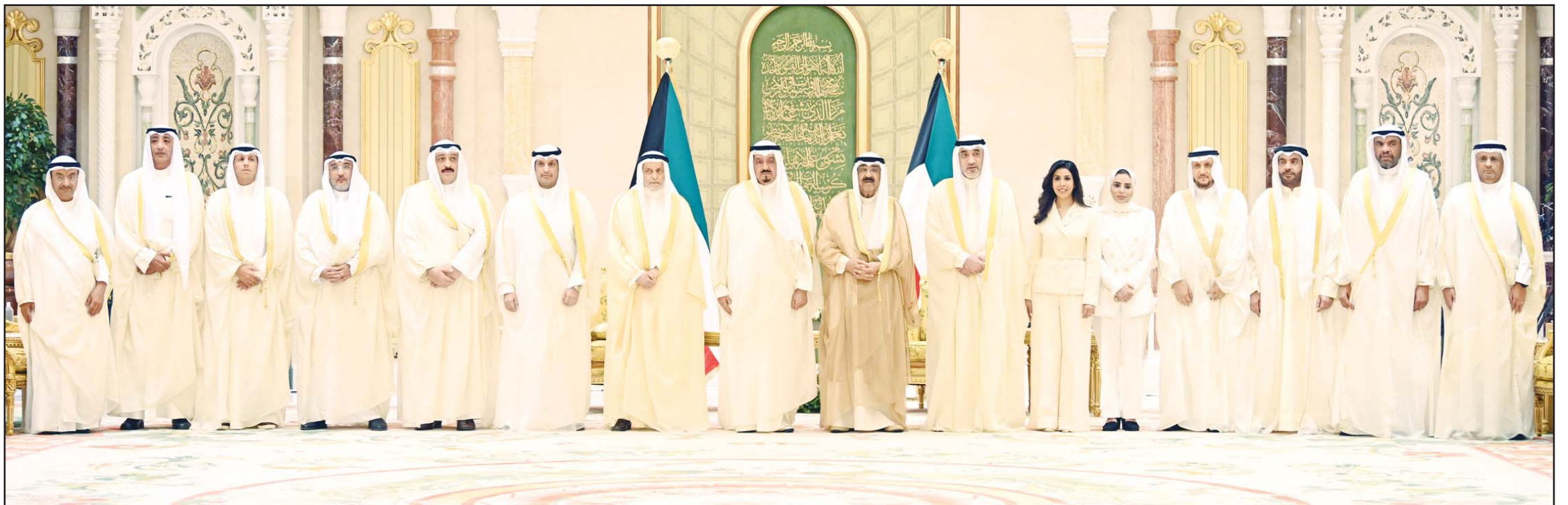




## NEW GOVERNMENT SWEARS CONSTITUTIONAL OATH BEFORE AMIR



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in a group photo during the reception of His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Prime Minister, and the ministers, for the Constitutional oath-taking ceremony on Wednesday.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah presided over an extraordinary Cabinet meeting at Bayan Palace on Wednesday.

# Amir pledges to pursue reforms

'New phase ... serious action'

**KUWAIT CITY, May 15, (KUNA):** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has issued an Amiri Order to address the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah as His Highness.

According to the Amiri Order: Addressing the Prime Minister must be as follows: His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister and the Ministers ought to "execute our order as of the date of its issuance and it should be published by the official gazette," stated the Amiri Order by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The Amiri Order was issued at Seif Palace. On Wednesday, Kuwait's newly formed government swore the constitutional oath before His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah took the oath and was followed by:

1. Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Interior Minister
2. Shereeda Abdullah Al-Mousherji, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs
3. Dr. Imad Mohammad Al-Atiqi, Deputy Prime Minister and Oil Minister
4. Abdulrahman Bdah Al-Mutairi, Minister of Information and Culture
5. Dr. Ahmad Abdulwahab Al-Awadhi, Minister of Health
6. Dr. Anwar Ali Al-Mudhaf, Minister of Finance, and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs
7. Dr. Adel Mohammad Al-Adwani, Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research
8. Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya, Minister of Foreign Affairs

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His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah takes the Constitutional oath before His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

### Opinion

## We are before a leader who is cognizant of the country and its maladies

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah  
Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

IT IS natural for a country to fall into long term crises if it is weak and corrupt. Perhaps, these crises lead to hunger, as it happened at one stage in China or Singapore before the era of Lee Kuan Yew or Germany's Otto von Bismarck who sought to revive his country in various ways in order to restore its strength and well-being.

Many figures in history committed themselves to advancing their country. For this reason, they became an example worth mentioning like Muhammad Ali Pasha in Egypt, King Abdulaziz bin Saud -- the unifier of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sultan Qaboos -- the manufacturer of the Omani renaissance and others who saved their countries when corruption became rampant in all aspects.

All these countries were saved by one man, who was determined and had a vision, and knew that a bitter cure was necessary, no matter how great the difficulties.

Today, Kuwait is facing a new and important phase whose signs are already clear, as it lived in political chaos when some people overstepped the executive powers in the name of the Constitution and enacted laws whose essence was to preserve their interests.

Rather, development of legislation was suspended because those with influence saw it as an infringement on their interests. They even deliberately prevented free opinion, demanding amendment of the Constitution, which had grown old and had become like a cripple led by groups that imposed their interests on everyone.

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### Newswatch

**KUWAIT CITY:** The Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, accompanied by an official delegation, would depart to the sisterly Kingdom of Bahrain tomorrow (Thursday).

The Prime Minister will head the State of Kuwait's delegation at the 33rd Arab Summit, to be hosted by the Bahraini capital, Manama. (KUNA)

**KUWAIT CITY:** The deputy chief of Kuwait's National Guard Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Sabah congratulated Kuwait's new government on taking the oath of office before His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Wishing His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah every success after taking his oath, alongside his Cabinet, the deputy chief of the national guard hoped Kuwait's new premier would succeed in bringing national aspirations to fruition, according to a statement by the military body.

He went on to wish the nation persistent prosperity and development under its "wise leadership," added the statement. (KUNA)

**KUWAIT CITY:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received a congratulatory call Wednesday from Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani.

Sheikh Mohammad congratulated His Highness on being appointed Prime Minister and forming a new government, wishing him success and Kuwait further progress and prosperity under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

His Highness Sheikh Ahmad expressed his gratitude in reply for his kind sentiments that reflect the two countries deep brotherly relations, wishing Sheikh Mohammad long-lasting health. (KUNA)

**KUWAIT CITY:** Kuwait Air Force has carried out a drill with live ammunition deploying Apache helicopters in Al-Udaire' range, the army said in a press release on Wednesday.

The army chairmanship of staff said in the press release that the exercise was aimed at sharpening skills of the pilots and enhancing efficiency and readiness of the Apache helicopters for combat missions. (KUNA)

## Act before amnesty's deadline, warns Mol

By Munaif Naif  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 15:** The Ministry of Interior has called on those who violated the Residency Law to take advantage of the amnesty, which will end on June 17, to amend their status or leave the country within the specified period to avoid legal accountability.

Consequently, the ministry continues to exert tremendous efforts to arrest those who violated the Residency and Labor laws. The ongoing inspection campaigns of the Residency Affairs Investigation General Department resulted in the arrest of 43 individuals of various nationalities in Farwaniya Governorate and Shuwaikh Industrial Area.

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Kuwaiti Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Representative at the UN and international organizations headquarters in Vienna, Talal Al-Fassam, delivers a speech at the 33rd session of the United Nations' Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) in Vienna. -- See Page 3

## Kuwait stresses accurate info for Schengen visa applicants

**KUWAIT CITY, May 15, (KUNA):** Kuwait's Civil Aviation authority (DGCA) stressed on Wednesday the importance of obtaining travel visas for travelers departing to Schengen countries from their embassies and providing correct information to avoid rejection of the visa application.

Acting Deputy Director General

for Aviation Safety, Air Transport and Civil Aviation Security, Abdullah Al-Rajhi, added in a press statement that all tourism and travel offices that assist citizens in obtaining a Schengen visa must not provide incorrect information for travel tickets and accommodation

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### Day by Day

HIS HIGHNESS the Amir's agreements with Türkiye were established directly between the two governments, a fact he explicitly stated.

His Highness made it clear that there would be no involvement of intermediaries or corrupt agents in these agreements, be it in the area of weapons procurement or otherwise.

This stands in contrast to previous deals, where corruption was rampant, with individuals seeking personal gain through inflated profits and commissions, often exceeding the actual value of the goods involved.

In both the Gulf countries and beyond, such practices are universally condemned, with many of those involved rightly characterized as high-level thieves.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

### 4 or 9 days?

## Eid duration linked to Arafat Standing

**KUWAIT CITY, May 15:** This year's Eid al-Adha holiday will be four days if Arafat Standing falls on June 15 (Saturday), reports Al-Anba daily.

Then, the days of Eid will be on June 16, 17 and 18 and work will resume on June 19.

If Arafat falls on June 16 (Sunday), the Eid days will be on June 17, 18 and 19; then June 20 (Thursday) will be declared a rest day since it falls between two holidays. Thus, the holiday will be nine days, as work will resume on June 23 (Sunday).

According to sources, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) will issue a holiday circular in advance. If the holiday is four days, employees who wish to extend it can submit a request for periodic leave for June 19 and 20.

It is important to note that absence on these two days without submitting a leave request in advance will result in the entire period being counted as absence from work, sources added.

## 10,000 expats axed from gov't sector in five years

**KUWAIT CITY, May 15:** The Civil Service Commission (CSC) is closely monitoring the implementation of the replacement policy in government agencies; along with the availability of national professionals in the central register of government employment, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources said this is in accordance with CSC Resolution No. 11/2017, which specifies the required percentages for each functional group. They affirmed that 10 functional groups have been quantified, with percentages ranging from 98 to 100 percent.

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## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 03:27 Asr ..... 15:20  
 Sunrise .. 04:56 Maghrib .. 18:33  
 Zohr ..... 11:44 Isha ..... 20:00

# Local

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

## Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

**By Day:** Rather hot, partly cloudy to cloudy and relatively humid with moderate to fresh northeasterly wind to easterly wind, with speeds of 20-55 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times and a chance

## Weather

for rising dust.

**By Night:** Mild, clouds will decrease gradually and relatively humid with light to moderate freshening at times easterly wind to northeasterly wind, with speeds of 08-45 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	36	27
Kuwait Airport	36	28
Abdaly	37	21
Jahra	37	27
Salmiyah	32	28
Nuwaisib	33	26
Wafra	35	24

## Destruction of Gaza schools on agenda

### 'Kuwait active partner in supporting ALECSO programs'

JEDDAH, May 15, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait is an active partner in supporting ALECSO programs, said Acting Undersecretary of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education, Mansour Al-Daihani Tuesday.

This came in remarks to KUNA by Al-Daihani during his participation in the Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) 121st executive council meeting in Jeddah, led by Saudi Arabia.

Al-Daihani praised the efforts of the cooperating Arab nations in holding meetings periodically and shedding light on what needs to be seen regarding the cultural and educational standards.

Al-Daihani expressed his gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their efforts in organizing the meeting, which saw the participation of 22 Arab countries.

Part of the agenda is taking an impor-

tant step to resolve the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, which led to the destruction of countless schools, educational institutes, and infrastructure, said, Al-Daihani.

He also pointed to Kuwait's history with ALECSO mentioning some prominent examples in which Kuwait played a crucial role including projects in Somalia, Jerusalem, and others.

For his part, the Chairman of the Executive Board of ALECSO, Hani Al-Muqbil, spoke about the painful circumstances Palestinians are going through in his speech, rejecting the occupation and the forced displacement of Gazans.

He stressed ALECSO's condemnation of the war that claimed the lives of thousands of civilians and destroyed hospitals, places of worship, infrastructures, schools, and institutions.

Al-Muqbil revealed that any action made or will be made by the government to the Execu-

tive Board would not be a coincidence or protocol, but rather a future vision that was planned to strengthen Arab ranks and reinforce principles to ensure their success when faced with a challenge.

Dr. Mohammad Ould Amar, the General Director of ALECSO, expressed his hope at the meeting that this will be a milestone that enhances the role and status of the organization to continue its mission with efficiency.

In addition to Al-Daihani, the Secretary-General of the Kuwaiti National Committee for Education, Science and Culture, Ali Dashti, was part of the Kuwaiti delegation participating in the meeting.

Jeddah will host the 121st session of the Executive Council of ALECSO, on Tuesday and Wednesday, in addition to the General Conference of ALECSO in its 27th session on May 17 of this year.



KUNA photo  
Acting Undersecretary of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education, Mansour Al-Daihani at the meeting.



Some of the participants in the panel discussion.

## 'China committed to investing in Kuwait projects; ties strong'

'West misleading world on Beijing phenomenal progress'

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff



Media persons from Kuwait are briefed on the economic success of China.



The China-Arab Research Center on Reform and Development at the University of Shanghai for International Education.

### KUWAIT CITY, May 15: A delegation of Kuwaiti media practitioners and journalists visited the China-Arab Research Center on Reform and Development at the University of Shanghai for International Education.

Secretary General of the center Professor Wang Guanda, Associate Professor Chen Yueyang and several high-level students warmly welcomed the delegation.

Guanda spoke highly of the strong relationship between China and Kuwait, emphasizing that his country is committed to investing in Abdullah Port, and that the agreements signed by his country will have a positive impact on Chinese investments in Kuwait.

He also highlighted China's interest in collaborating with Gulf countries, particularly Kuwait, in renewable and solar energy production.

He expressed his optimistic outlook for Gulf countries, indicating that in view of climate change, desert areas in the region will transform into green oases.

On the general economic position, Guanda cited a recent report by China People's Bank, which showed global demands and international trade on the rise. He said China's consumption exceeded expectations, while industrial investments continue to grow.

He also affirmed that the Chinese government's financial subsidy policy will continue, supported by integrated political procedures.

China People's Bank reported that China's GDP grew by 5.3 percent in the first quarter of this year, reaching 29.63 trillion yuan (approximately \$4.17 trillion). It added the economy rose by 1.6 percent, with domestic consumption rising by 4.7 percent in the first quarter of 2024. China aims to boost local demand to enhance economic growth.

Guanda also cited the National Statistics Office, which reported a 10.1 percent increase in research and innovation expenditures in 2022, amounting to three trillion yuan (\$0.42 trillion).

#### Research

He disclosed that China leads the world in terms of the number of official workers in research. In 2023, China exported electric vehicles, solar batteries and lithium batteries worth 1.06 trillion yuan (\$150 billion US), he added.

He emphasized that China's contribution to the global economy has reached 30 percent, and that it continues to enhance this contribution through the Belt and Road Initiative. This initiative will enter a new high-quality phase in 2024, as announced by President Xi Jinping, he elaborated.

Meanwhile, Guanda criticized certain Western press institutions for doubting the sustainability of China's advancement. "These entities spread rumors, claiming China has reached its peak and will collapse due to its aging population and reduced production. Such rumors are part of a deliberate attempt to defame China, he pointed out.

He said Western propaganda has doubted China in recent years, but China has proven them wrong. He disproved the allegation that there is an excess of Chinese production beyond market demand by quoting Chinese Minister of Finance Liao Minzhu. According to the minister, the demand for electric cars will increase to 45 million by 2030, which is 4.5 times the demand in 2022.

He clarified that China has manufactured 9.587 million electric cars, of which only one eighth has been sold domestically. He added it is not true that the Chinese industry is successful solely due to government subsidies. Instead, the government provides subsidies to start-up industries, and once they prove their success, the subsidies are gradually reduced. If an industry fails after receiving the subsidy, it is no longer subsidized because it is expected to fail, he explained.

On teaching Arabic language to Chinese students, Guanda disclosed that approximately 1,000 students graduate each year from Arabic language departments at 52 universities. He went on to say that 200 students graduate annually from the China-Arab Research Center on Reform and Development, and there are also students who study Arabic independently. Guanda himself studied Arabic at Kuwait University in 1998, revealing that the center will establish a translation department for Kuwait starting from the upcoming academic year. This coincides with the inauguration of the new headquarters of the center, he concluded.

### Road repairs in full swing

KUWAIT CITY, May 15: The Ministry of Public Works (MPW) has taken significant steps to improve the condition of roads in the country, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources unveiled the ministry's plan to offer contracts for road works in all governorates. Sources affirmed these contracts will be open, public tenders available to both local and foreign companies. They said the goal is to address the road condition issue, which is a top priority on the agenda of Minister of Public Works and State Minister for Municipality Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan.

