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Amiri decrees issued forming Civil Service Council and Committee to Investigate Kuwaiti Citizenship

KUWAIT CITY, May 27, (KUNA): An Amiri decree was issued Monday forming the Civil Service Council.

The decree appoints His Highness the Prime Minister or whomever he delegates among the ministers as the council's head and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Health Minister, Finance Minister, Education Minister and Minister of Public Works as Members.

An Amiri decree was also issued Monday forming the Supreme Committee to Investigate Kuwaiti Citizenship.

The decree appointed the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior as the Committee's head and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Foreign Minister and Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers as Members.



Amiri Diwan photo
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Saudi Minister of State and Cabinet Member Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

Kuwait Amir receives Saudi State Minister

KUWAIT CITY, May 27, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Monday at Bayan Palace visiting Saudi Minister of State and Cabinet Member Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

The minister conveyed to His Highness the Amir greetings from King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

His Highness the Amir returned the greetings and wished for further progress to the Kingdom and its people. Senior officials attended the meeting.

Prince Turki bin Mohammad Al-Saud arrived for an official visit in Kuwait Sunday evening.

Opinion

Bitter remedy to repair ruin of age is inevitable

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

TO be frank, even though some might find it offensive, the majority of the Kuwaiti people have endured devastation and chaos for nearly 40 years.

This matter became worse after the liberation when the centers of influence appeared in the ugliest forms, and the illusory powers multiplied. This is because there were those who saw themselves as a de facto ruler because they either had tribal or sectarian immunity, or because of their position as a legislator, to such an extent that the institutions became more like farms or backyards.

Amongst the chaos, even an officer was ordering and forbidding, as if there was no law in the country. In fact, the police stations were managed by the power of tribal or sectarian pride or the prestige of the region, and on the principle of "scratch my back and I scratch yours," until the citizens felt that their safe haven was not giving them their rights, because the dominance of interests overshadowed everything.

This chaos made people worry about their fate, because corruption struck even the foundations of the state and its pillar, which is the judiciary. This is because those entrusted with the rights of the people betrayed the trust and worked according to their interests. It is also because hesitation prevailed in the ministries, and some councils of ministers disappointed the confidence of both the ruler and the people.

Therefore, we saw that plundering public funds has become "smartness" and "shrewdness", and preserving people's rights is "foolish" and "useless", as those fighting over powers and authority have used all hideous tools in their struggle to achieve their goals.

Each of them had his own team, either in institutions or even on social media, to defend him.

From here we saw the corruption of projects, the maximization of their costs to unimaginable limits, and the abnormal spending without a scientific and realistic vision or oversight, as a result of laws enacted to serve a specific group and not the interest of Kuwait.

All of this and more was experienced by the citizens over the past three decades until they felt at some point that someone was trying to make amends for them in their homeland.

Therefore, when a wise doctor became available to the nation, he sought to save his people, and the treatment began first by warning against the disadvantages of multiple powers, and not separating them according to what the Constitution ordered, and infringement on powers.

However, all this did not dissuade those with bad consciences, so a firm order was issued to stop all this chaos, because he pledged from the beginning to restore his country's pioneering in all fields, and he took decisive measures.

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Kuwait demands global action against Israeli crimes in Rafah

Gaza toll 36,050

KUWAIT CITY, May 27, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned Monday Israeli occupation's aggression on Rafah's displaced people's tents, killing tens including women and children.

In a statement, the Foreign Ministry asserted that Israeli occupation's actions against Palestinians expose its blatant war crimes and unprecedented genocide to the whole world.

This calls for immediate and firm intervention by the international community to compel these forces into adhering to international legitimacy resolutions, including International Justice Court resolution on immediately ceasing aggression against Rafah, and protecting the Palestinian people.

Meanwhile, Israeli occupation committed massacres on Monday against Palestinian families, resulting in 66 martyrs and 383 injuries admitted to hospitals in the past 24 hours.

The death toll from the Rafah massacre on Sunday has risen to up 45 martyrs, including 23 women, children, and elderly, with 249 wounded, said the Health Authorities in Gaza in a statement.

Israeli warplanes bombed the Kuwaiti Peace Camp northwest of Rafah city, leading to the death of 40 Palestinians, injuring dozens, and the burning of tents.

The camp was recently established in the city with Kuwaiti support, accommodating dozens of Palestinian families displaced by the occupation from their homes in the north and center of the Strip.

Aggression

The total death toll of the Israeli occupation's aggression on the Gaza Strip since October 7 last year reached 36,050 martyrs and 81,026 wounded.

The State of Kuwait on Sunday stressed its commitment to continue aid and humanitarian assistance to the people of Palestine, and also praised UNRWAs vital role to serve and help the Palestinians.

"I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm Kuwait's commitment to humanitarian and relief aid to the Palestinian people," Kuwait's ambassador to Belgium and head of its missions to the European Union and NATO, Nawaf Al-Enezi, told an international meeting on Palestine in Brussels today.

He stressed that "UNRWA represents the backbone of the humanitarian response to Gaza, and plays a vital and indispensable role," and noted that Kuwait recently made a voluntary contribution in the amount of USD 30 million to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees.

Al Enezi welcomed the recent decision by Norway, Spain, and Ireland to recognize the State of Palestine, and hoped that other countries will view similar decisions more favourably.

He "strongly welcomed" the International Court of Justices latest decision ordering Israel to immediately stop its military operation in Rafah.

The Kuwaiti ambassador underlined the necessity to implement Security Council

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Municipality photo
The Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan visits the Cairo Street project.

Minister Al-Mashaan highlights progress

Cairo Street project hits 92.25% milestone

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: The Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan yesterday inspected the Cairo Street development project, one of the vital modernization and development projects in the country implemented by the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART).

The minister was accompanied during the tour by the Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Works Eid Al-Rashidi, and Acting Director of PART Eng. Khaled Dawi.

In a press statement issued during the tour, Minister Al-Mashaan said, "We are committed to providing excellent infrastructure that is compatible with the country's growing needs. The completion of 92.25 percent of the Cairo Street develop-

ment project represents a bright spot in our efforts towards achieving this goal".

She praised the commitment and efforts of the employees of PART and their hard work to achieve the required quality that she witnessed in the project.

The minister also praised the contractor's use of the latest technologies and modern equipment in

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Day by Day

IT'S often lamented that "Many innocent people end up behind bars," and indeed, such a sentiment seems to echo in the case of the man imprisoned solely on a witness's testimony.

We thank you Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior for your recent visit to the Central Jail, where you got firsthand insights into the situation.

Undoubtedly, the visit may have brought to light numerous grievances, particularly from inmates who may have been the victims of the aforementioned proverb.

The position of the Minister of Interior was earlier occupied by someone who did not even know the location of the Central Prison.

... Day tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Officials explore bilateral relations

Kuwait, China hold talks on mega projects

KUWAIT CITY, May 27, (KUNA): Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya on Monday held in-depth discussions with Chinese officials dealing with means of boosting relations in execution of mega development ventures.

The minister, according to a statement released by the Foreign Ministry, received the Chinese Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, Zhang Jianwei, with attendance of the head and members of a Chinese

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Kuwait minister at Arab Media Summit in Dubai

DUBAI, May 27, (KUNA): Arab Media Summit kicked off on Monday in Dubai with Kuwait represented by Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi.

Under the patronage of UAE Vice President and Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, the Summit seeks to contribute in enhancing and developing media content and build bridges of communication and understanding between Arab members of the media, writers and intellectuals.

The Summit will continue until Wednesday and is considered the biggest media gathering in the region, where it will discuss the reality and the future of

Continued on Page 5

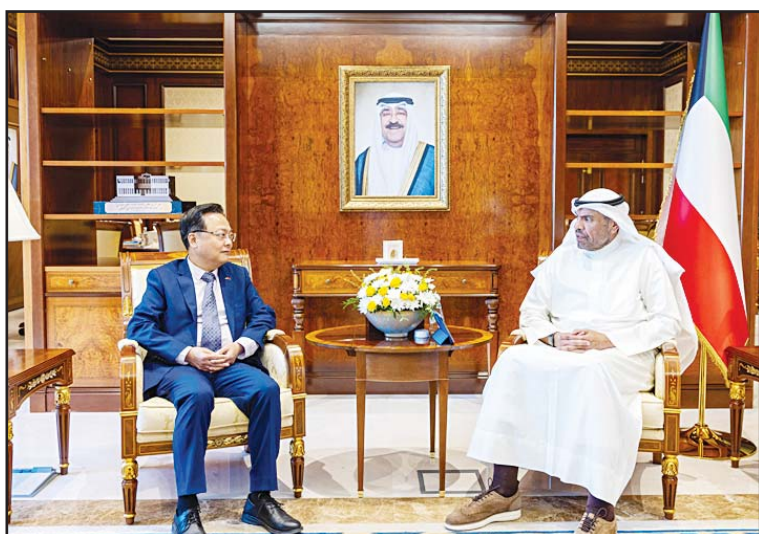
Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a condolences cable Monday to the King of Saudi Arabia Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, over the passing of Prince Saud bin Abdulaziz bin Mohammad Al-Saud.

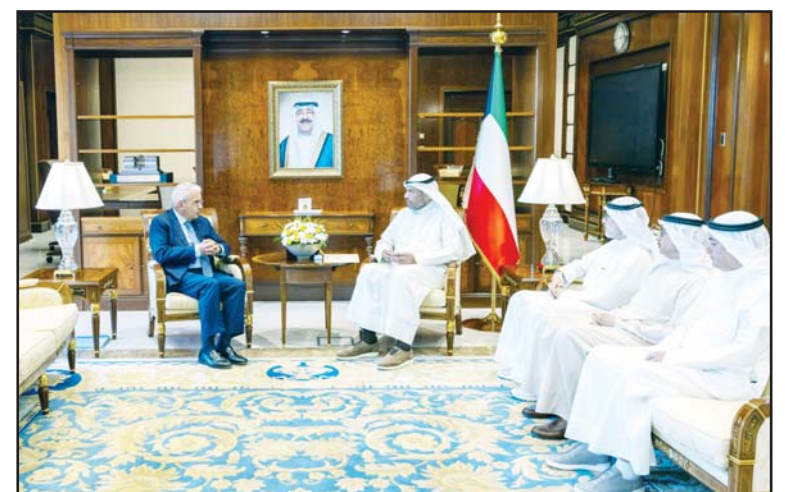
In the cable, His Highness the Amir prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow the deceased with His mercy and grant Al-Saud Family patience and solace.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent a condolence cable Monday to King of Saudi Arabia Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, over the passing of Prince Saud bin Abdulaziz bin Mohammad Al-Saud. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Sunday a cable of condolences to Governor-General of Papua New Guinea Bob Dadae, over a massive landslide. (KUNA)



MoFA photo
Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya receives the Chinese Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, Zhang Jianwei.



MoFA photo
Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya receives Palestinian Ambassador Rami Tahboub, who delivered a letter from Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:18 Asr 15:20
 Sunrise .. 04:50 Maghrib .. 18:40
 Zohr 11:45 Isha 20:10

Local

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

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Hot with moderate to fresh northwesterly wind, with speeds of 20-45 km/h causing rising dust.

Weather

By Night: Rather hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-35 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	42	30

Kuwait Airport	43	31
Abdaly	43	24
Jahra	44	29
Salmiyah	38	30
Nuwaisib	39	28
Wafra	41	27

Arab information ministers gather in Bahrain

Kuwait, FANA participate in Permanent Committee for Arab Media meet

MANAMA, May 27. (KUNA): Preparatory meetings for the 54th session of the Council of Arab Information Ministers began on Monday in Bahrain, with the participation of Kuwait and the Federation of Arab News Agencies (FANA).

FANA participated as an observer of the media meetings, represented by the Vice President of the Federation and Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Dr. Fatima Al-Salem and Secretary-General of the Federation Dr. Farid Ayar.

A delegation of Kuwait's Ministry of Information also participated in the meeting and was represented by the Acting Assistant Undersecretary for the Foreign Media Sector Bader Al-Tararwa, the Director of the Arab Media Department Awad Al-Fiker and the Director of the Foreign Media Affairs Department Aisha Al-Asousi.

Assistant Secretary-General and Head of Media and Communications Sector Ambassador Ahmad Khattabi, in his speech at the meeting of the 101st regular session of the Permanent Committee for Arab Media, expressed sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Information in the

Kingdom of Bahrain for generously hosting the meeting.

He expressed his aspirations for this committee to play its full role in developing media plans and strategies and discussing the reports of the expert committees affiliated with the Council of Information Ministers.

He pointed out that the draft agenda is rich and diverse, starting with the continued media support for the Palestinian issue, especially in the context of the terrible repercussions of the Israeli occupation's aggression against the Gaza Strip and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories.

The agenda also includes the implementation of the decisions of the Bahrain summit, including the joint Arab media strategy to combat terrorism, which requires the activation of its interim implementation plan 2024-2027 in partnership with the concerned parties.

At the end of his speech, he expressed his wishes for more practical recommendations and proposals that enhance cooperation between Arab media representatives.



PM Diwan photo
 HH the Prime Minister receives Minister of State and Member of the Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and his accompanying delegation.

Kuwait's PM receives Saudi Minister of State Prince Turki

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received, at Bayan Palace on Monday, the visiting Saudi Prince Turki bin Mohammad Al-Saud, Minister of State and Member of the Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The meeting was attended by Minister of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and the Saudi Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khaled Al-Saud and the Head of the Prime Minister's Diwan, Abdulaziz Dekheel Al-Dekheel. (KUNA)



Sheikh Jarrah Jaber with Ban Ki-moon Center CEO Monika Froehler. KUNA photo

Deputy FM receives Ban Ki-moon Center chief

Kuwaiti Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Mon-

day visiting Chief Executive Officer of the Ban Ki-moon Center for Global Citizen Monika Froehler. (KUNA)

Other Voices

60 years of Kuwait-Belgium ties ... a lasting legacy of friendship

By Nasser Al-Hajeri

Since establishing diplomatic ties six decades ago, Kuwait and Belgium have cultivated a robust relationship marked by mutual respect, cooperation, and shared interests. From economic collaborations to cultural exchanges, these two nations have consistently worked towards strengthening their bond on various fronts.

One of the cornerstones of Kuwait-Belgium relations is their economic partnership. Belgium serves as an essential trading partner for Kuwait, with bilateral trade flourishing over the years. Both countries have actively engaged in fostering trade and investment opportunities, particularly in sectors such as energy, finance, and technology. This economic cooperation has not only benefited the respective economies but has also contributed to regional stability and prosperity. Looking ahead, possible future cooperative initiatives could explore Belgium's international standing in renewable energy and offshore wind energy, as well as expertise in medical and cancer treatment, presenting promising opportunities for further collaboration and mutual benefit.

Cultural exchange has been momentous in Kuwait-Belgium relations, primarily through exchange visits fostering mutual understanding

and people-to-people connections. The concert by Karim Baggili last week at Yarmouk Cultural Centre (DAI) is an illustration of the excellent ties between Belgium and Kuwait. The concert bridges western music with Spanish-Arab music. Looking ahead, there's potential for further collaboration, especially in exploring educational opportunities for mutual benefit. Both countries could consider fostering partnerships to facilitate student exchanges, joint research programs, and cultural initiatives, enriching their educational and cultural landscapes while strengthening their bilateral ties.

Furthermore, the ties between Kuwait and Belgium extend beyond trade and culture to encompass humanitarian cooperation. Both nations have demonstrated a commitment to providing aid and support to communities in need worldwide, showcasing their shared values of compassion and solidarity. Moreover, Kuwait and Belgium prioritize dialogue and mediation as essential tools for conflict resolution and fostering peace internationally.

As Kuwait and Belgium commemorate six decades of diplomatic relations, the future holds promising prospects for further collaboration and growth. Both countries remain committed to deepening their partnership across various sectors, exploring new opportunities for cooperation, and addressing emerging challenges together. With a foundation built on trust, respect, and shared values, Kuwait and Belgium are poised to continue their journey towards a prosperous and mutually beneficial relationship in the years to come.



Al-Hajeri

Summer energy crisis looms

'Electricity' grapples with pressing issues

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: As the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy endeavors to secure energy from the Gulf Inte reconnection Authority for the coming summer, several pressing challenges persist, reports Al-Rai daily. Informed sources have highlighted three main issues currently troubling the ministry:

■ Expiration of Distributed Labor Contracts: The expiration of these contracts poses a significant concern.

■ Maintenance Tender Approvals: There has been an inability to obtain necessary ap-

provals for station and project maintenance tenders due to the absence of the Central Tenders Agency.

■ Shortage of Basic Materials: Delays in awarding supply tenders have resulted in a lack of essential materials in some ministry sectors.

These problems are particularly alarming as the summer season begins, potentially impacting the performance of various ministry sectors. Regulatory and financial authority approvals hinge on the Central Tenders Agency, exacerbating the situation.



Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi

By Marwa Al-Bahravi
 Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: The Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi officially opened the Ali Sabah Al-Salem Dialysis Center.

In a press statement issued on the sidelines of the meeting, the minister said this center aligns with the ministry's methodology that is based on developing health services in the country in an effort to provide the best health services to citizens.

He highlighted the ministry's keenness to achieve the concept of comprehensive, high-quality health coverage through the expansion of new specialized services, including adding and opening a number of dialysis centers in the country.

Dr. Al-Awadhi stressed that linking the center with the Adan Hospital represents a new addition to the dialysis centers in the Ahmadi health zone.

He explained that the Adan Hospital had one center, which was the Mohammad Al-Khuzam Dialysis Center. It was opened in early 2010, and the number of dialysis patients in it reached about 500.

Capacity

Dr. Al-Awadhi affirmed that two new dialysis centers will be launched soon - the Sabah Al-Ahmad Center (E), which will open with a capacity of 20 beds and up to 120 patients, and will serve the people of Sabah Al-Ahmad City, and then the dialysis center at the Motherhood and Childhood Hospital in Adan Hospital, with a capacity of 16 beds, and up to 80 patients.

He highlighted that paying attention to treating kidney patients and facilitating their access to the required health services is one of the ministry's priorities, adding



A photo from the symposium.

Research, creativity, and innovation in focus

AIU School of Arts & Sciences hosts 1st symposium

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: AIU is proud to announce the resounding success of the 1st Annual School of Arts and Sciences Symposium. This inaugural event set a high benchmark for future gatherings by bringing together groundbreaking discussions, creative exhibitions, and outstanding achievements in Biotechnology.

The symposium served as a unique platform for AIU students and faculty to explore and present their research, creativity, and innovations. Highlighting the intersection of scientific inquiry and artistic expression, the event had a vibrant community of learners and thinkers, celebrating the dynamic interplay between these disciplines.

A highlight of the symposium was the keynote address by Dr. Fatima Alrashed, Senior Scientist II & Principal Investigator at the Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI). Dr. Alrashed captivated the audience with her insights into student experiments at DDI and the exciting opportunities for summer internships. Her speech not only shed light on cutting-edge research but also inspired students to pursue their scientific passions.

The Poster Competition was a cornerstone of the symposium, with students presenting their scientific experiments through visually engaging posters. This competition showcased the depth and diversity of student research across various scientific disciplines including Biotechnology. After careful deliberation, the winners were announced as follows:

First Place: Mr. AldanahAlbahairi – Husain Kamal; Second Place: Ms.Iqra Nawaz; Third Place:



One more photo from the event.

Ms. Jumana Al Shatti.

In addition to scientific presentations, the symposium celebrated artistic creativity through a photography competition. Students captured the essence of science and art in their photographs, displaying remarkable talent and vision. The winners impressed the judges with their unique perspectives and technical prowess:

First Place: Ms. Lulwa Al Shatti; Second Place: Mr. Abdulrahman Al Salah; Third Place: Ms. Fatemah Alhader.

The inaugural event highlights AIU's commitment to quality American education within arts and sciences, specifically within Biotechnology.

that this will be made possible by providing many centers close to patients' residences, providing the latest equipment and medicines, and preparing specialized cadres to improve the health system and the type and quality of services provided.

Meanwhile, Consultant of Internal Medicine and Kidney Diseases, and Head of the Mohammad Al-Khuzam Dialysis Center at the Adan Hospital Dr. Bassam Al-Hilal explained that the center

was rehabilitated and equipped in accordance with standards of quality, patient safety, and infection prevention. It consists of one floor and includes ten of the latest dialysis devices in the world. It can serve 60 patients at its maximum capacity from the people of the area. Plans are also being made to expand it and increase its capacity in the future.

Dr. Al-Hilal affirmed that the ministry has spared no effort in providing the center with the

latest equipment, which will represent a qualitative addition to dialysis services, facilitating patients' access to the service and providing it to them according to the best quality standards.

He expressed appreciation for the unlimited guidance and support of the Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi and the Undersecretary of Ministry of Health Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi to launch the center's work.

'Imitating approach of people who respect democracy vital'

"THERE was an expectation that Kuwait's trajectory as a respected member state of the United Nations, owing to its moderation, rational behavior, generous contributions, and diplomatic finesse, would naturally position it among the esteemed group within the UN," **Abdullah Bishara**, wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"This wasn't solely due to its stances within the organization but also because it exemplified the principles of the Charter and fostered an environment enticing the organization to select competent members.

"Key among these were alignment with the Charter's values and possessing the intellectual and political acumen to handle sensitive positions, particularly in volatile areas like Cyprus, Lebanon, Yemen, various African issues, and select Asian regions.

"The Scandinavian group notably stood out for its substantial contributions to the organization and the abundance of qualified individuals capable of undertaking sensitive roles. As the organization's responsibilities grew, so did the pool of potential candidates, expanding beyond Scandinavia to include countries in South America and Asia.

"Even Africa began to play a significant role, having successfully groomed citizens suitable for critical positions, with emphasis placed on factors like nationality, neutrality, and the level of state support for chosen UN representatives.

"During my tenure as Kuwait's ambassador to the United Nations from 1971 to 1981, my earnest hope was to identify a fellow Kuwaiti whose name we could confidently nominate, particularly for roles related to economics and media within the international arena.

"Kuwait, characterized by its political stability, social contentment, and economic promise, envisioned a future that embraced the fulfillment of its citizens' aspirations.

"I witnessed Kuwait's proximity to aligning with enlightened nations through its stability, political openness, and the freedoms afforded to its people, who enjoyed political rights enshrined in the Constitution, alongside civil liberties shared by all Gulf Cooperation Council citizens. Moreover, Kuwait boasted graduates from prestigious global universities across various disciplines, reflecting its commitment to education and intellectual development.

"Kuwait possessed a politically astute commercial bloc that garnered widespread trust among those in power. This bloc adeptly forged strong relationships with authorities and collaborated closely with them, particularly during Kuwait's moments of crisis, often stemming from regional ambitions.

"This bloc, which led the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, leveraged its political acumen honed through diligent monitoring of domestic affairs and global news, to navigate Kuwait's political landscape. Within Kuwaiti political circles, it held a distinct position, earning the ruler's confidence and trust in its loyalty and patriotic integrity.

"This trade group undertook a significant national responsibility through its dialogues with the Amir of the State, not only advancing Kuwait's trade and economic interests but also contributing to political development.

"It played a pivotal role in fostering understanding with Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem to formulate a constitution that aligned with the principles and aspirations of all Kuwaiti communities. This constitution aimed to safeguard citizens' freedoms, ensure justice through an independent judiciary, protect rights to expression and representation in Parliament, support free education, address social needs, and provide healthcare -- all financed by the state treasury without imposing taxes.

"This transformative period marked Kuwait's transition from a state of struggle and peril to a rentier society, where state resources funded essential services, underpinned by the genuine commitment of the country's leadership, particularly His Highness the Amir.

"Amidst this political climate, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem ratified the constitution following deliberations by the Constituent Assembly, which was elected to review the proposed document. The Amir affirmed that the constitution, a historical milestone for Kuwait, accurately reflected the country's political, economic, and social realities.

