesting rate to 85 percent. Xinjiang is also vigorously developing clean energy, and the installed capacity to generate electricity from wind energy, photovoltaics and other renewable energy is expected to reach more than 64 million kilowatts. In 2023, Xinjiang's GDP reached 1.9 trillion yuan -- an annual increase of 6.8 percent, and its growth rate in most economic indicators ranks among the highest in China.

Achievements

All of these remarkable achievements are due to a safe and stable development environment. Xinjiang has suffered from terrorism and religious extremism, with thousands of violent terrorist incidents occurring there. Subsequently, Xinjiang adopted a series of anti-terrorism and extremism measures, including establishing vocational education and training centers in accordance with the law. These measures have significantly improved the domestic security situation and effectively protected the human rights of people of all national groups. There has been no terrorist incident in Xinjiang for seven consecutive years, and the social situation has witnessed remarkable improvement. The people live and work in peace and tranquility. People of all ethnic groups enjoy an increasing sense of gain, happiness and security; sticking together like pomegranate seeds. However, some countries are fabricating and spreading lies and rumors about Xinjiang, making baseless accusations of what they call "forced labor" and "genocide" in Xinjiang, and are using all available means to distort China's image, to obstruct China's stable development in Xinjiang, and to undermine friendly relations between China and Arab and Islamic countries. In 2023, more than 390 foreign delegations and more than 4,300 people visited Xinjiang. They believed that what they saw with their own eyes in Xinjiang was completely contrary to Western media reports, and there was no such thing as "forced labor", "genocide" or "concentration camps". They also expressed their appreciation for the results of efforts to combat terrorism and extremism in Xinjiang.

Xinjiang is a wonderful land. I am sincerely pleased to invite friends to watch the theatrical performance, "Xinjiang is a Wonderful Land", which will be held at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center, to enjoy the joyful singing and dancing of people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang, and to see the new appearance of Xinjiang in the new era. I also welcome everyone to visit and have a look at Xinjiang, where you will see the beautiful, prosperous, harmonious, peaceful and developed Xinjiang with your own eyes.

Two women freed on KD 1,000 bail

Kuwaiti woman granted position as prosecutor after court ruling

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: The Administrative Court obligated the Ministry of Justice and the Supreme Judicial Council to appoint a Kuwaiti woman, who is a law graduate, into the position of "Prosecutor class C" for the year 2023, after proving that she deserves it.

According to the case file, Lawyer Jarrah Hamid Al-Sharika explained that his client is of Kuwaiti lineage and origin, and belongs to an ancient and reputable family. She holds a university degree from the Faculty of Law of Kuwait University with a major grade of (very good) for the year 2021/2022. She then applied for the position of Deputy Public Prosecutor - C after it was advertised.

On September 2, 2023, she took the tests set by the ministry for that position at the Institute of Judicial and Legal Studies. She passed all the tests with high competence, and she had submitted certificates of appreciation from various authorities.

However, she was surprised to know that her application was not accepted, and some others were chosen to fill that job even though they were lower than her in terms of competence and excellence in academic degrees.

Those whose applications were accepted held good and acceptable grades, while she obtained her university degree from the Faculty of Law at Kuwait University with a major grade of (very good).

On 11/12/2023, she filed a grievance and petitioned the administration's deci-

sion to reject her despite her qualifications and achievements. She requested the administration to reconsider its decision, as it was marred with unfairness. However, the administration did not respond to her request, which prompted her to file a lawsuit.

The complainant's defense counsel Lawyer Jarrah Hameed Al-Sharika said the court ruled that the defendant was obligated to appoint her without ordering the cancellation of the appointment of any of those who were previously appointed.

Attorney Al-Sharika said, "Since the lawsuit was filed, we believe that my client was entitled to this job due to her merits."

□ □ □

2 women freed on bail: The Criminal Court has decided to release on bail worth KD 1,000 two Kuwaiti women who were accused of violence onboard a Kuwait Airways plane that was coming from Thailand and of assaulting the plane's security officer.

During the court session, the defense counsel of the two citizens, Lawyer Abdul Mohsen Al-Qattan, asked for a deadline to view and photograph the case documents. He requested the court to release his clients on bail for any value that the court deems appropriate, as they are Kuwaitis and there is no fear of them escaping the country.

According to the case file, they were not in a normal state of mind when they started a quarrel in the plane and then resisted the plane's security officer and insulted him. This resulted in the flight returning to Bangkok International Airport out of concern for the safety and security of the plane and its



KUNA photo
Chief of General Staff of the Kuwait Army, Lieut-Gen Al-Muzain receives the UAE ambassador accompanied by the Emirati Military Attache, Colonel Mohamad Al-Muhairi.

Kuwait's Army Chief of Staff meets UAE ambassador

Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwait Army, Lieutenant General Bandar Al-Muzain, discussed on Sunday with the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE)

to Kuwait Dr. Matar Al-Neyadi important topics of mutual interest, mainly military ones.

General Al-Muzain received the Emirati ambassador accom-

panied by the Emirati Military Attache, Colonel Mohamad Al-Muhairi, said the Army General Staff in a statement.

The statement added that dur-

ing the meeting, friendly conversations were exchanged, and the most important topics of mutual interest were discussed. (KUNA)

'Gulf biometric link project to detect dual nationality cases'

'Kuwait-Saudi linking process set to be completed'

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Kuwait is rapidly advancing in the field of biometric fingerprinting, preparing to finalize the Gulf biometric link project, according to a special source speaking to Al-Rai daily said. This project will detect all cases of dual nationality among the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, automatically resolving the issue.

In the past, manipulations of names always created a state of uncertainty. Now, even if the entire four-part name differs between Kuwait and any other Gulf country, it will be uncovered because fingerprints do not lie, providing results that are beyond doubt.

The source highlighted that biometric fingerprinting will simplify resolving the issue of dual nationality, revealing individuals who might use different identities and documents when moving between countries. This is particularly important given the social, economic, and financial burdens associated with dual nationality, which is a significant concern for the Gulf countries.

Regarding the fate of dual nationals in Kuwait, the source emphasized that the law is unequivocal: anyone holding another nationality will have their Kuwaiti nationality immediately revoked.

Withdrawal

When asked about the option to choose, the source explained that it is an exceptional case and not correctly applied. The law clearly mandates the immediate withdrawal of nationality without hesitation.

The biometric linking process between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia has already commenced and is close to completion, particularly since Kuwait met the Ministry of Interior's deadline to collect biometric fingerprints from citizens by September 30th.

Concerning nationality fraudsters using false names, the source stated that detecting such cases depends on complaints from the concerned parties, prompting necessary investigations and legal actions. This process begins with the revocation of nationality and encompasses all stages of criminal investigation and legal consequences.

When asked whether the names currently under scrutiny, potentially numbering in the thousands, will be presented to the relevant authorities and the Council of Ministers, the source replied that they are not pre-empting any events.

Recently, the Board of Directors of the Central Agency for Addressing the Situations of Illegal Residents (Bedoun) met under the chairmanship of the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef. The meeting included agency head



UN Resident Coordinator to Kuwait Ghada Al-Tahir.



KUNA photos
European Union Ambassador to Kuwait Anne Koistinen.

Kuwait's Deputy FM receives UN and EU ambassadors

Kuwaiti Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Sunday received UN Resident Coordinator to Kuwait Ghada Al-Tahir.

They discussed ways of bilat-

eral cooperation and coordination, in addition to supporting UN efforts in several matters.

Meanwhile, Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad also received European Union

Ambassador to Kuwait Anne Koistinen.

During the reception, they discussed ways of developing partnerships and cooperation between the two sides. (KUNA)

Several specializations students hoped to pursue excluded

Higher Education Ministry's plan regarding foreign scholarship sparks disappointment

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: As most high school graduates finalize their future academic paths, with many securing preliminary acceptance from accredited foreign universities for their desired specializations, the recent announcement of the Ministry of Higher Education's foreign scholarship plan for the 2024/2025 academic year has caused significant disappointment, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The new plan, revealed a few days ago, excludes several specializations that many students had hoped to pursue. This abrupt change has rendered many students' prior acceptances ineffective.

The range of exceptions to the foreign scholarship plan has widened, notably excluding business administration.

An informed source from the Ministry of Higher Education explained to Al-Jarida that this exclusion is due to prior coordination with the Service Bureau, Civil Affairs, and the Ministry of Higher Education.

The aim is to align offered spe-

cializations with the labor market's needs over the next five years, reduce admissions to Kuwait University and private universities, and encourage students to pursue rare specializations such as medical fields and artificial intelligence.

In response, students are calling for a more balanced admission plan that doesn't eliminate many specializations from foreign scholarships, limiting them instead to local institutions.

Some students and their parents told Al-Jarida that they don't oppose government agencies setting the scholarship plan but insist it should be done early, before students make their decisions and secure initial approvals from foreign universities.

They emphasized the difficulty and time required to gain admission to competitive programs like Business Administration, which has now been excluded from the plan despite its broad relevance in both government and private sectors.

Graduates argue that there should have been a balance in accepting Business Administration students

between internal and external scholarships rather than completely removing the major from the foreign scholarships plan.

They pointed out that not all students are from the scientific department; literary graduates cannot pursue medical specializations. They asked, "What is our fate now that the new admission plan excludes Business Administration?" highlighting that studying abroad is costly, and many cannot afford to study at their own expense.

They urged the Ministry of Higher Education to reconsider and allow students interested in Business Administration to be included in the foreign scholarships plan.

Additionally, the students noted that other majors, like marketing, which have similar labor market prospects to Business Administration, were not canceled. They expressed their unwillingness to study fields that don't align with their academic interests, urging the Ministry of Higher Education to reevaluate the plan.

PADA employees assigned to supervisory roles

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: The Personnel Affairs Committee of the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA) held a meeting that was presided over by the Acting Director of PADA Al-Humaidi Al-Mutairi in the presence of representatives of the medical, educational, administrative and financial sectors and members of the Personnel Affairs Committee.

During the meeting, decisions were issued to assign some employees to supervisory positions in PADA. These employees are:-

■ Noura Yousef Abdullah Al-Ibrahim, an accountant, was assigned to work as Head of the Purchasing Department in the Department of Financial Affairs.

■ Dalal Dhari Abdullah Al-Othman, a senior Physiotherapy specialist, was assigned to work as Head of the Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Department in the Department of Rehabilitation Medical Center.

■ Dhia Mused Abdul Wahab

Al-Musallam, a senior accountant, was assigned to work as Head of the Exchange Accountant Department in the Department of Financial Affairs.

■ Ali Abbas Hamza Al-Balushi, a social services supervisor, was assigned to work as Head of the Department of the Social Rehabilitation Center for Men in Sabahiya.

■ Maha Mohammed Al-Dosari, a senior psychologist, was assigned to work as Head of the Department of the Early Intervention Center for Disabled Children.

Lieutenant General Pilot Bandar Salem Al-Muzain, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem

Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and other board members. They reviewed several emerging topics and made decisions accordingly.

'Need robust measures to shield youth from smoking'

"EACH year on May 31, the World Health Organization and its global partners commemorate 'World No Tobacco Day' to underscore the health hazards associated with tobacco consumption and advocate for effective policies to curb its usage," columnist **Dr Hind Al-Shoumer** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"This year's theme, 'Youth Rise Up and Raise Their Voices', spotlights the need for governments to shield young people from the deceptive marketing strategies employed by the tobacco industry.

"By targeting youth, the industry seeks to perpetuate addiction and secure long-term profits. Tobacco use stands as the leading cause of preventable death, claiming the lives of one in ten adults worldwide.

"Alarmingly, children are increasingly turning to e-cigarettes with estimates indicating that 37 million adolescents aged 13-15 currently use tobacco globally.

"The overarching objective of 'World No Tobacco Day' is to safeguard present and future generations from the dire health ramifications of tobacco use, as well as the social, environmental, and economic adversities that stem from exposure to tobacco smoke.

"The historical roots of smoking trace back to 5000 BC, where it held significance in diverse cultures worldwide. Initially intertwined with religious ceremonies and rituals, smoking evolved over centuries.

"The modern cigarette, credited to the French in 1840, revolutionized tobacco consumption, spreading across Europe and Egypt by 1880.

"Quitting smoking poses significant challenges, with the initial three days marked by withdrawal symptoms like irritability, anxiety, insomnia, and increased appetite.

"Studies reveal that youth uptake of smoking is driven by factors such as peer influence, psychological stress, and perceived enjoyment. Notably, males exhibit higher rates of smoking addiction compared to females, with a ratio of 90:10.

"Contrary to popular belief, smoking hookah is not a safer alternative to cigarettes. Hookah smoke contains harmful substances like tar, carbon monoxide, heavy metals, and carcinogens, exposing users to significant health risks akin to cigarette smoking.

"Tackling smoking as a public health crisis demands robust measures to shield youth from its hazards, fostering the development of healthier generations worldwide."

Also:

"The conclusion of the Arab Summit in Manama saw unanimous agreement among Arab leaders to call for a thorough investigation into the events unfolding in the Gaza Strip and to hold those responsible to account," columnist **Tarek Bourseli** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"They also urged influential international powers to set aside political calculations and double standards when confronting Israeli actions, labeling them as clear violations of international law.

"The leaders' statement condemned Israeli forces for targeting humanitarian and human rights organizations, attacking aid convoys, including extremist assaults, and extending aggression into Rafah, leading to the occupation of the crossing and the obstruction of relief aid to Palestinians.

"In his address at the summit, His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmed Al-Abdullah, speaking on behalf of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, reaffirmed Kuwait's steadfast stance, emphasizing that regional stability hinges on granting Palestinians their rights.

"He called on the international community to impose a ceasefire on Israel and rejected the forced displacement of Palestinians from Gaza, as well as any restrictions on the work of UNRWA.

"I had anticipated the unified Arab position against Israeli aggression and the firm Kuwaiti stance advocating for Palestinian rights, self-determination, and a two-state solution.

"This position, I expressed in an interview with the Bahraini newspaper Al-Bilad before the summit began, outlining the expectations of Arab peoples for the summit's role in addressing pressing issues and following up on the outcomes of previous summits.

"The summit's final statement, emphasizing urgent solutions such as deploying international forces in Gaza until a two-state solution is achieved, reinforced my belief that efforts were intensifying to address Arab demands.

"The 'Manama Summit' emerged

as a platform for urgent solutions and decisive Arab outcomes aimed at fostering comprehensive peace in the Middle East."

"It is impossible for the situation to last... a fact that gives us optimism. The king gathered the wise men of the country and said: 'I want eloquence and wisdom in my time of need to help me manage my crises.' The wise men were unable to do so, hence, one of them came to the king with a paper on which was written: 'All this will surely pass.'" columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The king carefully looked at the piece of paper, while the sage began to speak: 'O my lord, the world will not remain as it is. The days of happiness are coming, but they will certainly pass, and you will see sadness that hurts your heart, but it will also pass. The wisdom of Allah, my lord, is that all our conditions are good. The good and the bad, happiness and sadness will certainly pass.'

"Then the king smiled as he was satisfied. He ordered that this wise saying be displayed in all the fields of the kingdom, so that everyone who sees it will remember that 'it is impossible for the situation to last.' (End of quote).

"Indeed, this happens in life. We gave examples of the fluctuation of conditions. We said that a person goes through bad conditions, then good or vice versa. This condition is known in economics as the 'business cycle'. It has four stages -- stagnation, recovery, boom and contraction. Thus, damage will not last forever, as well as the improvement in living conditions. Just as the condition of a person fluctuates, the condition of the State fluctuates as well.

"To give examples, in the 1960s and 1970s, there was an economic boom in Kuwait, then a 'market climate' crisis, followed by recession. After the liberation of Kuwait, there was an almost boom. In America, there was the Great Depression in the 1930s with a huge unemployment rate, but with America's entry into World War II on the side of the allies against Nazi Germany, there was boom and recovery. When the 1945 ended, the automobile and film industries were revived. After the destruction of Japan in this war, we witnessed recovery.

"The Soviet Union was strong, but it disintegrated into different republics in the early 1990s. Germany was also strong and occupied many European countries, but it was defeated and divided into two parts -- eastern and western. Then, its economy returned strong after the destruction of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

"Vietnam was devastated after the fall of Saigon to the communists in 1975 at the end of the war, but it rose and became an Asian tiger, that is, among the fastest growing Asian countries. Britain was a superpower that occupied many countries, but it retreated into itself, up to the point that the people of Scotland demanded for independence from it.

"Rwanda in Africa was backward and then they advanced. Ethiopia was in a bad situation, then its internal situation improved. Venezuela was stable, but its internal situation was destroyed due to mismanagement. Europe was backward in the Middle Ages, then wars broke out between its countries, after which peace and union came.

"We were praising stability in Gulf Cooperation Council countries, but the situation became turbulent. The Gulf dispute with Qatar surfaced, then reconciliation occurred, and the Council's entity was once again cohesive.

"Some Arab countries, such as Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Yemen, were witnessing renaissance at all levels under the leadership of the King, then their situation worsened, but their situation will change for the better, according to the fluctuation of conditions. It is the year of life, so we hope that our Arab world will change towards a better future, God willing.

"We were brothers in love in Kuwait, belonging to its land, for we are its people. Then, fake nationalities came, violence spread across society, and our internal situation deteriorated. Someone dared to ask: 'Do you want rule or not?' This is very dangerous!

"This is how the conditions of nations fluctuate. Let us be optimistic. Our situation, even if it was bad, is now better than before. Let us hope for the best. Our country is in safe hands under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir, may Allah protect him.

"The decision to dissolve the National Assembly was wise, fearing that saboteurs would move to harm the country.

"We must put an end to the negative trends that have harmed the country. We have to strengthen national unity and create statesmen who will protect the country."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



KUNA photo
Acting General Director of KFF Lieutenant General Khaled Fahad during the coordination meeting with the specialized bodies.

Lieut-Gen Fahad meets with Municipality, EPA, PAI officials

KFF seeks efforts protecting people near tires dumping site in Al-Salmi

KUWAIT CITY, May 26, (KUNA): Kuwait Fire Forces (KFF) arranged on Sunday a coordination meeting with the specialized bodies to follow up on effort to protect citizens and residents near the tires dumping site in Al-Salmi.

Acting General Director of KFF

Lieutenant General Khaled Fahad praised in his speech during the meeting the efforts made in finding solutions to protect people from fires in the site.

He affirmed the importance of meeting with Kuwait's Municipality, Environment Public Authority and

Public Authority for Industry and following up with the actions taken.

He also stressed the importance of preparing the site with water tanks, fire extinguishers and take all safety measures in case of any emergencies in the site, pointing out the risks of not providing the safety tools.

Citizen's bid to smuggle 100 kg hashish from Iran via sea foiled

Man dies after falling from top of house; 450m cable stolen

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: A Kuwaiti citizen was arrested for smuggling 100 kilograms of hashish into the country from Iran via sea.

This arrest by the anti-narcotics officers, led by Brigadier General Muhammad Qabazard, is part of the series of strikes by the anti-narcotic unit under the directives of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior and Defense Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef.

In a press statement, the Security Media Department of the Ministry of Interior explained that the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) discovered the smuggling of 100 kilograms of drugs via sea and arrested a citizen for being involved in smuggling the contraband with the intention of trading it in the country. The market value of the seized narcotics is estimated at about a quarter of a million Kuwaiti dinars.

The narcotics were seized in Abu Halifa and referred to the competent authority.

The Ministry of Interior affirmed that the security officers will continue to confront drug dealers and smugglers, and protect and preserve society from these dangerous scourges.

It calls on everyone to cooperate with the security officers and report any negative phenomena on the emergency No. 112 as well as the DCGD Hotline No. 1884141.

Citizen dies from fall: A Kuwaiti citizen in his twenties died after falling from the top of his house in one of the areas of Jahra Governorate.



Mol photo
Suspect and the drugs seized by the security authorities.

According to a security source, when the Ministry of Interior's Operations Room received information about the incident, securitymen and paramedics immediately rushed to the location and found upon arrival that he had died.

His body was referred to forensic medicine, and investigations have been launched into the incident.

450m long cable stolen: The legal representative of a Chinese company has lodged a complaint at Qashaniyah Police Station, stating that a 450-meter long cable was stolen from the company's site in Abdally (Kilometer 60), reports Al-Anba daily.

The legal representative revealed that the company's security and safety official, a Chinese, discovered the theft. Forensic officers lifted fingerprints from the site to identify the culprit.

Theft Case No. 19/2024, classified as per the directive of the deputy public prosecutor.

ecutor.

Home delivery man robbed: The Jahra police are looking for three thieves for robbing an unidentified Asian home delivery service worker, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily added, the victim was making home delivery of cell phones and related devices.

The victim, in his complaint to the Taima police station, said three people assaulted him when he was on his way to deliver an order.

The suspects reportedly snatched from him two branded new cell phones, a mobile phone charger and a pair of earphones.

Police impersonator held: Personnel from the Criminal Investigation Department have arrested an unidentified person for impersonating a security officer and robbing expatriates in the suburbs of Fahaheel, Abu Halifa, and Mahboula.

Mol starts fingerprint system

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Coinciding with the first day of the implementation of the fingerprint attendance and departure system in the Public Security Sector of the Ministry of Interior, security sources affirmed the commitment of administrative and police employees to implement the new system for recording attendance and departure.

The sources highlighted the employees' commitment to arriving and leaving at the specified timings, which begin at 7:30 am and end at 2:30 pm for administrators, as well as the shift timings for those working in the security directorates and police stations.

They stressed that the new system worked without any problems.

The sources revealed that the Ministry of Interior had installed the devices in all departments, sections, and police stations of the public security sector a few months ago, and the new system was implemented from yesterday to control the attendance and departure process and adherence to work hours.

Defaulter freed sans bail; ordered to sign a pledge of 'good conduct'

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: The Misdemeanor Discrimination Department has revoked a previous ruling that sentenced a citizen to two months in prison with hard labor for issuing a dud cheque, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to court papers, the judge decided to abstain from issuing any verdict and freed the man without bail but ordered him to sign a pledge of good conduct.

Attorney Ahmed Al-Ahmad, representing the defendant, alleged that the plaintiff company engages in unethical lending practices, offering citizens loans with exorbitant interest rates, sometimes up to eight times the borrowed amount.

Additionally, the company allegedly coerces borrowers into signing multiple cheques for a single transaction, then submits these cheques to authorities for amounts significantly higher than the original loan.

Al-Ahmad argued that his client had no criminal intent in issuing the bad cheque and contended that the lending company was aware of the insufficient funds in the defendant's account at the time the agreement was made and the cheque was issued.

27 violation on markets, shops issued

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Within the framework of intensifying the inspection efforts of Kuwait Municipality teams in compliance with the directive of Director General of the Municipality Eng. Saud Al-Dabbous on the strict application of the Municipal Law, bylaws and regulations, the Public Relations Department in the Municipality announced that the Municipal Services Audit and Follow-up Department at the Municipality branch in Farwaniya Governorate carried out an inspection tour in Dajeej to ensure that the markets and stores are complying with the laws and regulations, reports Al-Anba daily.

In this context, Director of the Municipal Services Audit and Follow-up Department in Farwaniya Governorate Talal Al-Aqab disclosed that the recent inspection of shops and advertisements in Dajeej area on shops and advertisements resulted in the issuance of 27 violation citations. He said the violations uncovered during the inspection include non-renewal of the advertisement license, creating an introductory advertisement for the activity without a license, adding an introductory advertisement for the activity without a license, exploiting spaces and squares without a license from the Municipality, and failure to maintain the advertisement.