Sources added these contracts will cover general maintenance works to improve the infrastructure in various areas; while there will be specific maintenance contracts for the first, third, fifth, sixth and seventh ring roads, Al-Sabiya Road, King Fahd Road, Airport Road, Fahheel Expressway, Al-Jahra Road, Abdally Road, Al-Salmi Road and King Faisal Road.

### Ministry pledges support

## 50% are women in leadership, supervisory positions: official

KUWAIT CITY, May 15: Abdulaziz Sari, the Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs, emphasized the ministry's dedication to supporting Kuwaiti women across all domains, working closely with public benefit associations focused on women's affairs, reports Al-Jarida daily.

He highlighted the significant representation of women in leadership roles within the Ministry and its affiliated agencies, with three women leaders and approximately 30 directors and supervisors, constituting nearly 50 percent of total leadership and supervisory positions.

Speaking at a panel discussion titled "Distinguished Kuwaiti Women" organized by the Supreme Council for Family Affairs in collaboration with the Lawyers' Association on Women's Day, Sari underscored Kuwait's historical commitment to women's advancement.

He noted Kuwait's remarkable achievements in overcoming challenges and its prominent regional and international standing, attributing much of this success to the active participation of women. Kuwait has embraced the principle of gender equality, recognizing women's contributions across economic, cultural, and social spheres, extending beyond political rights.

Sari highlighted the significant progress Kuwaiti women have made in leadership positions, both in the public and private sectors. He acknowledged their pivotal role in societal development, leading to the historic milestone of Kuwaiti Women's Day on May 16, 2005, commemorating wom-

en's political rights achievement in the National Assembly. Subsequently, women's representation in the National Assembly increased, marking significant progress towards gender equality.

Moreover, Sari credited Kuwait's Constitution and its commitment to international conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, ratified in 1994, as crucial factors in advancing women's rights. Legislative measures and patriotic initiatives further supported and protected women's rights, ensuring their empowerment and continued progress.

Dr. Maryam Al-Azmi, the Acting Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, emphasized Kuwaiti women's successes across various fields, driven by their intellectual prowess, patriotism, and commitment to national advancement. She highlighted women's contributions to volunteerism, humanitarian work, as well as their presence in judicial, diplomatic, military, and economic domains, underscoring their indispensable role in Kuwait's development.

Al-Azmi also noted Kuwait's early ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, reflecting the country's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment under Amiri Decree No. 24/1994. This commitment underscores Kuwait's aspiration to remain a cultural hub and a beacon of knowledge and progress, fostering an environment where women and men alike contribute to the nation's prosperity.

### PM congratulated on new post

## 'Rally behind Amir, leadership in current challenging times'

KUWAIT CITY, May 15: Khaled Al-Madhkour, President of the Social Reform Society, emphasized the imperative of rallying behind the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah as both a legal obligation and a national duty, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Addressing the General Assembly on its 60th anniversary, Al-Madhkour underscored the significance of unity during the current challenges facing the nation. He stressed that aligning with His Highness the Amir is vital for the welfare of the country and its citizens.

Al-Madhkour invoked prayers for the enduring stability, security, and prosperity of the nation, along with invoking blessings for His Highness's health and well-being.

Reflecting on societal discord elsewhere, Al-Madhkour urged a collective societal responsibility to safeguard Kuwait's stability, cohesion, and national unity. He cautioned against forces of division and incitement, emphasizing the importance of preserving the nation's stability and security.

Expressing unwavering confidence in His Highness's dedication to the nation and its people, Al-Madhkour highlighted the importance of upholding Kuwait's historical achievements, safeguarded by past generations. He emphasized the need to preserve the country's security, identity, economy, constitution, and unity under His Highness's leadership.

Meanwhile, the Kuwait Teachers Association (KTA) has expressed its full support for His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, and his recent decisions made during a challenging period, reports Al-Jarida daily.

They emphasized their commitment to following his directives and working towards the best interests of the nation.

The association highlighted the importance of teachers in shaping and building the future generation, pledging to uphold their responsibilities in advancing the coun-

try's progress.

Additionally, they congratulated Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah on his appointment as Prime Minister, expressing hope that educational issues would receive priority attention and support to enhance the educational environment for teachers and students alike.

The Kuwaiti Society for Supporting Inventors and Innovation congratulated Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah, the Prime Minister, and the members of the new government, expressing its optimism for the success of their path and the attainment of further achievements, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Dr. Fatima Al-Thallab, Chairman of the Association's Board of Directors, emphasized the significance of Dr. Mathal Hadi Al-Huwaila's appointment as Minister of Social Affairs, Labor, Family and Childhood Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, considering it a moment of pride for Kuwaiti women.

Dr. Al-Thallab expressed hope for a new phase marked by progress and development under the leadership of Dr. Al-Huwaila. She emphasized the importance of providing increased support and attention to inventors, innovators, and Kuwaiti citizens from the concerned authorities, recognizing them as integral components of the country's human capital. The association pledged to leverage its resources and expertise to serve society and foster a culture of innovation.

Wishing Minister Al-Huwaila success in her endeavors, Dr. Al-Thallab highlighted the need for initiatives that promote national competencies and empower Kuwaiti inventors and innovators to realize their aspirations.



Dr. Al-Ma'atouq

### By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 15: Chairman of the Board of Directors of the International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO) and Special Advisor to the Secretary General of the United Nations Dr. Abdulah Ma'atouq Al-Ma'atouq opened the 19th General Assembly of the IICO.

He announced that the IICO's allocations to support Gaza to date have reached \$5.4 million, as the organization has worked to finance 54 projects in partnership with Kuwaiti charitable societies, Palestinian organizations working in Gaza and the Turkish Red Crescent.

Al-Ma'atouq began with the recitation of the Holy Quran, then he proceeded with expressing deepest appreciation and gratitude for His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

He recalled the unwavering support of His Highness for charitable work and his sound guidance for the organization to support the people in Palestine.

"For more than seven months, the Zionist killing and brutality machine did not stop attacking proud Gaza. In facing this aggression, the organization mobilized its efforts and humanitarian interventions in order to keep pace with the tragic and disastrous humanitarian situation in the Strip toward the paths of collecting donations and studying the projects in Gaza. It quickly secured the basic needs of medical and food aid and necessary and urgent shelter supplies for civilians, medical and

civil defense teams, as the IICO's allocations to support Gaza have reached \$ 5.4 million," he revealed.

He pointed out that IICO finances 54 projects in partnership with Kuwaiti charitable societies, Palestinian organizations working in Gaza and the Turkish Red Crescent. He said these projects include sponsoring orphans and their families, the disabled, medical teams including nurses and pharmaceutical staff and needy families; as well as the provision of shelters, tents, water irrigation, food, medical and pharmaceutical supplies, subsistence supplies, flour, ambulances, bulldozers, electrical machines, refrigerators and others.

Moreover, the IICO succeeded in leading the Ninth Humanitarian Conference for Effective Partnership for Better Humanitarian Work, in coordination with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and a number of strategic partners.

This is within the framework of the organization's tireless endeavor to mobilize efforts to support life-saving humanitarian interventions in the Gaza Strip.

Al-Ma'atouq asserted: "Thanks to Allah for the success of the conference with the participation of 147 local, regional and international organizations from 48 countries around the world, as it resulted in pledges to implement programs and projects worth more than \$2 billion to deal with the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip in the next two years. IICO will form a committee to follow up the implementation of these programs. Cooperation with Kuwaiti charitable societies, United Nations and other international organizations is continuing to support the people in Gaza through the flow of aid via air, sea and land bridges. We will not hesitate to perform our humanitarian and legal duties until security and safety return to Gaza, and construction and development prevail."



# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## 'Need to forego opposition, all must jointly work for country'

"KUWAIT has initiated the dissolution of the National Assembly and the temporary suspension of certain articles of the Constitution for a period not exceeding four years. This period will be dedicated to a comprehensive study of all aspects of the democratic process, with the findings to be submitted for consideration, allowing the government to take appropriate actions," columnist **Dr. Nada Sulaiman Al-Mutawa**, wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, conveyed these decisions in a recent televised address to the nation on the tenth of May. His tone, simultaneously somber and resolute, reflected a commitment to Kuwait's enduring political and economic legacy. Kuwait's history is marked by a leadership dedicated to upholding the nation's proud heritage of political and economic stability.



Dr. Al-Mutawa

"In previous addresses, His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, had consistently emphasized national unity and constructive dialogue. These values have distinguished Kuwait, fostering internal stability and a unique balance of power.

"Kuwait has been commended for its efforts to expand globally, strengthen foreign relations, and advance its esteemed position as a beacon of peace.

"However, recent turbulence in parliamentary proceedings has disrupted the course of development. Electoral campaigns, clashes between Parliament members and government officials, and the delay in assuming duties have prompted His Highness the Amir to call for a renewed approach and systematic reform in political life.

"Despite Ramadan's spirit of flexibility and the lofty rhetoric of proposed solutions, recent political developments have veered into unsettling territory.

"Tensions have escalated, departing from the traditional decorum of Kuwait's political arena. Rather than awaiting the legislative session's opening, His Highness chose to address the nation, condemning the use of public platforms for defamation and marginalization. Interference in executive appointments and conditions for selecting the Crown Prince further exacerbated discord.

"Efforts to offer advice and mitigate tensions proved futile. Thus, His Highness had no recourse but to convey a message of both sorrow and resolve, announcing the suspension of the National Assembly -- a decision taken to preserve the integrity of Kuwait's legislative institution. Following this suspension, the Constitution will undergo review, with the aspiration that parliamentary life will be revitalized in the future.

"In conclusion, we fully support His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, in his commitment to rectify Kuwait's political and economic trajectory. We appreciate his calls for strategic initiatives that prioritize security and prosperity.

"In closing, it is disheartening to witness some using this decision as an opportunity for derision and slander. Rather, we should collectively strive to preserve and enhance parliamentary life. Let us hope that this suspension marks a renewal in both political and economic spheres."

**Also:**

"In the name of Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC)... Where are you? It is known that the mission of KGAC is to keep the State of Kuwait free from the danger of international smuggling operations. It is the oldest government administration in Kuwait, as it was established in 1899 during the reign of HH the late Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah. It is assumed that it developed and its role was strengthened when its objectives expanded -- from an institution whose purpose was to collect customs duties to a legal body at the level of combating crime. This means it is on alert 24 hours a day, not to mention its established relations with the relevant international organizations," columnist **Fakhri Hashem Al-Sayed Rajab** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"No one can deny the successes of this administration in the field of combating smuggling operations. Customs officers are always at the top of their work -- whether in NAS or Kuwaitiya buildings, Air Customs and Land Customs. They are armed with experience and modern X-ray technology, in addition to personal skills that have been refined through training to detect smugglers. They play an important role in combating drug trafficking by monitoring and inspecting all the imported and exported goods. Note that this administration talks about the huge profits it achieves annually...which is undoubtedly a good thing.

"However, it is unfortunate that the picture changed during my field visit, which came by chance. The reality speaks of great pain and greater ne-

glect, as it seems to the knowledgeable that nothing has changed in 20 years. I did not see anything in terms of development. I had a conversation with one of the employees who assured me that everything I see has been fixed for many years. He told me about the enormous amount of pain, starting with the humble offices, which I saw with my own eyes. As for the customs rest rooms, there is nothing wrong with that. Is it reasonable, for example, that they are designated for 50 employees? Fifteen chairs each. How can an employee working in these circumstances work with a reassured heart? How can he love his work and carry out the tasks assigned to him?

"Yes, what I saw was sad. Did you know that the dining rooms were old with worn-out cupboards in a very bad kitchen? Here, I could not help but tell the employee: 'There is no doubt that you receive incentives after every operation or confiscation.' He responded: 'Literally nothing... not even a dinar!'

"The question today is for KGAC: Doesn't this employee who works hard to stop the toxins from entering Kuwait deserve a reward? Why not, as long as you are talking about huge profits?!"

"More importantly, this employee's safety has not been guaranteed. We saw in the National Geographic program, in the Emirates in particular and in all other countries in the region and the world that there are special materials for rapid detection. Certainly, Kuwait has the capability to acquire these materials, so why not use them like the rest of the countries! Not short of resources! Doesn't the safety of this employee mean anything to you? Is the administration unable to provide clothing equipped with X-ray protective equipment? Is this the development you are talking about?!"

"By Allah, I do not see any of these -- with due respect to this administration. The matter needs an emergency procedure, because what is happening is not befitting the State of Kuwait or the health and psychological environment of the employees."

"Liberation of Kuwait... The eminent and distinguished head of Kuwait Diwan Association, **Fahd Al-Mujil** -- may Allah grant him success, good health and well-being -- graciously informed us about his telephone call with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah -- may Allah protect and preserve him, during which they talked about the recent measures. He conveyed to His Highness the view of the people of Kuwait in support of the recent measures, which were imposed by the current circumstances and have become necessary as the country is going through a difficult stage," columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Al-Mujil expressed support for these measures while praying for His Highness' health, wellness and success. He conveyed to us, may Allah reward him well, HH the Amir's response: 'This is what we want from our people. If we do well, they will support us and our procedures. If they have an opinion, they should inform us.' His Highness also quoted Al-Farouq Omar, saying: 'There is no good in you if you do not say it. There is no good in us if we do not hear it.' Or he said: 'We do not accept it.'

"This is the true face of the State of Kuwait, its people and its rulers. There are no barriers or closed doors. The ruler listens and accepts, and the ruled express their point of view politely and with respect. They listen and obey, in compliance with the words of the Noble Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace): 'You must listen and obey in your hardship and your ease, and your tonic. He hates you and influences you.' (Narrated by Muslim).

"At this particular time, we are in greater need of adhering to our religious and national principles more than ever in order to extricate our country from the bottleneck into which wrong practices have brought us to, not to mention the persistence of those we elected. They exceeded the limits of their powers stipulated in the Constitution, until the flood reached the extremes, so the National Assembly was dissolved before holding the opening session. He did not regret it amid the joy that spread throughout the country.

"As everyone knows, the joy of Kuwait over the recent measures is no less than their joy over the liberation of Kuwait from the brutal Iraqi invasion. Indeed, Kuwait was liberated from its kidnappers, thanks to Allah and the wisdom of the country's supreme leadership that sensed the danger and averted it before it occurred, and initiated the solution that became the solution for the Kuwaiti street, except those belonging to certain parties and the embassy boys whom we have not heard from till now. They kept quiet after seeing the red eye.

"Oh Allah, protect our country, Kuwait, and its people from all harm, and grant our leadership the righteous lining that will help him do what is good for the country and the people... Ameen."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

# Kuwaiti diplomat: World must tackle organized crime, terrorism activities

Arab anti-corruption agencies forum to kick off

**VIENNA, May 15, (KUNA):** The world must address the increasing rate of organized crime and its links to terrorism activities, a Kuwaiti diplomat said on Wednesday.

This statement was delivered by Kuwaiti Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Representative at the UN and international organizations headquarters in Vienna Talal Al-Fassam at the 33rd session of the United Nations' Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) in Vienna.

A unified international stance is needed to address the increasing rates of organized crime now affecting the security and stability of several countries, he indicated, noting that such illicit acts were targeting the youth and the very fabric of society.

Al-Fassam affirmed that Kuwait was eager to contribute to global security efforts in line with the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG).

The State of Kuwait, on a national level, continues to implement measures to ensure security as well as solidify justice for all, he affirmed, adding that such measures were part of Kuwaiti Vision 2035.

He revealed that Kuwait had come up with several laws and regulations to bolster transparency, fight crime and corruption, in addition to boosting human rights.

Ambassador Al-Fassam went on to say that, Kuwait had signed and is part of a plethora of international agreements when it came to security cooperation, the handing in of wanted individuals and efforts to combat corruption.

**Cybercrime**

In connection with cybercrime and criminal activities crossing borders, the Kuwaiti diplomat indicated that his country had issue a law in 2015 to counter cybercrime and also signed several regional and international agreements to prevent borders-hopping criminal activities.

Ambassador Al-Fassam took the chance to highlight the continuous crimes committed by the Israeli occupation forces against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, saying that the recent assault on the city of Rafah was part of a long series of crimes committed by the aggressors.

The international community and the world must put a halt to the Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people especially in the Gaza Strip, which right now needed an immediate ceasefire to allow the entry of much-needed humanitarian aid, he stressed.

He called on the UNSC to take a resolution to ensure justice for the Palestinian people and allow them to establish an independent state within the 1967 borders with east Jerusalem as a capital.