"With its enactment, Kuwait embarked on a new era of parliamentary governance. This parliamentary bloc played a vital role in fostering stability, advocating for moderation in expression, prioritizing societal concerns, and maintaining open channels of dialogue with the Amir.

"In its initial years, Kuwait's political landscape showed promise through prudent decision-making and rational discourse, fostering collective satisfaction with the parliamentary equilibrium that instilled confidence in the nation's progress.

"While stationed in New York, like many others, I observed early signs that the Kuwaiti parliament was not immune to the discord that often accompanies differing viewpoints among its members. Leaders who had initially aligned with the rulers during Sheikh Ahmed Al-Jaber's era and continued their collaboration under Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem's leadership found themselves embroiled in confrontations.

"Some disagreements stemmed

from differing interpretations of jurisprudence, while others emerged from divergent priorities and interests. Tensions escalated, particularly in the mid-1970s, culminating in the disruption of parliamentary proceedings in 1976."

"I came across an article penned by Mr. Muhammad Jassim Al-Saqr in **Al-Jarida** newspaper last Monday, addressing decision-makers and endorsing their actions while emphasizing the interconnectedness of stability and development with democracy. Once again, he underscored the imperative of nurturing democratic principles for the nation's advancement.

"It's undeniable that the group surrounding the late Abdulaziz Al-Saqr, whether within or outside Parliament, played a pivotal role in stabilizing the parliamentary process. Their moderation, coupled with a deep-seated commitment to political and social cohesion, contributed significantly to fostering parliamentary understanding.

"However, the withdrawal of this influential group had a tangible impact on the parliamentary dynamics, dimming its brilliance and ushering in a period of uncertainty.

"Instead of enhancing the vitality of the parliamentary experience, the absence of this group led to a sense of instability. Parliament lost its ability to effectively address crises and navigate the complexities of negotiations.

"Perhaps, in time, a new group will emerge inspired by the active and rational role exemplified by the late Abdulaziz Al-Saqr.

"As we move forward, it's imperative to emulate the approach of rational individuals who respect democracy and uphold the dignity of discourse, all while endeavoring to preserve Kuwait's radiance. I envision Mr. Muhammad Al-Saqr assuming the responsibility of gathering the remaining fragments of the legacy left by that influential historical group.

"His task would be to follow in their footsteps, championing moderation and laying the groundwork upon which democratic life thrives. In Kuwait, there's an urgent need to heed the wisdom of pioneers like Abdulaziz Al-Saqr and his cohort, whose principles continue to resonate.

"I'm truly sorry to hear about the passing of your dear friend, Ambassador Ahmed Al-Naqeb. His departure marks the end of a life distinguished by his benevolent contributions to administrative and commercial realms, coupled with a graceful diplomacy that spanned continents -- from Africa to Pakistan to London -- as a representative of Kuwait.

"I knew him as a remarkable individual, adorned with virtues that transcended petty concerns. He radiated love towards all, maintained purity in behavior, and harbored a conscience untainted by worldly distractions.

"His life was a testament to harmony, advocating for goodness, extending generosity to the deserving, and bringing joy to those who toiled hard, while steadfastly steering clear of trivial matters.

"As his health declined, he withdrew from friends, bearing his pain in solitude, maintaining communication with his son Abdul Wahab. Even in his suffering, he remained resilient until God called him, leaving behind a legacy adorned with sincerity, loyalty, and the beauty of generosity.

"May God grant Ambassador Ahmed Al-Naqeb a spacious abode in Paradise among the righteous, and may He bestow patience and solace upon his family and loved ones during this trying time.

"Indeed, 'every soul will taste death', but the memories and virtues of individuals like Ambassador Al-Naqeb will endure, etched in the hearts of those who knew him."

Also:

"The book 'This is where Kuwait began', authored by Abdullah Khaled Al-Hatem and printed by Dar Al-Qabas Press in 1980, is a valuable resource shedding light on significant milestones in Kuwait's history," columnist **Laila Al Abbas** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"It unveils intriguing facts about Kuwaiti 'firsts', such as the establishment of the first English language school by the American missionary mission in 1917, the inception of the first hospital for women in 1914, the initiation of the first study mission abroad to the Republic of Iraq in 1924, and many more seminal events.

"While museums and heritage programs play a crucial role in preserving history, books like these offer detailed insights that might otherwise go unnoticed.

"Hence, leveraging platforms like the Al-Qabas application and developing audio or e-books, along with an archive dedicated to Kuwaiti history and heritage at the National Library, could provide accessible avenues for learning and preserving this rich legacy.

"Additionally, integrating a section on Kuwait's heritage and history within existing platforms, such as the recently launched 51 application by the Ministry of Information, could further enhance public engagement with Kuwait's historical narrative.

"Despite encountering setbacks and delays in various domains, the recent speech by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad on 5/10/2024 instills confidence in the prospect of witnessing unprecedented achievements.

"With renewed enthusiasm and support, documenting 'From here a new Kuwait began' could garner widespread backing, ensuring that Kuwait's heritage is preserved and celebrated for generations to come."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



The memorandum of understanding being signed.

Al-Anba photo

Kuwait Army, American University in Kuwait sign MoU

In the presence of Commander of Studies and Research Center at Kuwait Army Major General Mohammad Nasser Falah and member of the Board of Trustees at American University in Kuwait Dr Nael Abdullah Al-Awadi, the center signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the university, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The MoU aims to strengthen coop-

eration between the two parties to address common issues, outline future cooperation on scientific research and projects, and enhance the exchange of experience in the interest of both parties.

A number of senior officials at the center the American University in Kuwait president attended the signing ceremony.

PACI official, 2 expats jailed with hard labor over bribe in IDs issue

Court imposes fine of KD 2K on Buyabes for insulting Saudi minister

By Jaber Al-Hamoud
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: The Court of Cassation has confirmed the imprisonment of a citizen, who served as a department head at the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI), sentencing him to five years of hard labor and fining him 212,000 dinars. Additionally, he has been dismissed from his position. The charges stemmed from him accepting a 20-dinar bribe for issuing each civil card to expatriates, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Alongside the citizen, two expatriates, one from Egypt and the other from Bangladesh, were also sentenced to three years of hard labor for their involvement in the scheme. The prosecution accused all defendants of bribery and money laundering, leading to their referral to the criminal judiciary.

The investigation revealed that over five years, the citizen had amassed 106,000 dinars through illicit transactions facilitated by the two expatriates. These expatriates acted as intermediaries, managing interactions with civil card holders and bypassing legal procedures.

Buyabes fined KD 2,000: The Court of Cassation has upheld a fine of 2,000 dinars imposed on Hamid Buyabes for insulting the Saudi Minister of Interior. However, the court acquitted Buyabes of charges related to "hostile actions" against Saudi Arabia.

The Public Prosecution had accused Buyabes of engaging in hos-



Mol photo
Officers during the Coast Guard centers inspection.

Preparedness checked

The Control and Inspection General Department at the Interior Ministry, in coordination with the Coast Guard General Department, recently inspected the Coast Guard centers in Khiran, Umm Al-Maradim Island, Qarourah Island, Kubar Island and Seif Palace, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The department carried out the inspection in order to ensure that its forces are fully prepared to receive reports and deal with emergency or security situations immediately.

Electricity cut off: The Emergency and Rapid Intervention Team from the Farwaniya Governorate Municipality conducted field tours, resulting in the disconnection of electricity to 13 properties used as residences for singles in the Khaitan area, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The Municipality's Public Relations Department urges citizens

and residents to cooperate with the relevant departments by reporting singles living in residential areas. These reports help the authorities enforce laws prohibiting singles from residing in these zones. Reports can be made through various channels, including a hotline (139), WhatsApp (24727732), or by submitting a written complaint to the director of the governorate municipality branch.

Officers detention ordered: First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf Al-Sabah has ordered the detention and suspension of a number of officers and civilians assigned at a police station in Jahra in response to a complaint that they have been dealing with citizens in a discriminatory manner, reports **Al-Rai** daily quoting sources.

Sources confirmed that the minister issued the directive in line with the principle of applying the law on everyone; that is, without discrimination.

Sources revealed the Oversight and Inspection Department at the Interior Ministry received information that some individuals detained at the police station for involvement in a fistfight were separated by keeping one of the parties outside the detention cell.

Woman accused of fraud: A Kuwaiti woman has filed a report at the Abdullah and Ali Sabah Al-Salem Port police station, accusing another woman of cheating her, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

According to the report, the complainant had entered into an agreement in July 2022 in an 'investment' agreement with the suspect, and was promised 1,600 dinars in return.

Despite making repeated attempts to resolve the matter peacefully, the complainant did not receive any money as agreed upon. She also produced evidence that during the period of investment she had paid her share of 100 dinars monthly for a period of 12 months.

When the agreed-upon deadline

passed without receiving the promised amount, the plaintiff said she ceased making further payments towards the investment.

A security source disclosed that the defendant was summoned for questioning and vehemently denied any wrongdoing, asserting that she had not breached the trust. The defendant claimed to have refunded the amounts previously paid by the plaintiff due to the incomplete fulfillment of the agreement.

Drug addict arrested: A recent report said at one of the cooperative societies in the Jahra Governorate an unidentified person was seen behaving abnormal following which suspicions arose that the individual was under the influence of narcotics, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

When the management of the cooperative society notified the Operations Department of the Ministry of Interior securitymen who were dispatched to the site found on the person a cigarette containing remnants of a used narcotic substance.

The man was arrested and handed over to the concerned authority for legal action.

2 vehicles impounded: A vehicle and a vanette have been referred to the vehicle impounding garage, and investigations are underway to arrest two individuals connected to a case registered at the Al-Waha police station under No. 65/2024 as misdemeanors, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

According to a security source, a Public Security patrol, while on a tour of the Jahra Stables area, noticed a white Nissan pickup truck without license plates being driven recklessly.

When the patrol stopped the pickup, a white 2017 Korean vehicle began harassing the patrol, attempting to collide with it and run over a security officer.

The source added that both the reckless driver and the driver of the Korean vehicle managed to escape on foot, abandoning their vehicles.

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Egypt extradites officer

Mother loses custody of kids for exploiting them on social media

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: In a landmark ruling, the Family Court stated that using children to promote social media influence to increase followers or achieve profits is against the law. It ruled to revoke a mother's custody of her children because she took revenge on their father by promoting their children on social media platforms.

According to the case file, Lawyer Mohammad Safar, the defense counsel representing the father, demanded to transfer the custody of his client's children from his ex-wife to his client after the mother promoted their children on social media to increase the number of followers on her private accounts in order to achieve financial profits and take revenge on her ex-husband. By doing so, she violated one of the conditions of the custody, as it proves she is not keen about her children's welfare.

Officer extradited: The local security authorities recently received a Kuwaiti officer from the Egyptian Interpol as he was accused of firing his gun at Kuwait International Airport to threaten his superior and then traveling to Egypt, reports **Al-Qabas** daily quoting reliable sources from the security sector.

Kuwaiti security authorities requested the Interpol to hand over the Kuwaiti officer while he was in Egypt. The coordinated efforts of the Kuwait and Egyptian authorities led to the extradition of the accused who is now detained in the country pending investigations.

Duo held for consuming drugs: Farwaniya securitymen patrolling along Kabad Highway arrested two people for consuming drugs and possession of narcotic substances and drug paraphernalia, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

While patrolling the area, the officers noticed the unusual movement of a vehicle, so they signaled for the driver to pull over. They later found out that the driver and his companion were under the influence of drugs.

They searched the car thoroughly, resulting in the discovery of narcotic substances, narcotic pills and drug paraphernalia.

Six projects underway

MoF allocates KD 505 mln for housing development

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: The Ministry of Finance has allocated a substantial amount, up to 505 million dinars, to support the development and construction of housing cities in Kuwait for the fiscal year 2024-2025, reports Al-Qabas daily

This allocation is intended to fund six residential construction projects, including Jaber Al-Ahmad City, Al-Mutla'a Residential City, South Sa'ad Al-Abdullah area, South Sabah Al-Ahmad area, South Abdullah Al-Mubarak suburb, and an affordable housing project in the Al-Naem area

Each of these projects aims to address the housing needs of Kuwaiti citizens, with a focus on providing various types of housing units. For example, the Al-Mutla'a City project is expected to contain over 28,000 housing units, while the South Sabah Al-Ahmad region is slated to accommodate approximately 13,800 housing units.

Additionally, efforts are being made to complete infrastructure projects in these areas to facilitate their development and utilization

Furthermore, there is a commitment to providing affordable housing options, as evidenced by the allocation of funds for the completion of 9,800 housing units in the Al-Naem area. These units will serve as alternative housing for residents of the Taima and Sulaibiya regions

Significant funding

The allocation of such significant funding underscores the importance placed on addressing housing issues and ensuring access to adequate housing for Kuwaiti citizens. With ongoing projects in the construction sector, Kuwait is making strides towards meeting the housing needs of its population and fostering sustainable urban development

According to data from the regional project tracker, MEED Projects, there are projects under implementation worth \$7.8 billion in the construction sector, making it the second largest sector after the transportation sector in Kuwait in terms of projects under implementation.

South Abdullah Al-Mubarak Project -- The total area of the project is 4.350 million square meters, and it provides 3,260 residential units, each with an area of 400 square meters.

Al-Mutla'a City -- The total area of the project exceeds 100 million square meters, and it is scheduled to contain 28,288 residential units, each with an area of 400 square meters.

South of Saad Al-Abdullah Residential City -- The project includes a number of residential units amounting to 24,500 thousand residential units, each with an area of 400 square meters.

Low-cost housing -- It is the completion of 9,800 housing units in the north of the country, on an area of 8.9 million square meters, and the area of the housing unit is 200 square meters, which will be allocated as alternative housing for residents of the Taima and Sulaibiya regions.

South of Sabah Al-Ahmad City -- It is scheduled to contain 13,812 housing units.

Tajikistan aims to propel sustainable water goals forward with UN collaborative efforts

Kuwait's efforts to address climate change impacts appreciated

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: The upcoming third edition of the high-level International Conference on Water for Sustainable Development, scheduled from June 10 to 13, 2024, in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, signifies a pivotal moment in global efforts to address water-related challenges.

Spearheaded by Tajikistan's government within the Dushanbe Water Process framework, the conference aims to bolster collective endeavors aligned with the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028."

Co-chaired by the Prime Minister of Tajikistan and the Undersecretary-General of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the conference will build upon the successes of previous editions and focus on accelerating actions outlined in the Water Action Agenda.

Solutions

With a thematic emphasis on promoting science-based solutions, capacity building, and cross-sectoral collaboration, the conference aims to showcase best practices, foster innovative partnerships, and mobilize global political will towards achieving water-related Sustainable Development Goals.

Tajikistan's leadership in water initiatives, epitomized by its role as the initiator of significant global undertakings, underscores its commitment to advancing sustainable water management and international cooperation

Speaking to the press at the Embassy of Tajikistan premises, the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to the State of Kuwait Zubaydullo Zubaydzoda said, "This year marks the third edition of the Dushanbe Water Action Decade Conference, following successful conferences held in 2018 and 2022.

"The 2022 conference played a pivotal role in shaping the themes of interactive dialogues at the UN 2023 Water Conference and launching the Water Action Agenda," he said



Photo by Leahab Qurtal
Zubaydullo Zubaydzoda' (right), Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to the State of Kuwait with Ghada Eltahir, (left), Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and the Resident Coordinator in State of Kuwait.

The primary objective of the conference, the Tajik envoy said, is to further strengthen collective efforts and support the implementation of voluntary commitments outlined in the Water Action Agenda of the UN Water Conference.

The conference aims to foster new partnerships and accelerate actions to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

In particular, the 3rd Dushanbe Water Action Decade Conference will focus on:

- Providing a platform to support the implementation of the goals and targets of the Water Action Decade, as well as for the follow up to the UN 2023 Water Conference;
- Providing an update on the activities and actions indicated in the Final Declaration, the Co-Chairs' Summary and the Call for Action and Partnerships of the 2nd Dushanbe Water Action Decade Conference;
- Accelerating the implementation of internationally agreed water-related goals and targets at the regional and national level, particularly through the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework;
- Promoting science-based solutions and tools, including data, technologies and innovations;

■ Improving capacity building, knowledge and education through sharing information and best practices;

■ Showcasing successful partnerships, advocacy and networking actions by stakeholders at all levels towards the implementation of the goals and targets of the Water Action Decade;

■ Strengthening cooperation at different levels by promoting dialogue, partnership and cross-sectoral approaches

Given the global significance of water issues, the world community, he said, has now recognized that the leader of the Tajik Nation is the initiator of six great undertakings: 'International Year of Fresh Water' (2003); International Decade for Action 'Water for Life' (2005-2015); 'The International Year of Water Cooperation' (2013); International Decade for Action 'Water for Sustainable Development' (2018-2028); International Year of Glaciers' Preservation (2025) and the proclamation of March 21 as World Day for Glaciers'. Each of these initiatives is implemented globally as vital to humanity

In her remarks, Ghada Hatim Eltahir Mudawi, Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and the Resident Coordinator in State of Kuwait, expressed gratitude to

Ambassador Zubaidov, for Tajikistan's initiative in hosting the third water conference emphasizing the significance of this initiative, highlighting water's pivotal role as a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of sustainable development for all nations

Acknowledging the global challenges related to water scarcity and climate change, Mudawi noted that over 2.2 billion people worldwide endure difficult conditions due to water scarcity. She stressed the importance of countries' efforts to ensure access to clean and healthy water while addressing wastewater management

She commended Tajikistan for its significant progress in addressing water-related issues, citing the emphasis placed on water conservation in outcomes from climate summits, including the 28th Climate Summit held in Dubai and preparations for subsequent summits

Devastating impact

She also underscored the devastating impact of climate change-induced droughts and floods on food security and quality of life globally

Expressing appreciation for Kuwait's efforts to address climate change impacts, Mudawi highlighted the government's commitment to providing water to all residents. She emphasized that water conservation is not solely the government's responsibility but also an individual obligation, emphasizing the role of individuals in combating water scarcity and climate change effects

Regarding the United Nations Office's support to Kuwait, Mudawi outlined the office's role in providing consultations on ensuring water access as a basic human right.

She underscored the office's alignment with Kuwait's sustainable development goals and Vision 2035, emphasizing collaborative efforts with specialized international programs and organizations such as the United Nations Development Program, the Human Settlements Program, and the United Nations Environment Program.

These collaborations, she said, encompass a broad range of environmental issues, including sandstorms and environmental conservation, funded through initiatives like the Kuwait Fund for Development.

Delegation urged to uphold unity

Hajj permits through Nusuk suspended

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: The Hajj and Umrah Department in the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has announced that the issuance of Hajj permits through Nusuk application is suspended and those visiting Saudi Arabia without a Hajj or Umrah permit will be banned from entering Makkah from 15 Zulqeda to 15 Zulhijja, reports Al-Anba daily quoting reliable sources.

Sources disclosed that the Kuwaiti Hajj Delegation headed by Undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Badr Al-Mutairi will travel to Saudi Arabia on Thursday to start welcoming the Kuwaiti pilgrims and facilitate their holy trip. Sources said the Hajj caravans will issue Hajj permits for registered individuals in the next few days, affirming that the pilgrims from Kuwait will start heading to the holy places on the first of Zulhijja.

Meanwhile, Dr. Bader Al-Mutairi, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and head of the Hajj delegation, emphasized the importance of the mission members being exemplary ambassadors for Kuwait during the Hajj journey, reports Al-Jarida daily.

He urged them to uphold honorable conduct and adhere to the regulations and laws of Saudi Arabia, ensuring that the Kuwaiti delegation stands in solidarity with the Kingdom and contributes to the success of the Hajj season.

The meeting for mission members, held at the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, gathered representatives from various participating ministries.

Muhammad Al-Mutairi, the Assistant Undersecretary for the Media and Foreign Relations Sector and Deputy Head of the Hajj Mission, highlighted the honor of being selected to serve Kuwaiti pilgrims. He called for unity, diligence, and cooperation among all members to ensure the effective representation of Kuwait and the Hajj delegation.

Al-Mutairi emphasized the need for a comprehensive action plan from the first day of arrival in Mecca until the end of the

Al-Omar experiences fatigue during forum

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced that Minister Omar Al-Omar experienced fatigue while delivering his speech at the opening of the Industrial and Investment Forum between the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and the People's Republic of China, reports Al-Qabas daily

In a statement released, Sunday, the ministry stated that rapid first aid was administered to the minister, leading to the quick stabilization of his health condition. Despite this episode, Minister Al-Omar completed the scheduled bilateral meetings

The ministry further assured that comprehensive examinations indicated that the minister's health condition is normal, attributing the incident to fatigue resulting from extensive travel and changes in sleep patterns. Currently, Minister Al-Omar is fully engaged in his duties and responsibilities.

journey.

He stressed the importance of documenting all activities undertaken by the mission to provide a detailed report to the Council of Ministers, ensuring transparency and accountability in the mission's work.

This collaborative effort aims to ensure the smooth and successful completion of the Hajj journey for Kuwaiti pilgrims.

CITRA holds simulation methodology workshop

Zakat House launches direct client engagement initiative

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: In an effort to enhance its services and address the needs of its clients, the Zakat House is initiating a new practice to engage directly with the community, reports Al-Jarida daily

Dr. Majid Al-Azmi, the General Director of the Zakat House, will be available to personally receive clients every Sunday, at the Capital Governorate and Hawalli branches located in the Salwa area.

The sessions will run from 10 am to 12 noon.

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: The Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) organize a workshop on simulation methodology and enhancing the human element, presented by Prasanth Raju, the leader of security operations at Activebytes, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The event took place today at 10:00 am at the agency's building. This workshop is part of the "Cybersecurity Skills Development Workshops" series and aims to explore the role of human behavior in enhancing cybersecurity.

It seeks to increase awareness among employees about effectively reducing risks and focuses on practical methods for training and empowering individuals to be the first line of defense against cyber threats.

Over 42,000 students prep for end-of-year exams

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: The end-of-year exams for the 2023/2024 academic year will commence next Wednesday morning for 42,546 students in both the scientific and literary sections, reports Al-Jarida daily

Among them, 27,540 students in the scientific section will be tested in mathematics, while 15,006 students in the literary section will be tested in French. Meanwhile, exams for religious education students in grammar start today, with 824 students participating

In this context, educational sources re-

vealed to Al-Jarida that the authorities are set to approve the rotation lists for the chairs and members of the twelfth-grade examination committees

It is anticipated that the Undersecretary of the Ministry, Mansour Al-Daihani, will approve these lists today, preparing for their distribution to committee chairs tomorrow morning

The Capital Educational District has informed committee heads that they will be rotated to the same schools as in the first semester exams.



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Promo period from 2nd May to 31st May 2024

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LOCAL

Bitter remedy

Continued from Page 1

Also, on this basis, the man of the era, His Highness the Amir, issued a clear warning to the ministers in the first meeting of the current government by literally saying, "We are in a serious phase, and I will hold the negligent accountable. People are looking for real achievements. We want unlimited giving, and I will follow up on the implementation of your work."

Today, the citizens feel it has begun, and as in all times, there are opportunists of chaos who seek to put thorns in the wheels, and work to obstruct the process in various ways. They hence work to spread stupid questions, the goal of which is to fish in troubled waters.

However, we tell them, "The bitter treatment is a characteristic of difficult beginnings, and repairing the ruin of an age cannot happen overnight."

We have to believe that the process has begun, and according to what we are currently seeing, by the end of the year, Kuwait will be a reconstruction workshop, not only in stone, but also in institutions.

What His Highness the Amir said to the ministers that he would hold accountable those who were negligent applies to everyone.

When the head of state takes it upon himself to monitor the work of ministers, they must be responsible to exercise their knowledge to the fullest extent and be role models for their subordinates.

Kuwait, China

Continued from Page 1

Government's delegation tasked with completing consultation on the joint development projects.