He affirmed that the inspectors in the governorate will continue their field tours to monitor those who violate the Municipality laws and regulations, and then take legal measures against them.

Young held for thefts: The Al-Ahmadi Governorate Investigation Department, specifically the Abu Halifa Investigation Office, has referred a young man born in 1996 to the Public Prosecution following his detailed confessions and admission of robbing expatriates using a Kuwait Municipality ID card. During his arrest, authorities found him in possession of eight civil cards, four bank cards belonging to his victims, five stolen mobile phones, a Kuwait Municipality ID page, and a stolen license plate which he used for his criminal activities, reports Al-Anba daily.

The surge in robbery cases within the Al-Ahmadi Governorate led detectives to form a special task force. Their investigation identified the perpetrator, who was driving an American vehicle with a stolen license plate. Upon his arrest, sanctioned by the Public Prosecution, and during the subsequent confrontation with the gathered evidence, the young man admitted to committing multiple robberies across various regions in the country.

Among the seized items was a stolen painting used by the accused. The thorough investigation and detailed confessions have now culminated in the referral of the case to the Public Prosecution for further legal action.



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Experts convene to explore cutting-edge treatments and research in cardiac care

Kuwait conference pioneers path to better health

KUWAIT CITY, May 26, (KUNA): Secretary-General of the Kuwait Heart Association, Dr Rashid Al-Owaish, stressed the importance of holding specialized conferences to provide doctors with the latest information, studies, and scientific research at the global level, as well as to discuss the latest developments in the treatment of heart diseases with the aim of improving the health system in the country.

Al-Owaish made these remarks during his speech at the opening ceremony of the Kuwait Heart Failure Conference, Saturday. The conference, organized by the Society in cooperation with the Sabah Al-Ahmad Heart Center, addresses numerous topics related to heart failure and reviews the latest therapeutic methods. It also aims to provide specialized doctors with the latest scientific findings in the field of diagnosis and treatment.

He explained that the conference, attended by a large number of local and international experts for one day, aims to provide sufficient information to society members to create effective health awareness regarding heart health. Additionally, it seeks to enrich experiences, exchange knowledge, and learn about the latest treatment methods, especially in the fields of technology and artificial intelligence.

In his address, Dr. Bassam Bulbanat, consultant cardiologist at the Sabah Al-Ahmad Center and the head of the conference, emphasized that the conference covers all aspects of heart failure diseases. It is the first of its kind to focus on this specialty within cardiology, making it an attractive opportunity for the extensive attendance



Dr Rashid Al-Owaish, Secretary-General of the Kuwait Heart Association, during an exclusive interview.



Dr. Hani Sabbour, consultant in cardiology at the Cleveland Clinic Hospital Institute in Abu Dhabi speaking at the conference.



Dr. Bassam Bulbanat, consultant cardiologist at the Sabah Al-Ahmad Center.



A group photo of the attendees.



One of the key speakers at the conference.



Photos by Mohammad Worsi among the attendees at the conference.

to benefit from the scientific material presented during the discussions.

He referred to a study published in 2015, indicating that patients with heart disease admitted to hospitals in Kuwait and the Arab Gulf countries were ten years younger on average than patients in America and Europe, where the average age was about 59 years. This significant difference underscores the importance of this issue.

Dr. Bulbanat noted that although the number of deaths due to heart disease had been declining over the past decade until 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic reversed this trend, returning death rates from heart disease to previous levels. Reaching the previously

achieved results may take ten years or more, posing a significant challenge for the future.

Dr. Hani Sabbour, consultant in cardiology and circulatory diseases at the Cleveland Clinic Hospital Institute in Abu Dhabi, highlighted in his speech that heart failure is one of the leading causes of death in the region. He emphasized the need for continuous data updating to support and manage patients effectively with the advancement of science.

He stressed that heart failure is a debilitating medical condition that poses life-threatening risks as the heart fails to pump enough blood throughout the body. This condition affects approximately 26 million people worldwide.

Dr. Sabbour explained that heart failure typically occurs after experiencing a heart attack or other heart-related diseases, or gradually develops due to conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure, or coronary artery disease. Obesity, high cholesterol, smoking, recurrent strokes, diabetes, and high blood pressure are among the most common contributing factors to heart failure.

He pointed out that there are over 20 types of modern medicines available alongside scientific advancements. However, many individuals with heart disease or associated risk factors fail to maintain appropriate cholesterol levels, which increases the likelihood of acute cardiovascular events.

Kuwait eyes upgraded electricity imports to bolster 'summer' grid

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: One week after the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy signed an agreement to purchase 500 megawatts from the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Qatar through the Gulf Electricity Network Authority, it is once again conducting negotiations to increase the quantity of imported electricity by purchasing an additional amount to strengthen Kuwait's

electricity network this summer, reports Al-Rai daily quoting sources from the ministry.

Sources said the ministry is taking this step with the aim of securing the electrical network during peak periods in summer, clarifying that the negotiations are still in the early stages; hence, the quantities that the ministry intends to import have yet to be determined.

'Prevention and Protection' campaign

KFF ramps up comprehensive summer safety program across all governorates

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) on Sunday launched an awareness and prevention campaign to have a "safe summer" (without accidents); in order to guarantee the safety of society, achieve community security and consolidate the concept of prevention to reduce the risks and causes of fire incidents and various accidents, which usually increase during summer, reports Al-Rai daily.

Director of the Public Relations Department at KFF Brigadier General Mohammad Al-Gharib told the daily that "in compliance with the directive of acting KFF Director General Major General Khaled Abdullah Fahd, an awareness campaign was launched under the slogan, 'Prevention and Protection'. This is in cooperation with the Ministry of Information, private institutions, military institutions, agencies, government and public benefit associations. It is part of KFF's strategy to raise public awareness on the importance of prevention."

He revealed that his department has addressed the concerned authorities to organize a three-month long program; which consists of awareness seminars, scientific methods, statistics and courses. He also affirmed the participation of various media outlets, communication platforms, cinemas, advertising companies and cooperative societies in presenting awareness materials to spread the 'prevention is protection' culture

among members of society, sects and communities in their own languages. He added KFF is asking for the assistance of the concerned authorities to translate these messages for people with special needs, stressing that KFF is keen on serving this category as well.

He said his department is committed to organizing and participating in lectures, programs and awareness events in collaboration with different agencies and institutions throughout the year; but the current campaign is more focused during summer as fire incidents are common in this season. He disclosed that most fire incidents are due to children playing with fire.

He went on to say: "During the summer months in 2022 -- from June to August, the number of fire incidents due to electrical short circuit reached 582 and the number of fire incidents due to teenagers and children tampering with a heat source or flammable materials reached 128 that resulted in 11 deaths. Within the same period in 2023, there were 652 fire incidents due to electrical short circuit and 140 due to children tampering with a heat source, resulting in five deaths and 83 injuries. We hope that we will not witness any fire incident and death due to fire this summer. God willing, we will have a safe summer this year."

He confirmed that the awareness programs will be held in government and private institutions and major commercial complexes in all governorates according to a schedule announced weekly. "These programs consist of awareness lectures in Arabic and English. If necessary, we will ask for the assistance of specialized translators for people with special needs.



Al-Gharib

Public Facilities Mgt Co to oversee project

Highway rest stops set for major upgrade

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: The Ministry of Finance has assigned the Public Facilities Management Company to manage the highway rest stops and chalets project, affirming the company has already acquired several rest stops in different areas, reports by Al-Rai daily quoting sources.

Sources stated it is highly probable that the contract with the ministry will include the company's management of future rest stops.

The contracts for managing the highway rest stops for the benefit of the State will last for 20 years. As part of the contract, the company will revamp the services offered at these rest areas, ensuring they are improved to the highest standard possible and reflect the importance of developing these vital locations on the highways, sources affirmed.

Although the sources did not disclose the exact budget allocated for enhancing the services at the highway rest areas, they assured that the funds provided are substantial enough to bring about a significant and much-needed change in these facilities.

Furthermore, sources stated that the entire car parking area, comprising approximately of 38 parking spots, is expected to be transformed into smart parking by October 2024 as per the plan of the Public Utilities Department in the company.

Sources added the department is striving to contribute to the realization of Kuwait's development strategy, Kuwait 2035, particularly in the area of digital transformation, which serves as the main pillar of this vision.

PAHW floats two tenders for new housing schemes

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare has floated two tenders for the construction of new housing schemes, signaling a significant push in the country's housing development efforts, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The first tender encompasses the construction of 1,985 houses, buildings, and associated infrastructure in Sectors BP4 and BP7, while the second tender covers 1,608 houses, buildings, and related infrastructure in Sectors BP6 and BP9.

The MEED magazine reported that bids for the main contracts were issued on May 12, with a bid submission deadline set for June 23. This recent tender activity follows previous bids received by the Public Authority for Housing Welfare in January for two other housing construction projects, which included plans for 1,777 houses and associated infrastructure in Sector BP3 and 1,568 houses in Sector BP1.

In the construction market, data from the regional project tracker, MEED Projects, indicates robust activity with projects worth \$7.8 billion currently under implementation, positioning the construction sector as the second largest after transportation in Kuwait. The mixed-use subsector leads in work in progress, followed by residential projects.

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LOCAL



Sheep trader

Traders optimistic

Ministry ensures fair sheep prices ahead of Eid Al-Adha

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Director of Commercial Monitoring Department in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Faisal Al-Ansari disclosed that the ministry is conducting intensive campaigns in the sheep market to monitor and control prices, reports Al Rai daily.

Al-Ansari pointed out that public auctions are considered the main indicators of prices, affirming the inspection teams are monitoring these auctions and prices remain reasonable so far. He said the prices of Iranian sheep range from KD75 to KD90, while the local and Saudi's Naimi sheep reached KD120.

He contacted traders who informed him that ample supply of sheep will reach the local market before Eid Al-Adha, stressing this will contribute to

controlling the prices and could even reduce prices of some types of sheep.

On the other hand, sheep trader Menawer Al-Wawan revealed that around 30,000 sheep are being imported from Jordan via Iraq; adding that roughly 800 sheep already entered market in recent days. He affirmed the availability of different types of sheep provides variety of prices for consumers, stressing that prices are reasonable for different categories of consumers. He said prices will go down after Eid Al-Adha due to lower demand and the travel of many individuals during summer.

Another sheep trader Sulaiman Al-Musafer voiced optimism about the prices for this season, because of the expected entry of a large number of sheep from Saudi Arabia, Jordan and other countries.

fields.

He added that it would work to integrate shared resources and expertise to strengthen the creative industries sector, which is considered one of the soft powers of countries and peoples.

He stressed that this step came in implementation of the Authority's strategy, which focuses on strengthening partnership with state agencies, civil society institutions, and the private sector to develop youth work in the country.

Major Kuwait banks

Continued from Page 1

traditional roles like judges, doctors, healthcare workers, engineers, and teachers. Additionally, employees in cooperative societies, construction supervisors, journalists, administrators, technicians, and similar professions are also considered.

For customers meeting the specified conditions, loans exceeding the value of the end-of-service bonus may be available, with additional margins varying based on job type, grade, and stability. The loan amount is capped at 25,000 dinars, as stipulated by the Central Bank of Kuwait, with installment limits determined by the client's solvency, salary, end-of-service bonus, and deposits.

Competitive landscape:

This development is significant as major banks are now entering a competitive field previously dominated by medium and small banks. These smaller banks had already opened lending to non-Kuwaitis with salaries starting at 300 dinars and minimal adherence to end-of-service bonus conditions. The increased competition is likely to attract more non-Kuwaiti customers.

Strategic shift:

The shift in lending policy is driven by a slowdown in credit portfolios at both individual and corporate levels, prompting banks to ease restrictions. Despite maintaining a conservative approach, banks are now willing to finance non-Kuwaitis with end-of-service bonuses close to or exceeding loan values, provided their employers are reputable and stable.

Challenges with Kuwaiti borrowers:

Another factor in easing restrictions on expatriates is the limited credit availability for Kuwaiti customers, many of whom have been credit-restricted for over a year due to Central Bank regulations. Additionally, the rate of new Kuwaiti recruits does not align with the targeted credit growth rate.

Job security and Kuwaitization:

Banks will continue to exercise caution, particularly with government jobs susceptible to Kuwaitization. There is a red list of jobs ineligible for lending, primarily those under strict Civil Service Commission guidelines requiring the appointment of Kuwaiti citizens.

ICC & ICJ

Continued from Page 1

of Palestine" has become a party to the court since it signed the Rome Statute in 2015 as an observer and in the court. Around the same time, it submitted a declaration accepting the ICC's jurisdiction "in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem." Based on this declaration, then-Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda announced that she had opened a "preliminary examination" of the situation in Palestine, and in December 2019 requested a ruling. To clarify the territorial scope of the ICC's jurisdiction.

In 2021, the Pre-Trial Chamber decided that the court's jurisdiction "extends to Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem."

At that time, the United States objected to the International Criminal Court's decision to expand its jurisdiction to include those places. The resolution stated that "the Palestinians are not eligible to be a sovereign state

Kuwait-Tunisia forge stronger ties through labor, economic initiatives

Security pact nears completion

By Fares Al-Abdan
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: The Tunisian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohamed Karim Al-Boudali praised the meeting he recently had with the Director of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) Marzouq Al-Otaibi.

He explained that the meeting was fruitful and was an opportunity to



Al-Boudali

emphasize the depth of relations between the two countries, review opportunities for enhancing cooperation in the field of Tunisian labor, and emphasize the contribution of Tunisian cadres over decades to the development effort in Kuwait.

There was appreciation from the Kuwaiti side for the role of the Tunisian labor force in its various specializations. Their number does not exceed 3,500 to 4,000, according to statistics, which is a small number. There is a desire to strengthen this presence in a way that responds to the requests and needs of the State of Kuwait.

Trained

In a statement issued on the sidelines of his meeting with journalists, Ambassador Al-Boudali said, "Tunisian workers are trained and integrated with Kuwaiti society and receive all respect and appreciation. This is what is important."

He thanked the Kuwaiti authorities for the support and hospitality they provide to the Tunisian community, adding, "If there are problems, they are addressed very quickly. What is important is that we agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding to enhance cooperation in the field of employment in a way that responds to the specificity and requests of Kuwait."

Regarding the areas most in demand, Ambassador Al-Boudali revealed that, "The talk was that the Kuwaiti authorities and leadership are open to cooperation in all fields, and are ready to accept and bring Tunisian expertise in all fields, but the focus was especially on health, justice, education, and the technological field.

We agreed to focus on these sectors in the first phase, and eventually open up to various sectors because there is a real desire to enhance cooperation."

Memorandum

Regarding setting a specific date for signing the memorandum, Ambassador Al-Boudali explained, "There is a project that we started working on. It is in its final stages. It will be signed either during a delegation's visit to Tunisia or during the meetings of the joint committee in its fourth ses-

and are therefore not eligible to obtain membership as a state, participate as a state, or delegate judicial authority to the International Criminal Court."

However, the United States is not a party to the Rome Statute, and this limits its influence on how the ICC operates. Moreover, although the United States and Israel do not recognize Palestine as a state, more than 140 other countries do, including this includes Spain, Norway and Ireland as of last week.

Earlier in May 2024, the UN General Assembly voted 143 to nine in favor of a resolution granting new "rights and privileges" to the "State of Palestine" at the UN, granting its delegation almost all rights except the right to vote, a privilege that cannot be. It can only be granted by the Security Council, where the United States has veto power.

The United States was one of the nine countries, along with Israel, that voted against the resolution. Following the announcement by ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken reiterated the US view that the ICC has no jurisdiction over "this matter."

For Israel, the acts in question are its use of starvation as a means of war and deprivation of humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza. As the statement of the ICC Chief Prosecutor Khan, makes clear, "Israel deliberately and systematically deprived the civilian population throughout Gaza of things indispensable to human survival."

Here he cited the statement and warning issued by UN Secretary-General António Guterres two months ago, when he said: "1.1 million people in Gaza are facing catastrophic hunger - the largest number of people ever recorded anywhere, at any time" as a result of "total hunger." "Man-made disaster."

While the World Food Program Director Cindy McCain has since declared that "massive famine" is occurring in northern Gaza. In mid-April 2024, Samantha Power, administrator of the US Agency for International Development, said it was "credible" to assess famine in parts of Gaza. The United States has repeatedly pressed Netanyahu to increase the flow of aid to Gaza, but largely to no avail.

ICC Chief Prosecutor Khan is likely

sion that will be held in Tunisia soon. Work on it will be headed by the foreign ministers of the two countries.

He stressed that, "There are more than 60 agreements in various fields of culture, education, investment, and trade exchange. In fact, the legal framework is very rich, and it facilitates relations between the two countries. The effort will focus on making these agreements respond to the requirements of the relationship, and some agreements may need to be amended."

Regarding investment opportunities in Tunisia, and the Kuwaiti private sector's discussion of investment opportunities, Ambassador Al-Boudali explained that Kuwait was one of the first countries to invest in Tunisia in the 1970s. Tunisia is always reminded of this fact. The Kuwaiti investments contributed greatly to advancing development in Tunisia. There are prospects and opportunities in Tunisia. There is Ekuity Capital, which represents the Kuwaiti investment arm in Tunisia, and is making a great effort to enhance cooperation between the two countries in this field. It belongs to the Kuwait Investment Authority.

He said, "During my meetings with various Kuwaiti bodies and officials, I sensed a real desire to strengthen cooperation in the investment field, and we set off on this. There was a visit one week ago by a Kuwaiti investment delegation to Tunisia, which returned two days ago. They held meetings with members of the government and the Investment Authority in Tunisia. It was an opportunity to discover the available investment opportunities, and we found that additional effort must be made in the field of introducing these available opportunities. These words are from the Kuwaiti delegation, which is a delegation on a special initiative of businessmen who moved to Tunisia. Meetings were arranged for them with the Tunisian authorities."

Flights

Regarding whether there were discussions with the Kuwaiti carrier regarding direct flights, Ambassador Al-Boudali said, "We are communicating about this in Tunisia and with our brothers in Kuwait. There are some technical areas that require agreement between the two parties. There is communication between the two sides about this matter."

Regarding the most important files that he will start working on, the ambassador said, "The situation is stable and the prospects are good. The most prominent files are supporting investment and trade exchange, and bringing Tunisian expertise to Kuwait.

There is a request and desire on both sides to enhance cooperation in the cultural field, which is very important, along with media and tourism exchange. I noticed that there is a great desire from the brothers in Kuwait to rediscover tourist sites in Tunisia, and there is great love and appreciation for Tunisian tourism."

Regarding reassuring investors who wish to invest in Tunisia, Ambassador

to focus on starvation and aid restriction for the simple reason that these crimes are the easiest to prove.

The ICC Prosecutor's request is not the first time these allegations have been made against Israel since October 7, 2023. On March 19, 2024, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk said that Israel's policies of restricting the flow of aid to Gaza may amount to In the same month, Oxfam, an NGO focused on alleviating global poverty, issued a statement saying that Israel "is using famine as a weapon of war more than five months ago."

So far there have only been requests for arrest warrants from the ICC and it remains possible that the Pre-Trial Chamber will not approve the requests. However, given the political sensitivity of the issue, it is almost certain that the ICC Chief Prosecutor, Khan, will limit this opening request to arrest warrants, which I believe that he would succeed in obtaining them, and a panel of senior international law experts convened by the ICC's Prosecutor with jurisdiction over those crimes will set out in the arrest warrant applications and that these crimes have been committed and the suspects are responsible for them.

Since the International Criminal Court does not have its own police to implement its orders, and if its judges decide to issue these arrest warrants, this does not mean in theory that any of the 124 member states of this judicial court is obligated to arrest them if they visit its territory. The member states rarely implement arrest warrants, especially when it comes to a head of state.

For example, former Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir was able to visit a number of member states of the International Criminal Court, including South Africa and Jordan, even though the court issued an arrest warrant against him, and despite his overthrow in 2019, Sudan did not hand him over.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, against whom the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant, visited abroad, recently to Kyrgyzstan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which are not members of the court.

But Putin avoided attending the meeting of the BRICS group (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) in Johannesburg, which was to imple-



Talal Al-Fasam, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to UN Office at Vienna.

Kuwait UN envoy stresses urgent global nuclear security measures

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and international organizations in Vienna Talal Al-Fasam delivered a speech at the concluding session of the International Nuclear Security Forum 2024 in Vienna, reports Al-Seyassah daily quoting Kuwait News Agency (KUNA).

Al-Fasam pointed out that the world is currently facing rapid, accelerated and unprecedented challenges that pose threats to global security. He highlighted the increasing threat to nuclear security in recent years, which is a matter of concern. He then stressed the importance of the forum in finding solutions to mitigate the risks associated with nuclear security.

He also underscored the need to enforce the provisions of the Convention on the Physical Protection

of Nuclear Material, which is part of global efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism. He affirmed that Kuwait has signed all international agreements related to nuclear security, including the nuclear terrorism convention.

He added Kuwait hosted eight consultants from the Consultative Services Department at the International Atomic Energy Agency last year, with the aim of benefiting from their expertise. He disclosed the visit included field trips, confirming Kuwait's keenness to strengthen cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency since 2009. He asserted this cooperation has yielded positive results, positioning Kuwait as one of the first regional countries to develop an integrated plan to guarantee nuclear security.

Al-Boudali explained, "I want to send a message of reassurance about the stability of the situation in Tunisia and the completion of the path of political reform in Tunisia and security stability.

Reforms

We have embarked on a set of economic reforms to improve the investment climate, and many reforms have been completed in this field. One of the positive indicators in this field is the growth of foreign investments in Tunisia during the year 2023 by more than 13 percent compared to the year 2022.

In addition, the ambassador said, "We always adhere to national sovereignty and national decision-making, after which we commit to international legitimacy and resort to international law and international institutions. We defend the most important issues

with the same steadfastness, conviction, and principled position. The best evidence of this is our position on the Palestinian issue. The Kuwaiti position and Tunisian position in this regard are almost identical. Its position on the Palestinian issue is clear and consistent, and we have not given up on this position at any stage."

Regarding security cooperation between the two countries, he stressed that, "There is ongoing security cooperation between the two countries, which is a long-standing cooperation controlled by bilateral and Arab frameworks. There is a draft agreement to strengthen this cooperation. It is in its final stages of preparation, and we expect it to be signed on the first visit in both directions, whether in Tunisia, Kuwait, or in the joint committee, and it is one of the agreements proposed."

United Nations ordered Israel to stop its attack on the city of Rafah in southern Gaza and withdraw from the Strip, in a case filed by South Africa accusing Israel of committing genocide. Collectively, indicating a "tremendous danger" to the Palestinian population.

The decision (ruling) issued on May 24, 2024 was the third time this year that the 15-judge panel issued preliminary orders seeking to curb the death toll and alleviate human suffering in Gaza. Although the orders are legally binding, the court does not have the police to enforce them, and as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN), the role of the International Court of Justice is to settle legal disputes brought before it by States, in accordance with international law, and to express advisory opinions on legal matters referred to it by authorized UN organs and specialized agencies.