Meanwhile, the Arab Forum of Anti-Corruption Agencies and Financial Intelligence Units is scheduled to kick off in Saudi capital, Riyadh later on Wednesday, with Kuwait's participation from the Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) and Kuwait Financial Intelligence Unit (KwFIU).

Chairman of the Kuwaiti Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), Abdulaziz Al-Ibrahim, and the Acting Head of the Kuwaiti Financial Intelligence Unit, Hanadi Bo Hamed, were due to partake in the event.

The forum would host around 600 experts and 75 speakers, representing financial intelligence units, anti-corruption authorities, government agencies, international organizations, as well as local bodies, alongside international and academic institutions.

The forum, due to conclude on Thursday, would focus on building future-ready capabilities and enhancing cooperation between stakeholders to combat financial crime, money laundering and terrorist financing in the Middle East and North Africa.

Designed to establish a clear path to impactful collaboration between Saudi Arabian agencies, counterpart organizations, and regional as well as international bodies in the fight against financial crime, the forum is a strategic, action-focused gathering, as it is designed to spearhead the adaptation and preparedness of institutions for future challenges. Moreover, it serves not only as an occasion for dialogue but also as a platform for initiating concrete initiatives and outcomes.



A fireman tackling the blaze .

## Mutla'a factory fire tackled

Firefighting teams successfully contained a fire that broke out in the Kirby rooms of a factory located in the Al-Mutla'a area. The teams acted promptly to combat, control, and extinguish the fire, ensuring that no significant injuries were sustained. Their swift and effective response prevented the situation from escalating, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

## Qarifa ruling May 22

## Four years jail upheld in bribe for entry visa case

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 15: The Court of Cassation upheld the ruling of a lower court that sentenced a Residency Affairs Department employee to four years in prison with hard labor for receiving KD500 bribe from a Pakistani in exchange for completing an entry visa transaction.

The incident dates back to early June last year, when the Residence Affairs Investigation Department provided information about the accused receiving a bribe in exchange for completing transactions. The employee was arrested red handed, because the entire process was documented through audio and video recordings.

**Qarifa ruling May 22:** The Criminal Court set May 22 for the announcement of its ruling on the case of Musaed Al-Qarifa and rejected the request to release the accused after hearing the arguments of the defense team.

According to the case files, the accused appeared in court from his prison cell and denied the charges of incitement to overthrow the government, insulting the authority of the Amir, broadcasting false news, and insulting the Minister of Interior. His lawyers demanded for his release, but the court rejected it.

The Public Prosecution had previously decided to detain Al-Qarifa for 21 days and referred him to the Central Prison, pending investigation on a State security case after he denied the charges filed against him based on his speech at an election seminar.



Some of the illegal residents being taken into custody. Around 68 illegal expatriates were arrested in raids conducted in different areas of the country .

## 'Transparency, accountability vital in military affairs to protect funds'

KUWAIT CITY, May 15: First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahd Yousef Saud Al-Sabah emphasized the paramount importance of Kuwait's security, entrusted to the capable hands of its sons within the military establishment, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

Speaking at a meeting with senior army commanders at the Ministry of Defense headquarters, Sheikh Fahd expressed gratitude to His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Prime Minister for their unwavering trust and support, which he views as a weighty responsibility to be upheld with diligence and dedication.

Sheikh Fahd underscored the significance of His Highness the Amir's recent directives, particularly the principle that "no one is above the law, regardless of position or capacity."

He emphasized that these directives

serve as a guiding principle for the Ministry of Defense, ensuring transparency and accountability in all decisions and actions to safeguard public funds from any potential infringements.



Sheikh Fahad

In closing, Sheikh Fahd reiterated the commitment to enhance the efficiency and capabilities of the Kuwaiti army, highlighting the direct attention and support of His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Prime Minister. He pledged to work diligently within their directives, with a focus on continual improvement, utilization of resources, and overcoming obstacles to achieve the nation's strategic vision and goals.

## MoE warns legal action

## 37,100 still to submit grad degrees

KUWAIT CITY, May 15: The Ministry of Education (MoE) has issued a call to 37,100 of its employees to urgently update their academic qualifications on the Ministry's designated website. This directive was reiterated by Matrouk Al-Mutairi, the Acting Undersecretary of the Administrative Sector, emphasizing compliance with the Civil Service Commission's Letter No. 2023116465, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

The directive initially circulated on March 11, highlights the need for employees to upload their post-secondary educational qualifications by the specified deadline, now just a week away. Failure to comply will result in legal actions against the non-compliant employees. This initiative underscores the Ministry's commitment to maintaining high standards and ensuring that all public education sector employees meet the necessary educational requirements.

**Attempted murder:** By order of the Deputy Public Prosecutor, a case of attempted murder was registered against an unknown assailant following a stabbing incident in Jahra.

A security source reported that the victim's wife brought her 27-year-old husband to Jahra Hospital, explaining that he had been involved in an altercation with an unidentified individual. The victim sustained two stab wounds, one to the right

side of his chest, and another in his back, in addition to several bruises. Detectives have been assigned to apprehend the perpetrator, while the victim continues to receive medical treatment.

**Kuwaiti swindled:** Capital detectives have apprehended an individual accused of defrauding a sixty-year-old citizen through a scheme involving a farmhouse. The arrest followed a report filed by the victim at one of the Capital's police stations, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The complainant accused the suspect of taking money to secure a livestock pen in Kabd. After receiving the payment, the suspect began delaying the process, leading to the complainant losing trust and demanding the money back. The suspect refused to return the funds. Investigations are ongoing.

**5.57m likely to travel:** Abdullah Al-Rajhi -- acting Deputy Director General for Aviation Safety, Air Transport and Aviation Security at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) -- has announced that Kuwait International Airport expects to handle 5.57 million passengers (around 42,117 arrival and departure flights) in the upcoming summer vacation period which extends from the beginning of June until mid-September, reports **Al-Anba** daily.



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# Yarmouk infrastructure project inked at a cost of KD 10.945 mn

First symposium showcases commitment to better living

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 15:** The 'First Generation' diwaniya in Yarmouk recently hosted a symposium entitled, 'Implementing an Infrastructure Improvement Project in Yarmouk', at the invitation of the cooperative society in the area.

Present at the event were acting Assistant Undersecretary for the Sanitary Engineering Sector at the Ministry of Public Works Abdul Rahman Al-Enezi, members of the Board of Directors and President of the Cooperative Society Suleiman Al-Baijan, Head of Yarmouk Police Station Colonel Abdullah Al-Qattan, Project Engineer Muhammad Helou, a group of people from the area and the ministry's engineers.

Al-Enezi stressed that the ministry, under the guidance of Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, is keen on implementing contracts within the specified dates; especially the infrastructure contracts, due to their importance in developing and modernizing services in residential areas which, in turn, contribute to raising the standard of well-being and living of citizens.

He explained that the contract to improve the infrastructure in Yarmouk has a contractual cost of KD 10.945 million and was signed on March 10, disclosing that work began on April 2. He said television filming is currently being done to en-



Indian Ambassador Dr Adarsh Swaika called on HE Ambassador Nasser Al-Sabeeh, Assistant Foreign Minister, Sheikh Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Kuwait Diplomatic Institute, Kuwait. Discussion centered around strengthening cooperation between the two diplomatic Institutes.

sure the safety of rain drainage network and maintenance works that will be carried out including putting asphalt and other services.

He added the duration of the contract is three years and is scheduled to be completed on April 2, 2027, followed by a maintenance phase for the works that have been implemented.

"We hope that the residents of Yarmouk will cooperate with us by enduring the inconvenience that the contract work will cause due to drilling, breaking tiles and others, as we are all seeking to achieve public good. The contract work includes replacing the entire sanitary sewer network, as well as replacing parts of the rain, telephone and lighting networks, the final asphalt layer, tiles and water lines for the irrigation networks," he explained.

He pointed out: "As part of the commitment to inform and familiarize citizens with the project, we have placed information boards at the three entrances to the area. The project's advisory body is keen on communicating those residing in the area, listen to their suggestions and complaints, and respond to their inquiries. A work plan and a media team have been created, in cooperation with Yarmouk Cooperative Society, to play this important role from the beginning of the project until its end. The difficulties have been identified, including the presence of service buildings, traffic density, narrow streets and awnings in front of houses. We are committed to returning them to the way they are after completing the works, as part of the terms of the contract. This is in addition to the presence of housing in the construction stages and the sidewalks being covered with trees. Trees will be removed only if absolutely necessary, which hinders the implementation of work, and the central island in the area will be removed. The difficulties that businesses will face are parking on sidewalks and official working hours during summer, which are determined by the Ministry of Social Affairs. It will be adhered to in respect of State's laws. Work will be stopped at peak traffic times in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior."

## Contractor completes all licenses related works

## 9 fresh water towers mullied in Al-Mutlaa Residential City

**KUWAIT CITY, May 15:** The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy started implementing the contract for the construction of nine fresh water towers in Al-Mutlaa Residential City and the ancillary works, as the project contractor has completed all licenses related to these works as stipulated in the contract awarded

towards the end of last year in accordance with the specifications set by the ministry at a total cost of KD7.796 million, reports Al-Anba daily.

Sources confirmed the ministry had earlier established several water tanks in Al-Mutlaa as part of the infrastructure works being carried out to supply water to the city and serve the families

who own plots there, in addition to various government buildings.

Sources added the infrastructure works include the establishment of a main line to supply water to the city, stressing all approvals have been obtained. Sources revealed the fresh water towers will be constructed on Plot Two in the city.

## PM sends greetings cable

## HH the Amir congratulates Paraguay on National Day

**KUWAIT CITY, May 15, (KUNA):** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to Paraguay President Santiago Pena on his country's National Day wishing him good health and Paraguay and its people further

progress and prosperity. Meanwhile, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to President Santiago Pena on his country's National Day.



Dr Moudi Al-Hamoud with some of the participating students.

## Event held under patronage of Dr Al-Hamoud

## Abdullah Al-Salem University hosts exhibit showcasing student projects

**KUWAIT CITY, May 15:** The English Language Preparatory Program at Abdullah Al-Salem University recently organized an exhibition showcasing projects by students from the English Language Program for the 2024 semester, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The event, held under the patronage of Dr. Moudi Al-Hamoud, Chairperson of the University's Founding Board of Directors, saw the participation of 140 teams of students from the program's academic and preparatory departments.

Taking place at the university's administration building and main library building in the Khaldiya area, the exhibition featured projects and products crafted by students in areas such as sustainability, tourism, and volunteer work, along with contributions from the mathematics and Arabic language departments.

Dr. Moudi Al-Hamoud commended the efforts of the preparatory program students, emphasizing their creative ideas and dedication reflected in their final projects. He noted that these projects demonstrate the capabilities of youth in utilizing

information and applying it on the ground to contribute to sustainable development goals. Al-Hamoud expressed optimism about the future achievements and development of these ambitious young individuals.

Dr. Amal Al-Laithi, a faculty member at Abdullah Al-Salem University and head of the English Language Program, highlighted the significance of the event, which is held at the end of each semester.

She emphasized its role in raising awareness about topics relevant to individuals and society, fostering research and practical skills, and boosting self-confidence and teamwork among students. The competitive framework of the event aims to stimulate creativity and innovation among students, preparing them for their academic and professional futures.

The exhibition concluded with the announcement of the winning projects, marking another successful initiative by Abdullah Al-Salem University to promote student engagement and academic excellence.

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Qatamesh and Dr Al-Sayer signing the agreement.

## Move aims at supporting patients

## KRCS signs 'cooperation agreement' with Jordan's King Hussein Cancer Foundation

**KUWAIT CITY, May 15:** The Kuwait Red Crescent Society and the Jordanian King Hussein Cancer Foundation have signed a cooperation agreement aimed at providing cancer treatment for patients and supplying medical equipment to the foundation, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The agreement, supported by the General Secretariat of Endowments, was signed by Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer, President of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, and Nisreen Qatamesh, Director General of the King Hussein Cancer Foundation.

Qatamesh expressed her gratitude to the Kuwait Red Crescent Society for its support of the foundation's mission to assist cancer patients who lack resources for treatment. She emphasized the significance of this support in providing patients with a genuine opportunity for treatment and recovery, as well

as supplying essential medical equipment. She also thanked the General Secretariat of Endowments for their support and trust in the foundation, underscoring the positive impact on the lives of cancer patients.

Al-Sayer echoed Qatamesh's sentiments, highlighting the longstanding cooperation between the two organizations, which has now entered its sixth year.

He praised the capabilities of the King Hussein Cancer Center and its esteemed reputation in the region. Al-Sayer reaffirmed the Kuwait Red Crescent Society's commitment to continuing collaboration with the foundation, aiming to enhance humanitarian efforts between the two entities.

He also commended the foundation's efforts in supporting Syrian refugees, emphasizing Kuwait's steadfast support for humanitarian causes globally.

## KPC, UNIPEC extend contract until 2033

**KUWAIT CITY, May 15:** Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and China International United Petroleum & Chemicals Co., Ltd. (UNIPEC), the commercial arm of China Petroleum & Chemical Corporation (SINOPEC) that owns the largest refining capacity in China, have signed an agreement to extend their contract until 2033, reports Al-Anba daily.

The agreement, which stipulates daily supply of 300,000 barrels, was signed in the presence of KPC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud, Managing Director for Global Marketing Sheikh Khaled Al-Sabah, Deputy Managing Director for Global Marketing Walid Al-Mukhaizeem and representative of the corporation's office in Beijing Khaled Al-Mutairi.

Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud expressed his appreciation, describing the extension as a significant milestone for the corporation. He

emphasized that it aligns with the corporation's strategic objective of securing stable markets for Kuwaiti oil. He stated that the agreement ensures Kuwait's prominent position in China -- the global economy's most important market. He also affirmed that this will guarantee profitable and sustainable returns.

On the other hand, Sheikh Khaled Al-Sabah expressed pride in witnessing the extension of the contact between KPC and UNIPEC. He emphasized that this extension is based on the long-standing relationship between Kuwait and China in various fields; including trade, industry and others. He said the agreement opens new opportunities for fruitful collaboration in the future.

He also commended the role of the global marketing unit in maintaining and strengthening business relationships with key clients.





Kuwait's FM meets with Iraq's Deputy PM and FM.



Kuwait's FM meets with his Moroccan counterpart.

KUNA photos

## FM meets Iraqi Deputy PM and FM, his African counterparts on Arab Summit prep meeting sidelines

Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya met Tuesday Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Dr. Fouad Hussein, on the sidelines of the preparatory ministerial meeting for the 33rd Arab Summit.

During the meeting, both sides touched on the bilateral ties between the two countries, the latest regional and global events,

and the items of the ministerial meeting agenda.

Meanwhile, FM Al-Yahya met Moroccan counterpart Nasser Bourita, on the sidelines of the preparatory ministerial meeting for the 33rd Arab Summit.

During the meeting, both sides touched on the bilateral ties between the two countries, the latest regional and global events,

and the items of the ministerial meeting agenda.

Also, FM Al-Yahya met Somali counterpart Ahmad Moallim Fiqi, on the sidelines of the preparatory ministerial meeting for the 33rd Arab Summit.

During the meeting, both sides touched on the bilateral ties between the two countries, the latest regional and global events,

and the items of the ministerial meeting agenda.

FM Al-Yahya also met Sudanese counterpart Hussein Awadh, on the sidelines of the preparatory ministerial meeting for the 33rd Arab Summit.

During the meeting, current developments on the Sudanese scene and the human suffering the brotherly Sudanese

people are experiencing were touched on.

The Sudanese minister renewed his country's gratitude for the medical supplies and the ongoing air bridge that was launched by Kuwait.

For his part, Minister Al-Yahya reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to stand with Sudan, support its unity, stability, and territorial integrity, and restore security and safety. (KUNA)

## We are

Continued from Page 1

Without a doubt, deifying the Constitution and making it divine created a kind of terror among everyone; up to the point that for 63 years, rulers have been wary of calling for development, because they faced many rioting attempts.

The constitutional texts were the source of the country's backwardness, because they granted executive powers to the parliamentarians whose actual tasks are legislation and oversight, not governance, which the Amir assumes through the executive authority. This happened up to the extent that any law the Amir rejected was approved forcefully after a month.

It happened in 2003, when HH the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad approved the political rights of women, but the National Assembly rejected the law. The rejection continued until 2005, when women forced it on the parliamentarians and others.

All this is a result of parliamentary hegemony, which severely harmed the country; while the Constitution clearly states that HH the Amir is the head of all authorities. Nevertheless, the loud noise that prevailed limited the exercise of his powers.