The meeting with the visiting Chinese officials was held at the ministry headquarters, the official statement said, noting that the two sides explored the close bilateral relations, the strategic cooperation between the State of Kuwait and the People's Republic of China, where they also broached "frameworks of boosting and promoting the relations in various sectors and at diverse levels."

The two sides held in-depth discussions, focusing on the necessity to cement the technical, development and economic ties in the realm of executing mega development projects in the State of Kuwait.

Moreover, they addressed the need to offer proposals and the aspired perceptions for attaining aspirations of the supreme political leadership to press ahead with laying foundations of a future plan to launch the common strategic ventures, namely Mina (port) Mubarak Al-Kabeer.

Cairo Street

Continued from Page 1

the project's asphalt laying work to achieve the highest standards of quality and efficiency required for the road.

Dr. Al-Mashaan stressed that the final stages of the project are proceeding according to the specified timetable, adding, "We will continue working to ensure that completion and opening take place on the expected date, which will benefit the public."

She reviewed a detailed explanation of the obstacles that had previously affected all stages of the project's work progress, represented by the migration of existing services that had been in place for more than 50 years, the main parts of which had been resolved.

The project will be in its final stages, and tunnel No. 2, which is the last, will be in its final stages to open to traffic as soon as possible.

In this regard, it is worth noting

that PART opened the first phase of the project on May 26, 2023, which includes tunnel No. 1, three vehicle bridges, and a flyover bridge that connects Shaab and Hawally. It also opened tunnel No. 3 between Dasma and Mansouriya on May 23, 2024.

Minister Al-Mashaan also reviewed the work progress rates in developing Second and Third ring roads, in which the completion rate reached more than 97 percent, and the necessary coordination is being made to complete the opening work.

It is also noteworthy that the project consists of a road network with a length of 11 km. It includes the construction of three tunnels, five bridges for vehicles, a bypass bridge, five bridges for services, seven pedestrian bridges, and works on the water network, rain and sewage network, telephone network, and street lighting, as well as a traffic control network, traffic signals, and related services, along with cosmetic greenery works on the roads.

Kuwait minister

Continued from Page 1

the media and creating cooperation opportunities between different Arab institutes.

On that matter, President of the Dubai Press Club (DPC), the organizing committee of the Summit, Dr. Maita bint Eissa Buhaimeid told KUNA that the Summit will continue until May 29, and is considered the umbrella for key events and initiatives.

"Focused on knowledge exchange and dialogue in the media industry, the Summit will include the 22nd Arab Media Forum, the second Arab Youth Media Forum, the 23rd Arab Media Award and the fourth Arab Social Media Influencers Award," she said.

"This year's AMF will bring together a large number of thought leaders, media personalities, editors in chief, influencers, scholars, writers, experts and content creators from the UAE, the region and across the world to discuss the future of the region's evolving media landscape," she noted.

The agenda on Tuesday will include the participation of Kuwait's Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi in a dialogue session titled "Kuwait to a new media decade", in which he will point out the importance of media cooperation to cope with the comprehensive development that Kuwait is witnessing.

Kuwait demands

Continued from Page 1

Resolution 2720 and allow immediate delivery of humanitarian aid in a safe and unhindered manner and to create the necessary conditions for a ceasefire in Gaza.

Today's Ministerial International Partners Meeting on Palestine was chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, Espen Barth Eide, and hosted by EU High Representative, Josep Borrell, with the participation of Mohammad Mustafa, the new Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority.

In his statements to the press, Borrell said it is so important that we gather together to try to support the Palestinian Authority because these are extremely difficult times for the Palestinian people."

"The situation in Gaza is beyond words. The occupied West Bank is on a brink, risking to explode any time. And as we speak, Israeli military operations continue in and around Rafah," he said.

"And this happens against the verdict of the highest United Nations court - the International Court of Justice (ICJ) - that ordered Israel to halt the military operation in Rafah and to open the border crossing for humanitarian aid," said the EU foreign policy chief.

Ahmadi, Mubarak Al-Kabeer committees prioritize infrastructures, public services

Councils approve drainage projects, expand horse center

By Enas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: The Ahmadi Committee of the Municipal Council Sunday held its ninth meeting for the second term.

During the meeting, which was headed by Nassar Al-Muhaini, the committee approved the request of the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) to allocate only nine basins, five water channels, and four connecting links to collect and drain rainwater between Wafra and Qardan, Al-Hufaira and Al-Fawwar to protect the Khairan area.

The committee reserved the Ministry of Health's request to allocate the Khairan Health Center in Khairan Block 1 for its previous approval.

The committee referred to the executive branch the inquiry submitted by a Kuwaiti citizen through a communication platform regarding the expansion of South Sabah Al-Ahmad.

The committee kept on its agenda the proposal submitted by member Fahad Al-Abduljader for allocating temporary parking spaces in Al-Adami Rest House, with the invitation of the member of the Municipal Council who submitted the proposal Fahad Al-Abduljader, the Ministry of Oil, the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources, and the Project Development Department of the executive branch. This was based on the request of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy to reallocate the location of the main electricity transfer station in Fahaheel Block 4, with the invitation of the Ministry of Electricity and Water, in addition to maintaining and requesting amendment to the Municipal Council's decision regarding the Abdullah Port backfill.

Meanwhile, the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Committee of the Municipal Council held its sixth meeting for the second term Sunday morning, headed by Nassar Al-Muhaini.

During the meeting, the committee approved one item out of three on its agenda, which is the Amiri Diwan's request to expand the location of the Arabian Horse Center (Bait Al-Arab) on the eastern and southern sides, north of central Subhan.

The committee referred to the executive body the letter of the Public Sports Authority regarding the project to implement the design, construction, completion and maintenance of the headquarters of the Kuwait Swimming Union in Sabah Al-Salem, specifically, to renew the decision regarding the union's headquarters in order to submit a report on it.

The committee postponed the proposal submitted by member Fahad Musaed Al-Abduljader for updating the data on Street 8 of Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Block 1, plot No. 167, which was then amended in the municipal system.

Ministry to float nine tenders for port dev't

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: The Ministry of Public Works has announced its plan to float nine tenders for supply, contracting and services contracts within fiscal 2024/2025 in a bid to complete the third part of the first phase of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port project, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a press statement, the ministry revealed these tenders include the establishment, completion and maintenance of infrastructure in the container yard, main buildings and facilities; consultancy agreement to supervise the implementation of contracts; manufacture, supply, installation, testing, operation and maintenance of handling equipment; consultancy agreement to supervise the handling equipment; manufacturing the handling equipment; deepening the port bay and linking the port to the current canal in Abdullah Bay; supervising the execution of works included in the previous tender; consulting services agreement to operate and run the programs included in Abdullah Mubarak Port; and marine dredging work for a small ship berth with the aim of facilitating the sailing of small ships used by the Coast Guard, Ministry of Defense and other concerned institutions.



Citizens seen at the facade of the Minister of Social Affairs office.

Rates based on value of practice subject

Administrative resolution sets grievance fees for ministry purchasing committee

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Abdulaziz Sari, has issued Administrative Resolution No. 1686 of 2024, outlining the fees for grievance requests against decisions made by the Ministry's Purchasing Committee, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The resolution, obtained by Al-Jarida, establishes fees based on the value of the practice subject to the grievance.

According to the resolution, the grievance fee is set at 100 dinars for practices valued between 5,001 and 15,000 dinars, and 200 dinars for practices valued between 15,000 and 25,000 dinars.

For practices valued between 25,000 and 35,000 dinars, the fee is set at 300 dinars, while it increases to 400 dinars for values between 35,000 and 45,000 dinars. For values between 45,000 and 55,000 dinars, the fee is 500 dinars, and for tenders between 55,001 and 74,999 dinars, the fee is 600 dinars.

The resolution mandates aggrieved parties to pay fees via the "KeyNet" system in the Ministry's Financial Department, ensuring they receive an official certified receipt.

Moreover, Administrative Resolution No. (2983/A) of 2017, pertaining to the Grievances Committee's work and specializations related to procurement tender procedures, is canceled and replaced by the new decision.

Furthermore, in response to Al-Jarida's report on overcrowding during the Minister of Citizens Affairs' reception, the Ministry announced plans to implement a new mechanism for visitor reception.

Beginning next week, appointments must be made in advance through the "Sahel" application to meet the Minister, preventing recurrence of severe crowding delays. Citizens can obtain appointments via the unified government electronic services application, "Sahel", and choose to meet the Minister through the Ministry's box's Appointments section.

Ahmed Al-Anzi, Director of the Public Relations and Media Department and the Ministry's official spokesman, emphasized that these measures align with royal directives and the Council of Ministers' open-door policy, aiming to address citizen needs effectively.

PAHW floats two tenders for new housing schemes

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: 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.

The Public Authority for Housing Welfare emerges as the largest single client in the construction domain in Kuwait, with projects under construction valued at \$1.8 billion.

Additionally, the country boasts construction projects worth approximately \$49.5 billion in the pre-implementation stages, with a majority in the design and study phases, followed by bid evaluation and pre-qualification stages for main contracts.

Minister Dr. Amthar Al-Huwaila will receive citizens every Wednesday from 10 am to 2 pm in her office in the Ministries Complex, Block 17, second floor.

Bankruptcy Department's Decision in Application No. 9/2023 Preventive Settlement Alfekr Altatweery General Trading and Contracting Co. (W.L.L)

Opening the preventive settlement procedures regarding the request submitted by the debtor (Alfekar Altatweery General Trading and Contracting Co., W.L.L) with ceasing all judicial claims and execution procedures taken against it, including the procedure of implementing the sale of shares owned by the requesting company shown in the case proving minutes dated 21/4/2024 issued by the General Department of Execution and in implementation of the seizure signed by it in File No. (191576860), for which a date is determined for selling them on Sunday, corresponding to 26/5/2024, referred to in the reasons, for a period of three months from the date of this decision, and the Bankruptcy Department shall notify the Central Bank, General Department of Execution, Kuwait Clearing Co., Boursa Kuwait Securities Co., Capital Markets Authority, the applicant company, the Bank against which it is submitted, as well as the Bankruptcy Committee, about this decision in accordance with Article (55) of Bankruptcy Law, publishing in the Official Gazette and registering it within ten days, with entrusting the applicant company to disclose this decision on its website, and by announcing it in two local daily newspapers, one of which is published in English language, at its expense, and providing evidence to that effect, and entrusting it to prepare a preventive settlement proposal including the data required by Article (73) of Bankruptcy Law, with exercising the necessary diligence to convince the bank against whom it is submitted (the creditor) to agree to the preventive settlement proposal. A copy of the preventive settlement proposal shall be submitted within a period not exceeding three months from the date of issuance of this decision in accordance with the provisions of Article (74) of Bankruptcy Law.



JOINT OPERATIONS WAFRA

SAUDI ARABIAN CHEVRON INC. (SAC) - KUWAIT GULF OIL COMPANY

Joint Operations (Saudi Arabian Chevron Inc. / Kuwait Gulf Oil Company), announces the under-mentioned Public Tenders for procurement of materials.

Kuwaiti and Saudi Merchants, registered with either Company wishing to participate in any of the under-mentioned Tenders are invited to collect the Tender documents from Purchasing Section, Purchasing & Logistic Division, Administration Building, Ground Floor, Joint Operations, Wafra, during the official working hours from 28 MAY 2024 up to 10 JUN 2024 for a non-refundable fee mentioned against each tender. Tender Fees to be deposited in the National bank of Kuwait (NBK) Account No. 1001132057. Saudi Suppliers can collect the tender documents from Saudi Arabian Chevron office in Al-Khobar Telephone No.: (013) 8645104 - Fax No.: (013) 8985436

The closing date for the following Tender will be on **Monday, 24 JUN 2024 @ 09:00 AM.**

S.NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS	FEES (IN KD)
1	015559-R1	PIPE, PIPE FITTINGS & GASKETS	5
2	015475-R1	S/F HYDROCYCLONE, PETRECO INTERNATIONAL	50
3	016024-R1	BATTERY LEAD ACID, ENERSYS INC	25
4	015108-R1	S/F MICROMOTION FLOW METERS	5
5	015422-R1	S/F DAVID BROWN PUMPS	15
6	015476-R1	S/F BAKER HUGHES PROCESS SYSTEM, CAMERON	25
7	018637	GLOBE & BALL VALVES	25
8	018649	CISCO IT NETWORK HARDWARE SUPPORT RENEWAL	25
9	018831	MISC SPARE PARTS, EMERSON	15
10	019115	MISC SPARE PARTS, ROSEMOUNT	25

Notes: Gate Passes are required for Suppliers entering JO-Wafra Administrative Offices to collect the tender document and gate pass processing time is 48 hours. Please fill request for gate pass along with legible copies of Authorization letter, Civil ID, Car Registration, Supplier Registration (KGOC or SAC) to e-mail HBJH@chevron.com and CBMS@chevron.com at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

For additional information, you may contact: Telephone No.: 23983639 - Ext. : 2502 - 3477

World News Roundup

Europe

Ukraine's Zelenskyy visits Spain: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy arrived in Madrid on Monday where he was expected to sign a bilateral security agreement with Spain that will help his country fight its more than two-year war with Russia amid a recent offensive by the Kremlin's forces.

Spain's King Felipe VI met Zelenskyy at the capital's Barajas airport. The Ukrainian leader was due to hold talks with Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez about what local media reported is a planned 1.1 billion euros (\$1.2 billion) agreement for Spain to supply Ukraine with more weapons.



Zelenskyy

Zelenskyy had been due to visit Spain earlier this month but he postponed all his foreign trips after the Kremlin's forces launched a cross-border offensive in the northeastern Kharkiv region and left Ukrainian troops reeling.

That push has further strained Ukraine's already depleted army, which in recent months has been fighting Russia's intense drive deeper into the partially occupied eastern Donetsk region. Zelenskyy said on Sunday that the Kremlin's army is mustering at another point in Russia, farther north but close to the approximately 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line, presumably to try and crack Ukrainian resistance in the area. A Western intelligence assessment suggested that Russia's Kharkiv offensive has subsided. (AP)

□ □ □

Poland rolls out plans for fortifications: Defense officials in NATO member Poland on Monday presented a plan to strengthen anti-drone surveillance and on-ground military defense through a system of fortifications and barriers along about 700 kilometers (430 miles) of its eastern border with Russia and Russian ally Belarus.

The government says Poland, which supports neighboring Ukraine in its defense against Russia's aggression, is being targeted by hostile actions from Russia and Belarus. They include cyberattacks, attempted arson and migrants being pushed illegally across the border, which officials describe as intended to destabilize the European Union, of which Poland is a member.

The government is also making preparations in the case of a military attack, while stressing the primary role of deterrence.

The government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk has planned a range of security measures including in cyberspace, as well as a more than \$2.5 billion investment in strengthening surveillance, deterrence and defense along the eastern border, a system known as Shield-East that is to be completed in 2028. Work on it has started, officials said. (AP)

□ □ □

Starmer woos undecided voters: British opposition leader Keir Starmer made his first major speech of the UK election campaign Monday, telling undecided voters that they can trust his Labour Party to safeguard the country's economy, borders and security.

Starmer is the favorite to win the July 4 election, with polls giving Labour a double-digit lead over the governing Conservatives under Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

But many electors remain undecided, and Starmer sought to address a perception that the left-of-center Labour Party is weaker on defense and security than the center-right Conservatives. (AP)

□ □ □

Incumbent Lithuanian prez re-elected: Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda secured a second five-year term as Lithuanian president in a landslide victory over Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonyte.

Preliminary figures by the Lithuania's Central Electoral Commission showed that Nausėda won 74.5% of the votes and Šimonyte 24.1%.

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

"Lithuania's independence and freedom is like a fragile vessel that we must cherish, protect and prevent from cracking," Nausėda said Sunday night after the ballots had been counted, the Baltic News Service reported. (AP)

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Orbán faces new serious contender: About three months ago, a scandal rocked five-time nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Fidesz party which prides itself on upholding family values and Christian conservatism.

As party leaders attempted damage control after close Orbán allies, President Katalin Novák and Justice Minister Judit Varga, were forced to resign over a presidential pardon for a man convicted of covering up a string of child sexual abuses, Péter Magyar saw a chance and broke ranks with the party in February.

In a matter of weeks, Magyar - a 43-year-old lawyer - built a political movement, now poised to become Hungary's largest opposition force and challenge Orbán's party in the June 9 European Parliament and municipal elections. Magyar said in a recent interview with The Associated Press that the upcoming vote was a "prelude" to his planned run in the 2026 Hungarian national elections. (AP)

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Gains but no triumph for AfD: The far-right Alternative for Germany made gains but failed to secure outright victories in local elections in an eastern state where the party is strong and its regional leader, one of the party's best-known figures, was recently convicted of knowingly using a Nazi slogan in a speech.

Sunday's elections at county and mayoral level in Thuringia come ahead of a state election on Sept. 1 in which Alternative for Germany's local leader, Björn Höcke, plans to run for the governor's job.

Official results with about four-fifths of districts counted on Monday showed Alternative for Germany, or AfD, gaining nearly nine points compared with 2019 to take some 26% of the vote across the state in elections for councilors. However, it remained a little behind the center-right Christian Democratic Union, Germany's main national opposition party, whose support was more or less unchanged. (AP)

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Protesters demand PM to resign: Protesters demanding the resignation of Armenia's prime minister on Monday blocked main streets in the capital city and other parts of the country, sporadically clashing with police.

Police said 196 people have been detained in Yerevan. Protests have roiled the country for weeks, sparked by the government's return of four border villages to Azerbaijan.

The demonstrations are spearheaded by Bagrat Galstanyan, a high-ranking cleric in the Armenian Apostolic Church and archbishop of the Tavush diocese in Armenia's northeast, where the returned villages are located. Although the villages were the protests' rallying point, they have expanded to express a wide array of complaints against Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his government. (AP)

□ □ □

France to lift state of emergency: French President Emmanuel Macron decided Monday to lift the state of emergency in the French Pacific territory of New Caledonia in a move meant to allow political dialogue following the unrest that left seven people dead and a trail of destruction, his office said.

The president's office said in a statement the state of emergency won't be extended "for the moment" and will therefore end Monday at 8 pm in Paris, which is 5 am Tuesday in New Caledonia.

The decision aims at "enabling meetings of the various components" of pro-independence movement FLNKS, the Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front, and allow elected officials and other local leaders "in a position to call" for lifting the barricades to go there and meet with protesters, the statement said. (AP)



Destroyed homes are seen after a deadly tornado rolled through the previous night on May 26 in Valley View, Texas. Inset: Juana Landeros, who rode out deadly tornado with her husband and her 9-year-old son when it rolled through the previous night, salvages items from her destroyed home. (AP)

Latest deadly weather in US kills at least 18 people

Powerful storms killed at least 18 people, injured hundreds and left a wide trail of destruction across Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas after obliterating homes and destroying a truck stop where dozens sought shelter in a restroom during the latest deadly weather to strike the central US.

The storms inflicted their worst damage in a region spanning from north of Dallas to the northwest corner of Arkansas, and the system threatened to bring more violent weather to other parts of the Mid-

west. By Monday, forecasters said, the greatest risk would shift to the east, covering a broad swath of the country from Alabama to near New York City.

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear declared a state of emergency early Monday in a post on social media platform X, citing "multiple reports of wind damage and tornadoes."

Seven deaths were reported in Cooke County, Texas, near the Oklahoma border, where a tornado Saturday night plowed through a rural area near a mobile

home park, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said at a news conference Sunday. The dead included two children, ages 2 and 5. Three family members were found dead in one home, according to the county sheriff.

Storms also killed two people and destroyed houses in Oklahoma, where the injured included guests at an outdoor wedding, eight people in Arkansas and one person in Kentucky. Tens of thousands of residents were without power across the region. (AP)

Politics

Texas runoffs test 2 prominent Republicans

Libertarians nominate Oliver for prez

WASHINGTON, May 27, (AP) — The Libertarian Party on Sunday nominated party activist Chase Oliver for president, rejecting former president Donald Trump and Robert F. Kennedy Jr after they each spoke at the party's convention.

Third parties have rarely been competitive in US presidential elections and the Libertarian candidate four years ago won 1% of the vote. But the party's decision is getting more attention this year due to the rematch between Trump and Democratic President Joe Biden, which could hinge again on small vote margins in a handful of contested states.

"We did it! I am officially the presidential nominee," Oliver posted Sunday on X, formerly Twitter. "It's time to unify and move forward for liberty."

Trump appeared Saturday night in Washington at the convention to give a speech that was repeatedly booed by many in the room. It did not pay off with the endorsement he requested, though his Republican allies on Sunday praised him for choosing to go before an unfriendly crowd.

Kennedy got a friendlier reception when he spoke on Friday and attacked both Trump and Biden for how they addressed the COVID-19 pandemic. He had talked up his support for the Libertarians and an endorsement could have helped him expedite the process of gaining ballot access in all 50 states, perhaps the biggest hurdle he faces in qualifying for the first presidential debate in June hosted by CNN.

Libertarians prioritize small government and individual freedoms, with a mix of policy positions that could be

seen as liberal, conservative or neither.

Oliver is an activist from Atlanta who previously ran for the US Senate and US House from Georgia. His campaign website calls for major cuts to the federal budget with an eye toward balancing the budget, the abolition of the death penalty, and the closure of all overseas military bases and ending of military support to Israel and Ukraine.

Also:

AUSTIN, Texas: The 2024 primary season is roughly halfway over and there have been few shakeups so far, with just one U.S. House member defeated and incumbents widely prevailing in state Capitols.

But the runoffs in Texas on Tuesday are a test for two prominent Republicans: US Rep **Tony Gonzales**, who has broken ranks over guns and the border, and powerful state House Speaker **Dade Phelan**, who angered the party's hard right over the impeachment of Texas Attorney General **Ken Paxton**.

The fights to save their jobs have laid bare the risks of dissent in the GOP and pushed both to swing back in races that have erupted into bitter and costly battles. A Gonzales loss, his supporters warn, would give Democrats an opening to flip a traditionally moderate district in November, while a change in Texas House leadership could push the state's policymaking even more to the right.

"You've got to be a brawler," said **Bill Miller**, a longtime Republican strategist in Texas. "It's expected. If you aren't willing to do that, you are an outcast."

Other Texas runoffs also are draw-

ing attention.

Katrina Pierson, a former spokeswoman for **Donald Trump**, is on the ballot for a state House seat near **Dallas**. GOP voters also are picking a challenger to Democratic US Rep **Henry Cuellar**, who was indicted this month on conspiracy and bribery charges. Cuellar has said he is innocent.

Primaries have knocked out only one House member so far this year: Republican Rep **Jerry Carl of Alabama**, who lost in an unusual primary to another incumbent, Rep **Barry Moore**, after the state was forced to redraw congressional districts.

Gonzales, who carried 45% of the vote after drawing five challengers in March, has been tested in the primaries like few of his fellow Republicans. He faces **Brandon Herrera**, a gun-rights YouTube creator who calls himself "The AK Guy" in the district where the Uvalde school shooting happened in 2022.

"The state party of Texas has moved very far to the right, even farther than where the Republicans in DC are right now," said **Brian Smith**, a political science professor at St Edwards University in **Austin, Texas**. He called the squabbles within the Texas GOP "a fight for the soul of the party."

Gonzales has the backing of party heavyweights including Texas Gov **Greg Abbott** and Republican House Speaker **Mike Johnson** and has shrugged off a rare admonishment last year from the state party. The censure followed votes he cast in favor of same-sex marriage protections at the federal level and a bipartisan gun safety bill after the Uvalde school massacre.



Demonstrators with Georgian national flags rally during an opposition protest against a foreign influence bill and celebration of the Independence Day in the center of Tbilisi, Georgia on May 26. A Georgian parliament committee on May 27 rejected the president's veto of the 'foreign agents' legislation that has sparked massive protests for weeks. (AP)



Hochul



Anderson

America

Lightning strike kills rancher: A lightning strike killed a Colorado rancher and 34 head of cattle over the weekend, officials said Sunday.