While reading the ICJ ruling, Judge Nawaf Salam, President of the International Court of Justice, stated that the temporary measures ordered by the court in March 2024 did not fully address the situation in the now besieged Palestinian enclave and the conditions for issuing a new emergency order were met.

On the other hand, South African lawyers asked the International Court of Justice in The Hague last week to impose emergency measures, saying that the Israeli attacks on Rafah must be stopped to ensure the survival of the Palestinian people, and 13 of the 15 judges of the International Court of Justice agreed to call on Israel to stop its attack, as ordered. The International Court of Justice requires Israel to submit a report to the Court within one month on its progress in implementing the procedures ordered by the Court.

Tariq Yousef Alshumaimry served as Counselor and Chairman of the Finance Committee and Chairman of the General Budget Committee at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague (PCA) and an observer in the Administrative Council of the Court of Justice International Affairs and Counselor at the Embassy of the State of Kuwait in The Hague in the Kingdom of the Netherlands during this period from 2013 to 2020.

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World News Roundup

Europe

Macron visits Germany

Sunak vows to bring back national service

LONDON, May 26, (AP) — All 18-year-olds in Britain will have to perform a year of mandatory military or civilian national service if the governing Conservative Party wins the July 4 national election, the party said Sunday.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak pledged to bring back a form of national service for the first time in more than 60 years, seeking to energize his election campaign after a faltering start.

The UK introduced military conscription for men and some women during World War II, and imposed 18 months of mandatory military service for men between 1947 and 1960. Since then Britain has had an all-volunteer military whose size has steadily shrunk.

Under the plan, a small minority of 18-year-olds - 30,000 out of an estimated 700,000 - would spend 12 months in the military, working in areas such as logistics or cyber defense. The rest would spend one weekend a month working for charities, community groups, or organizations such as hospitals, the police and the fire service.

Sunak said the program would help "create a shared sense of purpose among our young people and a renewed sense of pride in our country."

It remains unclear how it will be made compulsory. Home Secretary James Cleverly said no one would be forced to serve in the military.

Cleverly said Sunday that the main goal of the new plan was not boosting the military but building "a society where people mix with people outside their own communities, mix with people from different backgrounds, different religions, different income levels."

Regenerate

The Conservatives estimated the cost of the national service plan at 2.5 billion pounds (\$3.2 billion) a year. They said it would be paid for partly by taking 1.5 billion pounds (\$1.9 billion) from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which was set up in 2022 to regenerate poor communities. Labour said the national service announcement was a "desperate 2.5 billion pound unfunded commitment" from a party "bankrupt of ideas."

Former Labour Home Secretary Alan Johnson said the Tory plan amounted to "compulsory volunteering" and predicted "it'll never happen."

Elections in the United Kingdom have to be held no more than five years apart. The prime minister can choose the timing within that period and Sunak, 44, had until December to name the date.

He took most people - including those in his own party - by surprise when he announced on Wednesday that the election would be held on July 4. The Conservatives, who have been in office for 14 years, are trailing the opposition Labour Party led by **Keir Starmer** in opinion polls and are trying to overcome a widespread sense that voters want change.

Lithuanians return to polls

Lithuanians return to the polls Sunday for the second round of the Baltic country's presidential election as incumbent President Gitanas Nausėda seeks to hold off Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė and secure another five-year term.

The 60-year-old Nausėda, a moderate conservative, has been a strong backer of Ukraine, a position shared across most of the political spectrum. The popular Nausėda has been in office since 2009 and during that time Lithuania has also given refuge to many who have fled an authoritarian crackdown in neighboring Belarus and increased repression in Russia.

The president's main tasks in NATO-member Lithuania's political system are overseeing foreign and defense policy, along with acting as the supreme commander of the armed forces.

Given that Lithuania is strategically located on NATO's eastern flank, the presidency of a relatively small nation is given added importance as tensions rise between Russia and the West over the war in Ukraine.

The election comes as Russian gains in Ukraine are fueling greater fears about Moscow's intentions, particularly in the strategically important Baltic region.

After regaining its independence in 1991 from the Soviet Union, which occupied the southernmost Baltic country for five decades, Lithuania joined the European Union and NATO in 2004. Both candidates have been outspoken critics of Moscow and of Minsk, a Russia ally.

Kharkiv attack toll rises to 14

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned Sunday that Russia is preparing to intensify its offensive along Ukraine's northern border, as the death toll rose to 14 in an aerial bomb attack on a large construction supplies store in the city of Kharkiv.

The bombing of Kharkiv on Saturday afternoon also left 43 injured and 16 missing, Kharkiv Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said initially after the attack.

In a video statement from Kharkiv, Zelenskyy said that Russia is preparing offensive actions 90 kilometers (55 miles) northwest of Ukraine's second largest city. He said that Russians "gather another group of troops near our border."

He did not specify where the troops are being assembled, but Ukrainian officials have expressed strong concern about the Sumy region. Both Kharkiv city and Sumy with about 250,000 people are within about 25 kilometers (15 miles) of the Russian border.

Moscow's troops have in recent weeks captured villages in the Kharkiv area as part of a broad push, and analysts say they may be trying to get within artillery range of the city. Ukrainian authorities have evacuated more than 11,000 people from the region since the start of the offensive on May 10.

Macron visits Germany

President Emmanuel Macron arrived in Germany Sunday for the first state visit by a French head of state in 24 years, a three-day trip meant to underline the strong ties between the European Union's traditional leading powers.

The visit was originally meant to take place last July but was postponed at the last minute due to rioting in France following the killing of a 17-year-old by police.

While Macron is a frequent visitor to Germany as Paris and Berlin try to coordinate their positions on EU and foreign policy, this is the first state visit with full pomp since Jacques Chirac came in 2000. Macron and his wife, Brigitte, are being hosted by Germany's largely ceremonial president, Frank-Walter Steinmeier. The visit comes as Germany celebrates the 75th anniversary of its post-World War II constitution.

Steinmeier is holding a state banquet for Macron at his Bellevue palace in Berlin on Sunday evening before the two presidents travel on Monday to the eastern city of Dresden, where Macron will make a speech, and on Tuesday to Muenster in western Germany.



Starmer



US President Joe Biden speaks during the graduation ceremony of the US Military Academy class of 2024 at Michie Stadium on May 25 in West Point, NY. Inset: Graduates attend the US Military Academy commencement ceremony.

Biden tells West Point graduates they'll face threats 'like none before'

US President Joe Biden on Saturday told graduates of the US Military Academy that their class is being called upon to tackle threats across the globe and preserve the country's ideals at home "like none before."

Biden said the phrase, the class motto, was apt for the sorts of challenges they will take as newly minted Army second lieutenants, from supporting

Ukraine's defense against Russia's invasion to facilitating humanitarian assistance into Gaza and defending Israel from attacks by Iran.

"There's never been a time in history when we've asked our military to do so many different things in some many different places around the world, all at the same time," Biden said.

Speaking at sun-swept West Point, Biden reaf-

firmed that he will not allow American service members on the battlefield in Ukraine, but said their work to equip and train Ukrainian forces has "stepped up and stopped" Russian President Vladimir Putin's "brazen vision" for Europe. Biden praised US forces for helping Israel repel a massive drone and ballistic missile attack last month from Iran and working to deescalate the conflict. (AP)

Politics

Robinson energizes Republicans for election

Trump confronts booing during speech

WASHINGTON, May 26, (AP) — Donald Trump was booed repeatedly while addressing the Libertarian Party National Convention on Saturday night, with many in the crowd shouting insults and decrying him for things like his COVID-19 policies, running up towering federal deficits and lying about his political record.

When he took the stage, many jeered while some supporters clad in "Make America Great" hats and T-shirts cheered and chanted "USA! USA!" It was a rare moment of Trump coming face-to-face with open detractors, which is highly unusual for someone accustomed to staging rallies in front of ever-adoring crowds.

Freedoms

Libertarians, who prioritize small government and individual freedoms, are often skeptical of the former president, and his invitation to address the convention has divided the party. Trump tried to make light of that by referring to the four criminal indictments against him and joking, "If I wasn't a Libertarian before, I sure as hell am a Libertarian now."

Trump tried to praise "fierce champions of freedom in this room" and called President Joe Biden a "tyrant" and the "worst president in the history of the United States," prompting some in the audience to scream back: "That's you."

As the insults continued, Trump eventually hit back, saying "you don't want to win" and suggesting that some Libertarians want to "keep getting your 3% every four years."

Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson won about 3% of the national vote in 2016, but nominee Jo Jorgensen got

only a bit more than 1% during 2020's close contest.

Libertarians will pick their White House nominee during their convention, which wraps on Sunday. Trump's appearance also gave him a chance to court voters who might otherwise support independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. who gave his own Libertarian convention speech on Friday.

Polls have shown for months that most voters do not want a 2020 rematch between Trump and President Joe Biden. That dynamic could potentially boost support for an alternative like the Libertarian nominee or Kennedy, whose candidacy has allies of Biden and Trump concerned that he could be a spoiler.

Despite the raucous atmosphere, Trump continued to press on with his speech, saying he'd come "to extend a hand of friendship" in common opposition to Biden. That prompted a chant of "We want Trump!" from supporters, but more cries of "End the Fed!" - a common refrain from Libertarians who oppose the Federal Reserve. One person who held up a sign reading "No wannabe dictators!" was dragged away by security.

Promised

Trump tried to win over the crowd by pledging to include a Libertarian in his Cabinet, but many in the crowd hissed in disbelief. The former president did get a big cheer when he promised to commute the life sentence of the convicted founder of the drug-selling website Silk Road, Ross Ulbricht, and potentially release him on time served.

That was designed to energize Lib-

ertarian activists who believe government investigators overreached in building their case against Silk Road, and who generally oppose criminal drug policies more broadly. Ulbricht's case was much-discussed during the Libertarian convention, and many of the hundreds in the crowd for Trump's speech hoisted "Free Ross" signs and chanted the phrase as he spoke.

Also:

WASHINGTON: Before Mark Robinson, North Carolina's GOP candidate for governor, even stepped on stage at the state party's convention Saturday, several state candidates took time in their own speeches to energize the crowd by vouching for Robinson's gubernatorial bid.

When the state's lieutenant governor did take to the stage more than an hour and a half into the NCGOP Convention's Old North State Dinner in Greensboro, Robinson started off his fiery speech denouncing the media for focusing too much on **Donald Trump's** ongoing criminal and civil trials and not the "failures of the Democratic Party." He also shared his vision for the state, which he said centers around improving the economy and education.

"Trust me, there are enough people in this state who are talented enough and share the vision that we have that we can make this a reality, folks," Robinson said during his speech, which was livestreamed by Triad television outlet WGHP. The 55-year-old Republican is embroiled in one of the most hotly contested gubernatorial races of the 2024 election against his Democratic opponent and state Attorney General **Josh Stein**.



Joan Mitchell, left, gets a hug from her neighbor Edith Schaecher in front of their tornado-damaged homes on May 23 in Greenfield, Iowa. A tornado touched down and crossed an interstate in Texas, causing damage and possible injuries as scattered severe storms moved through Texas and Oklahoma on May 25. (AP)



Trump



Worley

America

Texas storms kill five: A Texas sheriff says at least five people are dead after powerful storms tore through a rural community, obliterating homes and leaving thousands of people without power Sunday.

Cooke County Sheriff Ray Sappington told The Associated Press that the victims included three family members who were found in one home near Valley View, a rural community near the border with Oklahoma.

The destructive storms began Saturday night. Officials said a tornado north of Dallas overturned heavy recreational vehicles, shut down an interstate and caused extensive damage to a highway travel center where drivers had rushed to take shelter.

Forecasters had issued tornado and severe thunderstorm warnings for parts of both states, as some heat records were broken during the day in South Texas and residents received triple-digit temperature warnings over the long holiday weekend.

A tornado crossed into northern Denton County in Texas late Saturday and overturned tractor-trailer trucks, stopping traffic on Interstate 35, Denton County Community Relations Director Dawn Cobb said in a statement. (AP)

Calif teenager arrested: A teenager was taken into custody after a crowd of young people swarmed a deputy's patrol car earlier this month, kicking and punching the vehicle before the deputy could drive away, a California sheriff's office said this week.

The 15-year-old male allegedly opened the driver's door of the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department vehicle and attempted "to overtake the deputy and his patrol unit," at a Highland intersection, according to a statement released Thursday. The juvenile was arrested at his home in Menifee on suspicion of attempted carjacking and felony vandalism. The deputy was able to close the door and

drive away from the encounter shortly after midnight May 11. Video footage obtained by detectives shows an unruly crowd pounding on the deputy's window and kicking the vehicle, leaving its front windshield cracked. (AP)

Police fatally shoot man: Police officers in Baltimore fatally shot a man who pulled a gun while they questioned him in a different shooting, authorities said.



British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and his wife Akshata Murty attend a Conservative general election campaign event in Stanmore, London, Britain on May 26. Sunak pledged to bring back a form of national service for the first time in more than 60 years, seeking to energize his election campaign after a faltering start. (AP)

A detective was shot in the chest, and his protective vest likely saved his life, Police Commissioner **Richard Worley** told reporters. Police were on the city's south side investigating a shooting Friday night in which 15 rounds were fired at a group of people, Worley said. No one was hurt in that incident.

As police questioned a man, he stood up and pulled out a gun. Officers ordered the man to drop the weapon numerous times before shots were fired, Worley said.

Investigators have not determined who shot first, the commissioner said. The identities of the man who was killed and the wounded officer have not been released. (AP)

NY man pleads guilty

An upstate New York man has pleaded guilty to charges that he snatched away a police officer's can of pepper spray during a chaotic clash with officers guarding the US Capitol building during the Jan. 6, 2021 riot.

Federal prosecutors said Friday that Troy Weeks, 38, was among a group that tried to overwhelm officers who were blocking an entryway to the building as supporters of former president **Donald Trump** stormed the Capitol grounds in protest of Trump's election loss.

He has pleaded guilty to felony charges of civil disorder and assaulting, resisting, or impeding an officer, as well as a handful of related misdemeanor charges. His attorneys did not immediately return an emailed request for comment. (AP)

Africa

Junta extends term

SAfrica 4 big parties begin 'campaigning'

JOHANNESBURG, May 26, (AP): South Africa's four main political parties began the final weekend of campaigning Saturday before a possibly pivotal election that could bring the country's most important change in three decades.

Supporters of the African National Congress, which has been in the government ever since the end of white minority rule in 1994, gathered at a soccer stadium in Johannesburg to hear a speech by party leader and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa.

The ANC is under unprecedented pressure to retain its parliamentary majority in Africa's most advanced country. Having seen its popularity steadily decline over the last two decades, Wednesday's election could be a landmark moment when the party once led by Nelson Mandela drops below 50% of the national vote for the first time, although it's still widely expected to win the largest share.

Several polls have the ANC's support at less than 50%, raising the possibility that it will have to form a national coalition. That would also be a first for South Africa's young democracy, which was only established 30 years ago with the first all-race vote that officially ended the apartheid system of racial segregation.

As thousands of supporters in the ANC's black, green and gold colors attended its last major rally before the election, Ramaphosa recognized some of the grievances of South Africans, which include high levels of poverty and unemployment that mainly affect the country's Black majority.

Struggles

"We have a plan to get more South Africans to work," Ramaphosa said. "Throughout this campaign, in the homes of our people, in the workplaces, in the streets of our townships and villages, so many of our people told us of their struggles to find work and provide for their families."

The main opposition Democratic Alliance party had a rally in Cape Town, South Africa's second-biggest city and its stronghold. Party leader John Steenhuisen made a speech while supporters in the DA's blue colors held up blue umbrellas.

Even though the ANC's support has shrunk in three successive national elections and appears set to continue dropping, no party has emerged to overtake it - or even challenge it.

But losing its majority would be the clearest rejection yet of the famous party that was at the forefront of the anti-apartheid movement and is credited with leading South Africans to freedom.

Some ANC supporters also expressed their frustration, as the country of 62 million people battles poverty, desperately high unemployment, some of the worst levels of inequality in the world, and other problems with corruption, violent crime and the failure of basic government services in some places.

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'123 killed in 2 weeks of fighting': More than two weeks of fighting between Sudan's military and a notorious paramilitary group over a major city in the western Darfur region killed at least 123 people, an international aid group said Sunday.

The fighting in el-Fasher, the provincial capital of North Darfur province, also wounded more than 930 people in the same period, Doctors without Borders said.

"This is a sign of the violent intensity of the fighting," the group said. "We urge the warring parties to do more to protect civilians."

Clashes between the military and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces escalated earlier this month in the city, forcing thousands of people to flee their homes, according to the United Nations.

El-Fasher has become the center of the conflict between the military and the RSF, which is aided by Arab militias commonly known as janjaweed. The city is the last stronghold that is still held by the military in the sprawling Darfur region.

Sudan's conflict began in April last year when soaring tensions between the leaders of the military and the RSF exploded into open fighting in the capital, Khartoum, and elsewhere in the country.

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Burkina junta extends term: The military leader of Burkina Faso will remain in office for another five years following the signing of a new charter after national consultations in the capital on Saturday.

Civil society representatives, the security and defense forces and lawmakers in the transitional assembly participated in the talks in Ouagadougou, which most political parties boycotted.

"The duration of the transition is fixed at 60 months from July 2, 2024," said Col. Moussa Diallo, the chairman of the organizing committee of the national dialogue process, in a speech after the talks.

Burkina Faso is one of a growing list of West African countries where the military has taken power, accusing the elected governments of failing to keep their promises. The current junta seized power in September 2022 by ousting the military regime of Lt Col Paul Henri Sandaogo Damiba about eight months after it staged a coup to remove democratically elected President Roch Marc Kaboré.

The transitional government has been running Burkina Faso under a constitution approved by a national assembly that included army officers, civil society groups and traditional and religious leaders. The junta had set a goal of conducting elections to return the country to democratic rule by July 2024.

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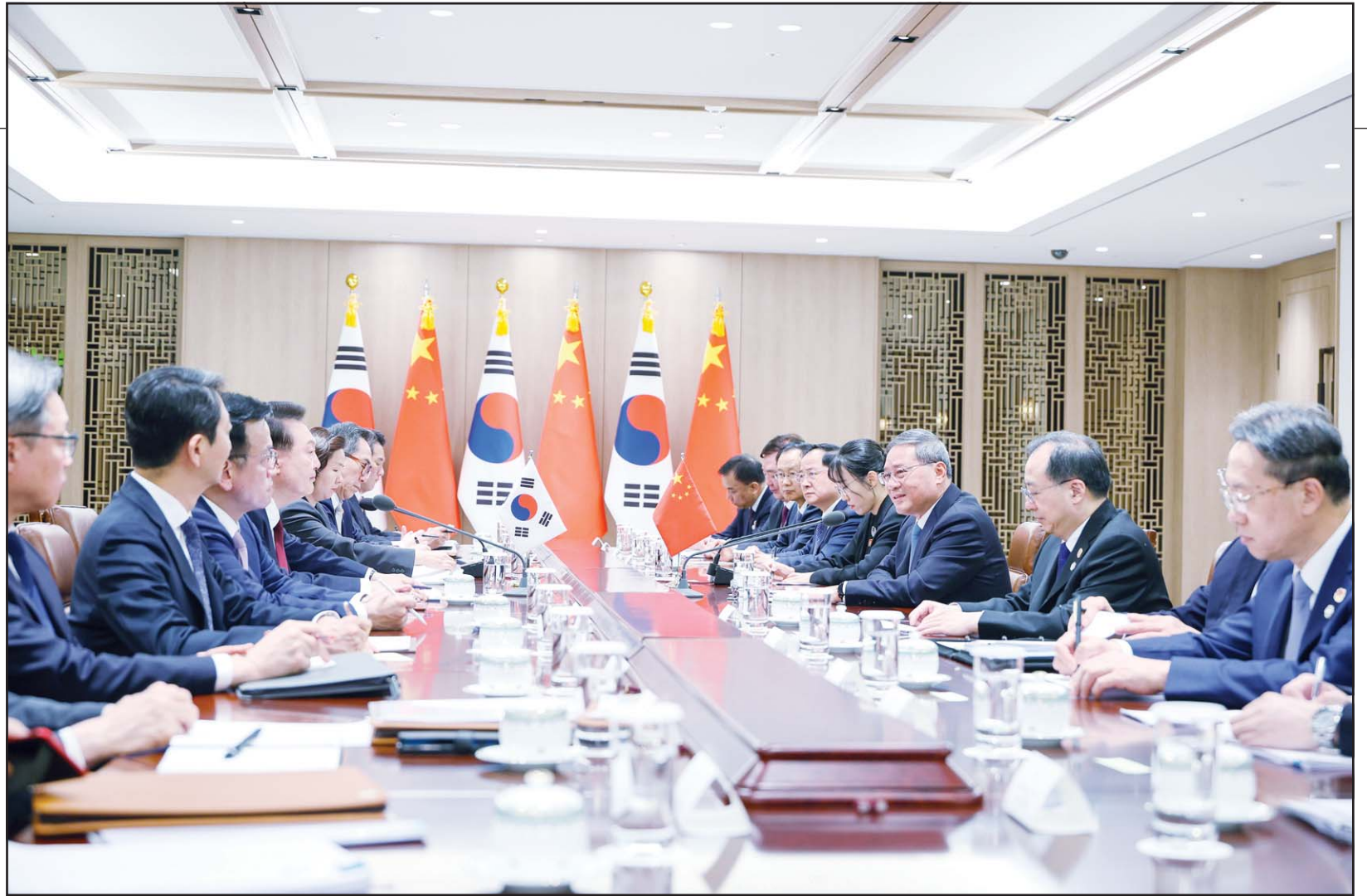
Kenya mine collapse kills 5: An illegal gold mine collapsed in northern Kenya, leaving at least five miners dead, police said Saturday.

The collapse of the Hillo mine in the Dabel area near the Kenyan border with Ethiopia on Friday was attributed to a landslide. Marsabit County Police Commander Patrick Mwakio said the miners died on the spot after the debris covered them.

No other miners have been found and it was not clear if anyone else was missing in the collapse.

Interior Minister Kithure Kindiki in March declared the area disturbed and banned mining activities after clashes over a mining dispute led to the deaths of seven people.

The mining activities were also in violation of the law because no environmental impact assessment had been done, and the tunnels were described as weak and on the brink of cave-in. Residents told media outlets that mining had continued despite the March ban and blamed authorities for allowing it.



Chinese Premier Li Qiang meets with South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol in Seoul, South Korea on May 26. Li arrived in South Korea to attend the ninth Trilateral Summit Meeting among China, Japan and South Korea from Sunday to Monday. (Xinhua)

Asia

More than 670 dead in PNG landslide: IOM

SKorea, China & Japan discuss cooperation

SEOUL, South Korea, May 26, (AP): South Korea's president reportedly called for a greater Chinese role in addressing concerns about North Korean nuclear threats during a meeting with the visiting Chinese premier on Sunday on the eve of a trilateral meeting involving Japan's leader.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, Chinese Premier Li Qiang and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida held rounds of bilateral talks among themselves on Sunday to discuss ways to enhance cooperation and other issues. They were set to meet Monday for a trilateral session, the first such meeting in more than four years.

No major announcement is expected from Monday's three-way gathering. But observers say that just resuming their highest-level, three-way talks is a good sign and suggests the three Asian neighbors are intent on improving relations. Their trilateral meeting was supposed to happen annually but it had stalled since the last one in December 2019 because of the COVID-19 pandemic and complex ties among the three countries.