During the era of HH the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, agreements were made with China for Kuwait to enter the 'Silk Road' project, develop the islands and implement other gigantic projects, but the Assembly blocked them; because the stakeholders found that it did not serve them and prevented their corruption, through what was called the 'local agent' that was canceled months ago under pressure from the leadership, since the latter saw it as a source of systematic plunder.

Kuwait has a lot of money invested abroad and such investment is subject to very high risks. The country incurred enormous losses in recent international crises. This means the country needs a lot of local investments in various fields; hence, money must be pumped into it, whether from the public or private sector, which was shackled at some point by parliamentary riots and the influential people's monopoly of everything in the country.

Today, we are faced with a ruler who has lived over the past decades observing everything that is happening in the country. He is saddened by what the situation has become. He has committed himself to exerting his utmost efforts to restore the country's pioneering position and to work on its renaissance by investing every national effort on this.

Therefore, those concerned in the Council of Ministers must live up to the expectations of their Amir. They should start the construction phase, and achieve what HH the Amir -- the Head of the State -- promised to the people, because everyone in Kuwait wants prosperity.

## Amir pledges

Continued from Page 1

9. Dr. Noura Mohammad Al-Mashaan, Minister of Public Works and Minister of Municipality Affairs

10. Dr. Mohammad Ibrahim Al-Wasmi, Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs

11. Omar Saud Al-Omar, Minister of Commerce and Industry, and Minister of State for Communication Affairs

12. Dr. Mohammad Abdulaziz Bushehri, Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, and Minister of State for Housing Affairs

13. Dr. Amthal Hadi Al-Huwailah, Minister of Social Affairs, Labor, Family Affairs and Childhood and Minister of State for Youth Affairs

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah pledged to pursue the process of reforms and affirmed that "we are in a new phase of the responsible and serious action stages."

His Highness the Amir's statement came during a reception of the His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to take the oath on the occasion of his appointment and present the ministers to His Highness the Amir.

His Highness the Amir congratulated the newly elected ministers, stressing that it is a great responsibility, wishing them success in serving the dear homeland and Kuwait's citizens and residents.

"We are in a new, responsible, and serious phase of hard-working to serve the nation, its citizens, and its interests," said His Highness the Amir.

His Highness the Amir urged the new government to determine priorities, unify efforts, and harness energies according to a specific work plan, and timetable.

Further, His Highness the Amir demanded the newly formed government to accelerate the implementation of long-awaited strategic development projects, address needed fields, issues, and topics related to infrastructure, and develop health care and the educational system; through procedures that take into account transparency and the preservation of public money.

His Highness the Amir also called on the ministers to develop economic and investment sectors to achieve a sustainable economy, invest in human capital, promote innovation and

scientific research, improve the business environment and government services, and digital transformation in the services provided.

"I urge you to strengthen diplomatic relations with brotherly and friendly countries, raise cooperation frameworks with them in various fields to broader horizons, and consolidate the humanitarian role of the State of Kuwait," said Highness the Amir.

Later Wednesday, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah chaired an extraordinary meeting of the Cabinet at Bayan Palace.

The session was attended by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah stressed Wednesday that Kuwait would usher in a new era of responsible and hard work and unyielding giving for a nation that has rights and citizens whose freedoms, interests and funds must be protected.

His Highness the Amir made the statement during an extraordinary cabinet meeting held under his chairmanship at Bayan Palace in the presence of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and cabinet ministers who were sworn in before His Highness the Amir earlier in the day.

His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad called on the new government to follow up on the implementation of its works and projects and to bring anyone failing to do his duty to accountability.

He also urged the government to set priorities, unify efforts, harness energies pursuant to a specific work plan and timetable, and focus on follow-up through continuous inspection tours.

He, further, requested the new cabinet to speed up the execution of long-anticipated strategic development projects, tackle dossiers, issues and topics pertinent to infrastructure, advance health and housing care and the educational system by adopting procedures where transparency and public money preservation should be put into account.

All economic and investment sectors should be developed so as to ensure a sustainable economy, capitalize on human capital, enhance innovation and scientific research, revamp the business environment and government services, and achieve service digitalization, His Highness the Amir underlined.

Furthermore, His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad urged the new cabinet to promote Kuwait's diplomatic relations with its brotherly and friendly countries, broaden the scope of cooperation to new horizons, and cement Kuwait's humanitarian role.

Finally, His Highness the Amir emphasized that mass media should work on highlighting government achievements in the implementation of development projects in the country in order to fulfill the Kuwaiti people's expectations and aspirations.

The cabinet, in turn, voiced great appreciation and gratitude to His Highness the Amir for his prudent directives, vowing to absolutely stick to them as a government approach aiming at creating further progress, elevation, stability, security and safety for the nation and citizens.

## Act before

Continued from Page 1

In addition, the campaign of the Tripartite Committee -- whose members are from the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Interior -- in Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorates led to the arrest of 25 individuals of different nationalities proven to have violated the Residency and Labor laws.

All those arrested were referred to the concerned authorities for the necessary legal measures.

## Kuwait stresses

Continued from Page 1

to applicants.

Al-Rajhi pointed out that providing incorrect information to the embassies would lead to the rejection of the visa application, stressing that the DGCA would take the necessary legal actions against the offices that violate the instructions.

He stated that all travelers must be careful not to submit visa applications that include incorrect reservations and information for travel tickets and accommodation reservations in order to avoid rejection of the visa application and also ensure the validity of the travel visa for the destination country upon departure from Kuwait International Airport.

## 10,000 expats

Continued from Page 1

Sources revealed the decision has led to the termination of around 10,000 expatriate employees from the government sector over a span of five years. In the first year: 3,140 expatriate employees were laid off; followed by 1,550 in the second year; 1,437 in the third year; 1,843 in the fourth year and 2,000 in the fifth year, sources elaborated.

# 'Health' implements measures against overtime absenteeism

MoE intends to create educational activity coordinator position

**KUWAIT CITY, May 15:** The Ministry of Health is increasing the presence of its inspection teams in health districts, hospitals, health centers, various sectors and central departments to monitor employees who are absent from overtime work despite being officially assigned to work outside the regular working hours, reports Al-Anba daily.

The ministry issued an administrative decision stipulating that the names of employees should be removed from the overtime lists if their absence during overtime is noted by the inspection teams. This action was taken due to numerous cases of employees failing to attend overtime.

Consequently, the ministry is implementing strict measures to cancel or remove the names of employees who failed to work overtime.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education intends to create the 'educational activity coordinator' position in every school to carry out all the administrative tasks assigned to the teachers, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources revealed the educational activity coordinator will follow up all school activities including the cafeteria and radio, and stay with the students at the end of the school day. Sources said the Educational and Activities Development Sector confirmed that schools need this manpower, but they are difficult to obtain due to the lack of graduates with such specialization from the universities and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET).

Sources pointed out that it is required that this job title is educational in nature -- an obstacle that can be overcome by transferring teachers who wish to carry out administrative work to this position. Sources underscored the need to open the door for the transfer of teachers who moved to administrative work in the ministry or educational districts to fill this job, considering they hold an educational qualification and have been given training in the field of school activities. Sources added the technical advisor for school activities and the principal are responsible for evaluating the performance of the educational activity coordinator.

## ASCC to 'celebrate' World Museum Day

**KUWAIT CITY, May 15,** (KUNA): Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center (ASCC) announced Wednesday a series of riveting programs beginning next Saturday in celebration of World Museum Day to promote roles of cultural centers in education.

In a statement to KUNA, the center mentioned that the celebration, suitable for all age groups, includes a live show performance, interactive workshops, and a discussion panel with experts and academics.

The live show will take spectators in an exciting journey through the developments of the cultural educational scene in the country.

The discussions will revolve around role of museums, innovation, and future of preserving cultural heritage.



Group photo of the participants in the conference.

Al-Jarida photo

## Water association engages in world utilities confab

The Kuwait Water Association, through its technical advisor and head of the Sustainability Committee, Heba Abbas, participated in the inaugural meeting of the Executive Committee of the World Utilities Conference held in Abu Dhabi, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This participation is part of the preparations for the upcoming third edition of the conference, which is hosted annually by the Abu Dhabi National Energy Company (TAQA). The conference serves as a global platform for specialists, analysts, and innovators in the energy and water sectors to convene and discuss the latest technologies and practices for managing public utilities sus-

tainably. Saleh Al-Muzaini, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Water Association, emphasized that the association's involvement in the Executive Committee of the World Utilities Conference reflects its ongoing efforts to support and empower national talents, which are the true assets of Kuwait.

Abbas highlighted the transformative agenda set by the results of the United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP28), which places a strong emphasis on tripling renewable energy capacity and doubling energy efficiency by 2030. This agenda underscores the increasing demand for sustainability and

reduced environmental impact, compelling utilities to innovate and adopt green technologies while promoting investment in the green economy.

Abbas commended the global cooperation and exchange of experiences, stressing the importance of joint and continuous efforts to achieve a balance between addressing immediate concerns about energy security and advancing long-term emission reduction goals. She emphasized the need for Kuwait to strengthen its position as an effective and influential partner in the energy and water sectors, in line with global sustainability requirements and environmental challenges.

## Projects target improved treatment

# Dr. Al-Zaid initiates scientific research projects at Dasman Diabetes Institute

**KUWAIT CITY, May 15:** Dr. Fawaz Al-Zaid, a researcher and head of the Department of Bio-energy and Neuroscience at the Dasman Diabetes Institute, has embarked on two new scientific research projects with the approval of the International Scientific Advisory Council and the Institute's Scientific Research Ethics Review Committee, reports Al-Jarida daily.

These projects align with the institute's vision and research direction, and collaboration with international experts has been secured to ensure their optimal execution.

Dr. Al-Zaid, who holds a doctorate in human nutrition from King's College London, has a background in studying glucose movement in the intestine and has conducted research on appetite control in humans during his post-doctoral fellowship in endocrinol-

ogy at the University of Westminster.

He furthered his research in diabetes at the National Institute of Health and Medical Research in France, focusing on inflammation, insulin resistance, and tissue dysfunction.

Acknowledging the continuous support from the Dasman Institute and the role of "Scientific Progress" in

supporting Kuwaiti research, Dr. Al-Zaid outlined the two ongoing research projects at Dasman Diabetes.

The first project investigates the role of immune disorders in

type 2 diabetes, utilizing animal models, advanced laboratory techniques, imaging, and genetic sequencing. This research aims to deepen understanding of the immune system's involvement in diabetes pathogenesis and explore potential treatments to mitigate its inflammatory effects on various complications associated with type 2 diabetes.

The second research project examines the impact of stress, anxiety, and depression on the management of type 1 diabetes in adults.

Dr. Al-Zaid aims to comprehensively understand the psychological aspects of patients and their connection to the development of type 1 diabetes. By elucidating this relationship, the research seeks to enhance treatment strategies for type 1 diabetes patients facing psychological challenges.



Dr Al-Zaid

## Al-Adwani vows to improve system

# Minister of education thanks leadership for reinstatement

**KUWAIT CITY, May 15,** (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Adel Al-Adwani relayed his thanks and appreciation to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah for renewing their confidence in him and reinstating him in position.

Al-Adwani, in a statement on Wednesday after taking the consti-

tutional oath, said that this comes with great responsibilities in facing the challenges opposing the educational sector.

The minister asserted determination to move forth in executing leaderships' directives of arriving at an educational vision with quality, excellence, and in par with global developments.

They will be taking serious measures to improve the educational system in all its dimensions, create a stimulating environment for

innovation, and promote scientific research.

He underlined importance of creating investment opportunities to achieve financial sustainability, indicating that the youth are the true wealth and investment of this country.

Al-Adwani took note of the efforts of all ministry employees and called on academics and families alike to unite efforts and cooperate to accomplish sought after achievements.



## World News Roundup

## Europe

**Slovakia PM wounded in shooting:** Slovakia's populist Prime Minister **Robert Fico** was wounded in a shooting Wednesday afternoon and taken to hospital.

Reports on TA3, a Slovakian TV station, said that Fico, 59, was hit in the stomach after four shots were fired outside the House of Culture in the town of Handlova, some 150 kilometers northeast of the capital, where the leader was meeting with supporters. A suspect has been detained, it said. Police sealed off the scene.



Fico

Deputy speaker of parliament Lubos Blaha confirmed the incident during a session of Parliament and adjourned it until further notice, the Slovak TASR news agency said.

President Zuzana Caputova condemned "a brutal and ruthless" attack on the premier. "I'm shocked," Caputova said. "I wish Robert Fico a lot of strength in this critical moment and a quick recovery from this attack." (AP)

**Zelensky postpones foreign trips:** Ukrainian forces withdrew from some areas of the country's northeast and battled Russian troops in others on Wednesday, as President Volodymyr Zelensky postponed all his upcoming foreign trips, underscoring the seriousness of the threat his soldiers are facing.

Against that grim backdrop, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken sought to reassure the ally of continuing American support, announcing a \$2 billion arms deal. Most of the money comes from a package approved last month.

The top diplomat is in Ukraine as Russian troops press a new offensive in northeastern Ukraine's Kharkiv region. It began last week, marking the most significant border incursion since the full-scale invasion began in 2022 and forcing thousands to flee their homes. In recent weeks, Moscow's forces have also sought to build on gains in the eastern Donetsk region. Taken together the developments mean the war has entered a critical stage for Ukraine's depleted army.

Ukraine's General Staff reported late Tuesday that troops fell back from areas in Lukyantsi and Vovchansk "in order to save the lives of our servicemen and avoid losses." (AP)

**'Russia prepared to negotiate':** Russian President Vladimir Putin says his regime is prepared to negotiate over the conflict in Ukraine in an interview with Chinese media on the eve of visit to partner Beijing that has backed Moscow in its full-scale invasion of its neighbor.

"We are open to a dialogue on Ukraine, but such negotiations must take into account the interests of all countries involved in the conflict, including ours," Putin was quoted as saying by the official Xinhua News Agency on Wednesday.

The Russian leader's two-day trip starting Thursday comes as his country's forces have pressed an offensive in northeastern Ukraine's Kharkiv region that began last week in the most significant border incursion since the full-scale invasion began, forcing almost 8,000 people to flee their homes.

China claims to take a neutral position in the conflict. (AP)

**King Charles III unveils 1st official portrait:** King Charles III has unveiled the first portrait of the monarch completed since he assumed the throne, a vivid image that depicts him in the bright red uniform of the Welsh Guards against a background of similar hues.

The larger-than-life painting by artist Jonathan Yeo captures the king with his hands clasped atop the hilt of his sword and a butterfly flitting above his right shoulder. Charles got his first look at the canvas Tuesday at Buckingham Palace.

Yeo began the portrait more than a year before Charles became king, with a sitting at the then-Prince of Wales' Highgrove estate in June 2021. The last sitting took place in November 2023 at Clarence House, one of the king's residences in London. (AP)

**Party on verge of forming hard-right gov:** Geert Wilders is on the verge of brokering a four-party coalition in the Netherlands six months after coming in first in national elections, opening the prospect that yet another European Union nation will veer toward the hard right weeks ahead of EU-wide elections.

Wilders has said he does not expect to become prime minister himself, because he remains too extreme for his coalition partners, but his Party for Freedom would be the driving force in a four-party coalition.

With hard right and populist parties now part of or leading a half dozen governments in the 27-nation bloc, they appear positioned to make gains in the June 6-9 EU polls. (AP)

**French prez convenes top ministers:** At least two people were killed and three were seriously injured overnight in the French Pacific territory of New Caledonia, French officials there said Wednesday, as President Emmanuel Macron convened a meeting of top ministers to discuss the spiraling violence.

It was the third day of violent unrest over a constitutional reform pushed by Paris that has roiled the archipelago, which has long sought independence.

Macron's office said the president also canceled a trip he had been planning to northwest France on Wednesday while he focused on the crisis.

French authorities in the territory said more than 130 people have been arrested and over 300 have been injured since Monday in the violence that has raged across the archipelago, where there have been decades of tensions between indigenous Kanaks seeking independence. (AP)

**Manhunt in for prison-break gang:** A massive manhunt was underway in France on Wednesday for an armed gang that ambushed a prison convoy, killing two prison officers, seriously injuring three others and springing the inmate they were escorting.

French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said "unprecedented" efforts were being deployed. Hundreds of officers were mobilized in the search for the escaped convict, Mohamed Amra, and the assailants who laid in wait for the prison van transporting him, ramming a car into it before opening fire on Tuesday.