Mike Morgan, 51, was feeding his cattle from a trailer when he was struck and died on the scene despite life-saving efforts, the Jackson County Sheriff's Office said.

The lightning bolt struck on wide open pasture outside the town of Rand, about 80 miles (129 kilometers) northwest of Denver, said George Crockett, the county coroner.

The strike also bowled over around 100 head of cattle that had bunched around the trailer loaded with hay, said Crockett. "All but the 34 got up," he said.

Morgan's father-in-law and wife were near but survived the blast, said Crockett. (AP)

□ □ □

Gunman arrested in shooting: A 61-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of shooting and wounding five people at a Los Angeles area home and then firing at a police helicopter after locking himself inside, authorities said.

Officers responded shortly before 11:30 pm Saturday and found four gunshot victims at the residence in San Fernando, police said. A fifth victim was later found at a hospital, where San Fernando police determined he had driven himself. ABC 7 reported.

The suspect locked himself in the home and shot at a Los Angeles Police Department helicopter before being taken into custody, police said. No other injuries were reported. (AP)

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7 parachute to safety: Six skydivers and a pilot on board a small plane parachuted to safety before it crashed near a county

airport in western Missouri, leaving the plane "a total loss," officials said.

Preliminary information indicates the plane that crashed early Saturday afternoon

was flying a skydiving mission, according to the National Transportation Safety Board.

The wreckage was found in a field east of the runways at Butler Memorial Airport, the



Denmark's King Frederik X, third left, celebrating his 56th birthday, waves together with Queen Mary, center, Crown Prince Christian, third right, Queen Margrethe, second right, Princess Josephine, second left, Princess Isabella, right, and Prince Vincent from the balcony of Frederik VIII's Palace, Amalienborg Castle in Copenhagen on May 26. (AP)

Bates County Sheriff's Office said on social media. The Federal Aviation Administration said the plane was a single-engine Cessna.

Bates County Sheriff **Chad Anderson** said in an email that all passengers parachuted to safety before the pilot did the same.

All were treated and released at the scene, according to the social media post. (AP)

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Man held in subway attack: A man set a cup of liquid on fire and tossed it at a fellow subway rider in New York City, setting the victim's shirt ablaze and injuring him, police said Sunday.

The random attack happened on a No. 1 train in lower Manhattan on Saturday afternoon, city police said, adding that the suspect was in custody on an array of criminal charges. Authorities also charged the man in connection with a similar fiery assault on the subway in February.

The victim from Saturday, a 23-year-old man, was recovering at a hospital. He told the New York Post that he shielded his fiancée and cousin from the burning liquid and his shirt caught on fire. He said he slapped himself to put out the flames.

Doctors told him he had burns on about a third of his body, he said.

Gov **Kathy Hochul** in March announced that hundreds of National Guard members would be going into the subway system to boost security. (AP)

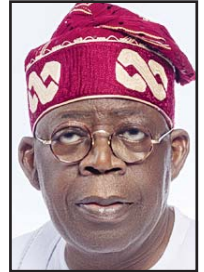
Africa

DA rallies support

Nigeria cracks down on illegal mining ops

ABUJA, Nigeria, May 27. (Agencies): Nigeria's government is cracking down on illegal mining, making dozens of arrests of unlicensed miners since April for allegedly stealing the country's lithium, a critical mineral used in batteries for electric vehicles, smartphones and power systems.

The recent arrests come as Nigeria seeks to regulate its mining operations of critical minerals, curb illegal activity and better benefit from its mineral resources. The clean energy transition, a shift away from coal, oil and gas and toward renewable energy and batteries has spiked global demand for lithium, tin and other minerals. Illegal mines are rife in the country's fledgling industry as corruption among regulatory officials is common and the mineral deposits are located in remote areas with minimal government presence. Officials say profits from illicit mining practices has helped arm militia groups in the north of the country.



Tinubu

In the most recent arrests in mid-May, a joint team of soldiers and police conducted a raid on a remote market in Kishi, in the country's southwestern Oyo State. Locals said the market, once known for selling farm produce, has become a center for illicit trade in lithium mined in hard-to-reach areas. The three-day operation resulted in the arrest of 32 individuals, including two Chinese nationals, local workers and mineral traders, according to the state government and locals. Loads of lithium were also seized.

Jimoh Bioku, a Kishi community leader, said there had been "clandestine searches" for the mineral at remote sites tucked away in the bush in the past years by Chinese nationals before "they engaged people to dig for them and turned the market into a transit point." The community was "particularly worried about the insecurity that usually follows illegal mining and that was why we reported to the state government," he said.

Employ

China is the dominant player in the global EV supply chain, including in Nigeria where China-owned companies employ mostly vulnerable people leaving Nigeria's far north - ravaged by conflicts and rapid desertification - to work in mining operations throughout the country. China's nationals and companies are frequently in the spotlight for environmentally damaging practices, exploitative labor and illicit mining. There have been at least three cases of illegal mining arrests involving Chinese nationals in two months.

President **Bola Tinubu** has repeatedly blamed illegal mining for the worsening conflicts in the country's north and asked the international community for help to stop the problem, which provides armed groups with the proceeds needed to sustain and arm themselves.

The Chinese embassy in Abuja did not respond to an Associated Press request for comment on the arrests and claims of illegal operations. But in a statement last year following a report by The Times of London alleging Chinese miners were bribing militants for access, the embassy said it "always encouraged and urged the Chinese companies and nationals in Nigeria to abide by the laws and regulations of Nigeria."

Nigeria is emerging as a new source of lithium in Africa as the world's largest producers, like Australia and Chile, are unable to fulfill the growing demand worldwide. But illegal activities thrive in Nigeria's extractive sector, denying the government due revenues, said Emeka Okoro, whose Lagos-based SBM Intelligence firm has researched illicit mining and terrorism financing in northern Nigeria.

And the combination of conflict and climate change effects, such as once fertile land rapidly turning into useless arid sand in northern Nigeria, has produced a cheap workforce for mining sites.

The arrests of "both Chinese nationals and young Hausa boys from conflict-affected regions underscore a troubling pattern," Okoro told the AP.

Also:

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's main opposition party Democratic Alliance (DA) on Sunday made its final appeal to voters to help it unseat the ruling African National Congress as it concluded its campaign ahead of elections this week.

The Democratic Alliance is the biggest opposition party in South Africa and has gathered some smaller opposition parties to form a pact known as the Multi-Party Charter for South Africa, which will see the group combine their votes to challenge the ANC after the elections.

Sunday's rally coincided with that of the smaller opposition Inkatha Freedom Party, which has the populous KwaZulu-Natal province as its stronghold and has committed to work with the main opposition.

Recent polls have put the ANC's support at less than 50% of the national vote ahead of the election, putting it in danger of possibly losing its majority. The Democratic Alliance is also under pressure after its support declined in the last national elections and a number of its leaders left to form new parties that will be competing in the polls.

Supporters came out in the thousands Sunday in **Benoni**, east of Johannesburg, where the DA's blue colored flags and party memorabilia decorated a small stadium in the town.

"Make no mistake, if DA voters stay at home, or they split the vote among many small parties on the ballot, then our country's next chapter could be even uglier than the past," said party leader John Steenhuisen.

DAR ES SALAAM: At least four farmers drowned and three others are missing after their boat capsized in a river in the **Katavi** region in southern **Tanzania**, a Tanzanian official said on Sunday night.

Mwanamvua Mrindoko, the Katavi regional commissioner, told Xinhua by telephone that the accident occurred on Friday evening. The boat, which was also carrying 10 bags of paddy, capsized in the Ukingwazi River in **Mlele** district. Seven people managed to swim to safety.

Rescuers, led by the Tanzania Fire and Rescue Force, found the body of one farmer on Saturday, and three more bodies were recovered on Sunday, Mrindoko said.

"Rescuers are still searching for the three missing farmers," said Mrindoko, adding that the river was over-flooded due to ongoing heavy rains last month.



A man salvages a cart and other material as water flows on to the Kuakata beach on the coast of Bay of Bengal caused by the advancing Cyclone Remal in Barisal, Bangladesh on May 26. Inset: India's National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) rescuers remove fallen trees as they oversee damages in Cyclone Remal affected villages in West Bengal state, India on May 27. (AP)

Cyclone floods coastal villages, cuts power in Bangladesh and India

A cyclone flooded coastal villages, blew away thatched roofs and left hundreds of thousands of people without power Monday in southern Bangladesh and eastern India. At least seven deaths were reported.

Dozens of Bangladeshi villages were flooded after flood protection embankments either washed away or were damaged by the storm surge, TV stations reported. Nearly 800,000 people had been evacuated from vulnerable areas in Bangladesh on Sunday.

Authorities have given no casualty figures yet, but Dhaka-based Somoy TV reported that at least seven people died. Two others were missing in a boat capsizing, the station said.

In India's West Bengal state, roofs on thatched houses were blown away while electric poles and trees were uprooted in some coastal districts. There were no immediate reports of deaths. Heavy downpours also inundated streets and homes in low-lying areas of Kolkata city.

Cyclone Remal weakened considerably after making landfall in Bangladesh's Patuakhali district early in the morning with sustained 111 kph (69 mph) winds. The Meteorological Department in Dhaka said the winds were now 90 kph (56 mph) with gusts to 120 kph (75 mph).

The India Meteorological Department said Remal was likely to weaken further throughout the day. It warned of heavy showers over Assam and other northeastern states for the next two days. (AP)

Asia

US lawmakers pledge support for Taiwan

Li agrees on cooperation with Seoul, Tokyo

SEOUL, South Korea, May 27. (AP): China's premier agreed Monday to revive three-way cooperation with South Korea and Japan in the face of shared challenges, but issued a veiled rebuke against the two countries' expanding security cooperation with the United States.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang met South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in Seoul in what was their countries' first such trilateral meeting in more than four years.

Many experts say just restarting the countries' highest-level annual meeting and agreeing on the need to improve ties is a positive sign for cooperation among the three Northeast Asian neighbors, as they all face economic uncertainties caused by wars and instability around the world. But how drastically their cooperation will be promoted is unknown as the three countries have a range of long-running complex issues.

In a joint news conference after the meeting, Li said China wants to cooperate with South Korea and Japan on economic issues, especially on supply chains and the restart of talks on a three-way free trade deal.

Yoon said the three leaders agreed to promote people-to-people and cultural exchanges, establish safe supply chain networks and work together to tackle shared environmental, health and other issues. Kishida said the three countries share a big responsibility for regional peace and that Japan will chair the next round of the trilateral leaders' meeting.

Despite the seemingly amicable mood of the meeting, however, Li at one point expressed Chinese uneasiness about Japan and South Korea's moves to beef up their security partnership with the U.S., which Beijing views as an attempt to form a bloc to contain China.

Also:

TAIPEI, Taiwan: A US congressional delegation met Taiwan's new leader on Monday in a show of support days after China held drills around the self-governing island in response to his inauguration.

PNG says landslide buried more than 2K people and formally asks for help

MELBOURNE, Australia, May 27. (AP): A Papua New Guinea government official has told the United Nations more than 2,000 people were believed to have been buried alive by Friday's landslide and has formally asked for international help.

The government figure is roughly triple the UN estimate of 670 killed by the landslide in the South Pacific island nation's mountainous interior. The remains of only six people had been recovered so far.

In a letter seen by The Associated Press to the United Nations resident coordinator dated Sunday, the acting director of the South Pacific island nation's National Disaster

Center Luseta Laso Mana said the landslide "buried more than 2000 people alive" and caused "major destruction" at Yambali village in the Enga province.

Estimates of the casualties have varied widely since the disaster occurred, and it was not immediately clear how officials arrived the number of people affected.

The International Organization for Migration, which is working closely with the government and taking a leading role in the international response, has not changed its estimated death toll of 670 released on Sunday, pending new evidence.

Korea and Japan.

The notification of the planned launch, banned under U.N. resolutions, came as South Korean President **Yoon Suk Yeol** and Japanese Prime Minister **Fumio Kishida** met Chinese Premier **Li Qiang** in Seoul for their first trilateral meeting in more than four years.

Japan's coast guard said it was notified by North Korea about its planned launch of a "satellite rocket," with a warning of caution in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and China and east of the main **Philippine** island of **Luzon** beginning Monday through midnight June 3.

North Korea provides Japan with its launch information because Japan's coast guard coordinates and distributes maritime safety information in East Asia.

North Korea's planned launch is thought to be an attempt to put its second military spy satellite into orbit. South Korea's military said Friday it detected signs of suspected preparations to launch a spy satellite at North Korea's main Tongchangri launch facility in the northwest.

Millions across Haiti are struggling to rebuild their lives in a country with no president as gangs who want full control of the capital and beyond kill, rape and injure thousands.

The country of more than 11 million people finds itself at a crossroads while preparing for the arrival of thousands of police from Kenya and other countries. The officers are part of a UN-backed deployment to quell gang violence that exploded after the July 2021 presidential assassination.

Haiti is as fragile as it's ever been: Nearly 2 million people are on the verge of starvation, more than 360,000 have been left homeless by gang invasions, and basic supplies dwindled as the main seaport and international airport closed for months.

Caught in the middle are Haitians of every generation wondering if the country will pull through, and whether they will live to see its future.

Juliana lived most of her life in Carrefour-Feuilles, which rebuilt itself after the devastating 2010 earthquake, and was known as a birthplace of young artists.

Located in southern Port-au-Prince, it was home to working-class people and those who had left the rural countryside.

"When we were at home, we were free, we had a good life," Juliana's mother, Baby Gustave, recalled. (AP)



Miners work at an illegal tin mining site in Jos, Nigeria on April 3. Nigeria's government is cracking down on illegal mining, making dozens of arrests of unlicensed miners since April for allegedly stealing the country's lithium, a critical mineral used in batteries for electric vehicles, smartphones and power systems. (AP)



Abinader



Pena

Lat/Am

Peru bus-train collision kills 4: Four people were killed and more than 30 others were injured after a passenger bus and a cargo train collided Sunday in central Peru, the country's national police said.

Authorities said the crash happened after 4 am in the district of La Oroya, about 110 miles (177 kilometers) east of the capital, Lima. The Ministry of Transportation and Communications in a statement said the cause is under investigation. The train and bus, both privately operated, had all the required permits, it added.

The ministry said all of the injured were taken to a nearby hospital. The agency did not immediately release the names of the deceased.

The bus had set out from Lima and was headed to the city of Huancayo. Images released by police show the overturned bus on the Central Highway. (AP)

Abinader re-election confirmed: The Central Electoral Board of the Dominican Republic on Saturday made official the results of the May 19 general elections that grant incumbent President **Luis Abinader** a new four-year term.

The election authorities announced in a resolution that Abinader and his running mate, **Raquel Pena**, were elected president and vice president, respectively, with 2,507,297 valid votes, accounting for 57.44 percent of the vote.

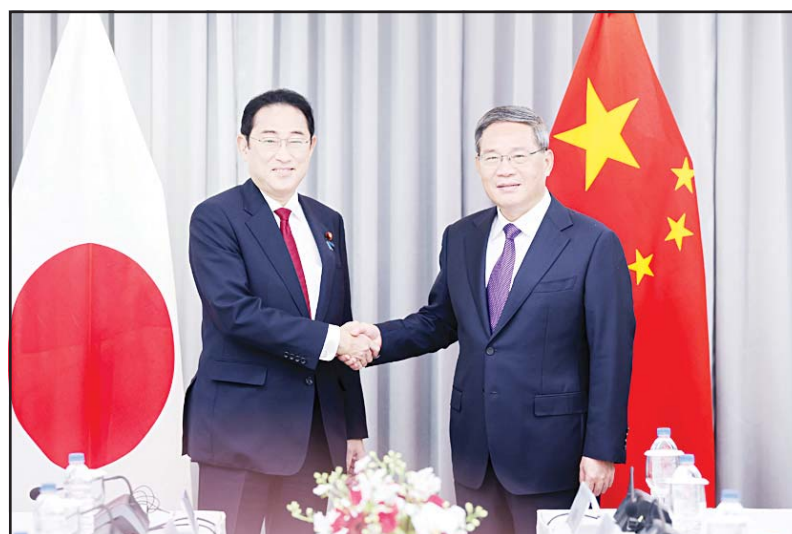
About 8.1 million voters were eligible to participate in the general elections. (Xinhua)

Haiti girl forced to rebuild life: For 12-year-old Juliana St Vil, life begins every afternoon.

She bounds out of the crowded shelter where she's been sleeping on the concrete floor for 10 months, a smile on her face despite harsh surroundings. Not yet a teenager, Juliana must navigate a Haiti oppressed by gangs that killed her father and drove her family out of their home.

An acting workshop held daily in a big house with a leafy yard is her escape. "I lived well," Juliana said, remembering

her old neighborhood. "I could always eat when I was hungry. I could go to school without a worry."



Chinese Premier Li Qiang meets with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on the sidelines of the ninth Trilateral Summit Meeting among China, Japan and South Korea, in Seoul, South Korea on May 26. (Xinhua)

central bank extends service hours

The Central Bank of Kuwait has announced an extension of customer service times in the banking hall at its main building, effective from June 2, 2024, reports Al-Qabas daily. The new hours will be from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm during working days. This extension aims to provide customers with time to conduct their transactions comfortably, as part of the bank's efforts to enhance and improve the services offered to visitors. Various services will be available

in the banking hall, including cashing checks, making deposits, purchasing souvenir coins, replacing damaged banknotes, and submitting complaints to entities supervised by the Central Bank of Kuwait. To ensure efficient service and minimize waiting times, visitors have the option to book an appointment through the "Meta" platform provided by Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) or the "Sahel" application.

China and Gulf countries forge deeper energy ties, embrace renewables

China's expressed willingness to deepen cooperation with Gulf countries across the entire oil and gas industry chain and explore new avenues in renewable energy signifies a significant step towards sustainable development and energy security, reports Al-Qabas newspaper quoting China Daily Dong Xiang, Deputy Director-General of the International Cooperation Department of the National Energy Administration, highlighted the challenges faced by both China and the Gulf countries in ensuring energy security and achieving energy transformation amidst a complex international landscape.

The energy sector plays a crucial role in practical cooperation between China and the Gulf states. In 2023, China imported substantial amounts of crude oil and liquefied natural gas from Gulf countries, underscoring the significance of energy cooperation in ensuring stable and diversified energy supplies. Zhang Binxian, Deputy Director of the Development and Planning Department of the China National Corporation, emphasized the continuing importance of oil and gas in the

global energy market. The corporation aims to expand cooperation beyond exploration and development to enhance the flexibility and security of the oil and gas supply chain. Moreover, energy cooperation extends to renewable energy, with China and the Gulf states prioritizing the green transition. Yuan Feng, director of the International Cooperation Center of the National Development and Reform Commission, highlighted China's leadership in green energy technologies and its role in making renewable energy more accessible and affordable globally.

Market Movements

27-05-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts		
DUBAI	- DFM	+14.81	4,027.46	SAUDI	- Tadawul	-19.42	11,831.22
JAPAN	- Nikkei	+253.91	38,900.02	PHILIPPINES	- PSEi	-48.29	6,571.60
				EGYPT	- EGX 30	-262.27	27,276.94
				PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	-495.97	75,512.00

Business

Affirming its leadership in creating innovative investment solutions

Markaz's 'GCC Momentum Fund' wins 'Best Momentum Fund Innovation' Award from Global Finance

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: Reinforcing its position as one of the leading asset management and investment banking institutions in the MENA region, Kuwait Financial Centre 'Markaz' was honored with the prestigious 'Top Innovations in Finance' award under the 'Best Momentum Fund Innovation' category at the eleventh edition of "Innovators 2024". Securing the global accolade from Global Finance marks yet another milestone in Markaz's 50-year journey, further cementing its position as a front runner in developing innovative and customer-centric investment solutions.

At Global Finance, a specialized team of experts select the winners based on a set of criteria, which include designing and launching innovative financial and investment tools that contribute to identifying and paving the way for new diversified opportunities in the sector, in addition to using modern technologies and creative thinking to provide an elevated experience for clients, in line with their aspirations and financial goals.

Launched in 2023 under the slogan 'Invest in Winners,' the 'GCC



Amani Al-Omani



Mohammed Al-Ghannam



Abdullatif Al-Nusif



2024 The Innovators- Global Finance

Momentum Fund' was the first fund of its kind in Kuwait to invest in GCC markets based on the 'Momentum' mechanism. The fund focuses on investing in shares that have sustained high momentum scores over the past 12 months, offering individuals and corporate investors that prefer to invest in GCC markets with a long-term strategy, the best risk-adjusted returns.

Commenting on this notable win, Amani I. Al-Omani, Managing Director - MENA Equities at Markaz, said: "To witness

the 'GCC Momentum Fund' gain global recognition just a year following its launch gives us a great sense of pride. This award is testament to the exceptional capabilities of the Markaz team in studying markets and offering innovative investment products and solutions capable of enhancing the overall investment scene in Kuwait and the region, while opening new horizons for clients. Amongst these innovative solutions is the 'Markaz Mumtaz Fund', the first local mutual equity fund, and the 'Forsa

Financial Fund', the first and only Options fund in the GCC since 2005. Markaz had also recently launched 'Lending and Borrowing Services' in 2022."

From his end, Mohammed A. Al-Ghannam, Senior Vice President - Fund Portfolio Management, MENA Equities at Markaz, said: "The asset management team at Markaz embraces an investor-first approach. Accordingly, the Momentum methodology was chosen after conducting a historical in-depth study of various in-

vestment methodologies, and then developing the Fund's mechanism according to research and studies that were held over the course of two years, to verify and validate this strategy. Our team's keenness to create and develop innovative solutions stems from Markaz's approach to launch investment solutions specifically designed to cater to clients' needs, which is reflected in the success of the Momentum strategy in Kuwait and the demand for it by investors."

Echoing similar sentiments,

Abdullatif Al-Nusif, Managing Director of Wealth Management and Wealth Development at Markaz, said: "Since inception, innovation has always been at the core of Markaz's operations, and we are thrilled to be part of Global Finance's 'The Innovators -2024' awards for our latest investment solution, 'GCC Momentum Fund'. This award reflects our commitment towards keeping up with the latest market trends and creating unique opportunities for our clients by diversifying our products and services, to better cater to their investment goals. Moreover, this accolade further reinforces our position in the MENA region, and underpins our clients' trust in us, which motivates us to be further innovative and address their changing needs."

These successes of Markaz are recognized and honored both internationally and regionally. In 2023, Markaz won more than 10 industry awards for its exceptional performance as a market leader in investment banking, commitment to corporate social responsibility programs, digital innovations, and promoting diversity and inclusion.

GCC debt market growth continues, Fitch reports

Gulf debt markets near \$1 trillion, sukuk constitute 40%

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: Fitch Ratings Agency has highlighted the significant progress made by most Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in developing their debt markets, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Although the pace of debt issuance is expected to slow compared to the first quarter, Fitch anticipates continued growth in debt issuances during the current and upcoming years.

During the first quarter of 2024, GCC countries accounted for 32.3 percent of total emerging market debt is-

suances in US dollars, excluding China. Global investor demand for these debts remains strong, bolstered by the inclusion of Gulf countries in major global bond indices, such as those by JP Morgan, FTSE, and Bloomberg.

The total volume of outstanding debt issuances in the Gulf region is approaching one trillion dollars, with approximately 40 percent in the form of sukuk (Islamic bonds). The size of the Gulf debt markets grew by 7 percent annually to around \$940 billion in the first quarter. Saudi Arabia holds the largest share at 43 percent, followed by the UAE with 30 percent, and Qatar with 13 percent.

Furthermore, the International Finance Corporation noted that the Middle East and North Africa region was the second-largest source of primary

CBK bonds

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the most recent issues of CBK Bonds and related Tawarruq at a total value of KWD (240) millions for (6) months with Rate of Return (4.500%).

green bonds in emerging markets outside China last year. The region saw a significant increase, more than doubling to reach \$15.5 billion in green bond issuances.