Yoon and Li agreed to launch a new South Korean-Chinese dialogue channel involving senior diplomats and defense officials in mid-June. They also agreed to restart negotiations to expand the free trade agreement and reactivate dormant bodies on personnel exchanges, investments and other issues, according to Yoon's office.

Stability

Chinese state media reported Li told Yoon that the two countries should safeguard the stability of their deeply intertwined industrial and supply chains and resist turning economic and trade issues into political and security-related issues.

Yoon also asked China, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, to contribute to promoting peace on the Korean Peninsula, while speaking about North Korea's nuclear program and its deepening military ties with Russia, according to South Korean media reports.

Yoon's office couldn't immediately confirm the report. But it said Yoon and Kishida in their separate meeting expressed worries about North Korea's nuclear program and agreed to strengthen their cooperation with the United States.

South Korea, Japan and the US have long urged China - North Korea's major ally and economic pipeline - to use its leverage to persuade the North to abandon its nuclear ambitions. But China is suspected of avoiding fully enforcing UN sanctions on North Korea and sending clandestine aid shipments to help its impoverished neighbor stay afloat.

North Korea's nuclear program and other sensitive topics like China's claim over self-governed Taiwan and territorial disputes in the South China Sea are not among the official agenda items for Monday's trilateral meeting. South Korean officials said that a joint statement after Monday's meeting will cover the leaders' discussion on cooperation in areas like people-to-people exchanges, climate change, trade, health issues, technology and disaster responses.

The three neighbors are important trading partners and their cooperation is key to promoting regional peace and prosperity. They together make up about 25% of global gross domestic product. But the three countries have been repeatedly embroiled in bitter disputes over a range of historical and diplomatic issues originating from Japan's wartime atrocities. China's rise and a U.S. push reinforce its Asian alliances have also significantly impacted their three-way ties in recent years.

Experts say South Korea, China and Japan now share a need to improve ties. South Korea and Japan want better ties with China because it is their biggest trading partner. China, for its part, likely believes a further strengthening of the South Korea-Japan-US cooperation would hurt its national interests.

China, meanwhile, has always sent its premier, the country's No. 2 official, to the trilateral leaders' meeting since its first session in 2008. Observers say China earlier argued that under then-collective leadership, its premier was chiefly in charge of economic affairs and best suited to attend the meeting, which largely focuses on economic issues.

But they say China may face more demands for President Xi Jinping to attend because he has concentrated power in his hands and defied the norms of collective leadership.

Also:

MELBOURNE, Australia: The International Organization for Migration (IOM) on Sunday increased its estimate of the death toll from a massive landslide in Papua New Guinea to more than 670 as emergency responders and traumatized relatives gave up hope that any survivors will now be found.

Serhan Aktoprak, the chief of the UN migration agency's mission in the South Pacific island nation, said the revised death toll was based on calculations by Yambali village and Enga provincial officials that more than 150 homes had been buried by Friday's landslide. The previous estimate had

been 60 homes.

"They are estimating that more than 670 people (are) under the soil at the moment," Aktoprak told The Associated Press.

Local officials had initially put the death toll on Friday at 100 or more. Only five bodies and a leg of a sixth victim had been recovered by Sunday, when an excavator donated by a local builder became the first piece of mechanical earth-moving equipment to join the recovery effort.

Relief crews were moving survivors to safer ground on Sunday as tons of unstable earth and tribal warfare, which is rife in the Papua New Guinea Highlands, threatened the rescue effort.

Around 250 additional houses have been condemned since the landslide because of still-shifting ground, leaving an estimated 1,250 people homeless, officials said.

The national government meanwhile is considering whether it needs to officially request more international support.

Crews have given up hope of finding survivors under earth and rubble 6 to 8 meters (20 to 26 feet) deep.

"People are coming to terms with this so there is a serious level of grieving and mourning," Aktoprak said.

He said the new estimated death toll was "not solid" because it was based on the average size of the region's families per household. He would not speculate on the possibility that the actual toll could be higher.

"It is difficult to say. We want to be quite realistic," Aktoprak said. "We do not want to come up with any figures that would inflate the reality."

Government authorities were establishing evacuation centers on safer ground on either side of the massive swath of debris that covers an area the size of three to four football fields and has cut the main highway through the province.

Beside the blocked highway, convoys that have transported food, water and other essential supplies since Saturday to the devastated village 60 kilometers (35 miles) from the provincial capital, Wabag, have faced risks related to tribal fighting in Tambitanis village, about halfway along the route. Papua New Guinea soldiers were providing security for the convoys.

Eight locals were killed in a clash between two rival clans on Saturday in a longstanding dispute unrelated to the landslide. Around 30 homes and five retail businesses were burned down in the fighting, local officials said.

state capital of Culiacan last November.

In a written statement, President Joe Biden thanked Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador for extraditing Pérez Salas. (AP)

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Police team leaves Haiti: An advance team of Kenyan police officials who were assessing preparedness before a multinational force is deployed to quell violence in Haiti is heading back home after the planned deployment was delayed over logistical issues.

The team is due to arrive back from Haiti on Monday after recommending a deployment delay that was later announced by the president.

A senior Kenyan official who declined to be named as they are not the official spokesperson said the bases are still under construction and crucial resources including vehicles are needed before deployment of the first 200 police officers from Kenya can take place.

The deployment was due to start this week, but President William Ruto said it would be delayed for three weeks.

The base where the police will operate from is about 70% done and there is need for secure stores for the armory, according to the senior official, who was in the advance team. (AP)



Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), leader Julius Malekore, speaks at a final election rally in Polokwane, South Africa on May 25. South Africa's four main political parties began the final weekend of campaigning on Saturday before a possibly pivotal election that could bring the country's most important change in three decades. South Africans will vote in the 2024 general elections May 29. (AP)



Garland



Ruto

Lat/Am

'Firefighter, official cause fire': A Chilean judge on Saturday ordered a volunteer firefighter and a former forestry official detained for allegedly planning and causing a mammoth forest fire in the Valparaiso region that caused 137 deaths and made 16,000 people homeless in February.

The court in Valparaiso ruled the two men, who were arrested Friday, could be held for 180 days while they are investigated.

The chief prosecutor in the case, Osvaldo Ossandón, told journalists that the main suspect is Francisco Mondaca, a 22-year-old volunteer firefighter in Valparaiso who is accused of physically starting the fire. He said flares and fireworks were found in Mondaca's vehicle.

The other suspect was identified as Franco Pinto, a former employee of the National Forest Corporation. He is accused of planning the crime.

The regional prosecutor for Valparaiso, Claudia Perivancich, said investigators have evidence the two men agreed "in advance to carry out conduct of this type when the weather conditions were adequate."

Prosecutors said that according to Mondaca's testimony, there was an economic motive behind the plot - providing more work in fighting fires. They said they had not ruled out the possibility of more people being involved. (AP)

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Top assassin extradited to US: A top assassin for the Sinaloa drug cartel who was arrested by Mexican authorities last fall has been extradited to the U.S. to face drug, gun and witness retaliation charges, the Justice Department said Saturday.

Néstor Isidro Pérez Salas, also known as "El Nini," is a leader and commander of a group that provided security for the sons of imprisoned drug lord Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, and also helped in their drug business, federal investigators said. The sons lead a faction known as the little Chapos, or "Chapitos," that has been identified as one of the main exporters of the deadly synthetic opioid fentanyl to the U.S.

Fentanyl is blamed for about 70,000 overdose deaths per year in the United States.

"We allege El Nini was one of the Sinaloa Cartel's lead sicarios, or assassins, and was responsible for the murder, torture, and kidnapping of rivals and witnesses who threatened the cartel's criminal drug trafficking enterprise," US Attorney General Merrick Garland said in a news release Saturday. Court records did not list an attorney for

Pérez Salas who might comment on his behalf.

The Justice Department last year announced a slew of charges against cartel

leaders, and the US Drug Enforcement Administration posted a \$3 million reward for the capture of Pérez Salas, 31. He was captured at a walled property in the Sinaloa



Tourists walk in a base camp of Mount Qomolangma in southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region on May 24. The Mount Qomolangma National Park has entered peak tourism season. From Jan 1 to May 20 this year, the Mount Qomolangma scenic spot has received about 136,000 tourists. (Xinhua)

Al-Shall's weekly report indicated that 141 out of 145 listed companies have announced their financial results for the first quarter of the current year, which constitutes about 97.2% of the listed companies, excluding those that have yet to report, reports Al-Qabas daily.

These companies achieved net profits of approximately 753.6 million dinars, marking a 2.7% increase from the 733.8 million dinars recorded in the first quarter of 2023, and a substantial 48.3% rise compared to the 508.3 million dinars in profits reported

for the fourth quarter of 2023.

The report highlighted that 10 out of 13 active sectors saw an increase in profitability compared to the first quarter of 2023, with one sector moving from losses to profitability, while profits in two sectors declined.

The banking sector led the performance with profits of about 411 million dinars, up from 385.4 million dinars, an increase of 25.6 million dinars.

The financial services sector followed, with profits rising to about 111.3 million di-

nars from 65.8 million dinars, an increase of 45.5 million dinars.

The real estate sector also saw a notable rise, increasing its profits from about 36.3 million dinars to 54.7 million dinars, an 18.4 million dinar increase. Conversely, the telecommunications sector experienced the largest decline, with profits dropping to about 50 million dinars from 132.7 million dinars in the first quarter of last year, a decrease of 82.8 million dinars.

The report further explained that 101

companies showed improved performance compared to the first quarter of 2023, with 69 companies increasing their profit levels and 32 companies either turning profitable or reducing their losses.

This means that 71.6% of the companies that announced their results achieved performance improvements.

On the other hand, 40 companies experienced a decline, with 22 companies seeing reduced profits and 18 companies increasing their losses or moving from profitability to losses.

In terms of profitability, the top ten companies achieved combined profits of about 487.4 million dinars, representing 64.7% of the total profits of all announced companies. Kuwait Finance House led with 162.8 million dinars, followed by the National Bank of Kuwait with 146.6 million dinars.

The National Industries Group Holding Company ranked third with 29.5 million dinars, and the Mobile Telecommunications Company (Zain) was fourth with 29.2 million dinars.

Market Movements 26-05-2024

EGYPT	EGX 30	Change	Closing pts	SAUDI	Tadawul	Change	Closing pts
↑		+334.07	27,539.21	↓		-145.35	11,850.64

Business

UK inflation above expectations, mixed PMI data

Cautious Fed, dovish ECB highlight divergence of global monetary policy outlook

Kuwait's real estate assets rise by 5.29% to KD 6.12b

Mabane leads with highest asset value of 1.43 bln dinars

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: The assets of real estate companies listed on the Bursa Kuwait reached 6.12 billion dinars in the first quarter ending March 31, 2024, compared to 5.81 billion dinars during the same period in 2023, marking a 5.29 percent increase, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Concurrently, the liabilities of these companies rose to 3.10 billion dinars from 2.92 billion dinars, an increase of 181 million dinars, or 6.2 percent. According to statistics, the liabilities of real estate companies accounted for about 50.7 percent of their total assets.

Among the real estate companies, Mabane Company led with the highest asset value at 1.43 billion dinars, up from 1.16 billion dinars. It was followed by United Real Estate Company with assets worth 650.8 million dinars, down from 695.3 million dinars.

Tamdeen Real Estate was third with assets of 583.1 million dinars, slightly down from 583.4 million dinars. Al-Tijaria Real Estate Company had assets of 568 million dinars, up from 553 million dinars, followed by Salhia Real Estate Company with assets worth 522 million dinars, up from 427 million dinars.

Sanam Real Estate Company saw the highest growth in assets, increasing by 37.7 percent from 7.9 million dinars to 10.9 million dinars. Mabane Company followed with a growth of 22.6 percent, and Salhia Real Estate Company with 22.2 percent growth. Kuwait Real Estate Company grew by 13.1 percent, reaching 416 million dinars from 367 million dinars, and Dalqan Real Estate Company grew by 7.6 percent, from 8.05 million dinars to 8.6 million dinars.

Conversely, Al-Tameer Real Estate Investment Company experienced the largest asset decrease, dropping by 31.9 percent from 22.6 million dinars to 15.4 million dinars. Al-Masaken International Real Estate Development Company followed with a 31.6 percent decrease from 18.5 million dinars to 12.7 million dinars.

Al Mazaya Holding Company's assets declined by 22.8 percent from 197 million dinars to 152 million dinars, and National Real Estate Company saw an 11.7 percent decrease from 588 million dinars to 519 million dinars and Al-Arabiya Real Estate Company's assets decreased by 11.3 percent from 135 million dinars to 120 million dinars.

Regarding liabilities, Mabane Company also topped the list with the largest liabilities at 735.9 million dinars, up

Bursa Kuwait shows mixed results

GCC financial markets see widespread decline

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Last week saw a widespread decline in most financial market indices across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, reversing the brief gains experienced earlier in the month, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Of the GCC nations, five indices saw significant declines, with Bahrain and Oman being the exceptions, albeit with modest gains. However, these two markets are comparatively less liquid among their Gulf counterparts.

Abu Dhabi's financial market index experienced the most substantial setback, dropping by 2.30 percent, marking its lowest point in over two years.

This decline brought its year-to-date losses to 7.7 percent. The market saw the release of first-quarter results from numerous companies, resulting in an overall profit decline of nearly 19 percent compared to the same period last year.

Similarly, UAE indices faced pressure towards the end of the week, partly due to global market trends, notably the Dow Jones, which recorded its largest daily loss in five months. The minutes from the US Federal Reserve hinted at continued monetary policy tightening and prolonged high-interest rates, diverging from earlier optimistic fore-

casts. In Dubai, the financial market index fell by 1.37 percent, despite robust performance from listed companies during the first quarter of the year, with profits increasing for the majority of them.

Saudi Arabia's TASI index, the region's largest, also experienced a significant downturn, dropping below the crucial 12,000-point mark for the first time since February. The majority of companies listed on TASI reported declines in profits for the first quarter.

Meanwhile, Qatar's market index suffered a notable loss, recording a decline of 1.45 percent, contributing to its substantial 11.71 percent loss for the year. Kuwait's stock exchange saw mixed results, with the general market index experiencing a slight decline, while the main 50 index maintained gains.

In terms of liquidity, there was a notable shift towards small-cap stocks, with increased activity compared to blue-chip stocks, leading to declines in the prices of some major companies, including the National Bank and Zain.

Bahrain and Oman, with their less liquid markets, recorded modest gains compared to their Gulf counterparts, with the Bahrain market index rising by 0.55 percent and the Oman index by 0.22 percent.

United Real Estate Company's liabilities rose by 7.6 percent from 33.7 million dinars to 36.4 million dinars.

On the other hand, Al-Tameer Real Estate Investment Company saw the largest decrease in liabilities, falling by 53.9 percent from 9.9 million dinars to 4.5 million dinars; Al-Masaken International Real Estate Development Company's liabilities decreased by 33.9 percent from 12.6 million dinars to 8.3 million dinars and Al Mazaya Holding Company's liabilities dropped by 26 percent from 136.9 million dinars to 101.2 million dinars.

Mashaer Holding Company's liabilities decreased by 17.9 percent from 4.8 million dinars to 4 million dinars, while Munshaat Real Estate Projects Company's liabilities fell by 16.9 percent from 88.3 million dinars to 73.3 million dinars.

European Central Bank (ECB) President Christine Lagarde indicated that she's "really confident that we have inflation under control." "The forecast that we have for next year and the year after that is really getting very, very close to target, if not at target. So, I am confident that we've gone to a control phase." Additionally, she signaled that there is a "strong likelihood" of a cut "if the data that we receive reinforces the confidence level that we have" with regards to the upcoming June 6 ECB meeting. Markets are strongly pricing in a 25bps rate cut by the ECB for the upcoming meeting.

The US Dollar index closed the week at 104.72.

The EUR/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.0845.

The GBP/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.2740.

The AUD/USD currency pair closed the week at 0.6627.

The NZD/USD currency pair closed the week at 0.6120.

By National Bank of Kuwait

United States

FOMC Meeting Minutes

In the latest FOMC meeting minutes, participants indicated that while inflation eased over the past year, recent data suggested lack of further progress towards reaching the 2% desired level. Furthermore, some participants indicated their willingness to tighten policy further if inflation remains sticky to a point where hiking becomes appropriate. The meeting minutes come following an incremental improvement in inflation, where the April CPI figure showed inflation at 3.4% down from 3.6% in March. Despite this, "Many participants noted signs that the finances of low- and moderate-income households were increasingly coming under pressure, which these participants saw as a downside risk to the outlook for consumption." Moreover, "They pointed to increased usage of credit cards and buy-now-pay-later services, as well as increased delinquency rates for some types of consumer loans." Officials indicated uncertainty about how long it would take to get inflation back to 2%, and how much impact high interest rates are having to get to their goal. The hawkish tone revealed in the minutes was followed by strengthening of the greenback as well as decline in equities.

Unemployment Claims Fall

The number of people filing for unemployment benefits in the US fell by 8,000 to 215,000 claims from 223,000 previously, below market expectations of 220,000 claims. The numbers suggest a historically resilient labor market despite a historical tightening cycle by the Fed and a recent uptick of the unemployment rate in April.

US Business Activity Rises

Business activity in the US is booming. The PMI composite index, which measures activity in both manufacturing and services sectors, rose to a 25-month high of 54.4 in May. This indicates that businesses are confident about the future, as output and order books are rising. Services PMI rose to 54.8 from 51.4 previously, a 12-month high, while the manufacturing PMI increased to 50.9 from 50.0 in April. Chris Williamson, Chief Business Economist at S&P Global Market Intelligence, stated that the readings "put the US economy back on course for another solid GDP gain in the second quarter." "Not only has output risen in response to renewed order book growth, but business confidence has lifted higher to signal brighter prospects for the year ahead," Williamson added. However, he warned that "Selling price inflation has meanwhile ticked higher and continues to signal modestly above-target inflation," complicating the path to the Fed's desired 2% inflation goal.

Europe

Eurozone Composite PMI at 12 Month High

In the Eurozone, composite PMI reached a 12-month high of 52.3 driven by higher than expected growth in the manufacturing sector. Manufacturing PMI rose to a 15-month high of 47.4, above expectations of a 46.6 print but remains in contraction territory. Meanwhile, services PMI remained unchanged at 53.3. The rise in business activity was supported by the bloc's largest economy, Germany, which recorded a 12-month high composite PMI of 52.2 after logging increases in both manufacturing and services activity. On the other hand, France's composite PMI fell from 50.5 to 49.1, taking it back into contraction territory. Markets reacted positively following the release of the data, with both the Euro and European equities rising.

ECB's Lagarde Signals Imminent Cut

European Central Bank (ECB) President Christine Lagarde indicated that she's "really confident that we have inflation under control." "The forecast that we have for next year and the year after that is really getting very, very close to target, if not at target. So, I am confident that we've gone to a control phase." Additionally, she signaled that there is a "strong likelihood" of a cut "if the data that we receive reinforces the confidence level that we have" with regards to the upcoming June 6 ECB meeting. Markets are strongly pricing in a 25bps rate cut by the ECB for the upcoming meeting.

Rates - 26th May 2024

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.0864	1.0803	1.0884	1.0845	1.0770	1.0940	1.0895
GBP	1.2699	1.2676	1.2761	1.2740	1.2680	1.2860	1.2756
JPY	155.60	155.47	157.19	156.99	156.30	157.60	154.86
CHF	0.9092	0.9077	0.9159	0.9148	0.9100	0.9180	0.9057

KOC initiates drilling mud recycling campaign

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: According to an authoritative oil source, Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) embarked on a campaign to recycle drilling mud for heavy oil wells in the last fiscal year, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This initiative aligns with the company's management vision aimed at mitigating environmental impact and financial costs.

The source highlighted the economic benefits reaped by the company from this campaign, emphasizing its role in curbing environmental harm caused by the disposal of toxic chemicals into the environment.

The campaign reportedly resulted in approximately 60% cost savings on drilling mud and saved around 120 thousand dinars for approximately 29 personnel associated with a designated well for the drilling tower.

The strategic chemical selection and meticulous engineering planning played pivotal roles in ensuring the success of the reused drilling mud, with a comprehensive plan and operational sequence devised to optimize

capabilities. Furthermore, a robust management system for recycling drilling mud was established across all heavy oil wells.

In line with KOC's objectives to reduce harmful emissions from production operations and enhance operational efficiency and safety, the company tackled a challenge associated with cleaning operations using coiled pipes.

KOC's innovative solution, the "ECO Burner System," was developed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions during external cleaning operations outside the drilling rig.

The system was implemented experimentally on 25 wells across south, east, and west fields, resulting in the recovery of 5,000 barrels of crude oil and 12,000 barrels of diesel, which were safeguarded from combustion.

Additionally, the implementation of the "ECO Burner System" led to a significant reduction in carbon dioxide emissions equivalent to 7 million kilograms. This initiative underscores KOC's commitment to sustainable practices and environmental stewardship in its operations.

Kuwaiti executives share success stories in robotics adoption

CyberMAK hosts conference on role of robotics and AI in business automation

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Yesterday, CyberMAK Information Systems organized a conference focused on the role of robotics and artificial intelligence (AI) in business automation, improving efficiency, and cost control in the workplace. The event was attended by a distinguished group of senior figures, including representatives from state ministries, telecommunications companies, banks, the oil sector, and private sector companies.

The conference featured presentations on robotics and AI technologies by Automation Anywhere. Additionally, a selection of executives from leading Kuwaiti companies, who are CyberMAK clients, participated as speakers. They enriched the discussions by providing valuable insights and practical experi-

ences, sharing success stories achieved through the adoption of robotics technologies in business automation.

Mr. Colin Miranda, CEO of CyberMAK, stated that such conferences are an excellent opportunity for knowledge exchange, sharing experiences, and networking among those interested in the field of robotics and AI. He emphasized that CyberMAK is committed to providing the necessary support to the Kuwaiti market by offering the latest technologies through CyberMAK's Center of Excellence like AIOps, AI, GPT, RPA, Customer Service Management, Software metering and analytics, Containerization, and others, while continuously investing in our teams to deliver the highest-levels of service quality that our clients deserve.



Photo during the event

BUSINESS

Palestinian economy faces unprecedented shock: minister

Palestinian Minister of National Economy Mohammed Alamour warned Saturday that the Palestinian economy is facing an "unprecedented" shock, due to the ongoing Hamas-Israel conflict in Gaza Strip.

In a press statement, Alamour said that "the war" carried out by the Israeli government and the financial and economic blockade are disrupting commercial activity and causing an

economic contraction for Palestine, which is expected to reach 10 percent.

A World Bank report published on Thursday projected that the Palestinian economy would contract in a range of 6.5 to 9.4 percent this year.

Alamour revealed that the Palestinian economy loses about 20 million U.S. dollars every day due to the complete cessation of production in the Gaza Strip and

disruptions in the West Bank, in addition to the unemployment of workers and the sharp decline in economic activity and purchasing power.

Alamour called on the international community to oblige the Israeli government to stop the "genocide" and end the financial and economic blockade which is being practiced as "political blackmail." (Xinhua)

Iran decides to raise oil production to 4 mb/d

Iran on Saturday approved to increase its crude oil production to 4 million barrels per day (mbd), the official news agency IRNA reported.