The violence of the attack shocked France. Prison workers held moments of silence Wednesday outside prisons in Paris and elsewhere to commemorate the officers who were killed. (AP)

**Protesters throng streets of Georgia:** Huge throngs of protesters blocked streets in the capital of Georgia and milled angrily outside the parliament building after lawmakers on Tuesday approved a "foreign influence" bill that critics call a Russian-style threat to free speech and the country's aspirations to join the European Union.

Soon after the 84-30 vote, a crowd of protesters in front of parliament tried to break metal barriers near the building. At least 13 people were arrested and Georgian news reports showed one with severe cuts and bruises on his head.

The protests expanded after nightfall, with thousands of demonstrators marching to Heroes Square about two kilometers from the parliament and blocking off the streets that converge on the square. (AP)

**Fire destroys 22 boats in Croatia:** A fire early at a marina in northwestern Croatia early Wednesday destroyed 22 boats and caused huge damage but no injuries.

An investigation was underway to determine what caused the fire at the marina in Medulin, a small town on the Istrian peninsula that's popular with tourists in the northern part of the Adriatic Sea.

Photos showed boats in the marina burning in a raging blaze. Local media said some owners jumped into the sea to escape as firefighters rushed to separate the boats still untouched by the fire.

The fire was brought under control. Authorities said they put up barriers in the sea in stop any environmental damage. (AP) Croatia is a top European tourism destination and a favorite spot for sailing. (AP)



A wildfire burns in northern Manitoba near Flin Flon, as seen from a helicopter surveying the situation on May 14. Inset: Firefighters arrive at the Flin Flon airport, as wildfires burn in northern Manitoba on Tuesday. (AP)

## Wildfire forces out hundreds of residents in Canada's oil sands hub of Fort McMurray

Hundreds of residents in four neighborhoods in the southern end of Canada's oil sand hub of Fort McMurray, Alberta, were ordered to evacuate with a wildfire threatening the community, authorities said Tuesday.

The Rural Municipality of Wood Buffalo said resi-

dents in Beacon Hill, Abasand, Prairie Creek and Grayling Terrace needed to leave by 4 pm.

An emergency evacuation warning remained in place for the rest of Fort McMurray and surrounding areas.

The rural municipality said the residents in the

four neighborhoods were being ordered out to clear room for crews to fight the fire, which had moved to within 13 kilometers (8 miles) of the city.

Fort McMurray has a population of about 68,000, and a wildfire there in 2016 destroyed 2,400 homes and forced more than 80,000 people to flee. (AP)

## Politics

## 'Spend \$32b to develop artificial intelligence'

## Senators unveil AI policy roadmap

'Well, make my day, pal'

## Biden challenges Trump to 2 debates

WASHINGTON, May 15, (AP) - A bipartisan group of four senators led by Majority Leader Chuck Schumer is recommending that Congress spend at least \$32 billion over the next three years to develop artificial intelligence and place safeguards around it, writing in a new report released Wednesday that the US needs to "harness the opportunities and address the risks" of the quickly developing technology.

The group of two Democrats and two Republicans said in an interview Tuesday that while they sometimes disagreed on the best paths forward, it was imperative to find consensus with the technology taking off and other countries like China investing heavily in its development. They settled on a raft of broad policy recommendations that were included in their 33-page report.

## Legislation

While any legislation related to AI will be difficult to pass, especially in an election year and in a divided Congress, the senators said that regulation and incentives for innovation are urgently needed.

"It's complicated, it's difficult, but we can't afford to put our head in the sand," said Schumer, D-NY, who convened the group last year after AI chatbot ChatGPT entered the marketplace and showed that it could in many ways mimic human behavior.

The group recommends in the report that Congress draft "emergency" spending legislation to boost US investments in artificial intelligence, including new research and development and new testing standards to try and understand the potential harms of the technology. The group also recommended new requirements for transparency as artificial intelligence products are rolled out and that studies be conducted into the potential impact of AI on jobs and the US workforce.

Republican Sen. Mike Rounds, a member of the group, said the money would be well spent not only to com-

pete with other countries who are racing into the AI space but also to improve Americans' quality of life - supporting technology that could help cure some cancers or chronic illnesses, he said, or improvements in weapons systems could help the country avoid a war.

"This is a time in which the dollars we put into this particular investment will pay dividends for the taxpayers of this country long term," he said. The group came together a year ago after Schumer made the issue a priority - an unusual posture for a majority leader - and brought in Democratic Sen. Martin Heinrich of New Mexico, Republican Sen. Todd Young of Indiana and Rounds of South Dakota.

As the four senators began meet-

ing with tech executives and experts, Schumer said in a speech over the summer that the rapid growth of artificial intelligence tools was a "moment of revolution" and that the government must act quickly to regulate companies that are developing it.

Young said the development of ChatGPT, along with other similar models, made them realize that "we're going to have to figure out collectively as an institution" how to deal with the technology. "In the same breath that people marveled at the possibilities of just that one generative AI platform, they began to hypothesize about future risks that might be associated with future developments of artificial intelligence," Young said.

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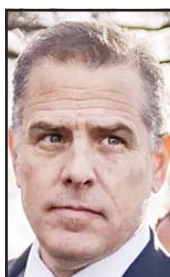
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Britain's King Charles III, (center right), and Britain's Queen Camilla arrive to attend a Service of Dedication for the Order of the British Empire, at St Paul's Cathedral in central London on May 15. (AP)



Cohen



Biden

## America

**Cohen gives insider details:** It wasn't until after a decade in the fold, after his family pleaded with him, after the FBI raided his office, apartment and hotel room, **Michael Cohen** testified Tuesday, that he finally decided to turn on Donald Trump.

The complicated break led to a 2018 guilty plea to federal charges involving a payment to the porn actor Stormy Daniels to bury her story of an alleged sexual encounter with Trump and to other, unrelated crimes.

And it's that insider knowledge of shady deals that pushed Manhattan prosecutors to make Cohen the star witness in their case against Trump about that same payment, which they say was an illegal effort to influence the 2016 presidential election.

"To keep the loyalty and to do the things that he had asked me to do, I violated my moral compass, and I suffered the penalty, as has my family," Cohen testified Tuesday. (AP)

**Judge rejects Biden's request:** Hunter Biden's federal gun case will go to trial next month, a judge said Tuesday, denying a bid by lawyers for the president's son to delay the prosecution.

US District Judge Maryellen Noreika rejected Hunter Biden's request to push the trial in Delaware until September, which the defense said was necessary to line up witnesses and go through evidence handed over by prosecutors. The judge said she believes "everyone can get done what needs to get done" by the trial's start date of June 3.

Later Tuesday, a three-judge panel of a federal appeals court said the tax case against him - which is scheduled to go to trial in California on June 20 - can also move forward. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals dismissed a defense effort to throw out the case.

The two rulings mean Joe Biden's son could be headed to trial next month in two criminal cases on opposite coasts in midst of his father's reelection campaign. (AP)

**Bus-truck collision kills 8:** Mexican

citizens were among those going to work at a Florida watermelon farm on Tuesday when the bus they were traveling in was sideswiped and crashed, killing eight peo-

ple, officials said.

Alicia Bärceña, Mexico's foreign relations secretary, on Tuesday said via the social media platform X that she was



People visit the 'Elegance and Style: Qipao and Shanghai Culture' at the China Cultural Center in Brussels, Belgium, on May 13. This exhibition on a collection of Chinese traditional Qipao dress and Shanghai culture opens to the public from May 14 to Sept. 5. The exhibition showcases more than 30 Qipao styles from the collection of the Shanghai City History Museum. (Xinhua)

sorry to report that a tragic automotive accident had happened in Florida with Mexican agricultural workers involved. She didn't say how many of the more than four dozen people on board were from Mexico.

The Mexican consulate in Orlando was working to find out more and provide support, according to a post on X. The Florida Highway Patrol said names of the people who died would be released after relatives were notified. (AP)

**'Boeing violated deal':** Boeing has violated a settlement that allowed the company to avoid criminal prosecution after two deadly crashes involving its 737 Max aircraft more than five years ago, the Justice Department told a federal judge on Tuesday.

It is now up to the Justice Department to decide whether to file charges against Boeing. Prosecutors will tell the court no later than July 7 how they plan to proceed, department said. New 737 Max jets crashed in 2018 in Indonesia and 2019 in Ethiopia, killing 346 people. Boeing reached a \$2.5 billion settlement with the Justice Department in January 2021 to avoid prosecution on a single charge of fraud - misleading federal regulators who approved the plane. Boeing blamed the deception on two relatively low-level employees. (AP)



## Lat/Am

## 13 dead in bus crash

## Violence in Haiti traumatizes kids

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, May 15, (Agencies): Students often throw up or wet themselves when gunfire erupts outside their school in northern Port-au-Prince.

When they do, school director Roseline Ceragui Louis finds there's only one way to try to calm the children and keep them safe: getting them to lie on the classroom floor while she sings softly.

"You can't work in that environment," she said. "It's catastrophic. They're traumatized."

Haiti's capital is under the onslaught of powerful gangs that control 80% of the city.

On Feb 29, gangs launched coordinated attacks targeting key infrastructure. The attacks have left more than 2,500 people dead or wounded in the first three months of the year. Now, in a bid to help save Haiti's youngest generation, the country is undergoing a wider push to dispel a long-standing taboo on seeking therapy and talking about mental health.

At a recent training session in a relatively safe section of Port-au-Prince, parents learned games to put a smile on their children's faces. The parents are often so distraught and discouraged they don't have energy to care for the kids, said Yasmine Déroche, who trains adults to help children overcome trauma inflicted by persistent gang violence.

Gunmen have burned police stations, stormed Haiti's two biggest prisons to release more than 4,000 inmates and fired on the country's main international airport, which closed March 4 and hasn't reopened. The violence has also paralyzed Haiti's largest seaport.



Gross

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## Closed

Meanwhile, some 900 schools have closed, affecting some 200,000 children.

"We must fight against this social inequality so that all children, all young people, can have the same opportunities to go to school, to work, to earn a living," said Christie Luca, president of the nonprofit Hearts for Change Organization for Deprived Children of Haiti. "All of these are problems that have led us where we are today, with the country on the edge of the abyss."

UNICEF's Haiti representative said the violence has displaced more than 360,000 people, the majority women and children. In addition, at least one-third of the 10,000 victims of sexual violence last year were children, Bruno Maes said.

"Children are left to fend for themselves, without assistance, without enough protection," he said.

More than 80 children were killed or wounded from January to March, a 55% increase over the last quarter of 2023 and "the most violent period for children in the country on record," said Save the Children, a US nonprofit. Luca said among those hurt were two boys struck in the head while walking to school and an 8-year-old girl playing inside her home when she was hit by a bullet that tore through her intestines, requiring emergency surgery.

## Allow

Louis said her 10-year-old son would daily cry "You're going to die!" as she headed to school, and the violence did not allow the boy to eat, sleep or play.

Louis remained resolute, knowing she had to be strong for him and her students. "My heart is destroyed, but my students see my smile every day," she said.

Still, many would fall asleep in class, unable to focus after sleepless nights punctuated by gunfire.

Others had more important things on their mind. "It's hard to focus at school or focus on playing a game when the rest of your body is worried about whether your mom and dad are going to be alive when you get home from school," said Steve Gross, founder of the US nonprofit Life is Good Playmaker Project.

Some students are increasingly drawn into gangs, toting heavy weapons as they charge drivers for safe passage through gang territory.

"The young children are traumatized and agitated," said Nixon Elmeus, a teacher whose school closed in January. He recalled how his best student stopped talking after an encounter with gangs.

**Mexico shootings kill 11:** Eleven people were killed Tuesday in mass shootings in a small town in the southern Mexico state of Chiapas, the state prosecutor's office said.

The office said the shooting occurred in the township of Chicomuselo, an area known as a trafficking route for migrant and drug smuggling that has been hit by cartel turf battles in recent months.

The township - and the outlying hamlet of Morelia, where the killings occurred - is in a sparsely populated area near Mexico's border with Guatemala.

The border area of Chiapas has been plagued by violence as the rival Sinaloa and Jalisco New Generation cartels battle for territory. Thousands of people have been displaced as the cartels work to control migrant, drug and weapons smuggling routes and forcibly recruit locals.

**13 killed in Peru bus crash:** At least 13 people were killed and 14 others were injured when a passenger bus plunged into a ravine about 50 meters deep in southern Peru on Tuesday, local authorities said.

The bus crashed around 6:30 am local time on the Libertadores highway as it was traveling from Lima to the city of Ayacucho, said the Regional Health Directorate's Center for Prevention and Control of Emergencies and Disasters in the southern department of Ayacucho.

"According to initial reports, so far 14 people have been injured and 13 have died," the center said in a statement.

The injured were taken to several area hospitals, it added.

**4 accused of smuggling:** Four men from the Dominican Republic were indicted in Puerto Rico on charges of smuggling wildlife in a case involving more than 100 dead birds, officials said Monday.

The men were detained after the US Coast Guard spotted them earlier this month aboard a flagless boat north of Puerto Rico and saw them throw overboard wooden cages holding tropical birds as authorities approached, the US Attorney's Office said.

Some 113 birds were retrieved from the ocean, officials said, adding that the men had traveled to the U.S. territory to smuggle back exotic birds to the neighboring Dominican Republic.



In this photo provided by the Philippine Coast Guard, fishing boats carrying activists and volunteers belonging to a nongovernment coalition called Atin Ito, Tagalog for This is Ours, pass by waters off Palauig Point, Zambales province, northwestern Philippines as they head towards Scarborough Shoal on May 15. (AP)

## Chinese coast guard shadows Filipino activists sailing toward disputed shoal

Chinese coast guard ships shadowed a group of Filipino activists and fishermen sailing on wooden boats towards toward a disputed shoal in the South China Sea, which Beijing has fiercely guarded from what it regards as intruders.

The Philippine coast guard deployed three patrol ships and a light plane to keep watch from a distance on the group of about 100 people, who set off

from western Zambales province to assert Manila's sovereignty over the Scarborough Shoal and surrounding waters. Dozens of journalists joined the three-day voyage. The navy also dispatched a ship to help keep an eye on the participants.

The four wooden boats carrying the Filipinos were still far from the shoal when at least two Chinese coast guard ships began shadowing them at night-

fall, said Emman Hizon, one of the organizers, adding that the participants remained in high spirits and would not turn back.

Some chanted "Atin Ito" - the name of the group, which means "This is ours" in Tagalog - repeatedly after they spotted the Chinese coast guard ships. "Atin Ito contingent will continue with its course," Hizon said. (AP)

## Asia

## Thailand's premier promises investigation

## Wong sworn in as S'pore 4th PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia, May 15, (AP): Singapore's deputy leader Lawrence Wong was sworn in Wednesday as the nation's fourth prime minister in a carefully planned political succession designed to ensure continuity and stability in the Asian financial hub.

A U.S.-trained economist, Wong, 51, succeeds Lee Hsien Loong, 72, who stepped down after two decades at the helm. Lee's departure marked the end of a family dynasty led by his father Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's first prime minister who built the colonial trading outpost into one of the world's richest nations during 31 years in office.

Wong took his oath of office in a televised ceremony at the national palace.

The leadership transition has been meticulously crafted by the People's Action Party, one of the world's longest-serving political parties and known for its clean and effective governance, and will not change the dynamics in the tiny nation of some 6 million people.

Wong, a civil servant turned politician, came to prominence while coordinating Singapore's successful fight against COVID-19. But he wasn't the first choice for the top job.

## Promoted

Heng Swee Keat, a former central bank chief and education minister, was the anointed successor but he withdrew his nomination in 2021. Wong was then picked by the People's Action Party in 2022 to fill the vacuum and quickly promoted to deputy prime minister.

"I will certainly strive to be a leader who is strong, kind and decisive. And I will do my best to build a Singapore where everyone can realize their full potential," Wong said on social media earlier this month.

Wong has retained the Cabinet and held onto his finance portfolio as he prepares for his first big test in general elections due by 2025, but widely expected to be called this year. Before taking office, he promoted Trade Minister Gan Kim Yong as one of two deputy premiers. The other deputy is

Heng.

Lee will stay on as a senior minister, a path taken by all former premiers.

While victory in the election is assured, Wong must clinch a stronger win after the PAP suffered a setback in 2020 polls over voters' rising discontent with the government.

Singapore under Lee's rule flourished into one of the world's wealthiest nations, but it also became one of the most expensive cities to live in. The PAP has also been criticized for tight government control and a government-knows-best stance, media censorship and the use of oppressive laws against dissidents.

Issues like widening income disparity, increasingly unaffordable housing, overcrowding caused by immigration and restrictions on free speech are often used as fodder by the opposition and have loosened the PAP's grip on power.