'Surge in insider trading activity raises transparency concerns'

Boursa Kuwait indices maintain neutral stance

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: The Boursa Kuwait indices maintained their neutrality at the beginning of the week's trading, continuing a horizontal trend for the sixth consecutive session, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Here's a breakdown of the market performance:

General Market Index lost 0.08 percent, equivalent to 5.45 points, closing at 7,129.22 points. The liquidity reached 48.1 million dinars, with 322.7 million shares traded through 16,171 transactions. Out of 126 shares traded, 51 gained, 65 lost, and 10 remained unchanged.

Premier Market Index lost 0.02 percent, or 1.68 points, closing at 7,782.72 points. Liquidity amounted to 30.2 million dinars, with 101.5 million shares traded through 6,383 transactions. Among the 33 shares traded, 11 gained, 20 lost, and two remained unchanged.

Main Market Index lost 0.35 percent, or 20.69 points, closing at 5,962.85 points. Liquidity stood at 17.9 million dinars, with 221.1 million shares traded through 9,788 transactions. Out of 93 shares traded, 40 gained, 45 lost, and 8 remained unchanged.

The trading session started with significant growth in the prices and activity of small stocks, with a focus on stocks that were active in the previous week and new stocks.

Notable performers included Manazel, Bayan, and Al-Inma. Aabar and Masaken shares also

gained momentum. However, there was pressure on stocks like KFH and Agility, which closed with losses. On the other hand, leading stocks like Burgan Bank and Al Mabany saw gains.

The trading tended to be calm during the first minutes, with attention focused on small and new stocks. Some stocks witnessed profit-taking operations, while others experienced pressure. Mixed trading continued until the end of the session, with momentum easing for small stocks and pressure on leading stocks.

In the Gulf Cooperation Council markets, four indices declined, with Qatar experiencing the most significant loss of 1.6 percent.

However, the Bahrain market index recorded limited growth. Oil prices traded at around \$82 per barrel during last Friday's weekly closing transactions.

Also:

KUWAIT CITY: The recent surge in trading activity by insiders on the Boursa Kuwait underscores the importance of transparency and regulatory oversight in maintaining market integrity, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Insiders, including owners, board members, and employees, have been actively involved in buying and selling shares in listed companies, with transactions totaling millions of shares.

While sales transactions by insiders have outweighed purchas-

es, there have also been transfers of ownership and changes in share ownership structures. These transactions are often driven by investment considerations, changes in company conditions, employee stock options, or subscription operations during capital increases.

To regulate insider trading and ensure fairness, the Capital Markets Authority has established specific timeframes during which insiders are prohibited from trading in securities issued by their companies. Failure to comply with disclosure requirements and updating lists of insiders within specified deadlines has led to warnings, violations, and fines from regulatory authorities.

Insiders' dealings serve as a significant indicator for market observers, providing insights into the direction of stock movements. However, adherence to regulatory frameworks and standards is crucial to maintaining market integrity and fairness. Companies must prioritize full disclosure and promptly update lists of insiders to uphold transparency and accountability.

The Boursa Kuwait has introduced a dedicated window for each listed company, titled "List of Insiders," to provide comprehensive information about board members, their positions, and titles. This initiative aims to enhance transparency and facilitate regulatory compliance regarding insider trading activities.

CEOs express confidence in NBK-FII Institute partnership

NBK unveils its strategic partnership with Future Investment Initiative (FII) Institute

RIYADH, May 27: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), the leading financial institution in Kuwait, and FII Institute, a global non-profit foundation dedicated to making an Impact on Humanity, marked a significant milestone today with the official announcement of their strategic partnership. The signing ceremony, held in Riyadh, brought together Anas AlUbaid, GM of NBK KSA, Musaad AlSudairy, CEO of NBK Wealth KSA, and Rakan Tarabzoni, COO of FII Institute, to set the stage for a transformative collaboration aimed at fostering growth and driving innovation in investment within the region and beyond.

Combining NBK's legacy of financial excellence and FII Institute's unwavering commitment to shaping the future through its impactful global initiatives, this partnership represents a powerful union of expertise and vision. With a shared dedication to driving positive change through the power of investment, NBK and FII Institute will join together to drive innovation.

This strategic partnership comes on the heels of the announcement of the 8th edition of the Future Investment Initiative (FII8) conference set for October 29-31 in Riyadh under the theme "Infinite Horizons: Investing Today, Shaping Tomorrow." It promises to convene today's greatest minds to share their global perspectives, unlocking new frontiers for human advancement and impactful innovation. FII8 stands poised to transcend limitations and explore boundless opportunities for progress.

In statements echoing their enthusiasm for the partnership, the CEO of NBK Wealth KSA and the GM of NBK KSA expressed their confidence in the transformative impact that this collaboration will bring to the financial sector and beyond.

Musaad AlSudairy, CEO of NBK Wealth KSA:



NBK and FII Institute forge strategic partnership.

"We are thrilled to announce our collaboration with the FII Institute, a strategic alliance that will empower our clients globally and catalyze sustainable development. Together, we are not only investing in a brighter future but also unlocking new pathways for innovation, growth, and community prosperity."

"This partnership to address key global issues aligns perfectly with NBK's commitment to creating meaningful impact. Collectively, we will explore actionable solutions of the future, reinforcing our shared dedication to a sustainable and prosperous future."

Anas AlUbaid, GM of NBK KSA:
"At NBK, we share the FII Institute's dedication to addressing global challenges through collaboration and innovation. By aligning our efforts, we aim to leverage our combined exper-

ience to generate insights and solutions that will drive sustainable growth and improve lives worldwide. This partnership represents a significant step towards creating a more resilient and equitable future, benefiting not only our clients but also the global community."

Richard Attias, CEO of FII Institute, emphasized the importance of partnering with esteemed international institutions like the National Bank of Kuwait, known for its trusted seven-decade history and progressive approach to finance. He stated, "The deployment of strategic capital plays a crucial role in addressing the most pressing global challenges. Our collaboration with NBK represents a convergence of expertise and resources, advancing our collective mission to drive positive change and develop innovative solutions through our initiatives and programs."

'Optimistic for growth amid airport recovery'

Kuwait's UPAC achieves positive results

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: United Projects for Aviation Services Company (UPAC) recently convened its ordinary general assembly meeting, with an impressive attendance rate of 96.8%, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The assembly approved all items on the agenda, including the financial statements for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2023. Notably, the Board of Directors' recommendation to refrain from distributing dividends for the same period was also endorsed.

In 2023, UPAC recorded revenues of 10.14 million dinars, marking a 2.6% increase compared to 2022. Net profits soared by 133%, reaching 1.61 million dinars, translating to an earnings per share of 4.06 fils per share.

UPAC's CEO, Nadia Aqeel, attributed these positive results to the

recovery of airport-related services and the uptick in daily flights and passenger numbers at Kuwait International Airport. Aqeel emphasized the company's commitment to delivering value to shareholders while maintaining robust business performance for clients, expressing optimism for steady growth in 2024.

Furthermore, UPAC successfully concluded its contract for the development, operation, and maintenance of parking lots and related facilities at the T4 terminal of Kuwait International Airport. The company facilitated a smooth transition and handover of the project to the Incheon International Airport Corporation (IIAC), the current terminal manager.

UPAC's involvement in the \$1.3 billion Reem Mall project on Reem Island in Abu Dhabi remains note-

worthy. The mall, equipped with advanced retail systems and logistics capabilities, opened to the public in February 2023. With 163 units operational and an occupancy rate of approximately 74%, UPAC anticipates opening more units in the coming months, further enhancing the mall's offerings and customer experience.

In Kuwait, UPAC oversees two main projects: the management and operation of the shopping center in the main passenger terminal "T1" at Kuwait International Airport, including parking facilities, and the management of real estate and parking facilities at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Airport ("T3"). These endeavors underscore UPAC's continued commitment to excellence and growth in aviation services and real estate management.

BUSINESS

KFAED participates in BADEA meetings

Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) participated on Monday in the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) annual group meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, in between 27 and 31 of May to boost international cooperation.

In a press release, KFAED said that it is partaking in the 59th meeting of the Board of Governors of the African Development Bank and the 50th meet-

ing of the Board of Governors of the African Development Fund under the slogan (Transformation of Africa and the African Development Bank Group and Reform of the Global Financial Structure).

It added that the meetings aim to enhance the discussion on reforming the global financial structure to support Africa's transformation and sustainable growth on the continent, and that

the meetings focus on the issue of African debt as one of the main points of the discussions.

It also seeks to discover ways of motivating private funding, locally and internationally, providing natural capital and promoting the transition towards green growth in Africa.

KFAED extends loans on concessional term to finance development projects in the developing countries. (KUNA)

Germany's social housing shortage grows

The shortage of housing for low-income households in Germany is worsening. Last year, the number of social housing units in the country fell by 15,300 to around 1.07 million, according to figures provided by the government recently.

This decline has accelerated from a drop of 14,000 social housing units in Germany last year to a new "historical low" in 2024, according to the Left Party, which was provided with the figures after

a parliamentary inquiry.

"This is a fiasco given the unchecked rise in rents and increasing housing shortage," said Caren Lay, the Left Party's housing policy expert. The government funding of 2.5 billion euros (around 2.7 billion U.S. dollars) for social housing construction last year was "obviously not enough," she added.

With around 49,000 new social housing units created in

2023, the German government only achieved less than half of its annual target.

Meanwhile, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) government has failed its annual construction target of 400,000 apartments. A report by TableMedia showed that only 295,000 homes were completed last year, with experts warning of a further slump to just 200,000 new properties in 2025. (Xinhua)

1.01m Chinese visit S. Korea in Q1 of 2024

Thriving tourism boosts cultural exchanges among China, Japan, S. Korea

By Tai Beijing

SEOUL, May 27, (Xinhua) — China, Japan and South Korea agreed at their ninth trilateral summit here on Monday to designate the year 2025 and 2026 as the China-Japan-South Korea Cultural Exchange Year.

Geographically close and culturally connected, the three East Asian neighbors boast robust people-to-people and cultural exchanges, and thriving tourism is giving a further boost to interactions among their people.

Masato Takashima, a Japanese travel magazine writer who recently paid a five-day visit to China, was deeply impressed by people's love for traditional Chinese attire Hanfu.

"Chinese Hanfu culture is amazing. In Xi'an and Luoyang, people don't just wear Hanfu at tourist sites, they incorporate it into their daily lives. You can see people wearing it on the streets. It gives you a sense of traveling through time," Takashima told Xinhua.

"The article I wrote for a famous travel magazine is about to be published. I hope more Japanese people can understand the prosperous and beautiful China," said the Japanese writer.

Cultural affinity and similarities in traditions make China an attractive destination for Japanese and South Korean tourists, some of whom are fascinated by the diverse landscapes of the vast nation.

"The buildings in Shanghai are tall and gorgeous, and the people there

are friendly," Kim Rin, a South Korean tourist who recently traveled to China with her boyfriend, told Xinhua.

The number of South Korean tourists traveling to China has increased significantly lately. Figures from South Korea's largest travel agency Hana Tour showed that bookings for package tours to China in May increased by 608 percent year-on-year.

Apart from large cities like Beijing and Shanghai, places like Zhangjiajie in Hunan Province and Changbai Mountain in Jilin Province are also among the most favored choices by South Korean travelers.

The fascination with pandas is also attracting visitors to China. After Fu Bao, the first giant panda born in South Korea returned to China, some South Korean travel agencies launched "panda tourism" itineraries, taking tourists to China's Sichuan Province to see the adorable pandas.

"I am looking forward to my next trip to China, and I hope to visit cities with more local characteristics," Kim said after concluding her trip to China's modern metropolis of Shanghai.

While many Japanese and South Korean tourists love to visit China, the two countries are also favored destinations for Chinese holidaymakers.

Latest data from Ctrip, a leading travel platform in China, showed that Japan and South Korea are among the top three international destinations for Chinese tourists during the Labor Day holiday.

In the first quarter of 2024, South Korea received around 3.4 million

foreign tourists, of which 1.01 million were from China, ranking first among all foreign tourists, government figures showed.

Xu Qing, a 76-year-old Chinese tourist who recently traveled to Seoul with her daughter and granddaughter, told Xinhua: "South Korea is very close to China. It is very convenient to travel in Seoul."

"The people here are very friendly. The city is very clean and very safe," she said.

China is also an important source of tourists for Japan and the purchasing power of Chinese visitors is loved by business operators in the tourism sector.

Data released by the Japan Tourism Agency revealed that Chinese tourists in Japan had the highest average per capita spending among all foreign visitors in the first quarter, amounting to 293,100 yen (1,867 U.S. dollars).

Apart from shopping, Chinese tourists are getting increasingly focused on experiencing the local culture and traditions, Japanese media reported.

A recent article in The Yomiuri Shimbun said that Chinese tourists visiting Japan seem to be changing their spending habits and are more focused on experiencing the Japanese culture.

Held after a hiatus of more than four years, the trilateral summit in Seoul is expected to add momentum to cooperation among the three East Asian neighbors. Cultural exchanges and economic and trade cooperation will get a further boost.

Industrialization

Tanzania, Uganda to enhance co-op

DAR ES SALAAM, May 27, (Xinhua) — Tanzania is ready to bolster efforts to enhance cooperation with Uganda in implementing the two countries' industrialization drive, a Tanzanian official said Sunday.

The governments of Tanzania and Uganda agreed to collaborate on implementing the two countries' industrialization drive on Friday evening when they closed the 2nd Tanzania-Uganda business forum, said Doto Biteko, Tanzania's deputy prime minister and minister of energy.

The forum was held in the port city of Dar es Salaam to explore avenues for collaboration and partnership between the two countries.

Biteko said the two countries have resolved to drive the industrialization agenda forward by making significant investments in infrastructure, including roads, railways and electricity, to support its smooth implementation.

He said both countries are focusing on developing processing industries that will help add value to agricultural and mineral products, adding that Tanzania and Uganda had signed an agreement in the energy sector.

Biteko added that the forum also resolved to boost trade volume between the two countries.

Enticing customers

Retailers offer summer deals

NEW YORK, May 27, (AP) — Americans who spend Memorial Day scouting sales online and in stores may find more reasons to celebrate the return of warmer weather. Major retailers are stepping up discounts heading into the summer months, hoping to entice inflation-weary shoppers into opening their wallets.

Target, Walmart and other chains have rolled out price cuts - some permanent, others temporary - with the stated aim of giving their customers some relief. The reductions, which mostly involve groceries, are getting introduced as inflation showed its first sign of easing this year but not enough for consumers who are struggling to pay for basic necessities as well as rent and car insurance.

The latest quarterly earnings reported by Walmart, Macy's and Ralph Lauren underscored that consumers have not stopped spending. But multiple CEOs, including the heads of McDonald's, Starbucks and home improvement retailer Home Depot, have observed that people are becoming more price-conscious and choosy. They're delaying purchases, focusing on store brands compared to typically more expensive national brands, and looking for deals.

"Retailers recognize that unless they pull out some stops on pricing, they are going to have difficulty holding on to the customers they got," Neil Saunders, managing director of consulting and data analysis firm GlobalData, said. "The consumer really has had enough of inflation, and they're starting to take action in terms of where they shop, how they shop, the amount they buy."

While discounts are an everyday tool in retail, Saunders said these aggressive price cuts that cover thousands of items announced by a number of retailers represent a "major shift" in recent strategy. He noted most companies talked about price increases in the past two or three years, and the cut mark the first big "price war" since before inflation started taking hold.

Higher-income shoppers looking to save money have helped Walmart maintain strong sales in recent quarters. But earlier this month, the nation's largest retailer expanded its price rollbacks - temporary discounts that can last a few months - to nearly 7,000 grocery items, a 45% increase.

China's industrial sector gathers steam

April produces profit rebound

BEIJING, May 27, (Xinhua) — China's industrial sector posted stronger growth momentum last month, with a sharp profit rebound suggesting sustained recovery.

Profits of China's major industrial enterprises increased by 4 percent year on year in April 2024, reversing a 3.5 percent decline registered in the previous month, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said Monday. Revenue growth of such enterprises also saw a turnaround with a 3.3 percent expansion recorded last month, compared to a 1.2 percent drop in March.

Analysts said this encouraging data was produced by a combination of government supportive policies and rising domestic demand, and that it reflected a steady broader economy.

As market demand continued to improve and industrial production picked up pace, these enterprises reported better performance last month, NBS statistician Yu Weining said.

The data showed major industrial enterprises, with an annual main business revenue of at least 20 million yuan (about 2.81 million U.S. dollars), had generated 2.09 trillion yuan in total profits in the first four months of this year, a 4.3 percent year-on-year increase, which is the same as the increase recorded in the first three months of 2024.

Yu said 75.6 percent of the 41 major industrial sectors saw an increase in profits during the January-April period this year, rising from a level of 68.3 percent in the first three months.

Manufacturers saw their profits grow by 8 percent from a year earlier and businesses in the power industry logged a 44.1 percent surge in profits thanks to lower coal costs and increased power generation. However, the mining and gas industries suffered losses during this period.

Notably, the statistician pointed out that the equipment manufacturing industry, with a 16.3 percent profit increase in the first four months, had continued to drive the growth of the whole industrial sector.

"The industry has witnessed significant strides in advancing towards high-end, intelligent, and environmentally friendly production, and fostering new quality productive forces," Yu said.

In breakdown, the electronics industry witnessed a significant surge in profits, recording a remarkable increase of 75.8 percent, driven by robust demand for smartphones, integrated circuits, and liquid crystal displays. The transportation equipment industry saw a 40.7 percent profit upswing, thanks in part to fast-growing shipbuilding orders. The automotive industry, meanwhile, registered a 29 percent profit increase.

Moreover, Yu added that warming consumer sentiment had resulted in consumer goods production also showing a notable upward trend, with profits climbing by 12 percent.

Across 13 major consumer goods sectors, ranging from furniture to food, all achieved profit growth. The chemical fiber industry stood out in this sector, recording a whopping profit increase of 181 percent.

China has rolled out an array of measures to consolidate economic recovery this year, stepping up efforts to bolster the industrial sector and unleash the potential of domestic demand.

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently showcased its commitment to building meaningful relationships with key partners by hosting a booth at Kuwait Airways' headquarters. This event provided an excellent platform for ABK's employees to engage with the airline staff and introduce them to a wide range of products, services, and solutions offered by the Bank.

At the heart of this engagement was ABK's eagerness to reach out to individuals across various industries, where Kuwait Airways consistently strives to meet the evolving needs of its customers. The synergy between these two esteemed entities laid a solid foundation for a fruitful collaboration and enhanced customer experience.

Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, expressed enthusiasm about the initiative, stating, "We are thrilled to have been present at Kuwait Airways' headquarters, a stalwart in the aviation industry that shares our dedication to exceptional customer service. By showcasing our



Ms. Johair Marafi - General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK

innovative solutions to the airline staff, we aim to strengthen our bond with a partner that mirrors our commitment to excellence."

She highlighted that the interaction was truly inspiring where their passion for delivering top-notch service aligns perfectly with ABK's values of putting customers



The bank's pavilion at Kuwait Airways headquarters.

first. Marafi concluded, "We look forward to exploring new opportunities for synergy and growth across all our initiatives to build multiple foundations of collaboration."

This endeavour underscores ABK's proactive approach to forging valuable partnerships and de-

veloping tailored financial solutions to clients across diverse sectors. As ABK continues to expand its outreach and enhance its offerings, collaborations with industry leaders like Kuwait Airways will play a pivotal role in driving mutual growth and enhancing customer satisfaction.

The young especially hard hit

Borrowers struggle with credit card debt in potentially 'bad sign' for the economy

NEW YORK, May 27, (AP) — Consumers are increasingly struggling to pay their credit card bills, raising concerns about severe delinquencies spiraling and sapping consumer spending.

The share of credit card debt that's more than 90 days overdue rose to 10.7% during the first quarter, a 14-year high, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York's report on first-quarter household debt.

A year ago severe delinquencies totaled only 8.2% of credit card debt. The first-quarter jump in severe delinquencies was the biggest since 2011. Meanwhile total credit card debt rose to \$1.12 trillion from just under \$1 trillion a year ago.

Those in their 20s and 30s are having the most difficulty paying their credit card bills. Those age groups typically have a mix of less earnings power and lower savings.

The Federal Reserve hiked its key interest rate to a 23-year high to combat four-decade high inflation, which peaked in June, 2022 at 9.1%. Those rate increases made borrowing more expensive on mortgages, auto loans and credit cards.

Consumer spending fuels economic growth, so trouble paying credit card bills is a worrisome signal. The direction of the labor market could determine whether debt stress becomes a

bigger concern. Job and wage growth helped counter the hit to consumers wallets from rising inflation, but a continued slowdown or reversal there could tip the scales.

"While these indicators do not necessarily predict a recession, especially with a robust labor market, a weakening in employment conditions could exacerbate household financial instability," said Gregory Daco, EY chief economist. "The combination of subdued job growth, sluggish income progression, and diminished savings could lead to increased delinquencies and a potential retrenchment in consumer spending."

Wall Street has so far brushed off concerns about rising credit debt levels and payment struggles, forecasting earnings growth to accelerate from 5.6% in the first quarter to 17.1% by the fourth quarter.

Still, retail spending unexpectedly stalled in April in a sign of consumer fatigue and worry. Walmart, the nation's largest retailer, has said its customers are spending more on necessities and less on discretionary goods like home furnishings and electronics.

Coffee chain Starbucks lowered its sales expectations for the year as people visit its cafes less often, and McDonald's is offering more deals as people cut back on fast food and eat-



In this file photo, Visa credit cards in New Orleans. Consumers are increasingly struggling to pay their credit card bills, raising concerns about severe delinquencies spiraling and sapping consumer spending. (AP)

ing out.

The Fed is now faced with the prospect of inflation remaining stubbornly high around 3%, above its target of 2%. The mix of high inflation, expensive borrowing rates and a slowing economy has thrown more doubt around the central bank's ability to tame inflation without causing a recession.

Credit cards only make up about 6.5% of consumer debt, according to

a Bank of America Global Research report. That alleviates some concerns, but the increase in delinquencies seems to be outpacing income growth and there is likely a large group of consumers who are paying their minimum balances and staying out of delinquency, but are too financially stressed to actually pay their full balances. A worsening of the economy could push those consumers into severe delinquency.

domestic demand and a complicated external environment, Yu said, noting that more should be done to cement the positive trend.

Greater efforts should be made to accelerate the development of new

quality productive forces, promote industrial upgrades, and assist enterprises in overcoming difficulties, thereby pushing forward the high-quality development of the industrial sector, Yu explained.

UK-based think tank Cambridge IFA acknowledges Zain for its leadership role in addressing the UN's Sustainable Development Goals

Zain presented with two distinguished awards in Sustainability and Gender Diversity

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: Zain, a leading provider of innovative technologies and digital lifestyle communications operating in seven markets across the Middle East and Africa, continues to be recognized for its leadership endeavors in the areas of Sustainability and Gender Diversity, in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Zain was presented with the Leadership in SDGs Award 2023; and Championship Award in Women Empowerment 2024 at the 9th Annual Global Good Governance Awards organized by Cambridge IFA, a UK-based think tank. The Awards celebrate individuals, governments, public and private sector institutions, and NGOs that exhibit governance and sustainability as their strategic priority.

Zain remains one of the most active organizations in the region with respect to delivering meaningful connectivity that leads to equitable systemic change through its Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) initiatives, with the company playing a crucial role in empowering the markets in which it operates to reap the benefits of digital transformation for the benefit of the communities it serves and beyond.

The recognition of these prestigious awards is testament not only to how much Zain believes in its purpose, but how relentless the company is ensuring its operations are a positive, inclusive force for good, with a commitment to continuing to instill these principles at the heart of the organization.