The plan was approved in a meeting of the country's economic council chaired by Interim President Mohammad Mokhber in the Iranian capital Tehran, the report said.

According to IRNA, the council decided that daily crude oil pro-

duction by the National Iranian Oil Company would increase from 3.6 mbd to 4 mbd.

The report said by implementing the oil output increase plan, which needs 3 billion U.S. dollars in investments, Iran would be able to generate an additional income of 7 billion dollars by the end of the current Iranian calendar year, which falls on March 20, 2025.

In April, the head of Iran's Customs Administration Moham-

mad Rezvanifar said that Iran's oil exports reached 35.87 billion dollars in the previous year, which ended on March 19.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration affiliated with the Department of Energy, Iran possessed an estimated total of 209 billion barrels of oil reserves by the end of 2021, ranking the country as the world's third-largest holder of crude oil. (Xinhua)

Summit organized by the Union of Arab Banks

Türkiye, Arab world pledge to boost financial cooperation

ISTANBUL, May 26, (Xinhua): Türkiye and the Arab world pledged to enhance their financial cooperation at the International Arab Banking Summit started Thursday in Türkiye's largest city, Istanbul.

Organized by the Union of Arab Banks, the summit convened key stakeholders from governments and the business world to delve into avenues for bolstering cooperation and surmounting challenges by tapping the potential.

Addressing the summit, Türkiye's Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency Chairman Sahap Kavcioglu said he believed the summit would help enhance financial communication and boost such cooperation.

In the speech live-broadcasted by local media, he said that the total assets managed by Arab countries in Türkiye amount to 3.8 trillion Turkish liras (about 118 billion U.S. dollars), and they have a share in eight banks operating in the country.

Turkish Treasury and Finance Minister Mehmet Simsek said at the summit that great cooperation potential, especially in tourism, defense industry and other fields, awaited to be unleashed from implementing free trade agreements between his country and those in the Arab world.

Wissam H. Fattouh, secretary general of the Union of Arab Banks, high-

lighted the keen interest of Arab banks to delve into the Turkish financial market, stressing that the union receives numerous requests from Arab banks expressing interest in investing in Türkiye.

"The trade cooperation amounting to 72 billion dollars between Türkiye and the Arab world underscores the attractiveness of Türkiye for Arab banks," Fattouh was quoted as saying by the state-run Anadolu agency.

Established in 1974 as a pan-Arab organization to represent the Arab banking and financial community, the union has 20 members from Arab countries.

Two meetings scheduled

OPEC+ to meet virtually on 2nd June for output rates

VIENNA, May 26, (KUNA): OPEC+ coalition will hold a virtual ministerial meeting on June 2 to discuss production rates in the second half of this year, said the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) on Friday.

The meeting was planned to be held in person, the OPEC said in a statement, giving no reasons for holding it virtually.

OPEC oil ministers will also hold the meeting of the 54th Joint Ministerial Market Monitoring Committee on the same day, it said.

The two gatherings will discuss the rates of output in the second half of this year and whether there

is a need for reforms, it noted.

In its latest report issued on May 14, OPEC said that demand for crudes of the OPEC+ alliance would remain unchanged to stand at about 43.2 million barrels per day for 2024, an increase of 900,000 barrels per day compared with 2023 levels.

In 2025, the report expected that demand for OPEC+ crude would hit 44 million bpd, a rise of 800,000 barrels compared with 2024, it revealed.

OPEC crude basket price rose by USD 4.90 per barrel, or 5.8 percent, to reach USD 89.12 per barrel.

Expanding China-Europe freight service boosts trade, prosperity

10 trains depart daily reaching over 100 cities across Asia & Europe

BEIJING, May 26, (Xinhua): In 2011, a train loaded with electronic products sounded its horn and embarked on a journey from Tuanjiecun Station in southwest China's Chongqing to Duisburg in Germany, marking the inauguration of the China-Europe freight train service.

Initially, the small station saw only one train depart each month. Now, it has become a first-class terminal, from which over 10 trains leave daily, reaching more than 100 cities across Asia and Europe. This epitomizes the rapid growth of the China-Europe freight train service.

As of Saturday, the total number of China-Europe freight train trips has surpassed 90,000. This extensive network currently serves 223 cities in 25 European countries and over 100 cities in 11 Asian countries, with its service covering almost the entire Eurasian continent, according to China State Railway Group Co., Ltd. (China Railway).

With deepening regional economic ties, the China-Europe freight train service -- a flagship program of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) -- has proven to be both a vital artery ensuring the continuous flow of commodities and a stabilizer enhancing the resilience of global supply chains amidst global turmoil.

Growing popularity
From 2016 to 2023, the annual number of China-Europe freight train trips surged from 1,702 to over 17,000. The value of goods transported by this service skyrocketed from 8 billion U.S. dollars in 2016 to 56.7 billion U.S. dollars in 2023.

As the Red Sea crisis disrupts vital shipping lanes and global supply chains, the China-Europe freight train service has attracted an increasing number of freight forwarders due to its efficiency, reliability, and cost-effectiveness.

The Suez Canal, through which 12 percent of global trade used to pass, saw traffic drop by 66 percent at the start of April, compared with a year earlier, said a recent report by British newspaper The Guardian. Many shipping firms are now diverting vessels to the safer, but much longer and more costly, route around the tip of southern Africa, passing the Cape of Good Hope. This can add 10 days to a journey and increase fuel costs by 40 percent.

Some companies have switched to rail freight, with the number of trains leaving China for Europe dramatically increasing in recent months, Marco Forgiore, director general at the Institute of Export & International Trade, told the newspaper.

The China Railway reported earlier this month that the number of China-Europe freight train services increased by 10 percent year on year to 6,184 trips in the first four months of 2024.

With an office in Chengdu, China, Polish company Real Logistics has been engaged in the China-Europe freight train service business for nearly a decade. General Manager Pawel Moskala told Xinhua that after the outbreak of the Red Sea crisis, maritime transport between China and Europe was severely affected, while the China-Europe freight train service has played a significant complementary role in supporting goods transportation.



This photo taken on March 21, 2024, shows a China-Europe freight train bound for Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, departs from the Shijiazhuang international land port in north China's Hebei Province. (Xinhua)

Turkish cbank says to maintain tight monetary policy amid high inflation

ANKARA, May 26, (Xinhua): Türkiye needs to maintain a tight monetary policy until inflation expectations decrease, the country's Central Bank Governor Fatih Karahan said Friday, expressing optimism for the Turkish lira's real appreciation.

"As per the latest data for April, inflation stood at 69.8 percent, and we anticipate it reaching around 75 percent in May due to base effects," he said while speaking at the Arab Banking Summit in Türkiye's largest city Istanbul.

Organized by the Union of Arab Banks, the two-day summit, starting on Thursday, convened key stakeholders from governments and the business world, aiming at bolstering cooperation and surmounting challenges by tapping the potential.

The governor noted the bank's

interim inflation targets for year-end 2024, 2025, and 2026 are 38 percent, 14 percent, and 9 percent, respectively.

Highlighting the benefits of the tight monetary policy for the banking sector, Karahan said "despite the high inflation environment, the banking sector continues to maintain its profitability. We are observing a significant increase in Turkish lira deposits."

"The regulations we have implemented will facilitate the sterilization of excess lira liquidity, support the transition to lira deposits, and prevent excessive credit growth," Karahan added.

Karahan also mentioned a growing appetite among foreign investors for the Turkish banking sector, driven by "policy normalization" and a decline in Türkiye's risk premium.

"Both public and private banks issued numerous long-term Eurobonds in 2023 and this year. Since last September, Eurobond issuances have totaled approximately 13.8 billion U.S. dollars. This year alone, total Eurobond issuances have reached 7.8 billion dollars, with additional subordinated debt issuances amounting to 4.1 billion dollars," he said.

Türkiye abandoned years of easing policies after last year's general elections, won again by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his ruling coalition.

In last June, the central bank's newly appointed administration delivered aggressive tightening aimed at cooling demand to curb inflation. The central bank has raised its key one-week repo rate from 8.5 percent to 50 percent since June 2023.

remains relatively cheap and safe.

"The China-Europe freight train service has, to a certain extent, ensured the security and stability of industrial and supply chains, injected stability into economic and trade exchanges, and played a significant role in maintaining stable trade relations worldwide," the scholar added.

Expanding service

Last Monday, a cargo train carrying 50 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of goods departed from Huanghua Port in Cangzhou, located in north China's Hebei Province, en route to Moscow, the capital of Russia, launching a new international route for the China-Europe freight train service.

Less than two months ago and also in Hebei, a new international freight train route linking the city of Shijiazhuang with Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, began operations. Hailing the China-Europe freight train service as a more efficient way to connect China with Europe, Bojan Stanic, assistant director for Strategic Analysis & Data at Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia, said that Serbia is a key point in the BRI, and this train will re-

duce logistics costs and bring benefits to both countries.

As the demand for rail transport between China and Europe grows, the China-Europe freight train service has seen significant network expansion and service upgrades in recent years.

Chongqing launched its first China-Europe freight train to Istanbul, Türkiye in February. Industry insiders believe that amidst frequent conflicts, the Istanbul train service has enhanced the corridor connecting western China with Europe, and bolstered the risk resistance and development resilience of the China-Europe freight train service.

"The train services provide a guarantee for the timely arrival of our goods and effectively reduce our operational risks," said Zhang Rong, deputy general manager of Yuxinrou (Chongqing) Logistics Co., Ltd., the operator of China-Europe freight train service in Chongqing.

Along with the network expansion, the China-Europe freight train service has also experienced impressive enhancement in transport capacity, efficiency, and service quality.

Pakistan says United Arab Emirates to invest \$10 billion in the country

ISLAMABAD, May 26, (AP): The Pakistani government said that the United Arab Emirates committed to investing up to \$10 billion in Pakistan during a meeting in the UAE capital between that country's president and the Pakistani prime minister.

The office of Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said in a statement that UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan made the commitment during a meeting in Abu Dhabi with Sharif,

who is visiting the UAE. It provided few details.

The statement said Sharif told the UAE president about measures the Pakistani government is taking to encourage foreign investment, and that the UAE president committed to investing \$10 billion in various sectors in Pakistan.

Sharif also invited the UAE president to visit Pakistan, an offer which he accepted, the statement said.

Harare mixes charm with force in bid to 'shore up' its currency

HARARE, Zimbabwe, May 26 (AP): The introduction of the world's newest currency in April inspired a reggae artist to record a song praising the ZiG, or Zimbabwe Gold.

The catchy tune, titled "Zig Mari," received generous play on state television and radio. The musician, Ras Caleb, received a car and \$2,000 - ironically paid in greenbacks, not the new ZiGs - from a businessman with close ties to Zimbabwe's ruling party and President Emmerson Mnangagwa; he said he wanted to reward an act he considered "patriotic."

Although money typically doesn't require publicity, Zimbabwe's sixth national currency in 15 years needs all the help it can get.

Desperate to halt a money crisis underlining the country's economic troubles, the government launched the gold-backed ZiG, the latest attempt to replace the Zimbabwe dollar, which had been battered by depreciation and often outright rejection by people unwilling to put their faith in it.

Senior officials from the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe and the ruling ZANU-PF party embarked on a flurry of public rallies and meetings to encourage the skeptical population to now embrace the ZiG ahead of the U.S. dollar - also legal tender in the southern African nation. Commercial jingles heralding the currency flooded the airwaves along with Caleb's single.

Yet despite the charm offensive, the ZiG is facing a familiar problem: public mistrust and structural barriers that have people still clamoring for U.S. dollars. Although the ZiG has largely held its value on the official market, it has tumbled on the black market, where \$1 can be exchanged for up to 17 ZiGs.

Authorities are also using force to prop up the new banknotes. They have packed jail cells with dozens of street currency dealers, and frozen the accounts of businesses accused of undermining the ZiG.

Law enforcement agents have arrested more than 200 street currency dealers on allegations of flouting foreign currency exchange regulations, national police spokesman Paul Nyathi said. The government accuses them of undermining and devaluing the new currency by using exchange rates higher than the official one.

Twin brothers Tapiwa and Justice

Nyamadzawo, 24, were arrested two weeks after the launch of the new currency after allegedly selling undercover detectives cellphone airtime worth \$10 at a rate of 15 ZiGs per dollar, according to court papers. The official exchange rate was just over 13 ZiGs per dollar. Like other currency traders, the twins were denied bail and remain in pretrial detention on charges that carry a maximum prison term of 10 years.

The crackdown is incongruous, because Zimbabwe has a long history of street currency dealers whose unofficial rates often carry the day. Many shops and merchants also ignore the official rate and only accept the local currency at their own rates. And many vendors, particularly in the unlicensed sector that employs more than 80% of adult Zimbabweans, still only accept the dollar.

What's more, the government has allowed some businesses, such as gas stations, to refuse to accept the ZiG in favor of U.S. dollars. Some departments, like the office that issues and renews passports, also accept only greenbacks. Many others still list their fees in U.S. dollars, although they accept the equivalent in local currency.

The government has announced fines up to 200,000 ZiG or about \$15,000, for businesses that fail to stick to the official exchange rate. Authorities have also frozen bank accounts of some businesses on accusations of rejecting the new currency or trading using exchange rates higher than the official rate. The Reserve Bank didn't name the affected businesses.

Zimbabwe has a long and tumultuous history of monetary instability. The ZiG is the sixth currency used following the spectacular 2009 collapse of the Zimbabwe dollar amid hyperinflation of 5 billion percent, one of the world's worst currency crashes.

The government printed a 100-trillion Zimbabwe dollar banknote to keep up with spiraling prices that saw a loaf of bread going for more than 500 million Zimbabwe dollars.

John Mushayavanhu, the governor of Zimbabwe's central bank, has hyped the ZiG as a first step toward eventual de-dollarization. The U.S. dollar accounts for more than 80% of transactions in the country, according to Mushayavanhu, who wants the ratio to be 50% by 2026.

Egypt's central bank maintains interest rate

CAIRO, May 26, (KUNA): The Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) on Thursday kept its overnight interest rates unchanged, maintaining overnight deposit and lending rates, and the main operation rate at 27.25 percent, 28.25 percent and 27.5 percent respectively.

The move was decided during the meeting of the

central bank's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), it said in a press release, adding that the discount rate was also kept unchanged at 27.25 percent.

The decision reflects the latest developments and expectations at both local and global levels since the MPC's previous meeting, it said.

Interest rates are still well below the headline

inflation rate, which was running at 32.5 percent in April. Inflation has declined from a record 38 percent in September, it noted.

In March, the bank raised the overnight deposit rate, overnight lending rates, and the main operation rate by 600 basis points to reach 27.25 percent, 28.25 percent, and 27.75 percent, respectively.

Innovative services for visually and hearing impaired customers

NBK partakes in career fair of 5th wave of 'Partners to Employ Them' initiative for disabled

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: As part of its leading CSR contributions in Kuwait, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) participated in the Career Fair of the 5th Wave of "Partners to Employ Them" Initiative for the Disabled 2023-2024, organized by the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) in collaboration with the Human Construction Society for Social Development (HCS).

During the Career Fair held on May 21st at the Cultural Center of Kuwait University - Shadadiya, the participating staff of NBK Group Human Resources presented the available vacancies for the disabled, as well as responded to all inquiries raised by the participants.



Jarrah Al-Shatti

Participation in career fairs stems from its importance as a platform for supporting national talent to promote sustainable human capital for the future.

Commenting on this, Jarrah Al-Shatti Talent Acquisition Manager at National Bank of Kuwait said: "We are always keen on extending all sorts of support to all segments of society, particularly people with special needs. In this regard, our efforts include providing internship and programs to support university students and job candidates from people with special needs, to facilitate mainstreaming them into the bank, which also reflects our commitment to inclusion and diversity."

"At NBK, we firmly believe in providing equal opportunities for all segments. Therefore, we have unwavering commitment to extend all sorts of support to the cherished special needs segment to drive their knowledge acquisition, regarding this a national duty and unshakable



Photos during the event.

commitment," he added. "NBK believes in the potential of every individual in our society, and the need to provide them with due support for learning and development. Reflecting this belief, we have a policy for recruiting certain categories of special needs people, in cooperation with the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA) and the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM)," he noted.

To ensure ethical hiring practices, NBK adheres to strict governance frameworks, including fair labor standards and the provision of ability and work psychometric tests to all candidates, guaranteeing a transparent and unbiased recruitment process. The bank's policies are rigorously designed to combat discrimination and promote a culture of equality and fairness across all hiring activities.

It is worth mentioning that NBK

is the first bank in the Middle East to assign sign language trained staff in all branches to serve hearing-impaired customers. It has dedicated branches equipped with the latest services to accommodate and facilitate banking for customers with visual, hearing or physical disabilities, maintaining the following practices to cater to special needs: ATMs equipped with Braille keyboards and headphones, enabling visually impaired customers to make easy and secure withdrawals, Braille printing facilities, iPads with speech-to-text functionality for visually impaired customers, wheelchair access to branches (available in all branches), and reserved, clearly marked parking spaces for special needs customers. Moreover, the bank provides easily accessible safe deposit boxes, debit and credit cards with photo for easy identification, when requested.

Leveraging social media to promote small businesses

Zain hosts content marketing workshop

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Zain hosted a special workshop on content marketing at its Innovation Campus (ZINC), presented by creative writer and author Manaer Al Kandari. The session, joined by aspiring small business owners and content creators, aimed at fostering creativity and sharing tips on how to best leverage social media platforms to successfully promote SMEs.

The session is a continuation of a series of specialized workshops Zain hosts periodically to foster a culture of creativity by leveraging on the unlimited capabilities of technology. Through such initiatives, the company hopes to empower individuals to use tech innovation to pursue their passion for art and content creation, by bringing the best local experts to share their insights and expertise.

Al Kandari also explained how to carefully outline and execute a comprehensive marketing strategy for every unique small business, as well as how to create attractive content and use it as a key tool to market products and services. In addition, she described the nature of various social media platforms, how they serve different audiences, and how to leverage each platform's strengths to best reach the target audience.

Al Kandari also discussed how to outline and execute a comprehensive marketing strategy tailored to each small business. She emphasized the creation of attractive content as a key marketing tool and described the nature of various social media platforms, their different audiences, and how to leverage each platform's strengths to reach the target audience effectively.

The workshop was well-re-



Manaer Al Kandari presents the workshop at the Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC).



This session is part of Zain's ongoing workshops to foster creativity.

ceived by content creators, SME owners, and creative individuals, offering a mix of theoretical and practical approaches to enhance attendees' skills and produce valuable outcomes.

Zain fosters a culture of creativity in the community by empower-

ing talented individuals to leverage technology. The company collaborates with local content creators to offer programs and sessions that encourage the public, especially young people, to pursue their passions and develop their innovation, creativity, and technology skills.

Discussion panel emphasizes healthcare developments in Kuwait

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait sponsors Amiri Hospital's eighth Medical Scientific Day

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Within its corporate social responsibility framework and keenness to strengthen its partnership with the healthcare sector in Kuwait, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently announced its sponsorship of Amiri Hospital's eighth Medical Scientific Day.

The event was held at the Waldorf Astoria hotel located at The Avenues and was attended by Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, Minister of Health, as well as other officials from the Ministry of Health, Amiri Hospital, and public and private health sectors.

During the event, an overview of the latest progress in the medical sector was given in addition to the benefits offered to citizens of Kuwait. A discussion panel was also held where the latest healthcare developments in Kuwait were presented, emphasizing the great efforts that responsible authorities exert to secure the highest levels of healthcare for both citizens and expatriates.

Commenting on this occasion, Sager Albenali, Chief Communications Officer at ABK, said, "Participating in this initiative is a testament to the Bank's commitment to diversifying CSR efforts across all sectors, thus contributing to enhancing our position as industry pioneers."

He revealed that ABK places great importance on the healthcare sector and supports many of its related initiatives throughout the year. The Bank is also very keen on cooperating with the related authorities to hold informative seminars that aim to raise public awareness on precautions to prevent infections and diseases.

Moreover, Albenali expressed, "Such initiatives play a pivotal role in raising health awareness, enhancing public health, and fighting negative and unhealthy habits. ABK continues to support the Kuwaiti government's efforts to secure the needs of citizens and residents while improving the solutions available at the local market." He added that ABK recently launched its medical loan, offering many exclusive benefits to customers in cooperation with local hospitals and clinics.

Concluding his statement, Albenali praised Amiri Hospital's exceptional efforts in organizing various awareness initiatives, healthcare days, and free checkups that create a positive impact in society. He affirmed, "ABK remains committed to pursuing initiatives that maintain trust across all customer segments and further enhance ABK's position in Kuwait's banking sector."



Bank employees during the event.

Multilingual expression of cleanup theme

Beach cleanup drive organized by ASSP Kuwait Chapter

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Outreach and Govt. Affairs Committee of American Society of Safety Professionals - Kuwait Chapter organized a Beach Cleanup Drive on 18th May 2024 at Mahboula Beach from 7:30 AM to 9:30 AM. The program theme was "The Ocean takes care of Us, Let's return the Favour!" During the event around 120 people including Kent employees, children and ASSP Members participated.

The program began with a welcome speech from Mr. Mohamed Yusuf, acting Vice-President of ASSP Kuwait Chapter, who thanked everyone for their presence and active participation. This campaign is about more than just cleaning the beach," said Mr. Safdar Khan President ASSP in his speech, "We want to awareness amongst the community about the impact of plastic pollution on our marine ecosystems and expressed gratitude to Kent Company staff for sponsoring the event."

Mr. Declan Finn (GM Kent) thanked ASSP Kuwait Chapter for organizing Beach Cleanup and he was happy to see large number of participants including children from Kent staff, ASSP members and their families.

Outreach Committee Head Mr. Balvant Singh briefed about the Safety precautions during the Beach cleanup activity and availability of First aid with first aid kit.

ASSP Kuwait Chapter informed the participants that "Our goal for Cleanup Day at Mahboula Beach is not only to pick up every piece of trash we can reach but also to educate the public on the responsibility of keeping the beaches clean and saving our environment."



Photos during the event.

Kent sponsored this Beach Cleanup Drive. Kent's core services include consulting, engineering & projects, completion, commissioning & start-up, operations & maintenance. Key personnel from Kent Kuwait who attended the event were, Declan Finn - General Manager, Vishnu Nair - Quality Systems Manager, Samantha Hogg - Country Human Resource Manager, Vijay Mohan - HSSEQ Lead, Tamer Alasad - Project Manager, David Choi - Commissioning Manager, Syam

Komalavally - Project Lead, Febin Sunny - Procurement Specialist and Satish Kumar Maitta - HSSE Supervisor.

T-Shirts, Caps, Hand Gloves, Trash Bag and masks were distributed to all the participants and thereafter trash collection kicked off.

During the closing notes, Mr. Safdar Ali Khan, President of ASSP Kuwait Chapter, Mr. Mohamed Yusuf, acting Vice-President of ASSP Kuwait Chapter, and Declan Finn, General Manager - Kent Kuwait, thanked all participants. ASSP Ku-

wait Chapter's Advisory Committee members Mr. Ashok Garlapati, Mr. CH. Rama Krishna Chary and Mentor Mr. Jignesh Shah participated, promoting the theme "Think Globally and Act Locally".