"One-party dominance in Singapore is weakening but the challenge for the PAP leadership is to slow down the process," said Eugene Tan, a law professor at Singapore Management University.

Wong was born seven years after Singapore separated from Malaysia and gained independence in 1965. His father was a migrant from China and his mother was a teacher. Unlike many senior PAP leaders, he didn't have a privileged background. Observers have said this could help him connect better with the common citizen.

## Also:

**BANGKOK:** Thailand's prime minister on Wednesday offered his condolences to the family of a young activist who died in detention after a monthslong hunger strike, amid a public debate on the country's justice system.

**Netiporn "Bung" Sanesangkham,** 28, died on Tuesday after suffering cardiac arrest while she was being detained at Bangkok's Central Women's Correctional Institution on charges that included defaming the monarchy. She had been on a hunger strike to protest the revocation of her bail in January.

Her death has prompted calls for re-

viewing a judicial process that allows people accused of politically-motivated, nonviolent offenses to be held for extended periods ahead of trial.

Prime Minister **Srettha Thavasin** told reporters that Netiporn's death was a loss that no one wanted, and said he has ordered the Justice Ministry to investigate.

Officials from the Corrections Department said during a press conference on Wednesday that while Netiporn appeared fatigued following her prolonged hunger strike, she had been well and there was no sign that she would develop such critical conditions, and that they had done everything to try to save her life.

**TANAH DATAR, Indonesia:** Indonesian authorities seeded clouds on Wednesday, trying to prevent further rain and flash floods after deluges that hit the country's Sumatra Island over the weekend left at least 58 people dead and another 35 missing.

Monsoon rains triggered a landslide of mud and cold lava from Mount Marapi, eventually causing rivers to breach their banks. The deluge tore through mountainside villages in four districts in West Sumatra province just before midnight on Saturday.

The floods swept away people and 79 homes and submerged hundreds of houses and buildings, forcing more than 1,500 families to flee to temporary government shelters, according to National Disaster Management Agency spokesperson **Abdul Muhari**.

He said that 58 bodies had been pulled from mud and rivers by Wednesday, mostly in the worst-hit Agam and Tanah Datar districts, while rescuers are searching for 35 people who are reportedly missing. About 33 villagers were injured.

Indonesia's Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency head **Dwikorita Karnawati** has said that more downpours were forecast for West Sumatra in the coming days, and that the danger of extreme rainfall would continue until next week.



Students dismissed from school walk past a makeshift barricade constructed from the shell of a burnt-out vehicle and topped with tires, in the Canapé Vert area of Port-au-Prince, Haiti on May 14. (AP)



Kindiki



Mamabolo

## Africa

**80 ATMIS, troops hone skills:** Some 80 African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) and Somalia security officers on Tuesday began a three-day training focused on detecting and neutralizing improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

The United Nations Action Service (UNMAS) is organizing training to increase the security forces of Somalia's capacity to effectively counter threats posed by IEDs on population centers and major supply routes (MSR), designated routes within an area of operations upon which the majority of traffic flows in support of military operations and humanitarian operations.

"The participants will discuss the Somalia IED threat's assessment and ongoing counter-improvised explosive devices (C-IEDs) operations," ATMIS said in a statement issued in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia.

UNMAS is a key partner to ATMIS and has over the years worked consistently to strengthen the capacity of both ATMIS and Somali security forces to effectively identify and disarm IEDs. (Xinhua)

**Rescue efforts continue:** Rescue and recovery operations continued into the second week following a building collapse in South Africa, with the death toll climbing to 33 as of Tuesday.

The multi-story building under construction collapsed last Monday afternoon in the coastal city of George, located about 400 kilometers east of Cape Town in the Western Cape Province. The reasons for the collapse are still under investigation.

Of the 81 construction workers who were on site, 62 have been rescued or recovered, while 19 are still unaccounted for, according to the latest update issued by local authorities at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday.

A total of 27 males and six females have been declared deceased in the aftermath of the building collapse. Authorities are facing challenges in identifying the victims and have appealed to the public for assistance, as only six of them have been identified so far.

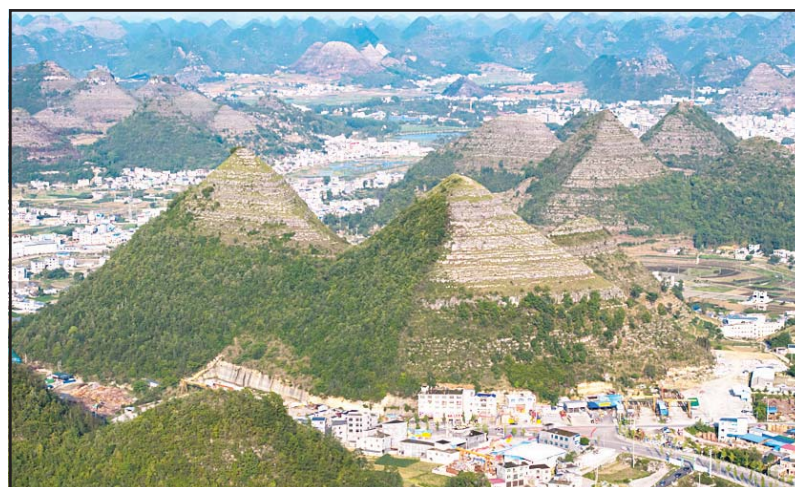
"We are experiencing difficulties in obtaining accurate names of individuals missing or deceased due to the building collapse. We urgently request families who have lost contact with their loved ones to come to the George Civic Centre on York Street," the municipal government of George said in a

statement. (Xinhua)

**Over 5K observers OK'd:** The Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) has approved more than 5,000 local and interna-

tional observers to monitor the upcoming general elections later this month, the electoral body announced on Tuesday.

Chief Electoral Officer **Sy Mamabolo**, speaking in Pretoria, South Africa's ad-



An aerial photo taken on May 14, 2024 shows a view of pyramid-shaped hills in Anlong County, southwest China's Guizhou Province. Several hills that resemble the pyramids of Egypt in a suburb of Anlong have recently become a popular tourist attraction. It appears that these hills are made of parallel layers of stones. (Xinhua)

ministrative capital, told reporters that the country is ready to conduct the 2024 national and provincial elections on May 29. Mamabolo said that training for 202,500 voting officials, who will manage the electoral process in the voting stations, is nearing completion.

Meanwhile, 76,580 voters abroad will cast their votes on May 17 and 18 at the country's 111 foreign missions, he added. (Xinhua)

**4 rescued in building collapse:** Four people were rescued from the rubble of a collapsed residential building on Tuesday in the Kiamaiko area in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi, a police officer said.

Three of the rescued individuals were taken to a nearby health facility, while one with minor injuries received treatment at the scene, Nairobi County Police Commander Adamson Bungei said. The search and rescue operation for more possible victims is ongoing.

Cabinet Secretary for Interior and Administration of National Government **Kiturum Kindiki** said that those who have encroached on riparian reserves and corridors must vacate immediately, warning that forceful evacuations will be conducted if necessary. (Xinhua)

Heavy rains have been pounding several parts of the country since March, leading to the deaths of 289 people. (Xinhua)





Photo during the event

**Petal Ads & talabat partners to boost business expansion**

Huawei, the leading global provider of information and communications (ICT) infrastructure and smart devices, announces its partnership with talabat, the region's leading platform for everyday deliveries. Through this partnership, talabat will be utilizing Petal Ads, Huawei's digital advertising platform, to propel its business expansion through cutting-edge targeting capabilities.

The collaboration was officially initiated with the signing ceremony of the MOU attended by key executives from both companies, taking place on May 7th at the Petal Ads booth, which

presented groundbreaking solutions tailored for the global tourism industry during the ATM 2024. This alliance between two industry leaders signifies a commitment to revolutionizing digital advertising and enhancing user engagement.

Launched in May, this partnership will span across talabat's regional markets. Renowned for its dedication to simplifying the daily lives of customers across the region, talabat will integrate targeted advertising initiatives powered by Petal Ads' cutting-edge capabilities. Furthermore, the talabat app will be featured in Virtual Preload, a unique lifestyle folder on all Huawei

devices. This first-of-its-kind initiative for talabat will ensure faster access to the app for Huawei users.

"Partnering with talabat, a leader in the food delivery and q-commerce industry, is a significant step for Petal Ads," said Mr. William Hu, Managing Director of Huawei Consumer Business Group, Middle East and Africa Eco Development and Operation. "This collaboration offers an exciting opportunity to leverage our digital advertising expertise and contribute to the success of the talabat platform, creating new avenues for businesses to connect with their audiences."

**Market Movements**

15-05-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
JAPAN	-	Nikkei 225	+29.67	38,385.73	
PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	+144.29	74,694.50	
SAUDI	-	TASI	-17.71	12,103.20	
DUBAI	-	DFMGI	-43.60	4,093.25	
PHILIPPINES	-	PSEI	-49.73	6,558.63	
EGYPT	-	EGX 30	-23.69	25,316.08	

# Business

**Bank establishes clear roadmap and structural plan for next six years**

Gulf Bank launches its 2030 Environmental, Social & Governance sustainability strategy

## NREC reports net profit of KD 2.9 million for Q1 2024

Total assets stand at KD 519 million

**KUWAIT CITY, May 15:** National Real Estate Company (NREC) reported its financial and operational results for the three-month period ended March 31, 2024. The Company reported a net Profit of KD 2.9 million and an EPS of 1.62 fils in Q1 2024, compared to a net loss of KD 2.3 million and a loss per share of 1.27 fils during the same period in 2023.



Faisal Jamil Sultan Al-Essa

The Company's operating revenue came in at KD 1.5 million for the period ended March 31, 2024, a decrease of 64% compared to the same period in 2023. Total assets stood at KD 519 million as of March 31, 2024.

NREC Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Faisal Jamil Sultan

Al-Essa, said: "Our first quarter results are in-line with our expectations. Our operational assets across our markets in Libya, Jordan, and Egypt have achieved strong performances. We are pleased with its overall performance of Abu Dhabi's Reem Mall to date and since it opened to the public back in February 2023 and maintain a positive outlook for its future performance. We expect to have stable performance during 2024."

NREC is a co-investor in Abu Dhabi's \$1.3 billion Reem Mall on Reem Island. The mall has been welcoming Abu Dhabi residents and visitors since February 2023 and expect a consistent momentum of new unit openings over the coming months. The mall is the region's first, fully integrated omnichannel retail ecosystem with digital, e-commerce, and logistics capabilities. It brings together all consumer and retail services to ensure a seamless customer experience.

Sultan added: "We remain committed to our goal of exiting certain assets, the proceeds of which will be used towards reduction of a major part of our debt." Established in 1973 and listed in Boursa Kuwait, National Real Estate Company (NREC) is a real estate investment, development and property manager based in the Middle East and North Africa. The Company's portfolio comprises a mix of retail, commercial and residential properties in the region.

**KUWAIT CITY, May 15:** Building on the pivotal role of embedding sustainability principles in society, Gulf Bank has announced its ambitious Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) spanning from 2024 to 2030. This strategy will serve as a roadmap and a clear structural plan for the next six years.

On this occasion, the Acting CEO of Gulf Bank, Mr. Waleed Khaled Mandani, stated, "At Gulf Bank, our commitment to environmental, social, and governance principles is foundational to who we are. It highlights our dedication to fostering a sustainable future, not just within our organization, but also in the broader community. This is a reflection of our aspirations to be a leading banking institution in Kuwait."

Mr. Mandani pointed out that the strategy establishes specific goals for implementing measurable sustainability standards and key performance indicators. This will lead to the adoption of selected high-quality initiatives, aimed at boosting environmental and social sustainability as well as corporate governance. These initiatives are designed to reflect our core values and guide every aspect of our banking practices and operations.

He added, "We believe that implementing ESG standards is essential for our long-term success and achieving our 2030 strategy will stand as a testament to our dedication to making a positive impact on society. Aligning our values and business objectives with ESG principles assists us in conducting responsible banking practices, empowering various social groups, and maintaining a fair work environment."

Mr. Mandani further explained, "Our 2030 ESG standards extend beyond mere financial metrics, to ensure that Gulf Bank's practices, procedures, and decisions align with the wider community and environmental obligations and adhere to the highest standards in the banking industry, as well as local regulations."

He emphasized that the bank's success and continued growth depend on integrating environmental, social, and governance considerations - governed by a clearly defined comprehensive strategy that aligns with the bank's values, shareholders, and customers.

**The General Framework**

On his part, Mr. Meshal Al-Wazzan, Head of Strategy at Gulf Bank, highlighted the general framework and broad outlines of the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategy for the year 2030, which are as follows:

• **Regulatory Compliance**

The strategy is designed to ensure Gulf Bank adheres to local laws and regulations regarding sustainability and responsible business practices. Additionally, it seeks to showcase the bank's ability to compete by aligning with the industry's best practices and adapting to emerging standards.

■ **Sustainable Value**

The strategy is designed to enhance the bank's role in contributing to reducing negative environmental impacts while empowering customers, shareholders, and the community. This approach preserves sustainable value, which is advantageous to both the bank and its partners.

■ **Performance Accountability**

ESG governance standards will serve as a comprehensive mechanism enabling the bank to measure and monitor its performance and progress in achieving its goals. This will be achieved through measurable actions and objectives that make Gulf Bank a leading example in defining and clarifying responsibilities.

■ **Risk Management**

Gulf Bank recognizes that environmental, social, and governance factors present both risks and opportunities. The ESG 2030 standards are designed to efficiently identify, assess, reduce, and manage these risks, ensuring the bank is safeguarded against potential threats to its reputation, operational integrity, and ongoing viability.

■ **Engagement of Customers, Shareholders, and Stakeholders**

The strategy encourages collaboration and engagement among the bank, its shareholders, customers, and both internal and external stakeholders, aiming to achieve specific environmental, social, and governance objectives. It also showcases the bank's commitment to transparency and accountability.



Acting CEO of Gulf Bank, Mr. Waleed Khaled Mandani.



Head of Strategy at Gulf Bank, Mr. Meshal Al-Wazzan.

fulfilling our environmental, social, and governance (ESG) commitments requires collective effort and collaboration from various bank departments and employees, as well as engaging with shareholders, customers, and stakeholders. By seeking their feedback, we can collectively continue our journey toward a more sustainable future.

**Enhancing Gulf Bank's Leadership in Sustainable Innovation**

Mr. Mohammad Al-Qattan, the General Manager of Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank, stated: "Our goal is to reinforce Gulf Bank's position as a leader in offering innovative services to our shareholders, customers, and stakeholders that foster sustainable growth. We are committed to utilizing technology and innovation to improve the experiences of our individual and small to medium-sized business clients, simplifying their access to our services. Furthermore, we are devoted to implementing environmentally friendly practices throughout all our branches and operations."

**Human Resources**

Ms. Salma Al-Hajjaj, the General Manager of Human Resources at Gulf Bank, emphasized the importance of continuing to establish fair work practices, achieving diversity and inclusion, empowering women, youth, and people with disabilities, and providing exceptional training. These initiatives help create an ideal workplace, boost employee well-being, and enhance their productivity and personal growth, while ensuring a harmonious balance between their professional and social lives.

**Corporate Banking Services**

Mr. Faisal Al-Adsani, the General Manager of Corporate Banking at Gulf Bank, stated: "We are dedicated to incorporating environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards into our offerings by providing financing solutions that support sustainable projects advantageous to both the environment and climate. Moreover, we will focus on high-value sectors and improve access to financing for small and medium-sized enterprises."

**Risk Management**

Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Saddah, the Acting Chief Risk Officer at Gulf Bank, stated: "We are dedicated to adhering to the Capital Markets Authority regulations by integrating sustainability factors into our risk management processes and incorporating sustainability risks into the board of directors' roles and responsibilities. We also comply with the Central Bank of Kuwait's guidelines that establish standards for evaluating climate-related risks. Our goal is to promote financing for projects that positively impact and address climate change, as well as to analyze and assess how ESG standards affect the bank's performance and financial stability. Additionally, we are evaluating climate-related risks."

ency and ensures that actions are taken to address the expectations and concerns of all involved parties effectively.

Mr. Al-Wazzan further stated: "To advance the implementation of our strategy, we must adopt a comprehensive and dynamic approach that ensures our strategic goals and commitments are aligned with the board of directors' overarching vision. This approach should also take into account evolving regulatory frameworks, emerging risks related to environmental, social, and governance issues, and the growing expectations of shareholders and customers."