Sustainability

Zain Group's 2023 Sustainability Report (SR), marking its 13th annual sustainability report entitled 'The Pathway to Value Creation' reflects the company's progress and efforts to address deficits and challenges across its footprint while providing Meaningful Connectivity that leads to Equitable Systemic Change through the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.



Zain Headquarters

The report demonstrates how the company addresses its social, economic, environmental, and human rights related impacts and how Zain continues to execute on its five-year, 2025 corporate sustainability strategy aiming to deliver meaningful and sustainable value across Zain's operating companies and beyond.

In 2023, Zain joined the United Nations (UN) Global Compact initiative, a

voluntary leadership platform for the development, implementation, and disclosure of responsible business practices as well as committing to the Science-Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) emission.

Notably, the A- score that Zain maintained in the latest 'CDP Score Report-Climate Change 2023', positioned the company first in the region and among leaders globally with respect to climate action initiatives.

Gender Diversity (WE)

Zain has been actively working on narrowing the gender divide in leadership roles at the company. Under its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion women empowerment (WE) pillar, Zain Group has been a pioneering force for women empowerment regionally since 2017. This gender diversity initiative was created at a time when only 14.5% of Zain's leadership comprised of women, and a target was set to increase this percentage of women leadership to 25% by 2025.

Three Zain operations have already achieved their WE leadership targets in 2023, Zain Jordan at 27.3%, UAE based ZainTECH at 27.0%, and Zain Kuwait at 26.9%.

For some time now, women have represented the higher proportion of university graduates in the region, yet this does not translate into positions within the workforce, let alone senior positions.

Hence, the issue of women's empowerment is an important topic for Zain, which has embedded this issue into the DNA and heart of the company's corporate strategy.

During 2023, women made up over 33% of Zain's total recruitment, and the company recently revolutionized its staff-friendly Family Leave Policy clauses, reinforcing its position as one of the most impactful DEI organizations in the region, if not the world.

Salma Al-Hajjaj highlights Gulf Bank's support for special needs employment

Gulf Bank promotes diversity & inclusion at 'Partners for Their Employment' career fair

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: In its ongoing commitment to fostering diversity and inclusion, Gulf Bank recently participated in the "Partners for Their Employment" Career Fair, organized by the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs in partnership with the Human Construction Institute. This initiative aims to support individuals with special needs by providing them with equal employment opportunities.

During the event, Gulf Bank received a substantial number of job applications from graduates of the fifth batch, totaling around 100 trainees for the training year 2024/2023.

Salma Al-Hajjaj, Gulf Bank's General Manager of Human Resources, expressed the bank's annual commitment to participating in the "Partners for Their Employment" campaign. She highlighted the comprehensive recruitment, training, and development program offered to individuals with special needs, resulting in job opportunities within the



Human Resources team of Gulf Bank.

bank.

Al-Hajjaj emphasized Gulf Bank's confidence in the capabilities of individuals with special needs, and its commitment to facilitating their inclusion in both society and the banking industry. She highlighted Gulf Bank's significant presence as a participant in the career fair, showcasing its dedication to fostering sustainable development in Kuwait.

Gulf Bank's involvement in the career fair is in line with its 2025 strategy and Kuwait's vision for the future. The bank is dedicated to nurturing young talents and consistently enhancing their skills as part of its comprehensive strategy.

The bank is committed to tapping into the talents of young individuals, recognizing their crucial contribution to its human resources sustainability goals. Gulf Bank's dedication

has been recognized with the "Best Implementation of Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives" award from MEED Magazine, showcasing its efforts to uphold community sustainability principles and cultivate a diverse and inclusive workplace environment.

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

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



KFH's Zaheb

Platform enables safe money transfers

KFH's Zaheb provides innovative payment & acceptance methods

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: To meet the high demand from merchants and business owners, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has launched a marketing campaign promoting its Zaheb digital platform. With the slogan "Stay Zaheb with KFH... Selling, Paying, and Collecting Just Got Easier," the campaign targets SMEs seeking to leverage the platform's innovative digital solutions.

Zaheb stands out for its innovative payment methods, including payment links and QR codes. These methods offer some of the fastest, safest, and most convenient solutions for transferring funds available today. By providing Zaheb, KFH strengthens its commitment to developing comprehensive digital technologies that transform and improve its services.

KFH launched Zaheb to empower businesses and attract them to the formal banking sector. This service enhances the capabilities of the national economy by promoting e-payment methods, which offer increased security, speed, and keep businesses aligned with the latest global trends in financial transactions.

This service allows merchants to generate invoice links that can be

easily shared with individual customers or groups via email or SMS. Customers can then click the link to view and pay their invoices. Additionally, with this service, merchants can create dynamic or static QR codes. Customers can scan these codes using their debit or credit card apps to make a direct payment.

The Zaheb platform empowers merchants with innovative payment solutions that are unrivaled in the local market. It offers a comprehensive suite of integrated services designed to meet the diverse needs of businesses across various industries. This includes features that cater to sales systems, customer demographics, and all aspects of e-payments. By providing these functionalities, Zaheb plays a vital role in driving economic growth, maximizing market potential, and offering added value to a wide range of customers.

The Zaheb platform provides its services to all business owners, from SMEs and large enterprises, that operate in accordance with Shari'a and have a current account in KFH. The service addresses a significant portion of the e-payment demand, which has recently increased and become a priority in companies' sales strategies.

Best account of its kind in Kuwait offering highest monthly expected returns

KIB announces winners of Al Dirwaza account's weekly draw

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) has announced the winners of the weekly draw held under the Al Dirwaza account's 2024 campaign, which is distinguished by the highest number of winners throughout the year. The fourth weekly draw, based on customers' April deposits, recently took place in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as well as representatives from the Bank. The KD 1,000 prize was awarded to Subah Khairallah Abdulwahed Sultan, Mohammad Mahdi Ali Basheer, Saber Jamaan Abdullah, Khaled Abdullah Eisaa Alfarhan, and Hamdah Rashed Salem Almertiji whilst the KD 500 prize was awarded to Khaled Mohammad Rashed Alhemeli, Nezar Mohamed Jameel Mahmoud Bdaier, Fahad Faisal Bader Alqanae, Bassem Saad Megahed Ibrahim, Yaser Mohammad Abdullah Jarkhi, Mohammed Talal Mohammad Alhaidar, and Muhvideen Seyed Abu Taher Solukku.

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



KIB's Al Dirwaza account

months from the account opening date and up to 1% expected rate onward. The expected profits are automatically deposited into the customer's account within the first day of the beginning of each month.

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

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

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

Bank introduces 'Customer Onboarding'

Warba announces winners of 'Al Sunbula' weekly draw

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: Warba Bank - the best bank in corporate and investment banking services in Kuwait - announced the winners of the weekly Al Sunbula draws. Warba Bank will continue to hold weekly draws for ten winners of Al Sunbula account, in the presence of a representative of Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Warba Bank employees.

Each of the 10 lucky winners of the Sunbula weekly draw of Warba Bank received KD 1,000, and the winners are: Nawal Ahmed Ali Al-Marzouqi, Ahmed Falah Fahad Al-Mohammed, Khaled Rifai Al-Dabbagh, Al-Azmi, Heba Mohammed Bayoumi, Abbas Sayed Mahmoud Al-Moula, Abdullah Owaida Al-Ajmi, Ibtisam Mohsen Jassim Al-Anezi, Eman Mubarak Abdullah Al-Ajmi, Halima Mohammed Ali Al-Awad, and Ahmed Riyadh Rashid Khazal.

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

Regarding the conditions, Mr. Abdulaziz Saud Al-Bakhait, Area Manager Retail Banking Group said: "KD 100 is now required to enter the weekly Sunbula draws and major draws, and the client still gets one chance for every KD 10 in the account, and the chances are counted according to the lowest balance in the account during the month. Therefore, a full month must have passed in the account to qualify for the weekly draw, and two full months for the major draws to count the chances. There are no restrictions or limits for withdrawal and deposit, the higher the deposited



Abdulaziz Al-Bakhait

amount, the greater the client's chances to win".

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

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

First female chairperson, Mrs. Manju Sreenath elected for 2024-25

TECAL Kuwait Chapter holds annual general meeting

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: Thrissur Engineering College Alumni Association, Kuwait Chapter (TECAL KUWAIT) held its Annual General Meeting at the prestigious Radisson Blu Hotel in Salmiya. The event, anchored by the charming Reshma Jayakumar, was a testament to the organization's commitment to fostering community and leadership.

The meeting commenced with a soulful prayer song by Ameya Suresh, setting a serene tone for the proceedings. Chairman Mr. Abdul Jabbar welcomed the attendees with a heartfelt speech, expressing his gratitude for the unwavering support and cooperation from all members. He emphasized the importance of nurturing new generation leaders to continue the remarkable tradition of TECAL KUWAIT and encouraged members to actively participate in community activities to showcase their skills and talents.

General Secretary Mr. Unnikrishnan presented the annual report, detailing the numerous activities and achievements



Photo during the event.

ments of the past year. Treasurer Mr. Krishnakumar C.K. followed with a comprehensive financial report for the year 2023-24, highlighting the organization's financial health and transparency.

AGM offered an emotional send-off to Mr. Afsal Ali, one of TECAL KUWAIT's most active members. Members shared warm memories, celebrat-

ing his contributions and wishing him well in his future endeavors.

The AGM also honored in-house sponsors Mr. Huskar and Mr. Sreenath for their outstanding contributions to the TECAL Challengers Cricket Cup. Their support has been invaluable to the success of the event.

A significant highlight of the meeting was the election of the new Ex-

ecutive Committee for 2024-25. In a landmark move, Mrs. Manju Sreenath was elected as the first-ever Chairperson, marking the year as one of women empowerment for TECAL KUWAIT. The new committee includes:

Mrs. Manju Sreenath (Chairperson), Jinesh C.S (General Secretary), Rakesh R Pillai (Joint Secretary), Shunish M.M (Treasurer), Mrs. Anicha Shijith & Nikhil Joseph (Arts Secretaries), Ramesh K P & Krishnaraj K (Sports Secretaries), Mrs. Mrinalini Govind & Mrs. Uma Jinesh (Lady Reps), Krishnakumar CK (Auditor) Following area reps Mrs. Anuradha Sandee (Mangaff, Fahahel), Jinesh N.R (Abu Halifa), Paul Mathew (Mahaboola), Mrs. Vidya George (Salmiya) and Subin Ravindran (Riggai, Jaleeb Shuwaik)

KEF Portfolio Shaju Meleveetil (Convener Specialties), Edison George (Organization), Abdul Jabbar M.M (Public relation), Roshith K.K (Data Management), Sugunan E.N (Food), Unnikrishnan (Finance) and Anoop Peediakan (Sponsorship)

Peru's Amazon hosts film fest celebrating tropical forests

BELÉN, Peru, May 27. (Agencies): In the heart of Peru's Amazon region, a poor neighborhood put aside the trials and tribulations of everyday life and celebrated an international film festival with works from countries with tropical forests.

Many who attended the 10-day event had never seen a movie on the big screen, and the one used for the festival was itself unique due to the area's geography.

"The festival aims to be a tribute to the jungles of the world and its people, to the Indigenous communities, in which we believe lies the answer to the challenges and destruction that forests face now that everyone is talking about climate change," Daniel Martínez-Quintanilla, co-executive director of the festival that ends Sunday, said.

Life in the community of Belén revolves around water. Houses and businesses are built on stilts because rains regularly lead to monthslong floods. Families own canoes to move around, but children who lack one sometimes use large plastic containers instead.

So, members of the Muyuna Floating Film Festival - muyuna in the Quechua language means "a whirlpool formed in mighty rivers" - set the screen on a 10-meter (33-foot) high wooden structure, allowing residents to enjoy the films from their canoes or the windows of their homes.

"For the first time, we are getting to know these settings that are bringing us to this community," said Belén resident Jorge Chilicahua,

a 60-year-old farmer who raises chickens and plants cassava, corn and vegetables to meet his family's needs. He has never been to a movie theater.

Much of the population of Belén comes from rural areas of the Peruvian Amazon and are part of various Indigenous groups, including the Kukama, Yagua and Bora, that migrated in search of better economic, educational and health opportunities. Their challenges abound.

People fish by making holes in the wooden floors of their houses, which forces mothers to keep a watchful eye over their children who do not yet know how to swim so that they don't fall into the water and drown. Health authorities have reported malnutrition and diarrhea are common due to lack of drinking water.

Martínez-Quintanilla said the event included films from Thailand, Brazil, Taiwan, Panama and other countries with tropical forests, as well as others made by young Peruvians.

The works screened included the Peruvian animated short film "The Engine and the Melody," which tells the story of an ant that falls Amazonian trees and a cicada that manages to regenerate the forest by playing a prodigious flute - until everything changes when a forest fire occurs.

Also:

CAIRO: Egypt's 11th International Festival for Drums and Traditional Arts kicked off here on Sunday night, attracting participants from 30

countries and regions.

Under the slogan of "Drums for Peace Dialogue," the festival, which runs through June 1, calls on artistic groups from many countries to share their musical vision, encourage cultural dialogue and embrace peace and inclusiveness worldwide.

The festival's events will be held in various venues in Cairo, including the Northern Wall Theater, the Cairo Opera House, the Sinnari House in Sayyida Zainab neighborhood, and Prince Taz Palace.

During the opening ceremony at the Northern Wall Theater in old Cairo, **Intisar Abdel-Fattah**, president and founder of the festival, held an artistic workshop in the presence of all participating teams.

Noting that the festival reflects Egypt's openness to others throughout history and is a journey through which different cultures meet, Abdel-Fattah said the heritage of drums is evoked and presented in renewed artistic forms.

"The festival represents a distinguished artistic platform that seeks to promote positive spiritual values, by embracing traditional arts and presenting them as a means of strengthening relations between people," **Rafiq al-Tawil**, head of Palestine's Falouja troupe for traditional arts, told Xinhua.

He said that his team had participated in the festival over the past six years, and the event is a perfect platform to show the traditional Palestinian arts to the whole world.

Festivals

Variety



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Chris Hemsworth in a scene from 'Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga.' (AP)

Film

'Furiosa' revs up the Mad Max universe

'The true stars are the vehicles'

NEW YORK, May 27. (AP): When it was time to start making "Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga," production designer Colin Gibson went to a garage in Australia to find some old friends.

It had been years since 2015's "Fury Road" wrapped production. Many of the vehicles seen in the film had been blown up or left to rust in Namibia. But a dozen of them - the "dirty dozen," Gibson calls them - had been put in storage, including the War Rig, Gigahorse and Duff Wagon.

"They did need a fair amount of cleaning up," Gibson says a little wistfully. "A lot of the fuel had turned to jelly and the tires sink. And it all seemed so much sadder than you remember."

Returning to the world of "Mad Max" meant resurrecting the motorized army of "Fury Road," getting it back into running condition and building an entire new fleet of gas-guzzling, mutant machines of apocalyptic doom.

As terrific as the cast of "Furiosa" is, including Anya Taylor-Joy and Chris Hemsworth, let's be real. The true stars of any "Mad Max" movie are the vehicles. The characters and actors of "Mad Max" may come and go across the saga's 45 years, but the marauding mechanized horde keeps chugging.

"In a sense, they're characters - they're extensions of the characters," Miller says. "You see it right through the 'Mad Max' films. The V8 Inceptor is an extension of Max. Furiosa ultimately has that vehicle we call the Cranky Black that's an expression of who she is at the end of the movie."

"Furiosa," which opened in theaters Thursday, takes place years ahead of the events of "Fury Road," so the War Rig and company aren't called back into duty until the end of the film. But they were a necessary reference point for all the cars and trucks that lead up to that finale. "Furiosa" is a prequel for more than its title character.

"We did use the idea of those other vehicles to build an evolution in," says Gibson. "So we would drop in vehicles that looked in embryo like some of the vehicles that had since been destroyed or gone to gold or been exploded off in Africa."

Gibson is a longtime collaborator of Miller's whose fervor for doing things practically and as realistically as possible is nearly as extreme as the War Boys' zeal

for Valhalla. That was a big part of the kinetic thrill of "Fury Road." And while that film included CGI in nearly every shot to accomplish its explosive onslaught, "Furiosa" depended on a bit more effects to realize its post-apocalyptic world.

"I don't like easy," he says. "We don't operate very well under easy. It's one of my ongoing arguments with George. I prefer uneasy, which may be why I'm so annoying."

Production designers might build the facade of a house or even an entire shell, but they don't have to install working plumbing. Gibson's creations, though, have to move. Most have working engines and when the director says "Action!" they have to move. As he says, "Everything has to be able to do its own stunt."

"There's a lot of hidden, unseen effort that goes into that," Miller says. "It's a military exercise. Of the shooting crew, there was over a thousand people on set every day, just to keep all that stuff going."

Machines

Gibson, who hadn't yet seen the film during an interview earlier this month, was still nursing some wounds over the fact that "Furiosa" contains some digital machines, too.

"Unless it's real, unless the sense of gravity is there, I don't think you get the hair going up on the back of your neck," Gibson says. "I think that's what we achieved with 'Fury Road,' and I'll keep my fingers crossed that the CG doesn't distance us too much in 'Furiosa.'"

"It is slightly different," sighs Gibson, "and I'm an old-fashioned girl."

But "Furiosa" also had many more challenges than "Fury Road," which transpires across a three-day blur. "Furiosa," spanning decades, needed more locations. (Here, Gas Town and Bullet Farm are visited.) And a more sprawling array of characters meant a lot more rides.

Dementus (Hemsworth) is a new villain whom the filmmakers styled after a fusion of Roman emperor and Genghis Khan. Early in "Furiosa," he rides a chariot pulled by three motorcycles. Later, he pilots a six-wheeled monster truck.

The War Rig, the central semi-truck of "Fury Road," also needed an earlier iteration for "Furiosa." Whereas the "Fury Road" War Rig was more weath-

ered and beaten up, "Furiosa" finds Immortan Joe's Citadel at the height of its power.

"So this is Louis the Sun King," says Gibson. "This is the Palace of Versailles. This is a shiny, mirrored, godlike object racing out into the desert and reflecting all the nothing that's coming back but also emblazoned with the legend of the Immortan as he sees it himself."

It's upon that rig that "Furiosa" has its most lengthy and blistering sequence. And while Taylor-Joy feels a particular bond with the War Rig she spent 78 days crawling across, the thoughtful features of the Cranky Black roadster were more revelatory to her.

"I love the fact there are all these details in the filmmaking that you don't even see as an audience member," Taylor-Joy says. "Like, the Cranky Black has human teeth all along the inside, which is so cool."

But the defining vehicle of "Furiosa" may be the motorbike. Two-wheelers star in the movie's frenetic start and they only populate from there, eventually filling the desert like a swarm of locusts.

"George had the idea that by the time Dementus arrived at the Citadel, there might have been 2- or 3- or 4- or 6,000 motorbikes," Gibson says. "I looked at how long it would take me to build that many. Do you know how hard it is to make one motorbike look different from another? They're basically two wheels and a seat."

That meant, to Gibson's horror, the necessity of CGI. But that didn't stop him from building some 100 characterized motorbikes, along with doubles for about half of them.

"Of all the vehicles, you always love the ones that start with nothing," Gibson says. "We were fortunate that BMW, Harley Davidson and Yamaha all came to the party and gave us generously of their beautiful machines knowing that there was no exclusivity and that by the time I got through with them, their mother wouldn't recognize them."

One bike has particular meaning to Gibson. He built it from an old 1940s Triumph kneeler, the kind used for racing. His mother - "a bit of a devil-may-care Sheila in her youth," he says - had once worked at a speedway around such motorcycles. Gibson lavished his with detail and texture as a kind of ode to her.

"If I could hang it on a key ring," Gibson says, "that's probably the one I'd keep."

LOS ANGELES: Movie theaters are looking more and more like a wasteland this summer. Neither "Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga" nor "The Garfield Movie" could save Memorial Day weekend, which is cruising towards a two-decade low.

"Furiosa," the Mad Max prequel starring Anya Taylor-Joy and Chris Hemsworth, claimed the first place spot for the Friday-Saturday-Sunday weekend with \$25.6 million, according to studio estimates on Sunday. Warner Bros. is waiting until Monday to release its four-day estimates.

"The Garfield Movie," animated and family-friendly, was the other big new offering this weekend from Sony's Columbia Pictures and Alcon Entertainment. It is claiming No. 1 for the four-day holiday weekend with an estimated \$31.9 million in ticket sales through Memorial Day. Sony estimates its three-day earnings to be \$24.8 million.

Aside from Memorial Day in 2020 when theaters were closed due to COVID-19, these are the lowest earning No. 1 movies in 29 years, since "Casper" earned \$22.5 million (not adjusted for inflation) in its first four days in 1995. Big earners are more typical for the holiday weekend, which has had ten movies crack \$100 million, led by "Top Gun: Maverick's" record-setting \$160 million launch in 2022. Last year, the live-action "The Little Mermaid" joined the group with a \$118 million debut. Audiences even turned out in greater numbers over the pandemic-addled weekend in 2021 for "A Quiet Place Part II," which made over \$57 million.

"This was a rather slow Memorial weekend," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. "A few things didn't happen that created this situation: We didn't have a tailwind heading into the summer. We kicked off the summer minus a Marvel movie. In a way, we've been playing catch up all year long."

"Furiosa" was never expected to join the \$100 million opener club, which Warner Bros. released on 3,804 screens in the US and Canada. But it was supposed to have a slightly stronger showing in the \$40 million range over its first four days. That would have been more in line with its predecessor, "Mad Max: Fury Road," which opened to \$45.4 million in May 2015. "Fury Road," starring Charlize Theron and Tom Hardy, went on to gross nearly \$380 million worldwide.

This new origin story in which Taylor-Joy plays a younger version of Theron's character had a lot of things going for it, too, including strong reviews out of the just-wrapped Cannes Film Festival (it has an 89% on Rotten Tomatoes) and a splashy international press tour with many buzzy premiere looks from Taylor-Joy.



Taylor-Joy

Theron

Internationally, it made \$33.3 million adding up to a \$58.9 million global launch. With a reported \$168 million production budget, not accounting for marketing and promotion, "Furiosa" has a long road to profitability. (AP)

BEIJING: Chinese comedy "The

Last Frenzy" stayed atop the box office chart on the Chinese mainland on Sunday, data from the China Movie Data Information Network showed.

The film, which explores life's choices in the face of death, raked in 15.61 million yuan (about 2.20 million US dollars) on the day, bringing its total revenue to 696 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 13.04 million yuan on Sunday.

American sci-fi "Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes" came in third with daily earnings of 7.59 million yuan. (Xinhua)

People & Places

Dance

Affordable pricing

Aging NYC Ballet is wooing young fans

NEW YORK, May 27, (AP): Alice McDermott settled into her seat at New York City Ballet on a recent Friday night, excited to see her first-ever ballet performance. The 31-year-old Manhattanite, who works in recruiting, was on a fun girls' night out with three friends she'd met through work, starting with dinner.

"They told me I'd love the ballet," says McDermott, who was also excited to realize she was already familiar with one of the evening's performers, Tiler Peck, via the dancer's popular Instagram feed. "They said you can put on a nice dress and just immerse yourself in another world, whilst marveling at what the human body can achieve."

Seems they were right: At the end of the evening, McDermott, a new fan, went home and watched a ballet documentary.



Solange

Perhaps you could call it "Ballet and the City"? Whatever the term for McDermott's ballet evening with pals, the scenario would surely be music to the ears of the company - which has been celebrating its 75th birthday with fanfare this year - and especially its artistic leaders of the past five years, Jonathan Stafford and Wendy Whelan.

The two, both former dancers at the storied troupe founded by George Balanchine, have made it a key goal to bring in a younger audience to ensure the company's long-term health - and more broadly, to guard the vitality of a centuries-old art form.

It seems to be working. Though some initiatives have been in place for longer, the last five years have seen a marked shift, according to numbers provided to the Associated Press: In 2023, 53% of ticket buyers were under age 50, and people in their 30s made up the largest age segment by decade. Five years earlier, in 2018, 41% of ticket buyers were under 50, and people in their 60s made up the largest age segment.