Participants expressed the Beach Cleanup theme "The Ocean takes care of Us, Let's Return the Favour!" in languages such as Telugu, Gujarati, Pilipino, Swahili, Bengali, Arabic and Hindi. A memento of appreciation was presented to Mr. Declan Finn, General Manager, Kent, by ASSP Kuwait Chapter President

Mr. Safdar Ali Khan, Mr. Ashok Garlapati, Mr. CH. Rama Krishna Chary and Mr. Jignesh Shah. The program concluded with the distribution of refreshments.

The ASSP - Kuwait Chapter has been organizing these events in Kuwait for several years. ASSP want to educate the community about the impact of pollution on our marine ecosystems. ASSP hopes that the event will serve as a catalyst for ongoing environmental efforts and inspire other communities to take similar action.

NSB reflects Indian immigrants' economic success, cultural impact

LOS ANGELES, May 26, (AP) — When Balu Natarajan became the first Indian American champion of the Scripps National Spelling Bee (NSB) in 1985, a headline on an Associated Press article read, "Immigrants' son wins National Spelling Bee," with the first paragraph noting the champion "speaks his parents' native Indian language at home."

Those details would hardly be newsworthy today after a quarter-century of Indian American spelling champs, most of them the offspring of parents who arrived in the United States on student or work visas.

This year's bee is scheduled to begin Tuesday at a convention center outside Washington and, as usual, many of the expected contenders are Indian American, including Shradha Rachamreddy, Aryan Khedkar, Bruhat Soma and Ishika Varipilli.

Nearly 70% of Indian-born US residents arrived after 2000, according to census data, and that dovetails with the surge in Indian American spelling bee champions. There were two Indian American Scripps winners before 1999. Of the 34 since, 28 have been Indian American, including three straight years of Indian American co-champions and one year (2019) when eight champions were declared, seven of Indian ancestry.

The experiences of first-generation Indian Americans and their spelling bee champion children illustrate the economic success and cultural impact of the nation's second-largest immigrant group.

As of 2022, there were 3.1 million Indian-born people living in the U.S., and Indian American households had a median income of \$147,000, more than twice the median income of all US households, according to census data. Indian Americans also were more than twice

as likely to have college degrees.

Indians received 74% of the H-1B visas for specialized occupations approved in fiscal 2021, and a record total of nearly 269,000 students from India were enrolled at US colleges and universities in 2022-23, according to the Institute of International Education.

Those numbers paint a picture of a high-achieving demographic that is well-suited for success in academic competitions.

Ganesh Dasari, whose daughter and son each made multiple appearances at the Scripps bee, holds a doctorate in civil engineering from the University of Cambridge and was recruited to the US to work for ExxonMobil on an H-1B visa. He quickly obtained a green card.

Academic

"Me and my wife, we came from a similar background. We both benefited from having the education ... so we put a lot of emphasis on educating our kids," Dasari said. "We basically introduced them to anything academic, and a couple of sports, but clearly there was a bias in our thinking that education is a higher priority than sports."

In his 2016 address to Congress, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi mentioned "spelling bee champions" among his country's contributions to the US while that year's co-champs, Nihar Janga and Jairam Hathwar, watched from the gallery.

Even among Indian American spellers, a particular subgroup is over-represented: families from the southern states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, where Telugu is the primary language. Hyderabad, the capital of Telangana, is India's information-technology hub and the region

supplies many H-1B visa recipients.

"Whenever we go to the spelling bee events, everybody speaks that language," Dasari said. "We realized there are so many people from the same state."

Deval Shah, the father of last year's champion, Dev Shah, grew up in the northwestern state of Gujarat and proudly noted Dev was the first spelling bee champion of Gujarati descent. The parents of the 2022 winner, Harini Logan, are from Chennai in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Shah is an engineer, his wife is a physician, and both of Harini's parents were trained as software engineers.

Indian-born parents of kids with an affinity for spelling have a network of similar families to provide guidance and support, as well as access to organizations like the North South Foundation, which offers academic competitions aimed at the Indian diaspora.

"The reason Indian American immigrants really dominate, the main reason is the North South Foundation," Shah said.

When Harini won her first NSF spelling competition, Ganesh Dasari was one of the judges, and "he was literally chasing us down" to tell them "Harini has tremendous potential to be on the national stage," said Rampriya Logan, Harini's mother.

Ishika, a 13-year-old from Spring, Texas, who will be competing at Scripps this year for the third time, woke her parents at 6 a.m. the day after she lost a third-grade classroom spelling bee, saying she wanted to participate in more bees. Her mother, an IT manager who immigrated to the US in 2006, then reached out to ask advice from other families from the Houston area whose children were high-level spellers.

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MONDAY, MAY 27, 2024



Sean Baker, winner of the Palme d'Or for the film 'Anora,' poses for photographers during the photo call following the awards ceremony at the 77th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Saturday, May 25. (AP)

Film

Ensemble of actors win best actress for 'Emilia Perez'

Sean Baker's 'Anora' wins Palme d'Or

CANNES, May 26, (AP) — Sean Baker's "Anora," a comic but devastating Brooklyn odyssey about a sex worker who marries the son of a wealthy Russian oligarch, won the Cannes Film Festival's top award, the Palme d'Or.

The win Saturday for "Anora" marked a coronation for Baker, the 53-year-old indie filmmaker of "The Florida Project" who used iPhones to make his 2015 film "Tangerine." It's also, remarkably, the fifth straight Palme d'Or won by specialty distributor Neon, following "Parasite," "Titane," "Triangle of Sadness" and last year's winner, "Anatomy of a Fall." Baker accepted the prize with his movie's star, Mikey Madison, watching in the audience at the Cannes closing ceremony.

"This, literally, has been my singular goal as a filmmaker for the past 30 years, so I'm not really sure what I'm going to do with the rest of my life," said Baker, laughing.

But Baker, the first American filmmaker to win the Palme since Terrence Malick in 2011 with "The Tree of Life," quickly answered that his ambition would remain to "fight to keep cinema alive." The director said the world needed reminding that "watching a film at home while scrolling through your phone, answering emails and half paying attention is just not the way - although some tech companies would like us to think so." "So I say the future of cinema is where it started: in a movie theater," said Baker, who dedicated his award to all sex workers "past, present and future." The awards were chosen by the nine-member jury led by Greta Gerwig, who told reporters she was "forever changed as a filmmaker because of this experience." Gerwig praised "Anora" as having the feeling of classical cinema, saying it felt like an Ernst Lubitsch or Howard Hawks film that lead in unexpected directions.

While "Anora" was arguably the most acclaimed film of the festival, its win was a slight surprise. Many expected either the gentle Indian drama "All We Imagine As Light" or the Iranian film "The Seed of the Sacred Fig" to win. Both of those films also took home prizes.

It wasn't the only jolt of the closing ceremony, though. Before George Lucas was given an honorary Palme d'Or, his old friend and sometimes collabora-

tor Francis Ford Coppola appeared to present it to him, reuniting two of the most pivotal figures of the last half-century of American moviemaking. Coppola, who earlier in the festival premiered his self-financed sci-fi epic "Megalopolis," called him his "kid brother." Lucas called Coppola "a big friend and a brother and a mentor." "I'm just a kid who grew up in a vineyard in Modesto, California, who makes movies in San Francisco, with my friend Francis," said Lucas. "It's definitely a different world. I've actually never made a film in Hollywood as a director." "All We Imagine As Light," about sisterhood in modern Mumbai, won the Grand Prix, Cannes' second-highest honor. Payal Kapadia's second feature was the first Indian in competition in Cannes in 30 years.

Afterward, Kapadia urged a wide understanding of Indian cinema, saying "there's amazing work going on in our country." "Not just Bollywood," said Kapadia.

Ovation

The jury awarded a special prize to Mohammad Rasoulof's "The Seed of the Sacred Fig," a drama made secretly in Iran. Days ahead of the film's premiere, Rasoulof, facing an eight-year prison sentence, fled Iran on foot. His film, which includes real footage from the 2022-2023 demonstrations in Iran, channels Iranian oppression into a family drama. The Cannes crowd met an emotional Rasoulof with a lengthy standing ovation. Coralie Fargeat's body horror film "The Substance," starring Demi Moore as a Hollywood actress who goes to gory extremes to remain youthful, won for best screenplay.

"I really believe that movies can change the world, so I hope this movie will be a little stone to build new foundations," said Fargeat. "I really think we need a revolution and I don't think it has really started yet." Some thought Moore, who attended the awards ceremony, might take best actress. But that honor instead went to an ensemble of actors: Karla Sofia Gascón, Zoe Saldana, Selena Gomez and Adriana Paz for Jacques Audiard's "Emilia Perez," a Spanish-language musical about a Mexican drug lord who transitions to a woman. Gascón, who accepted the award, is the first trans actor

to win a major prize at Cannes.

"This award is not just for me. It's for all people who are fighting for themselves and their rights," Gascón told reporters. "We've been insulted, denigrated, subjected to a lot of violence without even knowing why. I think this award is so much more than anyone could imagine." Explaining the jury's unusual choice of giving best actress to an ensemble, Gerwig said each performer was a standout, "but together they're transcendent." "Emilia Perez" also won Cannes' jury prize, giving it a rare two awards at a festival where prizes are usually spread around.

Best actor went to Jesse Plemons for Yorgos Lanthimos' "Kinds of Kindness." In the film, three stories are told with largely the same company of actors. Plemons, a standout in several chapters, didn't attend the closing ceremony.

Portuguese director Miguel Gomes won best director for his "Grand Tour," an Asian odyssey in which a man flees his fiancée from Rangoon in 1917.

"Sometimes I get lucky," shrugged Gomes.

The Camera d'Or, the prize for best first feature across all of Cannes official selections, went to Halfdan Ullmann Tøndel for "Armand," starring "The Worst Person in the World" star Renate Reinsve. Tøndel is the grandson of Swedish filmmaker Ingmar Bergman and Norwegian actor Liv Ullmann.

Last year's top winners in Cannes went on to considerable arthouse success and awards-season runs through the Oscars. That included the Palme winner "Anatomy of a Fall" and the Grand Prix winner "The Zone of Interest." Whether this year's Cannes lived up to that lineup was a regular conversation topic during the festival. But it was a notably eventful Cannes not just for the some of the films - including "Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga" and Kevin Costner's "Horizon: An America Saga" - that screened but for other surrounding dramas.

After stalling for years in France, the #MeToo movement gained momentum ahead of the festival following allegations by Judith Godrèche against two prominent French filmmakers. She brought her short "Moi Aussi" to the festival.

and playful - work on multiple levels for different ages, something they learned from Disney. (AP)

MANCHESTER, England: Nicki Minaj's concert in Manchester scheduled for Saturday night was postponed after police in the Netherlands discovered marijuana



Sherman



Minaj

in her bags as she was preparing to leave the country.

Promoter Live Nation said the performance will be rescheduled and tickets will be honored.

"Despite Nicki's best efforts to explore every possible avenue to make tonight's show happen, the events of today have made it impossible," the promoter said in

a statement. "We are deeply disappointed by the inconvenience this has caused."

Minaj tweeted earlier Saturday that she was stopped at the Amsterdam airport as she was about to board a plane for the concert in Manchester. Police told her they found marijuana in her bags, and it would have to be weighed, she

tweeted. Cannabis is illegal in the Netherlands, but it is tolerated for recreational use.

Robert Van Kapel, a spokesperson for the Netherlands military police, said a 41-year-old American woman had been arrested for exporting "soft drugs." He did not identify the woman or elaborate on the type of drugs in question. (AP)

People & Places

Music

Brave new album

Rapsody embraces vulnerable strength

NEW YORK, May 26, (AP): If truth has the power to set one free, then Rapsody's new album, "Please Don't Cry," has removed her from emotional imprisonment and gifted her immeasurable liberation.

"People put up a mirror for me. I sat in the mirror myself...it was the beginning of healing. Heart-broke: Why do you feel like you can't fill the void of whatever that was? Internally, why do you feel underappreciated?" questioned the three-time Grammy nominee. "And really allow myself, again, to just sit in a fire and burn. To forgive myself for some things. To accept some things. To learn to love myself."

Rapsody's not only frequently lauded by critics as the best female lyricist, but also as one of the best in the genre. After 2019's critically-acclaimed "Eve" album, discussions by hip-hop purists erupted on social media and in barbershops near and far debating her potentially rivaling Kendrick Lamar for the lyrical throne. But the recognition hasn't translated into the commercial success of some female peers - veterans like Nicki Minaj and Cardi B, or recent newcomers like Megan Thee Stallion, Latto or Ice Spice. But her plight isn't unusual for rappers labeled as "continuous" or extremely lyrical, regardless of gender.



Rapsody

"I was looking at what everybody else was doing instead of worrying about myself," she said, soft-spoken throughout the interview. "I'd see comments (saying), 'She makes great music, but she'll never make it because she's not half-naked or she don't have a No. 1 hit.' And I had to realize that those are really false measurements."

"Please Don't Cry," released in May, is by far the most personal of her four studio albums.

Features

Dwindling more than 350 potential songs down to the final 22 tracks, the bulk of the production comes from HIT-BOY, BLK ODYSSEY and S1, and boasts star-powered features including Erykah Badu and Lil Wayne. The regal voice of Phylicia Rashad is also sprinkled throughout.

The North Carolina native began constructing the album several years ago after a painful breakup and toward the beginning of the global coronavirus pandemic. Personal tales have always lived within her music, but the foundation of her catalogue is anchored by expert lyricism and musicality.

"I've always thought that I was authentic. But at the same time, I realized there was a level of fear there - a fear of allowing myself to be seen completely. But at that time, I don't even think I completely even knew who I was," said the 41-year-old Marlanna Evans who kept Lauryn Hill's "MTV Unplugged No. 2.0" project in heavy rotation while creating, along with an evolving Pinterest board filled with pictures and words for inspiration.

"Please Don't Cry" has a weightier R&B influence than past projects. Standout tracks include the Badu-assisted "3:AM," the lead single "Asteroids," "Stand Tall," "Faith" and "God's Light." While her razor-sharp bars still slice on songs like "Raw" with Lil Wayne and Niko Brim, the album makes its mark by entering a new territory of unapologetic vulnerability. Rapsody touches on insecurities, not having a stronger female fanbase, family members battling dementia and speculation surrounding her sexuality.

On the surprisingly transparent "That One Time," the past Stevie Wonder, Kendrick Lamar and J. Cole collaborator provides a rare glimpse into her love life and past transgressions.

"One time, I had an experience with a woman. But I also bring up that I was with somebody that wasn't available," said the Jehovah's Witness-raised artist of her relationship with a married person, while suggesting her partner wasn't fully honest. "I make mistakes, too - things I say I would never do, and then I find myself in a situation that I'm not proud of. But in my life and the conversations I have, I know I'm not the only one."

Bianca Edwards, vice president of marketing for Roc Nation, says the vulnerability displayed showcases Rapsody's security in her music and herself.

"You have to be extremely confident to bare your soul and not care what people think," said Edwards. "And on this project, I think that she bared a lot."

Always advocating for female rappers, Rapsody has consistently rejected praise meant to criticize her peers. But while there are songs like "Look What You've Done" in which she rhymes, "Don't lift me up throwin' shade/At my sisters that made it out wit' a- and bass," she also raps, "Everything look cookie cutter/We seen enough a-, that sh- ain't special no more" on "Diary of a Mad Bitch."

Harmony

"I see my name brought up a lot of times used to put other women down for how they choose to show up in this art and in their life, and I'm not here for that. I'm not trying to make myself the standard. I'm just trying to make myself another example of what women in hip-hop look like to bring harmony," said Rapsody. "With 'Diary,' it was me making an observation of everybody looks the same...I know we're not clones."

But despite a profession where cosmetic enhancements are common among female rappers - along with sexually-charged lyrics that contribute to their pop stardom - the "Complexion (A Zulu Love)" artist says she's never considered altering her body.

"My question is why isn't there space for me or others who are different from what we see on a mainstream level...why don't we get those same opportunities?" asked the self-described tomboy who also suffers from Graves' disease which can change physical appearance. "I never wanted to be anything other than who I was."

Rapsody says while every artist dreams of creating a hit record, she's not willing to compromise her musical integrity or chase songs that don't feel natural to attract more fans.

"I think she already found her place," said Edwards. "I work with a lot of artists, and I've met artists that are still trying to find themselves. That's not Rap."

A tour will launch in September with five European dates and a North American leg that will run through October.

"Please Don't Cry" has fortified Rapsody's healing journey, and she's better for it.

"Everybody asks me about this album, like 'How you feeling?' I say I feel really happy and I'm at peace. And this is the most free I've ever felt," she said. "I'm not putting pressure on myself to be defined as success through other people's measurements of what that looks like."



The Rolling Stones perform at a celebration for the release of their new album, 'Hackney Diamonds,' Oct. 19, 2023, in New York. The Rolling Stones has announced that they would close out their North American Hackney Diamonds tour by playing at Thunder Ridge Nature Arena in Ridgedale, Mo. (AP)

Music

Bach's album pushes for Skid Row reunion

Rolling Stones to rock the Ozarks

LOS ANGELES, May 26, (AP): The Rolling Stones and the Ozarks don't seem like the most natural pairing. But nature itself, and of all things fishing, have brought them together.

The Stones announced Thursday that they will end their summer Hackney Diamonds Tour on July 21 at Thunder Ridge Nature Arena, a brand new monument to mountain beauty in Missouri built by Bass Pro Shops founder and CEO Johnny Morris.

The Missouri native hopes that Thunder Ridge, which opens with a Morgan Wallen concert Saturday - will be a name heard alongside Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre in Colorado and The Gorge Amphitheatre in Washington state when people talk about the nation's most beautiful music venues.

"I just I really love my home here in the Ozarks," Morris told The Associated Press in an interview. "I'm happy to share it with the world."

For him, the site is as personal as it is pristine. Since he was a boy, with his father and grandfather, he fished the White River and Table Rock Reservoir - both visible from the venue's seats - in the deep-green Boston Mountains section of the Ozarks that surrounds it.

Morris entered the first national bass-fishing tournament - full of future fishing legends - on the reservoir in 1970, and the competitors' hard-to-get lures convinced him to start selling tackle to fishermen on the way there out of his father's liquor store in the early years of what would become Bass Pro Shops.

The 18,000-capacity arena in Ridgedale about 10 miles from Branson is downright tiny compared to the 80,000-plus-seat MetLife Stadium where the Stones will play Thursday night.

Mick, Keith and their crew coming to these mountains also had its origins in fishing. About a decade ago, Morris took his friend Chuck Leavell, a former member of the Allman Brothers Band who has been the

Rolling Stones' primary touring keyboardist and musical director since the early 1980s, on a fishing trip to Canada.

"We were on this pristine little stream, he hooks on this big fish, he said, 'John this is like the happiest day of my life. If you ever need a favor, you let me know,'" Morris remembered with a laugh. "A couple years ago we were working on this, and I said, 'Chuck remember that day you asked if there was anything you could do for me? How about you get the Rolling Stones to Ridgedale, Missouri?'"

Morris has for years dreamed of putting a venue on the site. Many musical acts have played in more makeshift set-ups for summer camps and fishing tournaments. Garth Brooks played to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Morris' stores.

"It just inspired me to see if we could expand this facility," he said, "just to share the beauty of the Ozarks."

Promote

The site won't necessarily require roughing it. Its 12-story "Nature Tower" - designed to look like the old fire-watching towers in national parks - rises over the back of the venue. The amenities in the VIP suites inside it include bedrooms. Morris later plans to have it re-dubbed the "Veterans Tower" to honor, among others, his father who fought in the Battle of the Bulge in World War II.

He takes the "Nature" part of the name seriously. Morris and those promoting the site say its structures were designed to blend and peacefully co-exist with their environment, and along with 1,200 acres of surrounding land they have been permanently set-aside as part of a not-for-profit foundation committed to the cause of conservation, to which all the proceeds will also go.

"Hopefully, it'll be undisturbed," Morris said. "You won't come there in the future and see condos or nothing. Only beautiful nature."

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Sebastian Bach's latest solo album, "Child Within the Man," is a reminder that every once in a while, a man and a moment meet.

This is that time for Bach and his former band Skid Row. The vintage-sounding album has everything that made Bach a force and offers a tantalizing glimpse into what he could bring to a reunited Skid Row.

Together, Bach and Skid Row were fixtures of hard rock radio in the late '80s and early '90s with songs like "Youth Gone Wild," "18 And Life" and "I Remember You." But since parting ways in 1996, neither has had anything close to the level of success they had together.

The lead singer job in Skid Row is currently vacant; Halesstorm's Lzzy Hale is filling in on a handful of shows in the coming weeks, but she has her own career to tend to.

The timing of Bach's solo album could not be better, and it shows a fierce performer in prime fighting form. It's not hard to picture the opening track "Everybody Bleeds" being belted out at a packed stadium by a reunited Skid Row.

His vocals remain sharp and his songwriting talents as cunning as ever.

Bach has new, creative ammunition that he could bring to a Skid Row reunion on tracks like "Crucify Me" and "Hard Darkness." They're the sort of hard, tightly played rockers at which the band excelled, signs of what once was and could be again.

Bach calls in favors from Mötley Crüe guitarist John 5 on "Freedom" and guitar virtuoso Orianthi on "Future of Youth." Billy Idol guitarist Steve Stevens adds a particularly combustible solo on "F.U."

And it all ends with an honest-to-Bach, '80s-esque hair metal power ballad on "To Live Again," proving that this guy remembers where he came from and where his bread is buttered.



Chiang Wei Liang, (left), and You Qiao Yin, winners of the special mention award for 'Mongrel,' pose for photographers during the photo call following the awards ceremony at the 77th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Saturday, May 25. (AP)



Rodriguez



Moore

Variety

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina: A 60-year-old woman saw her dreams of becoming the oldest Miss Universe contestant in history melt away in a haze of sequins and selfies Saturday at Argentina's annual beauty pageant.

Alejandra Marisa Rodriguez, a hospital legal adviser whose entry into the competition had been cheered as a triumph over ageism in a youth-obsessed world, fell short of the Miss Argentina crown. But she did take home the title of "best face," one of several pageant categories including best evening gown, best swimsuit and most elegant.

During the contest she thanked everyone who celebrated her success in the Miss Buenos Aires competition last month. Her win there, after Miss Universe eliminated its long-standing age limit, generated a frenzy of global media attention that vaulted her from obscurity to local fame.

In an instant the soft-spoken lawyer from the city of La Plata, south of Buenos Aires, was doling out moisturizer tips to women striving to achieve her surreally smooth face and promising the public there was truth to the adage that age is just a number. (AP)

ANTIBES, France: Some of the biggest stars in the French Riviera for the Cannes Film Festival made appearances at the 30th annual amfAR gala to raise money for AIDS research.

Demi Moore, whose film "The Substance" caused a stir at Cannes, hosted this year's gala, a role launched by Elizabeth Taylor in 1993.

The red carpet at the exclusive Hôtel du Cap, Eden Roc, was awash with models, actors, singers and fashion designers as well as plenty of festival movers and shakers, who paid thousands of euros for a table at the hottest event in town.

Michelle Yeoh, Heidi Klum, Kelly Rowland, Andie MacDowell, Diane Kruger, Colman Domingo, Michelle Rodriguez, Winnie Harlow, Robin Thicke, Diplo, Paris Jackson, Petra Nemcova, Karolina Kurkova, Natasha Poly and Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York, all attended the fundraiser.