The bank emphasized its commitment to reducing its impact on the surrounding environment, making sufficient efforts to decrease carbon emissions, optimizing resource usage, responsibly managing waste, and addressing all other environmental risks.

**Bank Officials Commit to ESG Principles for a Sustainable Future**

Furthermore, several bank officials affirmed their commitment to driving positive change by aligning their business objectives with the principles of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) outlined in the strategy. They view these principles as a proactive mechanism to support the bank's values and achieve its vision for a sustainable future. The officials emphasized that the bank's responsible banking practices significantly contribute to the overall well-being of society, while also specifically benefiting shareholders and customers.

**They stated:** "We recognize that



Alejandro Téllez seen in his office.



Albert Mari (left) and Alejandro Téllez (center) seen during a business meet.

**CEO Alejandro Téllez shares vision for innovation**

## StarNapp revolutionizes nautical sector with tailored ERP software

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

**KUWAIT CITY, May 15:** In the bustling world of nautical enterprises, efficiency and precision are not just desirable; they're essential and StarNapp emerges as a revolutionary solution, offering comprehensive ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) software tailored exclusively for the nautical sector. With StarNapp, companies can seamlessly manage their operations from anywhere, at any time, ensuring 24/7 accessibility and unlocking unprecedented levels of productivity and profitability.

In an exclusive interview with the Arab Times, the CEO & Founder Alejandro Téllez, says the StarNapp stands as a testament to innovation and expertise in nautical management with a clear objective that consists of incorporating suppliers into the service and generating a community in the sector, finally designing the version of the end user - a boat owner or captain -- who will be able to have a global assistance network.

"We have begun," he says, "the path through the most difficult sector and with the greatest complexity in processes, but having already validated our product with a number of companies already incorporated, we have embarked on internationalization, always with our sights set on a future where StarNapp will be necessary, useful and standardized throughout the world, being able to offer that assistance to any vessel wherever it is around the clock."

Albert Mari, who is also StarNapp CEO and partner added, "Developed by a team of seasoned professionals with firsthand experience in the sector, StarNapp addresses the unique challenges and complexities faced by nautical companies. Leveraging their deep industry knowledge, the team has crafted a solution that streamlines operations, optimizes efficiency, and enhances overall performance."

He added, at the core of StarNapp's mission lies a commitment to empowering nautical enterprises. By harnessing the latest technological advancements, StarNapp aims to improve productivity and increase profitability for its users. The platform is designed to be modern, intuitive, and user-friendly, ensuring seamless interaction for all stakeholders.

In this area, Téllez stresses, the StarNapp offers a wide array of features tailored to the specific needs of nautical companies such as:

**Boats and Vessels Management** -- From moorings to work orders, StarNapp provides comprehensive tools to manage all aspects of vessel operations.

**Task Management** -- Efficiently allocate tasks, monitor progress, and ensure timely completion with intuitive task

management features.

**Billing and Sales** -- Streamline invoicing, track sales, and manage financial transactions effortlessly.

**Purchases and Orders** -- Simplify procurement processes and optimize inventory management with integrated purchasing tools.

**Planning** -- Gain strategic insights and optimize resource allocation with advanced planning capabilities.

**Employee Management** -- From scheduling to performance tracking, empower your workforce with comprehensive HR solutions.

**Worksheets** -- Gain real-time visibility into your nautical workshop, track hours, monitor progress, and manage customer balances effortlessly.

**CRM** -- Cultivate strong relationships with clients and suppliers through robust CRM functionalities.

**Materials and Stock** -- Maintains optimal inventory levels and track material usage with precision.

**Payment Gateway Integration** -- Seamlessly process payments and manage financial transactions securely.

**Connection to Banks** -- Facilitate seamless banking transactions and financial management with integrated bank connectivity.

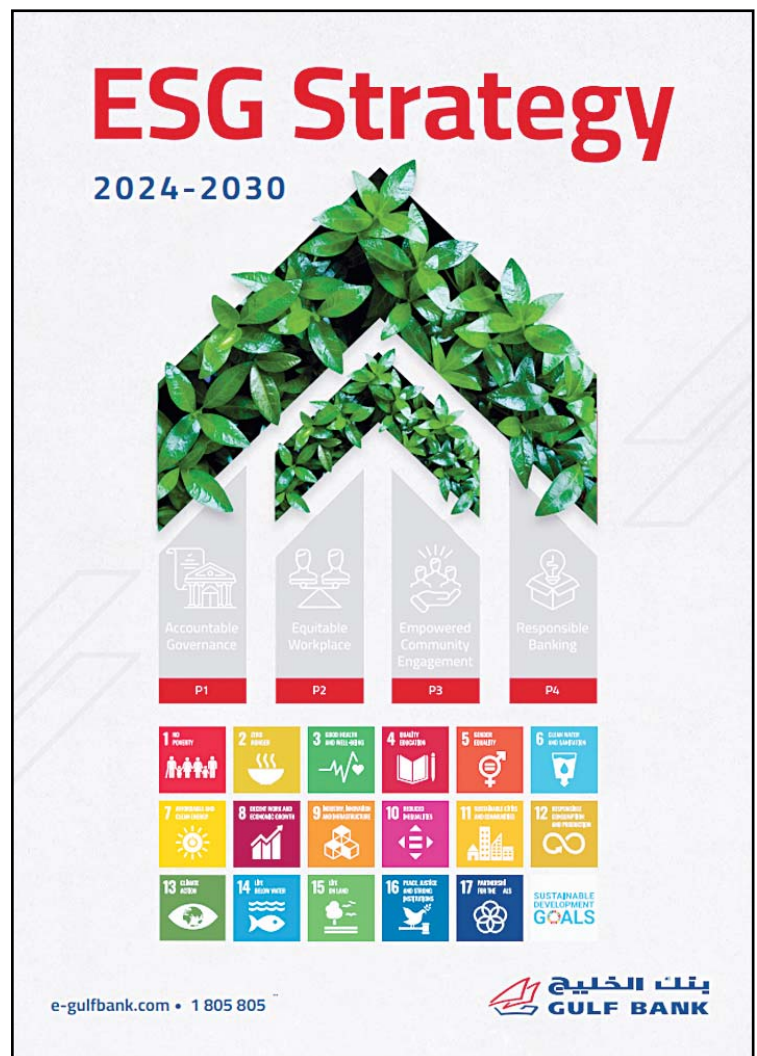
Téllez went on to say, with StarNapp, companies gain unprecedented control over their operations. The platform provides a real-time view of team activities, job progress, and billing status, enabling informed decision-making and eliminating unproductive costs. Whether monitoring work evolution or keeping clients informed of progress, StarNapp offers 360-degree visibility and peace of mind.

When it comes to maximizing efficiency and minimizing costs, he added, the benefits of using StarNapp extend beyond mere efficiency gains. By automating routine tasks and optimizing workflows, companies can achieve significant cost savings. For instance, a workforce of 25 employees could save over 570 hours per month on unproductive tasks, translating into tangible economic benefits and enhanced profitability.

In an industry defined by its challenges and complexities, StarNapp emerges as a beacon of innovation and efficiency.

By providing a modern, easy-to-use platform, StarNapp empowers nautical enterprises to navigate the seas of success with confidence. With its comprehensive features, user-friendly interface, and commitment to excellence, StarNapp sets a new standard for nautical management, enabling companies to thrive in today's competitive landscape.

**e-mail:** comercial@starnapp.com  
**Web:** starnapp.com



Main pillars of the Gulf Bank's 2030 sustainability strategy.



## BUSINESS

## US energy panel approves rule to expand transmission of renewable power

Federal energy regulators on Monday approved a long-awaited rule to make it easier to transmit renewable energy such as wind and solar power to the electric grid - a key part of President Joe Biden's goal to eliminate carbon emissions economy-wide by 2050.

The rule, under development for two years, is aimed at boosting the nation's aging power grid to meet surging demand fueled by huge data centers, electrification of vehicles and buildings, artificial intelligence and other uses.

The increased demand comes as coal-fired power plants continue to be retired amid competition from

natural gas, and other energy sources face increasingly strict federal pollution rules, setting up what experts say could be a crisis for electric reliability.

The grid is also being tested by more frequent service disruptions during extreme weather events driven by climate change.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approved the new rule, 2-1, with Chairman Willie Phillips and fellow Democratic commissioner Allison Clements voting in favor. Republican Mark Christie opposed the rule, dismissing it as a gift to solar and wind power operators.

The sprawling, 1,300-page rule, which addresses

transmission planning and cost allocations, will enhance the country's aging grid and ensure U.S. homes and businesses keep the lights on for decades to come, Phillips said.

"This rule cannot come fast enough," he said at a packed commission meeting at the agency's Washington headquarters. "There is an urgent need to act to ensure the reliability and the affordability of our grid."

The U.S. power grid "is at a make-or-break moment" and is being tested every day, Phillips said, citing "phenomenal load-growth from a domestic manufacturing boom, unprecedented construction of data

centers fueling an AI revolution and ever-expanding electrification" of vehicles and buildings.

At the same time, aging infrastructure, shifting economics and a range of state and federal policies are leading traditional resources to retire, he said. "On top of all of this, extreme weather events have become the norm, and the electric grid is routinely being pushed to the brink."

At the same time, construction of high-voltage power lines declined to a record low in 2022, "and much of that construction was simply Band-Aid fixes, rather than building a visionary grid of the future," Phillips said. (AP)

## Agility Global PLC reports Q1 '24 net profit of \$30.5 mln

Board approves \$65 million interim cash dividends

**ABU DHABI, May 15:** Agility Global PLC, a multi-business owner and operator and long-term investor in global and regional businesses, today reported Q1 2024 earnings of \$30.5 million, or 0.58 cents per share. EBITDA grew 34% to \$169.5 million, and revenue increased 5.6% to \$979.4 million. (Note that figures for the comparable period are carved-out financials).

## About Agility Global PLC

Agility Global PLC was listed on the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX) on May 2, 2024. Agility Global operates under two segments.

The controlled-business segment holds the company's operating entities, whose financial performance is consolidated and reflected in the company's income statement. This segment includes Menzies Aviation, the world's largest aviation services provider by number of countries; Tristar, a global leader in fuel and chemicals storage, shipping and logistics; and Agility Logistics Parks, a leading owner and developer of industrial real estate in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia.

The investment segment holds the company's minority investment stakes, mainly a 9% stake in DSV, the world's third-largest freight forwarder; and its stake in Abu Dhabi's Reem Mall.

"Agility Global's results reflect a strong start to the year. We are seeing



Tarek Sultan, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Agility Global.

double-digit growth in EBITDA generated by our businesses," said Agility Global Chairman Tarek Sultan. "Over the past few years, we have been refocusing the business and investing for future growth. Today, we are well positioned to take advantage of growth in promising segments, and our results are an indication that we are on the right track."

## Interim Dividends

Agility Global's board has approved the distribution of \$65 million as interim cash dividends. Shareholders registered on the company's registrar as of the settlement date 24 May 2024 are entitled to the dividends.

## Q1 2024 Performance

## Controlled Businesses

For Q1 2024, the consolidated EBITDA of the controlled businesses was \$160.8 million and revenue \$979.4 million. This reflects increases of 40.1% and 5.6%, respectively, over the same period in 2023.

The results have been mainly driven by the following:

## Aviation Services: Menzies

Menzies Aviation reported EBITDA of \$87.6 million and revenue of \$576.9 million for the first quarter of 2024, increases of 32.4% and 14.4% over the same period a year earlier.

Menzies' growth is largely the result of improved organic performance in key markets, including Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas. Menzies continues to witness a post-COVID recovery in the OSEAA (Oceania, SE Asia, and Asia) region, where there are increased flight and cargo volumes. In the first quarter, several new projects also contributed positively to the results, among them launches of operations in Chile, South Africa, India/Bangalore cargo, Spain, and Belgrade, along with an expanded scope of operations in Iraq/Baghdad. The overall growth, combined with a continued focus on cost discipline, has resulted in margin improvement.

## Fuel Logistics: Tristar

Tristar, a global leader in fuel and chemicals storage, shipping, and logistics, had a good start to the year. Although revenue declined by 8.4% in the first quarter due to winding down of some contracts and the sale of some ships, however, EBITDA grew by 48.2% to reach \$64.3 million.

This growth is driven by strong performance across Tristar's diversified portfolio of services.

## Industrial Real Estate: Agility Logistics Parks

Agility Logistics Parks (ALP), a leading developer of warehouse parks and light industrial facilities, reported EBITDA of \$9.4 million on revenue of \$12.7 million, increase of 32.2% and 22%, respectively. ALP's growth was driven mainly by its Saudi Arabia operations, which experienced increased demand for warehousing space. ALP has operations in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Africa, and India with 3.65 million SQM of land.

## Investments Segment

Agility Global holds non-controlling minority stakes in a number of businesses, both listed and non-listed. As of 31 March 2024, the carrying value of those stakes was roughly \$4.2 billion with a net asset value of \$3.1 billion. The main investments in this segment are in DSV and Reem

Mall.

DSV is a Copenhagen-based logistics company and a global top three freight forwarder. Agility Global owns a 9% stake in DSV, making it one of the largest shareholders in DSV. The carrying value of this investment as of March 31, 2024, was \$3.1 billion. DSV share price has been volatile this year. Declines have been partially offset by hedging 73% of this investment through a funded equity collar. Due to the accounting treatment, DSV's share price movement is reflected through the company's equity. Thus, the financial performance of DSV is not reflected in the Agility Global Profit & Loss statement.

Reem Mall - Agility Global is also an investor in Abu Dhabi's Reem Mall on Reem Island. Agility Global's investment in Reem Mall is through equity and convertible debt. The mall had a soft opening to the public in February 2023. To date, 163 units are trading, and almost 74% of Gross Leasable Area (GLA) is com-

mitted. More tenants are expected to announce openings in coming months. The mall is the region's first, fully integrated omni channel retail ecosystem with digital, e-commerce, and logistics capabilities. It brings together all consumer and retail services to ensure a seamless customer experience.

## Recap of Agility Global Q1 2024 Financial Performance

- Net profit stood at USD 30.5 million equivalent to 0.58 cents per share
- EBITDA increased 34% to USD 169.5 million, and margins stood at 17.3%
- Revenue increased 5.6% to USD 979.4 million
- Agility Global enjoys a healthy balance sheet with USD 10.4 billion in assets and USD 5.1 billion in Equity.
- Reported operating cash flow was USD 46.2 million for the first quarter 2024. Agility Global spent a total of USD 44.6 million in CAPEX and investments.

	Q1 2024 (Million USD)	Q1 2023 Carved out (Million USD)	Variance (%)
Revenue	979.4	927.6	5.6%
EBITDA	169.5	126.5	34.0%
EBIT	95.4	62.2	53.3%
Net Profit	30.5	7.2	323.1%
EPS(cents)	0.58	0.14	323.1%

*Numbers above are rounded.*

## Fears expressed about less web traffic

## Google 'unleashes' AI in search, raising hopes for better results

MOUNTAIN VIEW, May 15, (AP): Google on Tuesday rolled out a retooled search engine that will frequently favor responses crafted by artificial intelligence over website links, a shift promising to quicken the quest for information while also potentially disrupting the flow of money-making internet traffic.

The makeover announced at Google's annual developers conference will begin this week in the U.S. when hundreds of millions of people will start to periodically see conversational summaries generated by the company's AI technology at the top of the search engine's results page.

The AI overviews are supposed to only crop up when Google's technology determines they will be the quickest and most effective way to satisfy a user's curiosity - a solution mostly likely to happen with complex subjects or when people are brainstorming, or planning. People will likely still see Google's traditional website links and ads for simple searches for things like a store recommendation or weather forecasts.

Google began testing AI overviews with a small subset of selected users a year ago, but the company is now making it one of the staples in its search results in the U.S. before introducing the feature in other parts of the world. By the end of the year, Google expects the recurring AI overviews to be part of its search results for about 1 billion people.

Besides infusing more AI into its dominant search engine, Google also used the packed conference held at a Mountain View, California, amphitheater near its headquarters to showcase advances in a technology that is reshaping business and society.

The next AI steps included more sophisticated analysis powered by Gemini - a technology unveiled five months ago - and smarter assistants, or "agents," including a still-nascent version dubbed "Astra" that will be able to understand, explain and remember things it is shown through a smartphone's camera lens. Google underscored its commitment to AI by bringing in Demis Hassabis, the executive who oversees the technology, to appear on stage at its marquee conference for the first time.

The injection of more AI into Google's search engine marks one of the most dramatic changes that the company has made in its foundation since its inception in the late 1990s. It's a move that opens the door for more growth and innovation but also threatens to trigger a sea change in web surfing habits.