Followers

Now, longtime ballet followers note that on a bustling Friday evening you can look down from the first ring of the David H. Koch Theater at Lincoln Center and not simply see, well, a sea of gray.

A major factor in attracting younger people, especially those under 30, has been affordable pricing. There are also evenings targeting young professionals, including post-show receptions. And there have been collaborations with visual or musical artists with youthful followings - like the musician Solange, who in 2022 was commissioned to score a ballet by 23-year-old choreographer Gianna Reisen.

The Solange collaboration was a significant moment, Whelan and Stafford said in a recent interview, surveying the past five years as the thumping of leaping dancers' feet echoed through the ceiling above Stafford's office.

"We sold out every show," Whelan noted. "It was a little nugget, but it was memorable."

Perhaps even more important was the fact, says Stafford, that about 70% of those ticket buyers were new to the company - contributing to "a generation of young professionals in the city that are at our theater every night now."

Katherine Brown, the ballet's executive director, said the company had taken a look at the theater and vastly reduced the price of certain seats - and saw them fill up. She also noted the 30-for-30 program, where members under 30 can buy any seat in the house for \$30. "That thing has just exploded," Brown says, from some 1,800 members in the last full season before the pandemic-forced shutdown, to some 14,000 now.

One can't discount the "pure economics" of an evening at the ballet, especially for young people, says Wendy Perron, longtime dance writer and former editor of Dance Magazine. "When I was in New York in the '70s and '80s, I just couldn't afford to go to the ballet," she says.

Also not to be discounted: the effect of social media in promoting dancers as people with personalities.

"We've got this crop of really exciting but also relatable, approachable dancers, and through social media, audiences can connect to them in a way they couldn't back when we were dancing," says Stafford, who retired as a dancer in 2014.

Consider Peck, one of the company's most popular ballerinas (and a rising choreographer), whose Instagram feed had reached McDermott before she ever saw her dance. Peck supplies her half-million followers with short, punchy videos about everything from her 10 favorite dance roles to how she applies stage makeup. Her videos often feature her partner onstage and off, rising principal dancer Roman Mejia.

It's all very different from a time when - like Odette in "Swan Lake" - ballerinas used to be mysterious and, above all, silent.

Performance

Social media - whether used by the company or via the dancers' own feeds - can also answer questions. If you attended a performance of "The Nutcracker" a few seasons ago, you might have wondered why dancer Mira Nadon, as Sugarplum Fairy, suddenly disappeared from the stage at a key moment. The answer was on her Instagram later: Her pointe shoe had slipped off.

"See, you can get all your answers from Instagram now," quips Whelan, who herself has an active feed.

A few months ago, Whelan, a much-loved former NYCB principal who also retired in 2014, got a congratulatory text from Stafford in the morning - it had been exactly five years since the two had taken the helm after a turbulent period when #MeToo accusations caused scandal.

Historically, the company had been led by one man - Balanchine until 1983, then Peter Martins. This time, the board tried something new: a duet. Stafford was already interim head, and Whelan had applied for the job.

"They put us in a room and closed the door, and we were like - 'Hi?'" Whelan says. "They were like, figure it out! And we did." Stafford, the artistic director, serves as a bridge between the creative and business sides. Whelan, associate artistic director, focuses on the delicate task of programming.

Company insiders describe a mood different from the days when one outsized, all-powerful personality ruled from above. For one thing, the pair says they've instituted annual taking-stock conversations with each dancer.

Diversity - ballet is slowly changing but still overwhelmingly white - is also a priority, they say, and that includes diversifying "the pipeline," meaning students at the affiliated School of American Ballet.



This image released by Magnolia Pictures shows Mads Mikkelsen in a scene from 'The Promised Land,' which will start streaming on Hulu from Thursday, May 30. (AP)



George Lucas poses with the honorary Palme d'Or during the photo call following the awards ceremony at the 77th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Saturday, May 25. (AP)



Wactor



Milei

Variety

LOS ANGELES: Former "General Hospital" actor Johnny Wactor was shot and killed when he interrupted thieves stealing the catalytic converter from his car in Los Angeles, his family said Sunday.

The shooting occurred around 3 a.m. Saturday when the victim approached three men in downtown LA, according to the Los Angeles Police Department.

His mother, Scarlett Wactor, told ABC 7 that her 37-year-old son had left work at a rooftop bar with a coworker when he saw someone at his car and thought it was being towed. A mask-wearing suspect opened fire, his mother said.

Three suspects drove away from the scene, police said. Wactor was rushed to a hospital, where he died.

There were no arrests as of late Sunday. Wactor's agent, David Shaul, said the actor was "a real moral example to everyone who knew him."

"In the highs and lows of a challenging profession he always kept his chin up, and kept striving for the best he could be," Shaul said in a statement Sunday. "Our time with Johnny was a privilege we would wish on everyone. He would literally give you the shirt off his back. After over a decade together, he will leave a hole in our hearts forever."

Wactor portrayed Brando Corbin on the ABC soap opera from 2020 to 2022. He also appeared in a variety of films and TV series, including "Station 19," "NCIS," "Westworld" and the video game "Call of Duty: Vanguard." (AP)

BUENOS AIRES: A book presentation about neoclassical economic theory may not sound like a crowd-pleaser.

But recently in Buenos Aires mobs of star-struck fans packed a giant auditorium to hear Argentina's president, the libertarian economist Javier Milei, lecture on the importance of freeing capital from the control of the state.

As he strode through a sea of fans jostling for selfies and climbed onstage, the shouting crowd leapt to its feet. Whistles, stomps and chants of his political slogan "Long live liberty, dammit!" filled the theater.

They were greeting Milei like a stadium rocker. And within moments, he became one.

Grabbing the mic and swinging into a

Music

Kravitz leans on the funk

BTS's RM debuts bold new album

LOS ANGELES, May 27, (AP): All seven members of BTS are currently serving South Korea's compulsory enlistment for men of a certain age - and in what should feel like an absence, the K-pop boy band is keeping their fans occupied with a steady release schedule of eclectic solo material. Next up is rapper RM's second solo full-length album, "Right Place, Wrong Person."

The thoughtful leader of BTS, RM is usually philosophical in his solo work, often unafraid to take big sonic risks, sometimes with big rewards. On "Right Place, Wrong Person," he continues to ask the big questions atop elastic, genre-averse production.

The title track opens the bilingual album, launching with RM repeating the album's title over and over again in a deep, almost militaristic cadence - before exploding into asymmetrical production ornamented by his gothic baritone.

From there follows the wet, funky bass of "Nuts"; the avant-garde "Around the world in a day" with the inventive guitarist Moses Sumney; and the haunted hip-hop of "Domodachi," featuring British rapper Little Simz with ferocious drums and jazz-like improvisational instrumentation, a sensibility that continues into the following "Interlude." There are few genres that strike fear in RM.

Or maybe they do, and that's the point: Thematically, the album centers on the artist considering his own identity - one of the most famous people on the planet expressing that he feels out of step with the world. Naturally, the music mirrors that frustration, curiosity and meditation. "Groin" is frustrated, raw rap and perhaps the most profane he has been to date. "Heaven" is dreamy shoegaze; he's a rapper who can live inside '90s alternative rock and own it.

The album's closer, "Come back to me," is yet another demonstration of RM's penchant for collaboration:

Kuo from the Taiwanese band Sunset Rollercoaster plays guitar and bass on the laidback pop-rock song; OHYUK from the South Korean band HYUKOH composed and arranged it. "Come back to me" is a whistle-along acoustic pop tune, but as the first song released off the album, it failed to encapsulate its maximalist spirit.

Perhaps "LOST!," with its lightning-speed programmed synths, summertime riffs and soft, stacked harmonies, would've been a better choice for a first taste, effortlessly moving from pop, R&B, rap and electronic music with ease. It's a deceptively optimistic listen with a different message from our narrator: "I'm goddamn lost," a confused RM speak-sings. "I never been to club before."

"Right Place, Wrong Time" benefits from RM's big, existential questioning - and like the other pop philosophers that came before him, it doesn't offer any answers. And it doesn't sound like it is supposed to.

The bass is banging, the guitars are shrieking and Lenny Kravitz is howling on "Blue Electric Light," the rocker's best stuff in years, offering a welcome blast of funk in 2024.

There's joy and swagger in almost every track, with Kravitz showing his knack for adding cool stuff to songs - a blistering guitar part here, a sax solo there or a touch of Wurlitzer. Bongos? Sure. A talk box? Whatever, baby.

It all kicks off with a lush, arena-ready trademark Kravitz rocker in "It's Just Another Fine Day (In This Universe of Love)" and then he channels the late Prince in the addictive "TK421," which sounds like it could have been on "Purple Rain."

What is "TK421"? It's in the movie "Boogie Nights" as a term for a stereo upgrade and in "Star Wars" as the designation for a Stormtrooper. In Kravitz' NSFW video for the song, he strongly implies TK421 is his, ahem,

personal stormtrooper. Whatever it is, you'll have a hard time finding a more pleasing song this summer.

"Honey" is a sweet seduction ballad and "Paralyzed" sees Kravitz thrillingly go full '80s heavy metal, while "Let It Ride" is more late Prince, with Kravitz pulling out a Moog and some Rollands for a synth-laden fest, making his voice almost menacing in the computer blue.

"Bundle of Joy" sounds initially like it must be about a baby, but Kravitz is back in the bedroom, admiring a lover's "savoir-faire to her silky thighs" before letting loose a very Purple One-like scream. He quivers with passion in the soulful "Stuck in the Middle" and "Human" has terrific percussions and a Depeche Mode vibe.

He gets some scolding in on our social divisions on "Love Is My Religion," a foot-stomper with hot piano and the lyrics: "Warring and shaking our planet is baking in front of your nose/And the conclusion's coming fast so stay on your toes." Kravitz channels Rick James for another funky plea for us to all get along in "Heaven."

The album ends with the title track, which fittingly sounds like it should play over the end credits of a high-octane movie franchise with cool robots and slinky models. "I just want to make love/Under blue electric light," he sings. We are putty in his hands.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: It wasn't so long ago that every conversation about the K-pop girl group aespa focused on their digital avatars. The quartet are actually an octet, if their AI counterparts are to be counted - an inventive exercise in transmedia storytelling to match their forward-thinking pop sound. But that was then. Now the group is preparing to release their debut full-length studio album, "Armageddon." Lead single "Supernova" samples Afrika Bambaataa's "Planet Rock" from 1982 and brings their electronic experiments even further into the future.

lot of life around the world," she wrote.

Da'Luz Vieira-Manion didn't immediately respond to messages from The Associated Press on Saturday.

Jones grew up around Wichita, Kansas. His younger sister, Sharon Jones Laverentz, told the Wichita Eagle that her brother had visited every U.S. state before he was in first grade thanks to their father's job supplying Army bases with boots. (AP)

He wrote in an autobiography posted on Edinburgh University's website that he moved to Paris after World War II, where he worked as a photographer. He also spent four years in Africa as a freelance photographer. In his 1956 book "Under the African Sun," he tells of surviving a helicopter crash in a marketplace in In Salah, Algeria, the Wichita Eagle reported. After the helicopter crashed he discovered he was on fire; gale-force winds had reignited the ashes in his pipe. "Camels bawled and ran, scattering loads of firewood in all directions," Jones wrote. "Children, Arabs and veiled women either fled or fell full length in the dust. Goats and donkeys went wild as the whirling, roaring monster landed in their mist... weak with relief, the pilot and I sat in the wreckage of In Salah's market place and roared with laughter."

He later moved to Greece, where he supported himself by translating books from German and French to English. He decided to drive through India and Nepal in 1958. He said he fell in love with Afghanistan during the trip and later enrolled at Edinburgh to study anthropology.

"He was more interested in the people and cultures he was finding than he was in photography and selling those," his son, archeologist Peter Jones, told the Wichita Eagle. (AP)

cover of "Panic Show" by Argentine hard rock band La Renga, Milei jumped frenetically around the stage, whipping 10,000 fans into a frenzy.

"I am the lion," he hollered, shaking his unruly hair to the beat. "I am the king of a lost world."

When the music came to a stop, he tossed off his black leather jacket to reveal a business suit underneath and stepped up to the podium, returning to his usual persona as a disheveled academic. "I wanted to do this because I really wanted to sing," he said. (Xinhua)



Ed Sheeran, (left), and Noodles, of The Offspring, perform during BottleRock Napa Valley, Sunday, May 26, in Napa, Calif. (AP)

Dr. Hessa Al-Shaheen highlights significance of new clinic

Smoking cessation clinic launched at Sabah Al-Salem University City

By Marwa Al Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: The Kuwait Society for Combating Smoking and Cancer has inaugurated a new smoking cessation clinic at the College of Life Sciences in Sabah Al-Salem University City. This launch coincides with the celebration of World No Tobacco Day, reflecting the Society's commitment to combating smoking through awareness and support initiatives.

During the opening ceremony, Dr. Hessa Al-Shaheen, board member and treasurer of the Society, praised the university administration for its cooperation in establishing the clinic. She emphasized the importance of creating a healthy environment for students and staff, highlighting the severe physical, mental, and social harms of smoking. Dr. Al-Shaheen noted that a similar clinic at the Society's headquarters, reopened in 2021, has successfully increased visitor

numbers and helped many quit smoking.

Dr. Al-Shaheen pointed out the aggressive marketing of tobacco products to young people, stressing that the new clinic offers a crucial opportunity for those wishing to quit this harmful habit. The clinic will provide specialized treatments and support, aiming to expand its services within the university city.

Deputy Director of Kuwait University for Planning, Asaad Al-Rashed, acknowledged the collaborative efforts to open the clinic, the first specialized smoking cessation facility at the university. He emphasized the educational role of the clinic in raising awareness about the harms of smoking and thanked all parties involved for their contributions.

Dr. Amal Al-Yahya, head of the Healthy Cities Office at the Ministry of Health, described the clinic as a foundational step toward building a smoke-free society. She noted that Sabah Al-Salem University City is



A photo from the smoking cessation clinic inauguration at the Sabah Al-Salem University City.

recognized as a healthy university city and that the clinic aligns with the National Anti-Smoking Program under the Ministry of Health. The clinic will benefit from digital follow-up and electronic health records, integrating with 26 primary health care clinics.

Dr. Khaled Al-Saleh, Chairman of the Society's Board of Directors, underscored the importance of treating tobacco addiction as a core strategy in anti-smoking programs. He explained that many smokers struggle to quit on their own and highlighted the vital role of support services provided by cessation clinics. The new clinic aims to assist motivated smokers, offer guidance on the health risks of smoking, dispense treatments, and conduct studies to monitor treatment success and influencing factors.

The establishment of this clinic marks a significant advancement in public health efforts to combat smoking, providing essential support to students and university staff committed to quitting smoking.

Photo by Mohammed Morsi

WHO ministers seek solutions

World Health assembly pushes for pandemic readiness as treaty stalls

GENEVA, May 27, (AP): The World Health Organization opened its annual meeting on Monday with government ministers and other top envoys hoping to reinforce global preparedness for the next pandemic in the devastating wake of COVID-19.

But the most ambitious project, to adopt a pandemic "treaty," has been shelved for now after 2 1/2 years of work failed to produce a draft that countries could unite behind by Friday, as originally hoped.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus insists it's not a failure, and acknowledged an "immense" task faced by negotiators on a "very ambitious timeline" - alluding to the many years it usually takes for UN countries to reach global treaties.

When diplomats, health officials and activists were still attempting to produce a draft pandemic treaty, he had predicted the assembly could be one of the most significant in WHO's 76-year history. Not anymore.

Consensus

"Of course, we all wish that we had been able to reach a consensus on the agreement in time for this health assembly and cross the finish line," Tedros said in his opening remarks. "But I remain confident that you still will - because where there is a will, there is a way."

"It's now for this World Health Assembly to decide what that way is - meaning the solution is in your hands," he added.

WHO officials and others have been eager to build on the momentum of concern from the coronavirus pandemic, with the risk that the more it fades into history, the less the public - and policymakers - will be interested in preparing for a future pandemic.

The basic premise is that pathogens that have no regard for national borders require a united response from all countries. But decision-makers have struggled to balance national interest with the call from WHO officials to think more broadly in the interest of humanity and equity.

So health ministers will now have to take up the work and try to overcome deep-set differences, including how the world can share information on emerging pathogens and scarce resources like vaccines and masks when demand skyrockets.

Other high-profile participants, including International Olympic Com-

New mind-control era

Brain-controlled device offers new hope for stroke patients

TIANJIN, May 27, (Xinhua): A stroke patient who donned a brain electrode cap was attempting to lift a bottle from the table using her fingers and an additional "sixth finger" device mounted on the wrist.

"Try again, focus your attention, and see if you can lift the bottle," said a neurological physician encouragingly.

With each attempt -- once, twice, thrice, -- the patient who had been unable to grip a pen witnessed the bottle slowly detach from the tabletop. The expression transformed from initial despair to incredulous astonishment, culminating in a moment as tears brimmed in her eyes.

Wang Zhuang, a third-year doctoral student and a member of the neural engineering team at Tianjin University, intently watched the patient and the "sixth finger" device on her hand, while meticulously recording every fluctuation in the data.

The team has crafted an innovative finger-worm device, leveraging non-invasive brain-computer interface (BCI) technology to harness the patient's brainwaves, enabling stroke patients

to mentally "command" an extra digit.

Also, the device serves to revitalize the patients' compromised central and peripheral nervous systems, thereby facilitating the rehabilitation of hand motor functions.

The BCI, a technology heralding the future, is swiftly emerging as a focal point for global investment. Scientists and engineers are eager to integrate this pioneering tech into the realm of medical practice, embracing a new era of therapeutic possibilities.

"Stroke stands as a significant threat to the health of our nation's populace, often leaving patients with varying levels of physical impairment," said Wang.

"Our aspiration is to harness the power of technology to offer them enhanced opportunities for a life of completeness and fulfillment," he added.

In January, a Chinese clinical team from Xuanwu Hospital had implanted a wireless processor into the skull of a paralyzed man, and this significantly assisted him to recover his motor skills, including drinking a bottle of water on his own.

mittee President Thomas Bach, and U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, also addressed the gathering of the U.N. health agency's 194 member states.

Guterres, speaking by video, called the pandemic accord a "once-in-a-generation opportunity" to make sure the global health systems respond faster and more equitably in the next outbreak and urged delegates to back amendments to the international health as a way to boost the response to emergencies.

"Amidst the legal arguments and endless negotiation for the pandemic treaty, let us remember that the heart of the health care is not just policies and programs, it is about our shared humanity," Thailand's Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin said via a video feed. Envoys will discuss global health

concerns including the fallout from wars in places like the Middle East, Sudan and Ukraine.

Instead of a pandemic treaty, the best shot now for bulking up the international health architecture to fight such cross-border outbreaks is through amendments to the nearly two-decades-old International Health Regulations, which countries have "in principle" agreed to, Tedros said last week.

Those regulations focus on helping countries detect and respond to health emergencies.

For example, envoys to the assembly could establish the concept of a "pandemic emergency" to build on and refine the cumbersome category of Public Health Emergency of International Concern, which is currently WHO's highest level of alert for dangerous epidemics.

There's little help ... some people are chained

Kush, a cheap synthetic drug, ravaging Sierra Leone's youth

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone, May 27, (AP): In Sierra Leone, a cheap, synthetic drug is ravaging youth. Trash-strewn alleys are lined with boys and young men slumped in addiction. Healthcare services are severely limited. One frustrated community has set up what it calls a treatment center, run by volunteers. But harsh measures can be used.

The project in the Bombay suburb of the capital, Freetown, started in the past year when a group of people tried to help a colleague's younger brother off the drug called kush. After persuasion and threats failed, they locked him in his room for two months. It worked. He has returned to university and thanked them for setting him free.

"The only time I left the room was when I went to the bathroom," Christian Johnson, 21, recalled. He said he was motivated to kick the drug by thoughts of his family, the fear of becoming a dropout and the abandonment by many of his friends.

The volunteers then expanded the effort and took over an abandoned building. They seize people at families' request and sometimes chain them to prevent them from escaping - an echo of a practice the West African country's only psychiatric hospital previously used. There's little padding against the

concrete floor and walls, and little to do beyond confronting their craving.

"We turn parents away for lack of space," said Suleiman Turay, a local football coach who helped launch the center. "The people in the community cooperate and help in their own individual ways. Some bring food, some bring water, doing whatever they can to help." A doctor in the community visits from time to time. Police said they were not aware of the project or the practice of chaining people.

Volunteers

So far, the Bombay Community has treated 70 to 80 people, volunteers said. One showed the chains used in extreme cases, although no one was chained at the time. The youngest held was a 13-year-old boy sent there by his father. "I was very angry, and I wanted to have nothing to do with him," said the father, Gibrilla Bangura, a college lecturer. "I am very grateful to these men and women for their role in helping my son."

Sierra Leone's President Julius Maada Bio this year declared a war on kush, calling it an epidemic and a national threat. He has launched a task force on drug and substance abuse, promising to lead a government approach focused on prevention and

treatment involving law enforcement and community engagement.

Destructive (cross head) "We are witnessing the destructive consequences of kush on our country's very foundation, our young people," Bio said in April.

People rarely know what they're getting with kush, a derivative of cannabis mixed with synthetic drugs like fentanyl and tramadol and chemicals like formaldehyde. In some communities, civil society workers say, people have dug up graves to grind bones to cut with the drug, seeking chemicals used in embalming.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's director in Sierra Leone, Daphne Moffett, said one challenge in responding to the crisis is the drug's changing composition. "Before appropriate interventions can be developed, we need to know what materials are in Kush," she said in an email.

The drug leaves people lethargic, desperate and ill. While the government does not publish official figures on kush-related deaths or hospital admissions, Ansu Konneh, the director of mental health at the Ministry of Social Welfare, said there had been a sharp rise in people addicted to kush turning up at Sierra Leone's only psychiatric hospital since 2022.

Over 488,000 dengue cases in Argentina

UN allocates \$2M for cholera response in Somalia

MOGADISHU, May 27, (Xinhua): The United Nations relief agency has allocated 2 million U.S. dollars from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) for an urgent response to the cholera outbreak in Somalia, the UN said on Monday.

The allocation is supporting UN agencies and their partners to provide lifesaving assistance to 60,000 people in critical health, water, sanitation and hygiene response in Puntland and Central Southern states, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said.

According to the World Health Organization, more than 10,000 cholera cases and 120 deaths have been reported in seven states across the country since January.

The UN agency said the residual effects of the historic drought during the three-year La Nina event in 2023, combined with the impacts of the once-in-a-century floods induced by El Nino earlier this year, have fueled outbreaks of acute watery diarrhea and cholera in Somalia.

It said the current Gu (April to June) seasonal rains and flash floods are also expected to affect at least 770,000 people by the time the season ends.

The UN agency appealed for more funding to meet the current and rising needs due to climate shocks and other factors.

It said the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan for Somalia, which requires 1.6 billion dollars to respond to the needs of 5.2 million people, is only 20 percent funded.

Also:

BUENOS AIRES: Argentina has detected over 488,000 cases of dengue during the first five months this year, 3.35 times that of last year, the health ministry said Sunday.

In the first 20 weeks of the year, 488,035 cases of dengue were registered, according to the ministry's National Epidemiological Bulletin.

The largest number of the cases were reported in the central region, followed by the northwestern and northeastern regions. Dengue is detected in 19 of the 24 districts of the country and has caused a total of 343 deaths this season.

The most frequent symptoms of the disease were fever, headache, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain.

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SPORTS

Kolkata routs Hyderabad by 8 wickets to clinch third IPL title

Starc rattles Sunrisers top-order

CHENNAI, May 27, (AP): Kolkata Knight Riders clinched its third Indian Premier League title after it dismantled the batting powerhouse of Sunrisers Hyderabad for only 113 runs and went on to win the final by eight wickets with 57 balls remaining.