Rowland addressed her Cannes controversy from earlier in the week where she appeared to have an altercation with security on the red carpet. (AP)

BARCELONA, Spain: Louis Vuitton unveiled its latest fashion designs at Barcelona's Park Güell on Thursday, providing the clothes with drama to finally match

Antoni Gaudi's architectural masterpiece. Nicolas Ghesquiere's ambitions for the Parisian house's 2025 Cruise collection were unveiled before an A-list crowd, in-



Payal Kapadia, (second from right), winner of the grand prize for 'All We Imagine As Light,' poses with Kani Kusruti, (from left), Chhaya Kadam, and Divya Prabha during the photo call following the awards ceremony at the 77th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Saturday, May 25. (AP)

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cluding actresses Ana de Armas, Jennifer Connelly and Saoirse Ronan.

Louis Vuitton usually unveils its ready-to-wear collections in the French capital, while choosing exotic and attention-grabbing locations for its destination cruise collections.

Where tourists tread daily in tank tops, shorts and flip flops, this UNESCO World Heritage Site for one night was home to cutting-edge garments that blended with its earthy tones that are at once organic and yet seemingly ethereal.

The models weaved their way through the 86 Doric columns that hold up a vaulted square in the center of the park that overlooks Barcelona and the Mediterranean Sea in the distance. (AP)

BEIJING: Chinese comedy "The Last Frenzy" stayed atop the box office chart on the Chinese mainland on Saturday, data from the China Movie Data Information Network showed.

The film, which explores life's choices in the face of death, raked in 17.56 million yuan (about 2.47 million U.S. dollars) on the day, bringing its total revenue to 680 million yuan since its release on May 1.

It was followed by the action crime thriller "Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In," which garnered box office sales of 14.35 million yuan on Saturday. (AP)

'A catastrophic moral failure'

WHO's efforts to draft pandemic treaty falter amid disagreements

GENEVA, May 26, (AP): A global treaty to fight pandemics like COVID is going to have to wait: After more than two years of negotiations, rich and poor countries have failed - for now - to come up with a plan for how the world might respond to the next pandemic.

After COVID-19 triggered once-unthinkable lockdowns, upended economies and killed millions, leaders at the World Health Organization and worldwide vowed to do better in the future. In 2021, member countries asked the UN health agency to oversee negotiations to figure out how the world might better share scarce resources and stop future viruses from spreading globally.

On Friday, Roland Driecq, co-chair of WHO's negotiating board for the agreement, acknowledged that countries were unable to come up with a draft. WHO had hoped a final draft treaty could be agreed on at its yearly meeting of health ministers starting Monday in Geneva.

"We are not where we hoped we would be when we started this process," he said, adding that finalizing an international agreement on how to respond to a pandemic was critical "for the sake of humanity."

Driecq said the World Health Assembly next week would take up lessons from its work and plot the way forward, urging participants to make "the right decisions to take this process forward" to one day reach a pandemic agreement "because we need it."

The draft treaty had attempted to address the gap that occurred between COVID-19 vaccines in rich and poorer countries, which WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said amounted to "a catastrophic moral failure."

Guidelines

Addressing a sullen final day of negotiations, the WHO chief insisted, "This is not a failure."

"We will try everything - believing that anything is possible - and make this happen because the world still needs a pandemic treaty," he said. "Because many of the challenges that caused a serious impact during COVID-19 still exist."

The accord's aim was to set guidelines for how the WHO's 194 member countries might stop future pandemics and better share resources. But experts warned there were virtually no consequences for countries that don't comply.



Tedros

The co-chairs of the treaty-drafting process didn't specify what caused the logjam, but diplomats have said vast differences remained over sharing of information about pathogens that emerge and the sharing of technologies to fight them.

The latest draft had proposed that WHO should get 20% of the production of pandemic-related products like tests, treatments and vaccines and urges countries to disclose their deals with private companies.

Earlier this month, US Republican senators wrote to the Biden administration, arguing that the draft treaty focused on issues like "shredding intellectual property rights" and "supercharging the WHO." They urged Biden not to sign off.

Britain's department of health said it would only agree to an accord if it adhered to British national interest and sovereignty.

Meanwhile, many developing countries said it's unfair that they might be expected to provide virus samples to help develop vaccines and treatments, but then be unable to afford them.

Hunger and displacement

Vaccine shortage, weather fuel Africa's cholera deaths

LILANDA, Zambia, May 26, (AP): Extreme weather events have hit parts of Africa relentlessly in the last three years, with tropical storms, floods and drought causing crises of hunger and displacement. They leave another deadly threat behind them: some of the continent's worst outbreaks of cholera.

In southern and East Africa, more than 6,000 people have died and nearly 350,000 cases have been reported since a series of cholera outbreaks began in late 2021.

Malawi and Zambia have had their worst outbreaks on record. Zimbabwe has had multiple waves. Mozambique, Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia also have been badly affected.

All have experienced floods or drought - in some cases, both - and health authorities, scientists and aid agencies say the unprecedented surge of the water-borne bacterial infection in Africa is the newest example of how extreme weather is playing a role in driving disease outbreaks.

"The outbreaks are getting much larger because the extreme climate events are getting much more common," said Tulio de Oliveira, a South Africa-based scientist who studies diseases in the developing world.

Outbreaks

De Oliveira, who led a team that identified new coronavirus variants during the COVID-19 pandemic, said southern Africa's latest outbreaks can be traced to the cyclones and floods that hit Malawi in late 2021 and early 2022, carrying the cholera bacteria to areas it doesn't normally reach.

Zimbabwe and Zambia have seen cases rise as they wrestle with severe droughts and people rely on less safe sources of water in their desperation like boreholes, shallow wells and rivers, which can all be contaminated. Days after the deadly flooding in Kenya and other parts of East Africa this month, cholera cases appeared.

The World Health Organization calls cholera a disease of poverty, as it thrives where there is poor sanitation and a lack of clean water. Africa has had eight times as many deaths this year as the Middle East, the second-most affected region.

Historically vulnerable, Africa is even more at risk as it faces the worst impacts of climate change as well as the effect of the El Niño weather phenomenon, health experts say.

In what's become a perfect storm, there's also a global shortage of cholera vaccines, which are needed only in poorer countries.

"It doesn't affect countries with resources," said Dr. Daniela Garone, the international medical coordinator for Doctors Without Borders, also known by its French acronym MSF. "So, it doesn't bring the resources."

Billions of dollars have been invested into other diseases that predominantly affect the world's most vulnerable, like polio and tuberculosis, largely because those diseases are highly contagious and could cause outbreaks even in rich countries. But that's not the case with cholera, where epidemics remain contained.

WHO said this month there is a "critical shortage" of oral cholera vaccines in the global stockpile. Since the start of 2023, 15 countries - the desperate few - have requested a

total of 82 million doses to deal with deadly outbreaks while only 46 million doses were available.

There are just 3.2 million doses left, below the target of having at least 5 million in reserve. While there are currently cholera epidemics in the Middle East, the Americas and Southeast Asia, Africa is by far the worst-affected region.

Vaccines alliance GAVI and UNICEF said last month that the approval of a new cholera vaccine would boost stocks. But the result of the shortage has already been measured in deaths.

Lilanda, a township on the edge of the Zambian capital of Lusaka, is a typical cholera hot spot. Stagnant pools of water dot the dirt roads. Clean water is like gold dust. Here, over two awful days in January, Mildred Banda saw her 1-year-old son die from cholera and rushed to save the life of her teenage daughter.

Cholera shouldn't be killing anyone. The disease is easily treated and easily prevented - and the vaccines are relatively simple to produce.

That didn't help Banda's son, Ndanji.

When he fell sick with diarrhea, he was treated with an oral rehydration solution at a clinic and released. He slipped back into dehydration that night at home. Banda feels terrible guilt.

"I should have noticed earlier that my son was not feeling well," she said, sitting in her tiny concrete house. "I should have acted faster and taken him back to the clinic. I should have taken him back to save his life."

Vaccination

Because of the vaccine shortage, Zambia couldn't undertake a preventative vaccination campaign after neighboring Malawi's outbreak. That should have been a warning call, said de Oliveira. Zambia only made an emergency request when its cases started mounting.

The doses that might have saved Ndanji started arriving in mid-January. He died on Jan. 6.

In Zimbabwe, a drought worsened by El Niño has seen cholera take hold in distant rural areas as well as its traditional hot spots of crowded urban neighborhoods.

Abi Kebra Belaye, MSF representative for Zimbabwe, said the southern African nation normally has around 17 hard-hit areas, mostly urban. This year, cholera spread to 62 districts as the struggle to find water heightened the risk.

"This part of Africa is paying the highest price of climate change," Kebra Belaye said.

Augustine Chonyera, who hails from a cholera-prone part of the capital, Harare, was shocked when he recently visited the sparsely populated rural district of Buhera.

He said he heard grim tales of the impact of the disease: a family losing five members, a husband and wife dying within hours of each other and local businesses using delivery trucks to take the sick to a clinic several kilometers (miles) away.

"It seems now the people in rural areas are in more danger than us. I still wonder how it happened," Chonyera said.

He said he returned home as soon as he could - after giving a large bottle of treated water he had brought with him to an elderly woman.



The Kuwaiti delegation participated in the Abu Dhabi Dermatology and Cosmetic Medicine Conference.

Team's achievement praised

Kuwaiti dermatology team tops Gulf Championship in Abu Dhabi

ABU DHABI, May 26, (KUNA): A Kuwaiti medical team specializing in dermatology was able to achieve first place in the Gulf Championship for trainee dermatologists affiliated with the Dermatology Board programs held on Friday and concluded on Saturday in Abu Dhabi.

Speaking to KUNA, Dr. Abeer Al-Bathali, Director of the Kuwaiti Board Program of the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialties and Secretary General of the Kuwaiti Dermatologists Association, expressed her great happiness and pride in this honorable achievement and the distinguished performance of the Kuwaiti Dermatology Board doctors, wishing them all success in raising the name of Kuwait in international forums.

She added that the Kuwaiti delegation participated in the Abu Dhabi Dermatology and Cosmetic Medicine Conference included Dr. Nasser Ashkanani, Dr. Farah Al-Ali, and Dr. Asael Al-Enezi from the Kuwaiti Board for Dermatology.

It is noteworthy that the tournament was held in Abu Dhabi with the participation of several male and female doctors from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Oman. The Kuwaiti delegation performed honorably and deservedly and, hence, won first place thanks to their competence and good training.

Childhood obesity surges

Over 1/3 of children's food in Philippines are sugary: study

MANILA, May 26, (Xinhua): The number of overweight children in the Philippines has tripled since 2003 due to sugary children's foods, according to a study by UNICEF and the Consortium for Improving Complementary Foods in Southeast Asia released on Thursday.

The study finds that over one-third of commercially produced packaged foods for children aged six months to three years in the Philippines contain added sugars and sweeteners.

It also finds widespread use of potentially misleading and deceptive labeling and a lack of strict government regulations regarding product composition and sale.

"This comes as the country has seen its number of overweight children triple since 2003, a figure classified as high according to global standards," the study says.

The study assessed 182 infant cereals, purees, snacks, and ready-to-eat meals marketed to infants and young children in the Philippines. Nearly all dry or instant cereal products are fortified, but fortification levels often do

not meet the recommended standards.

According to the study, no product labels include the Filipino language, making it difficult for parents and caregivers to understand and interpret the information on the labels.

Unhealthy products are marketed and promoted as suitable for consumption by young children. A quarter of the food products do not include a recommended minimum use age of at least six months, and only 2 percent of the product labels include messaging on the importance of continued breastfeeding.

"Commercially produced complementary foods are a common part of the diets of young children in the Philippines, with 83 percent of mothers from urban areas reporting they provide these foods to their children daily," said the study.

The study calls for improved government regulations for commercially produced complementary foods, including prohibiting added sugars and sweeteners, limiting sugar and sodium content, and prohibiting misleading marketing and labeling.

Safe summer

What to look for in mosquito repellent

FORT COLLINS, Colo., May 26, (AP): There's an old joke that mosquitoes are like family: They are annoying, but they carry your blood.

Mosquito season is starting to rev up across much of the United States. And that means bug bites.

When a mosquito bites you, it pierces the skin using a mouthpart called a proboscis to suck up blood. As it feeds, it injects saliva into your skin that can cause a reaction - a bump and itching. But the pests can also spread parasites like malaria and viruses like dengue, West Nile and Zika.

So you might want to pause summer vacation planning and consider what to look for in repellents, which keep bugs away from you, and insecticides, which kill them.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that for protection that lasts hours, people should look for ones with these active ingredients: DEET, IR3535, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Those ingredients are registered with the Environmental Protection Agency.

A note about oil of lemon eucalyptus: Lemon eucalyptus essential oil has a similar name, but the agency does not recommend it because it hasn't been tested for safety and is not registered with EPA as an insect repellent.

Likewise, the CDC doesn't endorse other "natural" products that haven't been evaluated.

Repellents are one line of defense against bugs, but there are others: Wear long sleeves and long pants. Avoid going out at dusk and dawn, when some types of mosquito tend to be most active.

Silvie Huijben, an evolutionary biologist at Arizona State University, helped develop an online game to help children understand how to protect against mosquitoes, which emphasizes another prevention strategy:

"Mosquitoes need water to breed in," so it's important to make sure to get rid of standing water - including buckets of water or kiddie pools left undisturbed in the yard for a week or more, she said. "Make sure you're not the one contributing the local mosquito problem, that you're not breeding mosquitoes on your property."

Pesticide

You can also treat clothes and outdoor gear with a pesticide called permethrin to ward off mosquitoes and other unwelcome pests.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention operates a mosquito lab in Fort Collins, Colorado, where it evaluates insecticides, but not repellents.

To test these kinds of products, the researchers coat the inside of a bottle with a given dose of an insecticide ingredient, then put mosquitoes in the bottle - usually about 25. They see what percentage of the bugs die within two hours and compare that with a nearby uncoated bottle containing the same number of mosquitoes.

The test is widely used in the US and also is increasingly used around the world. It is considered simpler and less expensive than some more complicated alternatives, including a test in which insecticide drops are applied directly to mosquitoes.

Scientists typically repeat the experiments each season to document changes in how the mosquitoes respond to insecticides, CDC officials say.

Huijben said repeating the test is important because it has limitations: Results can be thrown off by factors such as whether each bottle was coated with exactly the same amount of chemical.

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Xhaka's early strike enough for victory

Leverkusen win German Cup, complete undefeated double



Leverkusen's Granit Xhaka lifts the trophy after the German Soccer Cup final match between 1. FC Kaiserslautern and Bayer Leverkusen at the Olympic Stadium in Berlin, Germany. (AP)

BERLIN, May 26, (AP) — Granit Xhaka's early strike was enough for Bayer Leverkusen to win the German Cup final 1-0 over Kaiserslautern for an unbeaten domestic double.

Xhaka fired the ball in under the crossbar from distance in the 16th minute. It proved to be enough against second-division Kaiserslautern despite losing defender Odilon Kossounou to a second yellow card just before the break.

SOCCER

Leverkusen won the Bundesliga unbeaten, an historic feat. The only blip on the record of Xabi Alonso's team this season was losing the Europa League final to Atalanta 3-0 on Wednesday in Dublin. That ended Leverkusen's record 51-game unbeaten run across all competitions. It was its only loss in 53 games this season.

"The whole journey, the whole season was wonderful," the Spanish coach said after doubling Leverkusen's trophy haul in just one season. "What we did this season is unbelievable."

Alonso and his players ran to their fans after the whistle on Saturday in Berlin's

Olympiastadion. They had supported the team loudly throughout, though were drowned at times by the even more vociferous Kaiserslautern supporters.

They displayed a spectacular tifo of a red devil grasping the trophy in front of a hellish background of fire and brimstone before the game. Flares sending red smoke into the sky embellished the effect - and gave an inkling of what was to come.

The stadium announcer's repeated requests to stop the pyrotechnics were met with continued indifference. The second half began to a huge fireworks display from the Leverkusen fans.

Despite the smoke above, there was little fire on the field after a long hard season. Kossounou was booked for stopping Kenny Prince Redondo's break in the third minute, then issued another yellow for a foul on Boris Tomiak in the 44th.

It didn't stop the Leverkusen machine from grinding out the win. Jeremie Frimpong should have made it 2-0 in the 75th after going past the goalkeeper.

It's Leverkusen's second German Cup title after beating Hertha Berlin's reserve team in the 1993 final. Leverkusen's other trophy is the 1988 UEFA Cup.

Prefontaine Classic

Richardson wins 100, Chebet sets world record in 10,000m

EUGENE, Ore., May 26, (AP) — Sha'Carri Richardson continued her march toward the Paris Olympics on Saturday at the Prefontaine Classic, winning the women's 100 meters in 10.83 seconds.

Kenyan Beatrice Chebet set a world record in the 10,000 meters at the Pre earlier in the day with a time of 28 minutes, 54.14 seconds, while American Christian Coleman won the day's other notable event, the men's 100, in a season-best 9.95.

But the spotlight was on the battle between Richardson, the 2023 world champion, and Jamaican Elaine Thompson-Herah, the reigning Olympic gold medalist in both the 100 and 200 meters.

Thompson-Herah faded at the Pre, finishing last in a time of nine. The charismatic Richardson, wearing her long hair tied back in a ponytail, muscled her way to the finish and dramatically pushed off the tape remnants.

After crouching for a moment while her time was announced, Richardson rose to give the crowd at Hayward field a smile and a wave. Julien Alfred of Saint Lucia finished second in 10.93.

"I feel like I'm continuing to grow and develop into a mature young lady, a mature athlete, as well as a vessel that I am put on earth to continue to grow," Richardson said.

Richardson will get her shot at a spot on the U.S. team for Paris at the Olympic trials next month in Eugene. She was denied a chance to run in the Tokyo Games because of a positive drug test for marijuana following her first-place finish in the 100 at the trials.

Richardson fell to ninth in the 100 at the 2021 Prefontaine, her first competition following the Olympics disappointment. She did not qualify for the world championships at Hayward Field in 2022.

But since then, she has steadily made a comeback. In 2023, she won her first Diamond League event in Doha. Then she blazed to a title in the U.S. national championships before winning the gold medal at the worlds in Budapest.

Asked if she would race again before the Olympic trials, she said: "We'll see. Watch."

The Prefontaine Classic was the fifth stop of the year on the elite international Diamond League series. For the Americans vying for a spot on the Olympic team, it served as key tune-up.

Athing Mu, the defending Olympic gold

medalist, withdrew from the 800 meters because of lingering hamstring soreness and will instead focus on the trials. Britain's Keely Hodgkinson won the 800 in 1:55.78 under cloudy skies and temperatures in the low 60s.

The Prefontaine's signature event, the Bowerman mile, featured a field that included seven athletes with lifetime bests under 3:50. The race did not disappoint, with Britain's Josh Kerr finishing in 3:45.34, the best time in the world this year.

Coleman, the world indoor champion in the 60 this year, won the 100 at the 2019 worlds in Doha. His finish at the Pre was his first sub-10 second finish in the 100 this year. Kenyan Ferdinand Omanyala was second in 9.98.

ATHLETICS

"I feel good. I feel like I'm in the best shape I've ever been in and I feel like now it's just mentally putting it all together and doing what I know I'm capable of on race day," Coleman said.

American Kenneth Bednarke won the men's 200 in 19.89. Fellow American Grant Holloway, a three-time world champion in the 110 hurdles who has won all of the races he has run this year, finished his event in 13.03, a world best this season.

Chebet bested the previous record of 29:01.03 set by Ethiopia's Letesenbet Gidey at FBK Stadium in the Netherlands on June 8, 2021.

The finish earned Chebet a spot on Kenya's team for the Olympics this summer. Although she primarily competes in the 5,000 meters, she said she hopes to also run the 10,000 in Paris.

In the men's 10,000, Kenyan Daniel Matieko won in 26:50.81, a world best so far this season. Gerald Drummond of Costa Rica topped the field in the 400 hurdles in 48.56. American Joe Kovacs won the shot put.

In the women's 100 hurdles, Cyrena Samba-Mayela of France won with a personal-best finish in 12.52. Ethiopia's Diribe Weleji won the women's 1,500.

Other top finishers included Valarie Allman in the discus and fellow American Emily Grove in the pole vault. Cuba's Leyanis Perez Hernandez won the triple jump and Uganda's Peruth Chemutai won the steeple chase.

Archer takes 2 wkts on return in England's T20 win over Pakistan

Hosts beat visitors by 23 runs

BIRMINGHAM, England, May 26, (AP) — Pace bowler Jofra Archer claimed two wickets on his long-awaited return to international cricket to help England beat Pakistan by 23 runs in a Twenty20 at Edgbaston.

This was Archer's first appearance on the international stage in 14 months, but he had not played for his country on English soil since 2020 after an injury-hit few years.

He bounced back from an expensive first over which went for 15 runs to finish with 2-28 and help England dismiss Pakistan for 160 in pursuit of 184.

CRICKET

England's 183-7 was largely down to a blistering half-century from captain Jos Buttler, who struck three sixes on his way to 84 before a collapse of five wickets for 25 runs left the door open for Pakistan.

Fakhar Zaman ensured Pakistan made a strong start to their chase with 45 off 21 balls, but Reece Topley picked up three wickets and Moeen Ali and Archer claimed two each.

They helped England begin its T20 World Cup preparations with a victory after Wednesday's washout in Leeds.

Buttler resisted the temptation to open the bowling with Archer and went with Ali, which paid off when Mohammad Rizwan picked out Liam Livingstone at midwicket to depart for a duck.

England was well on top when Topley claimed Saim Ayub from his second over, but it brought Fakhar to the crease.

While Fakhar edged his first delivery over Ali in the slips, it sparked a run of fours from each of his first five deliveries.

Archer was given the ball and Fakhar reminded him how brutal international cricket can be.

After Babar Azam hit Archer's second delivery back over his head for four, Fakhar finished the over with a ramp shot for six as Pakistan ended the powerplay on 55-2.

With the match in the balance, Buttler turned to Ali and Adil Rashid, who silenced a partisan Pakistan-dominated crowd.

Ali claimed the decisive wicket of Babar for 32 when he pinned him in front lbw and Rashid backed it up with the dismissal of Shadab Khan.

Pakistan reached the midway point on 80-4 before Archer got in on the act. His first delivery of his second spell was pitched up, clocked 90 mph (145 kph) and accounted for wicketkeeper Azam Khan, who spliced to Ali at cover.

England's stranglehold increased when Fakhar's scintillating innings concluded after he skied Livingstone to the onrushing Harry Brook at mid-on.

Archer return for another one-over spell, which brought about the wicket of Imad Wasim.

Topley finished the job when Shaheen Afridi slog-swept to Phil Salt to give Topley figures of 3-41.

Pakistan captain Babar earlier made Archer

wait for his chance with the ball when he put England in to bat, but Buttler signalled his intent with two scorching fours down the ground off Shaheen's second over.

The early introduction of left-arm spinner Imad accounted for Salt cheaply, but Will Jacks joined forces with Buttler and took 15 runs off Haris Rauf, which included a sumptuous drive for the first six of the day.

Jacks impressed and put on 71 with Buttler before Rauf ended his fine knock on 37 to deny him a maiden T20 fifty.