The \$2.9 million signing Mitchell Starc rattled Hyderabad's top-order with 2-14 and all six Kolkata bowlers took wickets before the most aggressive batting team this season was bowled out for the lowest ever total in the history of IPL finals in 18.3 overs.

CRICKET

Venkatesh Iyer then led Kolkata to 114-2 in 10.3 overs with a blazing 26-ball unbeaten 52 with Rahmanullah Gurbaz scoring 39 in 32.

"It was comprehensive (victory)," said Kolkata captain Shreyas Iyer, who also played in an IPL final for Delhi Capitals in 2020 when his team lost to Mumbai Indians.



Kolkata Knight Riders' wicketkeeper Rahmanullah Gurbaz plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket final match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Sunrisers Hyderabad in Chennai, India. (AP)

"This is what we demanded from the players and they stood up. It's difficult to express the feelings, so much to cherish right now. There was no one individual who took us here, it was a cumulative effort, it was a flawless

season for us."

Kolkata previously won the IPL titles in 2012 and 2014 and had dominated this season by finishing on top at the end of league stage with nine wins from 14 games.

It even dominated the most aggressive Hyderabad side by winning both in the league stage and also in the qualifier where Starc had stood out before routing Pat Cummins' team in a one-sided final.

Cummins had won the toss and chose to bat first, but his team got deflated inside the first seven overs as they limped to 47-4 against an impeccable attack of Starc, Harshit Rana (2-24) and Vaibhav Arora (1-24).

Starc started the rout when he clean bowled Abhishek Sharma with a ball that swung away from the left-hander and knocked back the off stump. Travis Head, who had often scored quick runs for Hyderabad this season, edged Arora's first ball and went for a golden duck. At 6-2 in two overs, Hyderabad struggled to recover from that double loss.

Starc's three-over spell in the power play gave Kolkata another wicket when Rahul Tripathi top-edged the Australian left-arm quick.

There was no power-hitting from the South African pair of Aiden Markram, who made a struggling 20 off 23 balls,

and Heinrich Klaasen (16 in 17) as Kolkata kept picking up wickets at regular intervals.

Markram's weak pull shot against Andre Russell landed in the lap of Starc at long-on and Klaasen departed in the 15th over when he dragged Rana's brilliant off-cutter back onto his stumps.

Russell then mopped up the lower order with 3-19 and Hyderabad was in danger of not making 100 before Cummins hit 24 off 19 balls and was the last man dismissed in the penultimate over.

"Russell has got a magic wand and he is looking towards me to bowl," Shreyas Iyer said. "In the majority of the games he gave us breakthroughs."

Kolkata lost Sunil Narine early in the chase before Venkatesh Iyer, who smashed three sixes and four boundaries, and Rahmanullah Gurbaz effectively sealed the game with some aggressive hitting in a 91-run stand.

It was a heartbreak for Hyderabad, which had topped IPL batting records throughout the season and scored over 265 three times during the league stage where it finished second behind Kolkata.

However, it got bowled out for its lowest total of the season at a venue where Kolkata, owned by Bollywood celebrity Shah Rukh Khan, had happy memories of winning its first IPL title in 2012.



The License D training course in progress.

Kazma, Al-Arabi battle to draw

By Khaled El Anzi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: In the fourth round of the Premier Handball League, Kazma and Al-Arabi faced off in a thrilling match that ended in a 27-27 draw at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex.

In the same round, Al-Kuwait showcased its strength by defeating Al-Salmiya 36-28, while Al-Qadisiya, bouncing back from two consecutive defeats, narrowly edged out Burgan with a 27-26 victory.

Kuwait Club continues to dominate the Premier League standings with 32 points, followed by Al-Qadisiya with 27 points. Kazma holds third place with 25 points, trailed by Al-Salmiya with 23, Al-Arabi with 22, and Burgan with 18.

In the First Division League, Al-Qurain is set to meet Al-Nasr at 5

pm, and Yarmouk will face Al-Fahaheel at 6:30 pm.

Meanwhile, international lecturer Dr. Khaled Al-Sharji highlighted the efforts of the Kuwaiti Handball Federation, along with the International and Asian Federations, to enhance training standards in Asia, aligning

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with global developmental trends. He noted the success of two recent Category D training courses in Kuwait, which saw active participation from both male and female trainers.

Echoing Al-Sharji's sentiments, international lecturer Dr. Muhammad Al-Sammak emphasized the Kuwaiti Federation's commitment to organizing training courses aimed at enhancing the skills of national training cadres.

Al-Arabi President 'renews' coach Al-Shatti contract for next season

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: Al-Arabi Club President Abdulaziz Ashour has announced the renewal of Coach Nasser Al-Shatti's contract, ensuring his position at the helm of the team's technical leadership for the upcoming season.

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During the regular general assembly, Ashour also mentioned that the administrative staff's status will be determined at the season's end. He commended the administrative staff for their hard work and dedication throughout the season and praised the efforts of both the technical and administrative staff across all club activities.

Regarding professional players, Ashour confirmed that Moroccan player Hamza Khaba will continue with Al-Arabi in the new season. He also stated that the club is actively working to attract high-caliber professionals to strengthen the team and make a significant impact in the Premier League.

However, Ashour did not comment on the future of Nigerian professional Anayo Iweala, Moroccan Walid Sabar, Tunisian Ayman Sfaxien, and Algerian Imad Eddine Boubacar.

Addressing Al-Arabi's par-



Al-Arabi coach Nasser Al-Shatti.

participation in the Asian Challenge Cup, Ashour expressed surprise at any skepticism, noting that the decision for the league champion and runner-up to participate in international competitions was made in May 2022 and is well-documented in Federation records. He emphasized that participating in the Asian Championship is a right of Al-Arabi Club.

Ashour also highlighted that preparations for the new season are in full swing, with training set to begin on June 23. The team will then head to an external training camp in mid-July before returning for friendly matches and the start of league matches on August 9.

Al-Senussi extends deal with Al-Salmiya for two 'seasons'

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: Salmiya Club has renewed the contract of Libyan professional Senussi Al-Hadi for two seasons, following his standout performance since joining the team during the winter transfer period last January.

Al-Hadi, who has earned the trust of Salmiya's technical staff led by Croatian coach Ante Misha, played a pivotal role in the team's



A file photo of Al-Senussi (left) fighting for the ball.

success. Coach Misha, who originally brought Al-Hadi to the club, personally requested the renewal of the Libyan professional's contract. Additionally, Brazilian player Alex Lima's contract has been extended for another season, as per Misha's request.

Coach Misha himself has a contract with Salmiya until the end of the next season.

Meanwhile, decisions are pending regarding the future of three other foreign players: Brazilian Sebastião Junior "Seba", Ghanaian Issaka Abudu, and Gambian Sang Pierre. While Seba seems likely to continue for another season, Abudu and Sang Pierre's futures remain uncertain.

In addition to securing their foreign players, Salmiya Club has also announced contract renewals with several local players. Badr Jamal and Muhammad Al-Huwaidi



Kolkata Knight Riders players celebrate with the trophy after defeating Sunrisers Hyderabad during the Indian Premier League cricket final match in Chennai, India. (AP)

Barcelona edge Sevilla

Fermin Lopez gives Xavi winning send-off in La Liga

MADRID, May 27, (Xinhua): Xavi Hernandez ended his two-and-a-half years as coach of FC Barcelona ended with a win as goals from Robert Lewandowski and Fermin Lopez gave his side a 2-1 win away to Sevilla.

It was fitting that Lopez, who has been one of the successes of Xavi's management this season, scored the winning goal just before the hour.

Youssef En-Nesyri leveled for Sevilla after half an hour, but Lopez's second-half strike meant Xavi could leave with his head held high.

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Mallorca ended a difficult season with a 2-1 win away to Getafe thanks to late goals from Vedat Muriqi, who canceled out Gaston Alvarez's opener for Getafe in the 90th minute before Pablo Maffeo gave coach Javier Aguirre a winning send-off three minutes into injury time.

Celta and Valencia ended their campaigns with an entertaining 2-2 draw with and Iago Aspas's penalty canceling out Carlos Dominguez's own goal, which had given Valencia an early lead.

Alberto Mari's 60th-minute penalty put Valencia back in front but just two minutes later Anastasios Douvikas ensured it ended honors even.

Things also ended all-square between Las Palmas and Alaves with Carlos Vicente giving Alaves a second-half advantage and Marc Cardona assuring a draw as the two sides promoted last season celebrated top-flight survival for another year.

Real Madrid prepared for next weekend's Champions League final with a 0-0 draw at home to Betis, which saw coach Carlo Ancelotti give Thibaut Courtois over an hour in goal, while Andriy Lunin didn't get a single minute, in what could be a hint to who plays in next week's Champions League final.

The match also saw Toni Kroos give an emotional 'adios' to the Santiago Bernabeu after announcing his retirement earlier in the week.

The issues of who would claim

Ancelotti has 'really difficult' decision to make in goal for Madrid

MADRID, May 27, (AP): Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti knows he will have a tough decision to make in goal for the Champions League final against Borussia Dortmund on Saturday.

Will he pick Andriy Lunin, who has played in goal nearly the entire season, or Thibaut Courtois, the veteran who has won the Champions League before but has just returned from injury?

"It's really difficult," Ancelotti said Monday. "Of course it's really difficult, because both of them deserve to play this final. Lunin because he did a fantastic season, and Courtois because he is back from his injury and everyone knows the quality of Courtois. It's a difficult decision but I think I'm going to take into the game this decision, no doubt."

Lunin was nursing a fever and was the only Madrid player who didn't train on Monday as Madrid began its final week of preparations. But Ancelotti said the 25-year-old Ukrainian was expected to be available for Saturday's final in London.

The illness surely doesn't help Lunin's chances, though, and many had already expected Ancelotti to go with the more experienced Courtois despite his lack of minutes this season.

Courtois ruptured a left-knee ligament in August, just two days before the start of the season. The 32-year-old Belgian then also ruptured the meniscus in his right knee in March, when he was close to making a comeback.

He was sidelined until the beginning of this month, when he started in a 3-0 win over Cadiz, a victory that secured Madrid's 36th Spanish league title.

Lunin was back in goal as Madrid beat Bayern Munich in the Champions League semifinals. He had saved two penalties in the decisive shootout win over Manchester City in the quarterfinals.

Lunin had earned the starting position over Kepa Arrizabalaga, the former Chelsea player who is Madrid's other reserve goalkeeper. Ancelotti said Lunin was the best goalkeeper in the world right now.

Courtois has proven experience in finals, though, having won the 2022 Champions League with Madrid, the FA Cup with Chelsea, the Europa League with Atletico Madrid, and two Copa del Rey titles (one for Madrid, one for Atletico), among several other titles.

the Zamora and Pichichi awards for the best goalkeeper and striker of the season, were resolved, with Athletic Club Bilbao's Unai Simon winning the Zamora as he kept a clean sheet in Athletic's 1-0 win away to Rayo Val-

lecano. Nico Williams decided a game with an end-of-season flavor with a 66th-minute goal after good work from Alex Berenguer.

Girona's Artem Dovbyk scored a

hat-trick in Girona's 7-0 thrashing of Granada on Friday night to win the Pichichi award.

The Ukrainian forward ended his hat-trick with an 89th-minute penalty that took his total for the season to 24 goals and although Villarreal's Alexander Sorloth had the chance to overtake that in his side's visit to Osasuna, the Norwegian was struck by bad luck as he had to limp off with a muscle injury after 14 minutes of a 1-1 draw.

Goals from Samuel Lino and Reinildo saw Atletico Madrid to a 2-0 win away to Real Sociedad in a result that ended Real Sociedad keeper Alex Remino's chance of ending the season with the best goalkeeping record.

Finally, Almeria beat Cadiz 6-1 in a match between two teams who will play next season in the second division.

Although Brian Ocampo put Cadiz ahead, two goals each from Sergio Arribas and Luis Suarez, an own goal and an effort from Gonzalo Melero saw Almeria romp to a win that saw them climb off the bottom of the table and above Granada, whose coach Jose Ramon Sandoval announced his resignation before the defeat in Girona.



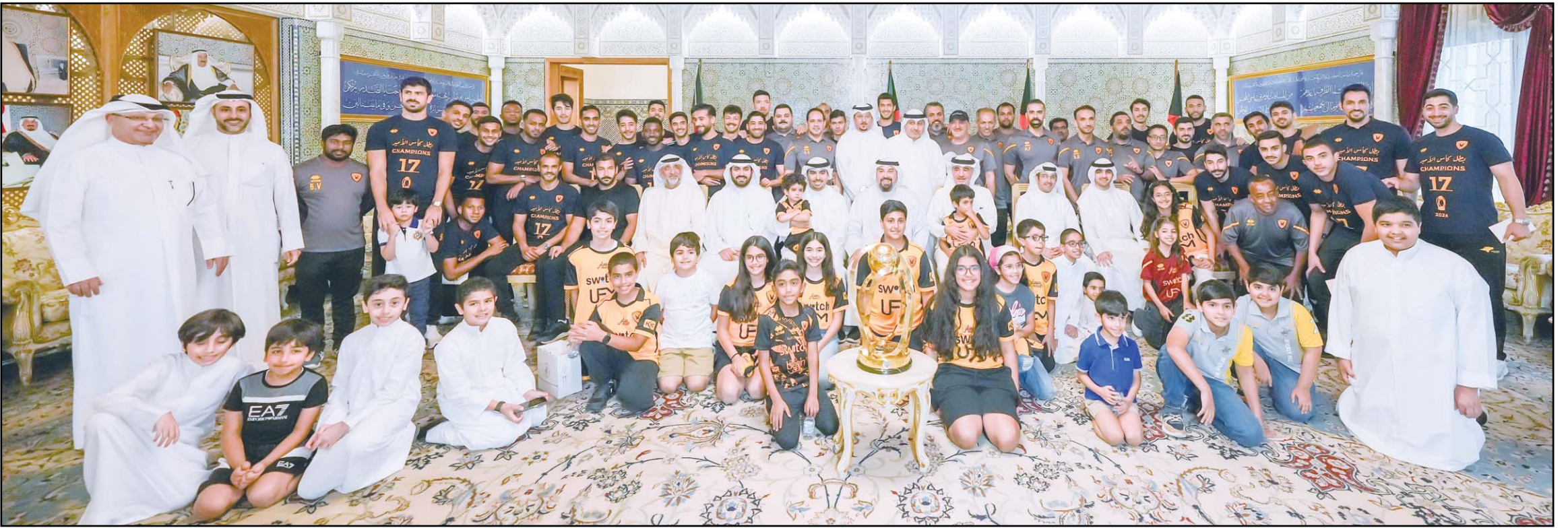
Barcelona's Lamine Yamal (right), fights for the ball with Sevilla's Kike Salas during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Sevilla and FC Barcelona at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan stadium in Seville, Spain. (AP)



Real Madrid's goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois attends a training session during a Media Opening day in Madrid, Spain, Monday, May 27, 2024. Borussia Dortmund will play against Real Madrid in Saturday's Champions League soccer final in London. (AP) - See Page 15

Sports

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Officials and players pose for a group photo.

The players and team staff honored

Al-Qadisiya Club celebrates Amir's Cup victory at Al-Babtain's Diwan



Badr Al-Mutawa presents a gift to the Al-Babtain family.

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: Businessman and member of the General Assembly of Al-Qadisiya Club, Saud Abdulaziz Al-Babtain, along with his brothers and cousins, honored the team for winning the Amir's Cup for the 17th time. The celebration took place at Al-Babtain's Diwan in Al-Nuzha.

The event commenced with master of ceremonies, Ahmed Al-Ramadan, welcoming esteemed guests, including the President of the Kuwaiti Federation and former President of the Olympic Committee, Sheikh Dr. Talal Al-Fahad. Following the introductions, Saud and Mohammed Abdulaziz Al-

more championships in their illustrious sports career. These victories benefit Kuwaiti football and our country, Kuwait."

Vice Chairman Sheikh Fahad Talal Al-Fahad expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Saud Abdulaziz Al-Babtain and his family, noting that such generosity from the Al-Babtain family is well-known. Sheikh Fahad also addressed the squad selection for the upcoming matches against India and Afghanistan in the Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup and the 2027 Asian Cup. He voiced concerns about certain omissions but affirmed his support for the selected players.

Regarding Al-Qadisiya's exclusion from next season's Asian competitions by the Football Association, Sheikh Fahad clarified that this was expected and attributed it to an incident during the Amir's Cup final. He stressed that the Amir's Cup remains more significant than any other competition, and the club is honored to have won it.

Al-Qadisiya goalkeeper Khaled Al-Rashidi thanked the Al-Babtain family for their hospitality and recognition of the players and staff. Captain Badr Al-Mutawa also expressed gratitude to Saud and Mohammed Abdulaziz Al-Babtain for their support, wishing them abundant blessings and prosperity.

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Babtain, along with Sheikh Fahd Talal Al-Fahad, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al-Qadisiya Club, honored the players and team staff.

Saud Abdulaziz Al-Babtain expressed his joy over Al-Qadisiya's victory in the Amir's Cup, stating, "We congratulate the members of Al-Qadisiya Club for winning this prestigious cup, even if it was a bit delayed this time. We are used to this great sporting establishment always achieving victories and great accomplishments. We wish them continued success and

Best of the Rest

Galatasaray grab title: Galatasaray clinched the Turkish league title on Sunday, edging city rival Fenerbahce with a record total of 102 points.

Galatasaray needed just a point in its final game at Konyaspor, and won 3-1 with talismanic striker Mauro Icardi scoring twice to raise his league-leading total to 25.

Fenerbahce won 6-0 at home to last-place Istanbulspor to finish three points back on 99, the second-highest tally ever for a 38-game season in the league. (AP)

Midtjylland win league: FC Midtjylland took advantage of a slip-up by Brondby on a dramatic final day in the Danish league season to win the title - and the team had a special visitor to mark the occasion.

Kristoffer Olsson, the Sweden midfielder in rehabilitation from an acute brain condition, was at the MCH Arena to watch his Midtjylland team draw 3-3 at home to Silkeborg.

Midtjylland needed to better the result of title rival Brondby, which started the final round ahead only on goal difference. That's how it transpired, with Brondby conceding in the 78th minute to lose 3-2 at home to AGF and leave its players sprawled on the field in tears. (AP)

Brugge come out on top: Club Brugge won its 19th Belgian league title on a dramatic final day of the season with a 0-0 draw against local rival Cercle Brugge that capped a remarkable turnaround in fortunes during the playoffs phase.

Club Brugge came close to letting the title slip away Sunday when it conceded a goal with about 10 minutes left, only for the referee to cancel it for an offside position after a VAR check.

For the second straight year, three teams still had a shot at the title before kickoff: Brugge, Union Saint-Gilloise and Anderlecht. (AP)

Doncic and Irving each score 33 as Mavs extend lead over Wolves

Dallas makes all the big plays again on both ends of the court

DALLAS, May 27, (AP): Luka Doncic lunged for the ball after a steal by Anthony Edwards, knocking it far enough away to create a scramble and a jump ball the Dallas superstar won.

The Mavericks made all the big plays again - on both ends of the court - and are a win away from their first trip to the NBA Finals in 13 years.

Doncic and Kyrie Irving scored 33 points apiece and Dallas put together a decisive run in the final five minutes to beat the Minnesota Timberwolves 116-107 on Sunday night for a 3-0 lead in the Western Conference finals.

The 14-3 finish gave the Mavs a fifth consecutive playoff victory after Dereck Lively II left with a sprained neck when the rookie center took an accidental shot to the back of the head from Karl-Anthony Towns' knee.

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No team in NBA playoff history has rallied from 3-0 down.

"Don't even say it," said Doncic, who will try to clinch his first trip to the NBA Finals in Game 4 on Tuesday night in Dallas. "But it feels great. But we've got to think about next game. Gotta play with the same mentality. They're not going to go away. No way."

P.J. Washington Jr., who scored 16 points, put Dallas ahead for good on a tiebreaking corner 3-pointer with 3:38 remaining after Doncic passed to Irving, who sent the ball to Washington.

The co-stars took over from there. Doncic hit a shot in the lane for a four-point lead, Irving sent the crowd into a frenzy on a falling-down jumper and Doncic found Daniel Gafford for an alley-oop dunk and a 113-105 lead with 34 seconds left. Gafford had just blocked Mike Conley's layup attempt at the other end.

"They're trying to double me the whole game, trying to double Kai, so that just makes us better," Doncic said. "Everybody touches the ball, everybody plays. We come down to the stretch, and we execute."



Dallas Mavericks guard Luka Doncic (77) shoots against Minnesota Timberwolves forward Kyle Anderson (1) during the second half in Game 3 of the NBA basketball Western Conference finals in Dallas. (AP)

Kuwait Para team returns from worlds in Kobe



Kuwait Para athletics delegation.

KUWAIT CITY, May 27: Kuwait Para athletics team returned home after participating in the 11th Para Athletics World Championship in Kobe, Japan.

The Kuwaiti Para team remarkable success, securing two gold medals and one silver medal at the championship. Faisal Al-Rajhi clinched the gold medal in the 5,000-meter wheelchair race, while Faisal Sorour won the silver medal in the shot put competition. These victories ensured both athletes' participation in the Paris Paralympic Games 2024.

World champion Faisal Sorour expressed his joy over his significant achievement in one of the most prestigious global athletics championships. He dedicated his silver medal to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the government, and the

people of Kuwait. Sorour also praised the support from the Board of Directors of the Disabled Club, led by Shafi Al-Hajri, for their efforts in overcoming all obstacles to achieve optimal physical and technical readiness.

"Kuwait's disabled athletes continue to achieve outstanding international results season after season, thanks to the excellent teamwork and dedication of the club's management. Their constant efforts to develop all sports and provide comprehensive support to players are commendable. We hope to continue this success at the Paralympic Games in Paris 2024," said Sorour.

The delegation was led by Fahd Al-Mutairi as president, with Nizar Ramadan and Ahmed Harbi as coaches. The team included four athletes: Faisal Al-Rajhi, Faisal Sorour, Dhari Nassar Al-Bati, and Malak Hadi Al-Anzi.

Ayozé, Fermin get surprise call-ups to Spain's preliminary 'Euro' squad

MADRID, May 27, (Xinhua): Spain coach Luis de la Fuente on Monday named his preliminary list of 29 players for the forthcoming 2024 European Championships in Germany, with some surprises.

Real Betis striker Ayozé Perez is rewarded with a call-up for an excellent end to the season, as is Barcelona attacking midfielder Fermin Lopez, Girona's Aleix Garcia and Real Madrid defender Nacho Fernandez.

However, there is no place for Real Madrid right-back Lucas Vazquez or Athletic Bilbao's Oihan Sancet, who drops out of the squad after recent injury setbacks.

The squad has to be cut to 26 by June 7, although only 23 of those can be in the matchday squad when Spain play Croatia, Italy and Albania in the group stage, which kicks off on June 15.

Speaking to Spanish TV network RTVE, De la Fuente said that the 29 players he has named "all have the

same chance" of being on the plane to Germany, but he added that "the way things stand today, I am clear on whom the 26 will be." He said naming 29 players now was to "guarantee against any setback" in training sessions before June 7.

Full squad: Goalkeepers: Unai Simón, David Raya, Alex Remiro. Defenders: Dani Carvajal, Jesus Navas, Robin Le Normand, Dani Vivian, Nacho Fernandez, Pau Cubarsi, Ay-

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meric Laporte, Alex Grimaldo, Marc Cucurella. Midfielders: Rodrigo Hernandez, Martin Zubimendi, Marcos Llorente, Fermin Lopez, Fabian Ruiz, Mikel Merino, Pedri, Aleix Garcia. Forwards: Lamine Yamal, Ferran Torres, Dani Olmo, Alex Baena, Nico Williams, Ayozé Perez, Joselu, Alvaro Morata.