Buttler had already targeted leg-spinner Shadab by this point, and after he reached his half-century with a wonderful ramp shot off Rauf, the England captain accelerated.

A reverse sweep for another maximum proved the catalyst for Shadab's final over to go for 20 runs, but the host's momentum was checked when Jonny Bairstow's dismissal on 144-2 sparked a collapse.



Pakistan's Fakhar Zaman hits out past England wicket keeper Jos Buttler, during the second T20 match at Edgbaston, Birmingham, England. (AP)

Why did the French Open cancel a farewell ceremony for Nadal?

Naomi Osaka secures hard-fought victory in French Open opener

PARIS, May 26, (AP) — On the first day of the 2024 French Open, Naomi Osaka marked her seventh appearance in Paris with a 1-6, 6-4, 7-5 first-round victory over Lucia Bronzetti.

"There were moments I played pretty well, but I was pretty nervous and got really tight," said the No. 134-ranked Osaka of her hard-fought victory during an on-court interview.

No. 48-ranked Bronzetti has never won at Roland Garros in three appearances. Her career record in Grand Slam tournaments is 3-10. In her most recent match at the Morocco Open quarterfinals last week, she led American Peyton Stearns 5-0 in the third set but ended up losing.

Elsewhere, No. 30 Dayan Yastremska eliminated Ajla Tomljanovic while Lesia Tsurenko forfeited after playing less than a set against Donna Vekic because of a back problem.

In the men's draw, No. 6 Andrey Rublev defeated Taro Daniel 6-2, 6-7 (3), 6-3, 7-5. Rublev showed some frustration during his match, throwing his racket at one stage.

Lorenzo Sonego stunned No. 17 Ugo Humbert 4-6, 6-2, 4-6, 3-6. Humbert was the highest-ranked Frenchman in the tournament.

Brandon Nakashima also won. Among other players scheduled to play Sunday are two-time major winner Carlos Alcaraz and, in the night session, Andy Murray against Stan Wawrinka in a matchup between a pair of men who own three Slam titles each.

The French tennis federation put off holding a ceremony to celebrate Rafael Nadal at Roland Garros this year, because he has said this might not necessarily be his final appearance at the tournament he has won a record 14 times.

Tournament director Amélie Mauresmo said Sunday, Day 1 of the clay-court Grand Slam event, that Nadal let officials know he didn't want to close the door on a return before he told the world that at a pre-tournament news conference.

"As you can imagine, we had something planned for him. But ... because he doesn't know if it's going to be his last Roland Garros or not, he wants to leave the door open maybe to come back next year as a player. So we are not going to push him, obviously, to do anything," Mauresmo said.

"It's his decision when he wants to have a proper ceremony, a proper goodbye, a proper farewell. So we're not going to do it this year. That's his wish," she continued. "And even

though we were ready to push the button if something happens, we obviously are going to respect what he wants and make sure we are ready whenever he feels he wants to do it. Later this year; next year; anytime he wants."

Nadal, who turns 38 on June 3 and has said previously he expects this to be his last season, will face No. 4 seed Alexander Zverev in the first round on Monday. The match is scheduled to be third in the main stadium, Court Philippe Chatrier, and could start at around 3:30 p.m. local time (9:30 a.m. EDT).

Here are some answers to questions about Nadal and Zverev:

Despite having such a dominant record at the French Open, Nadal was not seeded and so could have been placed anywhere in the bracket and been stuck playing anyone at all, even the very best opponents. Because of injuries, including a surgically

TENNIS

repaired hip and problematic abdominal muscle, Nadal has competed little the past two seasons, going only 7-4 in 2024, and so someone who has been ranked No. 1 and spent more than a decade inside the top 10 is now outside the top 250.

This is Nadal's first Grand Slam tournament without a seeding since the 2005 Australian Open. The top 32 players in the men's and women's draws are seeded, and the seedings are based on the ATP and WTA rankings, which take into account the most recent 52 weeks of results. In theory, Mauresmo could have opted to circumvent the rules and go ahead and award a seeding to Nadal based on his past performances in Paris. But that was never really considered, she said, in part because "giving protection to some players" would result in "a lot of other issues and problems," and because "it also has to be OK with other Grand Slams and everything."

Players who are seeded, such as Zverev, are guaranteed to avoid going up against another seeded player any earlier than the third round of a Grand Slam tournament, which have 128-player fields and require seven victories to earn a championship.

Players tend to agree with Mauresmo's decision, with several saying they believe the seeding system should remain

the way it currently is (Wimbledon used to seed players according to their results on grass courts, but has strictly followed the rankings since 2021). "The way that the seedings work, I think it's appropriate. In this case, it's unfortunate how that happened, but I don't know how you gauge where someone should and shouldn't be seeded based on past or previous success," said three-time major champion Andy Murray. "It'd be quite hard to do that."



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SPORTS

Hussein Al-Musallam, Spanish sports leaders explore 2031 Aquatics Championship hosting

MADRID, May 26: The President of the International Aquatics Federation, Hussein Al-Musallam, met with Spanish Minister of Sports Monica Garcia.

The meeting was also attended by the President of the Spanish Olympic Committee, Alejandro Blanco, and the President of the Spanish Aquatics Federation, Raul Crepin, and the Mayor of Madrid, Jose Almeida. They discussed Spain's potential hosting of the 2031 World Aquatics Championships.

This discussion aligns with the International Aquatics Federation's strategic plans under Hussein Al-Musallam's leadership. These plans aim to distribute championships across all five continents, promote swimming globally, and expand its reach to remote areas, thereby nurturing successive generations of swimming athletes.

Hussein Al-Musallam highlighted that Spain is a leading nation in water sports and possesses the necessary capabilities to successfully host such a prestigious global event.



The President of the International Aquatics Federation, Hussein Al-Musallam, (2nd from right) with the Spanish sports officials.

Fan clashes before final lead to 30 injuries, 10 arrests

PSG clinch French Cup, complete double in Mbappé's last game

Barca lift another Women's CL trophy



Barcelona's team captain Alexia Putellas lifts the trophy after winning the women's Champions League final soccer match between FC Barcelona and Olympique Lyonnais at the San Mames stadium in Bilbao, Spain. (AP)

VILLENEUVE D'ASCQ, France, May 26, (AP): Paris Saint-Germain beat Lyon 2-1 in the French Cup final and completed the domestic double in Kylian Mbappé's last game for the club.

France winger Ousmane Dembele and Spain midfielder Fabian Ruiz scored for PSG in the first half.

Lyon defender Jake O'Brien got a consolation goal in the second half.

PSG won the league and cup for the first time since 2020 when it achieved a domestic treble by also lifting the now defunct League Cup.

Mbappé celebrated with a big roar after the final whistle. With an equally big smile on his face, he hugged and high-fived his teammates. The ecstatic PSG staff lifted Mbappé and threw him in the air.

Despite losing in the final, Lyon still qualified for the Europa League by finishing sixth in the league.

Dembélé opened the scoring in the 22nd minute by heading

SOCCER

home a cross from Nuno Mendes. Ruiz doubled the lead by converting a rebound in the 34th after his header was blocked by O'Brien.

Lyon goalkeeper Lucas Perri pulled off some outstanding saves in the opening minutes, denying Bradley Barcola and Warren Zaire-Emery, but misjudged the flight of the ball when Mendes made the cross for the opener.

O'Brien cut the deficit to 2-1 by heading in a corner in the 55th.

PSG has struggled in the air this season and nearly conceded from another corner in the 64th, but goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma tipped a header from Lyon left back Nicolas Tagliafico over the bar.

"The players are disappointed but let's not forget that we must also be proud of what we have done," Lyon coach Pierre Sage told broadcaster beIN Sports.

Lyon was bottom of the league in December but racked up more points than any other club in the second half of the season to finish sixth.

Mbappé tried hard to find the net in his last outing for PSG. A curling shot from the edge of the box didn't trouble Perri in the 20th and he volleyed over the bar in the 41st.

The latest incident of fan violence this season led to 30 injuries after rivals from Lyon and Paris Saint-Germain fought on a highway before Saturday's French Cup final near the city of Lille. Bertrand Gaume, the prefect for upper France, praised the police forces for intervening and preventing further violence. There were 10 arrests.

Prefecture officials in charge of France's northern region said in a statement Sunday that 14 of the injured needed medical treatment. One bus was burned and two others damaged during the clashes, which involved more than 200 fans and took place at around 6 p.m. local time. Eight police officers sustained minor injuries.

Images online showed rivals charging into each other before one of the groups, clad all in white, clambered over barriers and retreated across a nearby field.

Supporters threw flares and windows were smashed on buses. The final was deemed a very high security risk by the national police division for the fight against hooliganism, and the incidents happened despite fan buses from both clubs being escorted by police.

Lyon and PSG ultras have a long-standing rivalry and were expected to travel to Villeneuve d'Ascq for the final. The PSG group was dressed in dark clothing while the other was in white, representing Lyon. Some wore balaclavas to hide their faces as they fought.

UEFA celebrates growth of women's soccer

BILBAO, Spain, May 26, (AP): It was a night of celebration for Barcelona after another Women's Champions League title, and for the women's game in general after another season with significant growth in the sport.

Barcelona defeated Lyon 2-0 to win its third European trophy and to add to its recent dominance in the sport on Saturday, capping a year that saw increased

attendance, additional revenue and more participation by women across all levels of the sport.

A record crowd of 50,827 for a final was on hand to see Barcelona lift the trophy after beating record eight-time champion Lyon with goals by stalwart players Aitana Bonmati and Alexia Putellas at the packed San Mames Stadium in Bilbao.

The Barcelona victory came as soccer officials celebrated the success of a five-year plan to boost the women's game, a plan that was renewed ahead of the final to keep the sport growing.

The "Time for Action" project was put in place by UEFA in 2019 to try to improve women's soccer. The European soccer body aimed to double the number of women and girls playing the game, and said it more than doubled that target with nearly three million women and girls currently playing soccer thanks to "investment in key initiatives" such as "UEFA Football in Schools."

UEFA said there are now 47 associations with a strategy in place for women's soccer, and noted that almost 20% of its committee members are now female. Centralised media and commercial rights helped increase the competition's value more than fourfold, UEFA said, "funding a financial distribution model which extends the benefits across the entire women's club landscape."

"The investments and changes to the UEFA Women's Champions League and UEFA Women's EURO, plus a highly successful commercial

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programme, have meant that we have exceeded our expectations in terms of doubling the reach and value of these flagship competitions," said Anne Rei, chair of UEFA's Women's Football Committee. "This has also gone a long way to changing perceptions."

What also helped revitalize the Women's Champions League was the introduction of a new group stage ahead of the 2021-22 season, with four groups of four teams playing each other home and away to add "strength in depth." And beginning in 2025-26, UEFA will introduce a single-league stage featuring 18 teams, and a second club competition in women's soccer.

UEFA said "both steps will give the chance to more clubs within the football pyramid to compete at the highest level, promoting domestic growth and competitive balance."

UEFA President Aleksander Čeferin said ahead of the final in Bilbao that the European soccer governing body "prioritized the growth of women's football" and achieved "significant progress through a focused strategy, substantial investment, and a commitment to making the sport accessible to all."

"The UEFA Women's Champions League played pivotal in this process, highlighting the skills of top players, breaking remarkable attendance records, and inspiring generations of girls to engage with our beloved sport," he said.



The UAE Ambassador to Kuwait, Dr. Matar Al-Neyadi with Board of Directors of the Kuwait Air Sports Club.

UAE Ambassador hosts Kuwait Air Sports Club

The UAE Ambassador to Kuwait, Dr. Matar Al-Neyadi, hosted the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Air Sports Club. The meeting included the Secretary General of the club, Captain Muhammad Burahma, Treasurer Ahmed Al-Shalahi, and Director of Public Relations Khalifa Al-Fadhli.

During the meeting, Treasurer Ahmed Al-Shalahi commended Ambassador Al-Neyadi for his impactful role and significant contributions to the success of numerous Gulf sporting events in Kuwait. He also acknowledged the Ambassador's unwavering support in promoting youth sports, particularly in air sports.

Al-Shalahi expressed his gratitude to Ambassador Al-Neyadi for the warm reception, emphasizing that such meetings strengthen sports relations and pave the way for future cooperation among the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.



PSG's Kylian Mbappé attempts an overhead kick during the French Cup final soccer match between Lyon and PSG at the Pierre Mauroy stadium in Villeneuve d'Ascq, northern France. (AP)



Left-right: Sami Al-Zamanan honoring players at the end of the championship. KUNA photos

Kuwait Amb. 'lauds' nat'l team at Para Athletics Championship

KOBE, May 26, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Ambassador to Japan Sami Al-Zamanan expressed his admiration for the Kuwait national team's outstanding performance and victories at the World Para Athletics Championships held in Kobe, Japan.

In a statement to KUNA, Ambassador Al-Zamanan praised the remarkable achievements of national team players Faisal Al-Rajhi and Faisal Sorour. He also honored them at the conclusion of the championship for their exceptional performance, which resulted in winning the gold and silver medals respectively.

Faisal Al-Rajhi secured the gold medal by clinching the top spot in the 5,000-meter wheelchair race, while his teammate Faisal Sorour earned the silver medal in the shot put competition.

Ambassador Al-Zamanan expressed his hope for the continuation of such remarkable achievements by the players, emphasizing the importance of upholding Kuwait's reputation in sports forums worldwide. He particularly highlighted the upcoming Paralympic Games in Paris next summer as a crucial platform for further showcasing Kuwait's talent and dedication in para-athletics.

he told his team over the radio.

A Monaco victory felt extra special for him, having grown up in a flat overlooking the start-finish line watching cars zooming past below.

"No words can explain that. It was the race that made me want to be a Formula 1 driver one day," the 26-year-old Leclerc said. "Seeing so many of my friends on the balcony, so many people I know. It means a huge amount to me." The last 15 laps were the most difficult as the realisation of how much winning would mean dawned on him.

"I must say I was thinking about my dad," Leclerc said of his late father.

Ferrari's Leclerc wins Monaco GP

MONACO, May 26, (AP): Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc won the restarted Monaco Grand Prix from pole position on Sunday for his first Formula 1 victory in nearly two years.

Leclerc was on pole for the third

MOTOR RACING

time in four years, but had previously never finished on the podium at his home race. His first win since Austria in July 2022 took his career tally to six, all with Ferrari.

"Tonight's going to be a big night,"



Al-Ain players celebrate on the podium after winning the Asian Champions League title.

Sports

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Al-Ain's 'spectacular' comeback seals Asian Champs League title

'Great night for the club'

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates, May 26, (AP): Al-Ain of the United Arab Emirates won the Asian Champions League on Saturday, coming back from a 2-1 first-leg deficit at Japan's Yokohama F. Marinos two weeks ago to win 6-3 on aggregate.

More than 20,000 home fans cheered on a 5-1 second-leg victory at Hazza bin Zayed Stadium. Al-Ain added to its 2003

title after losing two finals since then.

The home side coached by former AC Milan, Inter and Chelsea striker Hernan Crespo was dominant over the Japanese club led by former Liverpool and Leeds winger Harry Kewell.

"It was a fantastic performance from the players," Crespo said. "We worked hard from the start and then we got a great reward. This is a great night for the club."

Al-Ain took the game to the visitors in the first half and soon took the lead.

After just eight minutes, tournament top scorer Soufiane Rahimi found the target for the 12th

time and Argentine forward Kaku converted a penalty to put Al-Ain ahead just after a half hour.

Five minutes before the break however, Yokohama hit back to silence the home fans. Yan Matheus made it 3-3 on aggregate.

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There was still time before the break, however, and Yokohama was reduced to 10 men after goalkeeper William Popp was sent off after bringing down Rahimi outside the area.

After that, it was always an uphill struggle for Yokohama.

Midway through the second half, Moroccan forward Rahimi scored his 13th goal of the tournament to put Al-Ain, beaten finalist in 2005 and 2016, ahead once more.

Yokohama did its utmost to get back into the final, but two late goals from Al-Ain's Togolese forward Kodjo Laba put the outcome beyond the five-time Japanese champion hoping for its first Asian Champions League title.

Al-Ain was also rewarded with a spot in the 2025 Club World Cup, which has been expanded from seven teams to 32.

"We want to test ourselves against the very best teams in the world," Crespo said.



Kuwaiti players train under the supervision of the head coach.

Pinto announces Kuwait squad for key qualifiers

Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Kuwait's Portuguese national team coach, Rui Pinto, has unveiled the squad for the upcoming joint Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup and 2027 Asian Cup finals against India and Afghanistan. The squad roster includes notable names as Fahd Al-Hajri, Sami Al-Sanea, and Muhammad Dahham, among others, representing various clubs including Kuwait Club, Al-Qadisiya, Al-Arabi, and Salmiya.

Ahead of the crucial matches, the Kuwaiti delegation is set to depart for Thailand tomorrow for an external training camp lasting five days, followed by preparations in Calcutta for the clash against India.

The Football Association aims to use the camp to elevate the team's readiness and ensure meticulous preparation for the vital showdown against India. The upcoming matches are pivotal for the Blue Team's advancement to the decisive round and securing a spot in the Asian Cup finals, with vic-

tory being the ultimate goal.

Currently, the Qatari team leads the group standings with 12 points, followed by India in second place with 4 points, closely trailed by Afghanistan. Kuwait sits in fourth place with 3 points.

Kuwait Squad: Fahd Al-Hajri, Sami Al-Sanea, Muhammad Dahham, Ahmed Al-Dhafiri, Reda

SOCCER

Hani, Mishari Ghannam, Faisal Zayed, Saud Al-Hoshan, Youssef Nasser (Kuwait Club), Mubarak Al-Fanini, Khaled Ibrahim, Eid Al-Rashidi, Rashid Al-Dosari, Abdulaziz Wadi (Al-Qadisiya), Hassan Hamdan, Sultan Al-Anazi, Ali Khalaf, Suleiman Abdul-Ghafour, and Badr. Tariq and Salman Al-Awadi (Al-Arabi), Abdul Rahman Al-Fadhli, Mahdi Dashti, and Athbi Shehab (Salmiya), Hamad Harbi and Bandar Boursli (Kazma), and Salman Buramia (Al-Nasr).

35 national coaches participate

Kuwait hosts coaching course

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: The Kuwait Handball Federation, under the supervision of the Asian Handball Federation, is organizing the second "License D" training course for coaches. This course, held at the Leadership Development Center in Khalidiya, features the participation of 35 national coaches and lectures by international experts Dr. Khaled

HANDBALL

Al-Sharji and Dr. Muhammad Al-Sammak.

The session's opening ceremony was attended by Bader Al-Dhiyab, Vice President of the International Handball Federation for the Asian continent, and Abdullah Al-Dhiyab, Assistant Secretary of the Kuwaiti Handball Federation.

Bader Al-Dhiyab praised the Kuwaiti Handball Federation's significant role in advancing the technical aspects of the game. He emphasized that such training courses directly

improve the skill level of coaches, positively impacting the teams they train and contributing to the overall development of handball in the country.

Abdullah Al-Dhiyab confirmed the success of the first training course, which concluded last week. He highlighted the Federation's commitment to enhancing the skills of trainers and technical staff through both theoretical and practical sessions. He also acknowledged the support and official recognition from the Asian and International Federations.

Al-Dhiyab announced that additional courses will be held in September to obtain the "C" license, available only to those who pass the current course, in line with new International Federation regulations.

He also expressed gratitude to the General Sports Authority for its support of sports, specifically handball and coaching courses, by providing facilities at the Leaders Preparation Center.

Additionally, in the third round of the league, Al-Sahel will face Al-Tadamon at 5:00 pm, followed by a match between Al-Sulaibikhat and Khaitan at 6:30 pm.



PSG's Kylian Mbappe raises the trophy during the presentation ceremony after the French Cup final soccer match between Lyon and PSG at the Pierre Mauroy stadium in Villeneuve d'Ascq, northern France. PSG won the match 2-1. (AP) — See Page 15

Coronation day for Kuwait Club

Zain Premier League concludes with exciting final matches

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Tonight marks the conclusion of the sixty-second edition of the Zain Premier League, featuring three matches in the championship group's tenth and final round. Kuwait Club will kick off against Al-Arabi at Ali Sabah Al-Salem Stadium at 7:27 pm. Meanwhile, the Friendship and Peace Stadium will witness clashes between Al-Salmiya and Al-Fahaheel at 5:50 pm, followed by the match between Al-Qadisiya and Al-Nasr at 8:50 pm.

The league standings were solidified after the last round, with Kuwait Club securing the title with 56 points, 7 points ahead of second-

Oqla elected to West Asian Federation Executive Office

fending champions Al-Arabi and Al-Qadisiya battling for the top spot. The rivalry persisted throughout the season, with Al-Arabi leading for many rounds before Kuwait Club surged ahead five rounds from the end. The title race came down to the wire, culminating in Kuwait Club's 3-0 victory over Al-Qadisiya and Al-Arabi's 1-1 draw with Al-Fahaheel in the final round.

In the second match, Al-Fahaheel aims to secure victory against Al-Salmiya to clinch fourth place, while Al-Salmiya seeks a draw to maintain its position in the standings.

In the third and final match, Al-Nasr confronts Al-Qadisiya in pursuit of their first league victory, having suffered seven defeats and one draw so far.

AMMAN, May 26: The Football Association's Vice-Presidents, Ahmed Oqla and Hayef Al-Mutairi, actively participated in the fourteenth regular general assembly meeting of the West Asian Federation, convened in Amman, Jordan. Notably, Oqla was elected as a member of the Executive Office of the West Asian Federation, while Sheikh Ali bin Khalifa was elected as the second vice-president of the West Asian Federation.

Key agenda items during the meeting included the approval of working committee reports and financial summaries for the year 2023. Additionally, discussions centered on proposals from member associations and executive committees, as well as the strategic direction of the West Asian Federation.

China's Wang claims women's singles title

KUALA LUMPUR, May 26, (Xinhua): China's Wang Zhiyi clinched the women's singles gold at the 2024 badminton Malaysia Masters here on Sunday at the Axiata Arena.

Wang capped off her tournament with tough final against India's Pusarla V. Sindhu, losing the first set but making a remarkable rebound for a final score of 16-21, 21-5, 21-16.

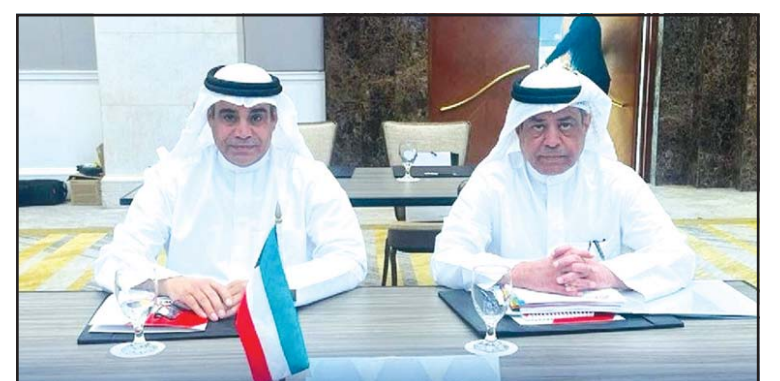
Also on Sunday, world No. 1 and top seed Viktor Axelsen of Denmark outclassed home favorite Lee Zii Jia to claim the men's singles title.



Players challenge for the ball in this file photo.



The participants of the coaching course.



The Kuwaiti delegation.