"This bold and responsible approach is fundamental to delivering on our mission and making AI more helpful for everyone," Google CEO Sundar

## Xi's visit to Hungary, Serbia brings new Chinese investment &amp; deeper ties to Europe's doorstep

BUDAPEST, Hungary, May 15, (AP): When Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Hungary last week, he arrived to one of the few places in the European Union where his country is considered an indispensable ally rather than a rival. By the time he left on Friday, he'd secured deals that provide fertile ground for China's plans of economic expansion in Europe.

After meeting with nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on Thursday, the leaders addressed a small group of select media in Hungary's capital, Budapest, announcing the formation of an "all-weather partnership" that would usher in a new era of economic cooperation.

As most EU countries make efforts to "de-risk" their economies from perceived threats posed by China, Hungary has gone in the other direction, courting major Chinese investments in the belief that the world's second-largest economy is essential for Europe's future.

While Xi and Orbán didn't unveil concrete agreements following their meeting, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó later said in a video that a deal had been reached on a joint Hungarian-

Chinese railway bypass around Budapest, as well as a high-speed train link between the capital and its international airport.

The two countries also agreed to expand their cooperation to the "whole spectrum" of the nuclear industry, Orbán said, and deals were reached on China helping Hungary build out its network of electric vehicle charging stations and on construction of an oil pipeline between Hungary and Serbia.

Szuzsanna Vegh, a program assistant at the German Marshall Fund and visiting fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, said those deals were "a clear signal that China sees Hungary as a key and reliable ally" in the EU as it seeks to reverse Europe's toughening de-risking policy.

Xi's visit, Vegh wrote in a statement, shows that Hungary's government "remains indifferent to its allies' concerns and will continue to strengthen its bilateral ties with China in order to position itself favorably in what it perceives as a developing multipolar world."

Pursuing a similar strategy is Serbia, Hungary's neighbor to the south, which has also provided wide opportunities

for Chinese companies to exploit its natural resources and carry out large infrastructure projects.

Like Orbán, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic has built a form of autocratic governance that eschews the pluralism valued in more traditional Western democracies - making both countries attractive to China as opaque direct deals help to eliminate red tape.

During Xi's visit to Serbia last week, he and Vucic signed an agreement to build a "shared future," making the Balkan country the first in Europe to agree on such a document with Beijing.

Vuk Vuksanović, a senior researcher at the Belgrade Center for Security Policy, said that Xi's interest in Serbia reflects his strategy of appealing to countries that are less committed to a U.S.-led economic and political community.

Xi's "shared future" agreement with Belgrade, Vuksanović said, promotes "China's vision of the international order, the one where China is much more powerful, the one where the Western powers, primarily the U.S., no longer have the ability to dictate the agenda to others."

to the web, even when they have an AI overview," Reid said. "They start with the AI overview and then they want to dig in deeper. We will continue to innovate on the AI overview and also on how do we send the most useful traffic to the web."

The increasing use of AI technology to summarize information in chatbots such as Google's Gemini and OpenAI's ChatGPT during the past 18 months already has been raising legal questions about whether the companies behind the services are illegally pulling from copyrighted material to advance their services. It's an allegation at the heart of a high-profile lawsuit that The New York Times filed late last year against OpenAI and its biggest backer, Microsoft.

Google's AI overviews could provoke lawsuits too, especially if they siphon away traffic and ad sales from websites that believe the company is unfairly profiting from their content.

But it's a risk that the company had to take as the technology advances and is used in rival services such as ChatGPT and upstart search engines such as Perplexity, said Jim Yu, executive chairman of BrightEdge, which helps websites rank higher in Google's search results.

'We didn't export one car 15 yrs ago'

## Morocco's automotive industry shifts gears to prep for EV era

TANGIERS, Morocco, May 15, (AP): A train that travels from rural northern Morocco to a port on the Mediterranean Sea carries no passengers. Three times a day, it brings hundreds of cars stacked bumper to bumper from a Renault factory outside Tangiers to vessels that transport them to European dealerships.

Business incentives and investing in infrastructure like the freight railway line have allowed Morocco to grow its automotive industry from virtually nonexistent to Africa's largest in less than two decades. The North African kingdom supplies more cars to Europe than China, India or Japan, and has the capacity to produce 700,000 vehicles a year.

Moroccan officials are determined to maintain the country's role as a car-making juggernaut by competing for electric vehicle projects. But whether one of Africa's few industrialization success stories can stay competitive as worldwide auto production transitions to EVs and increasingly relies on automation remains to be seen.

More than 250 companies that manufacture cars or their components currently operate in Morocco, where the auto industry now accounts for 22% of gross domestic product and \$14 billion in exports. French automaker Renault, the country's largest private employer, calls Morocco "Sandro-land" because it produces nearly all of its subcompact Dacia Sanderos there.

Unencumbered by many of democracy's checks and balances, the government tells companies looking to outsource production to cheaper locales they can get approval for new factories and complete construction in as little as five months.

"We didn't export one car 15 years

ago. Now it's the first exporting sector in the country," Minister of Industry and Trade Ryad Mezzour said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Mezzour said Morocco has distinguished itself from other outsourcing destinations by expanding its ports, free trade zones and highways. The government offered subsidies of up to 35% for manufacturers to put factories in the rural hinterlands outside of Tangiers, where Renault now produces Clios as well as Dacia Sanderos, Europe's most popular passenger vehicle, and soon plans to start manufacturing hybrid Dacia Joggers.

Chinese, Japanese, American and Korean factories make seats, engines, shock absorbers and wheels at the Tangiers Automotive City, a large campus of car parts manufacturers. Stellantis produces Peugeots, Opels and Fiats at its plant in Kenitra.

Devoting immense resources to developing and maintaining an automotive sector that could employ a young and growing workforce was part of a 2014 industrialization plan. To create jobs, Mezzour said that he and his predecessors have focused on offering more than cheap labor to foreign automakers looking for new places to build cars and produce parts.

Major automakers pay unionized factory workers less in Morocco than they do in Europe. But even with salaries one-fourth the size of France's 1,766.92-euro (\$1911.97) monthly minimum wage, the jobs pay more than the median income in Morocco. The industry employs 220,000 - a small but sizable chunk of the more than 200,000 agricultural jobs the country is losing annually amid a six-year drought.

## China's booming new energy industry a boon for the world

BEIJING, May 15, (Xinhua): In recent years, products from China's new energy industry, such as electric vehicles (EVs) and photovoltaic products, have made their marks in the global market.

This has sparked heated discussions among observers regarding the extent to which Chinese new energy technologies and products benefit their societies. In fact, China's progress in this industry not only promotes its own sustainable development but also holds positive implications for the global community.

First and foremost, China plays a crucial role in producing new energy products and reducing global carbon emissions.

As the world's largest producer of new energy vehicles, China has leveraged its industrial prowess to fulfill its emission reduction commitments. China's National Big Data Alliance for New Energy Vehicles has recently announced

that in March, monthly carbon emissions reductions from new energy vehicles have surpassed 9 million tons for the first time, a significant milestone in China's green development.

By the same token, data from the National Energy Administration has revealed that China contributed over 50 percent of the 510 gigawatts of newly installed renewable energy capacity worldwide in 2023.

The increase in carbon emissions reductions from China's EV and installed renewable energy capacity is a boon for the energy transition of China and the world at large.

China accounts for almost 60 percent of the new renewable capacity expected to become operational globally by 2028. This makes China a major contributor to the global goal of tripling the world's renewable capacity by 2030, said the International Energy Agency (IEA).





Photos during the session.

### Al-Roomi shares insights

## Markaz conducts leadership session 'Lead with Influence'

KUWAIT CITY, May 15: In line with its people-based culture and commitment to cultivating leaders throughout the organization, Kuwait Financial Centre 'Markaz', hosted an inspiring session for its employees, entitled 'Lead with Influence', presented by the acclaimed leadership author and coach, Mr. Abdulaziz Al-Roomi.

The session equipped Markaz's employees with insights into how to further develop their leadership skills, personal brand and enhance their influence, irrespective of their roles or titles. It also highlighted the importance of operating within a culture of leadership and influence, as that of Markaz's, and addressed the unique dynamics of the financial sector and just how crucial these skills are for steering client relationships, stakeholder engagement, and decision-making processes that are essential in the world of finance and investments.

Commenting on the engaging session, Peter Kelly, Executive Vice President of Human Resources at Markaz, said: "At Markaz, we firmly believe in empowering our team members to confidently present their ideas and opinions in the workplace, and to take the initiative in leading both themselves and their colleagues. The insights shared by Mr. Al-Roomi have provided us with a comprehensive blueprint for personal and professional growth, consistent with our legacy of leadership over the past 50 years. His session offered invaluable strategies

for cultivating a powerful presence and becoming agents of positive influence within our organization and in our interactions with our clients and partners." Mr. Al-Roomi's guidance is particularly resonant for professionals in our industry, where the ability to lead with influence is not just beneficial, but necessary."

During this session, Mr. Al-Roomi underscored the importance of every individual seeing themselves as a leader, capable of driving innovation and collaboration. He elaborated on how personal influence could lead to excellence in performance and ultimately, contribute to superior company results. The concept behind hosting the session aligns with Markaz's strategic focus on investing in people, reinforcing the idea that professional capabilities should be complemented with personal leadership skills to truly excel in the fast-paced financial industry.

A visionary in the field of leadership and human resources, Mr. Al-Roomi is a best-selling author and executive coach. With over two decades of cross-industry professional experience, he is recognized by the Forbes Coaches Council and the HBR Advisory Council. Mr. Al-Roomi is an advocate for achieving fulfillment as a pathway to success, sustaining voice in leadership development, as acknowledged by the Harvard Business Review and Maastricht University School of Business and Economics.

Initiative aims to attract young Kuwaiti talent

## KFH participates in GUST's career fair

KUWAIT CITY, May 15: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) recently concluded its participation in the 25th edition of the three-day career fair held at the Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST). The event was held under the patronage of the Minister of Education, Higher Education, and Scientific Research, Dr. Adel Al-Adwani.

At KFH's pavilion, a team from KFH Human Resources received applications from many applicants and answered inquiries about career opportunities from recent graduates and undergraduate students seeking part-time employment. The event, launched by the Acting Secretary General of the Private Universities Council, Dr. Adel Al-Bader, and President of Gulf University for Science and Technology, Prof. Bassam Alameddine, saw a large number of students applying



KFH concludes successful participation in GUST Career Fair.

to KFH and seeking careers that aligned with their majors and the job market needs.

KFH's participation in the career fair is part of its ongoing efforts to attract and support young Kuwaiti

talent at all levels. This initiative serves as an extension of KFH's broader commitment to supporting the endeavors of both public and private universities.

KFH Senior Manager Recruitment, Abdullah Al-Khamis, emphasized KFH's commitment to strengthening its ties with GUST and other academic institutions. This aligns with the bank's strategy to support students, the educational process, and Kuwaiti talent. He further commended GUST's role in equipping young talents with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in the private sector.

Al-Khamis emphasized the importance of participating in similar events to foster and strengthen communication channels between universities and KFH through diverse initiatives, ultimately benefiting both parties.

### Prestige of real estate appraisal profession highlighted in workshop

## KIB organizes special workshop on investment fundamentals and real estate appraisal at KU

KUWAIT CITY, May 15: Kuwait International Bank (KIB), represented by its Real Estate Department, organized a practical workshop at the College of Business Administration at Kuwait University, in response to an invitation to discuss the fundamentals of investment and real estate appraisal. Held at the university's campus in Shadadiya, the workshop was attended by several faculty members and students from the College.

Fahad Alsaleh, Manager of the Real Estate Advisory Division and the Product Development and Support Division (PDS) at KIB's Real Estate Department, and Engineer Hossam Al-Kolak, Real Estate Expert in the Real Estate Department, shared their expertise and technical knowledge in the real estate field with the future generation of entrepreneurs and leaders in real estate development in the country.

This distinguished initiative comes as part of the Bank's commitment to its comprehensive social responsibility strategy and the implementation of the memorandum of understanding on integrating practical studies into the academic curriculum.

During the workshop, following an introduction that included an overview of the KIB's history in the real estate field spanning over five decades since its establishment in 1973, Alsaleh provided a comprehensive overview of real estate investment to the students. He discussed its main aspects and presented several examples on how to invest in the real estate market, both locally and globally.

He highlighted its importance as one of the best tangible assets, noting that the market remains stable and sustainable compared to others, despite various changes and circumstances. Additionally, Alsaleh discussed the differences between types of real estate, such as private residential, investment residential, commercial buildings, complexes, and others.

Discussing the various administrative and financial services, including Islamic financing, aimed at developing the real estate sector in Kuwait, Alsaleh highlighted one of the most prominent services: real estate appraisal. This service includes property inspections for

customers, conducting economic feasibility studies for projects, determining rents for various property units, estimating construction costs, and providing consultations and technical reports for various real estate projects. Additionally, it involves monitoring project implementation and the stages of completion. He added that the field of real estate appraisals is considered a prestigious profession globally due to the expertise, precise engineering insight, and scientific applications required to determine a fair value for the property being evaluated.

In his turn, Engineer Al-Kolak addressed several factors that can directly or indirectly affect property values, explaining that there are natural and regulatory factors, as well as economic and social ones. He provided a detailed explanation of the methods and approaches to determining a fair value for properties considering these factors.

Among the most important methods are the cost approach, the income capitalization approach, and the market sales comparison approach. He illustrated these with examples from the Kuwaiti market and discussed the impact of architectural design on the economic feasibility of real estate projects with the students.

At the conclusion of the workshop, the university team expressed their appreciation to KIB's Real Estate Department for their efforts in preparing and delivering a workshop rich in knowledge and valuable information. Alsaleh also expressed his gratitude for the invitation to share KIB's extensive and comprehensive expertise in the field of investment and real estate appraisal.

It is worth noting that KIB's Real Estate Department is the primary reference for several key government entities, banking institutions, as well as investment and real estate companies. These entities continually benefit from the comprehensive services provided by the Department, given KIB's extensive and long-standing expertise in this field, dating back to its establishment in 1973 under the name "Kuwait Real Estate Bank."



KIB's KU real estate lecture.

## AUK library hosts annual open house for Earth Day

KUWAIT CITY, May 15: The American University of Kuwait (AUK) library hosted its annual open house in celebration of Earth Day, spotlighting a sustainability-themed event aimed at raising awareness about pressing environmental issues. This year's open house showcased a vibrant array of student organizations, clubs, and academic courses, all dedicated to initiatives aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. These efforts spanned commitments to affordable and clean energy, sustainable cities and communities, and climate action.

The AUK community actively engaged in educational activities designed to deepen their understanding of sustainability. Students from an Environmental Studies class led trivia quizzes and organized scavenger hunts, while the Data Club and other student groups shared their undergraduate research, which included contributions to a published volume by Taylor & Francis titled, Sustainable Innovations in Management in the Digital Transformation Era.

The open house also welcomed external community partners, including publishers, content providers, and Campus France, who highlighted English-language higher education opportunities in France focusing on pertinent subjects. Additionally, the founders of Warsha Graph demonstrated to students how to create unique art through eco-printing and recycled paper.

The library team introduced new resources and research guides and presented innovative library technologies aimed at enhancing the academic journey for scholars and students. Guests were also informed about the various avenues for accessing and maximizing the wealth of materials and collections available both on and off campus.

By empowering individuals with the tools, information, and inspiration needed to effect meaningful environmental action, the AUK library exemplifies the transformative potential of education in building a more sustainable future for generations to come.



General photos from the open house.



Group photo of the library team.

Customized offers tailored to private, privilege & Al Shabab customers

## NBK offers exclusive luxury experience for premium banking customers at Grand Hyatt

KUWAIT CITY, May 15: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) always seeks to enhance customer banking experience by delivering exclusive offers and exceptional benefits tailored to their different segments. In this context, and as part of its continuing efforts to leverage its long-term partnerships with leading institutions across many sectors to provide customers with outstanding offers and discounts, the bank announced offering an exclusive luxury experience for Premium Banking Customers in collaboration with Grand Hyatt Hotel.

Through this offer, NBK Private, Privilege Banking and Al Shabab Customers can enjoy exclusive discounts on dining and spa services, as well as special rates for room bookings at Grand Hyatt, guaranteeing an exceptional service and an unmatched experience.

Premium Banking Customers

can benefit from 15% discount at Stamboul and Liberte restaurants and spa treatments in addition to special room rates, enabling them to enjoy significant savings.

Commenting on the campaign, Intekhab Abbas, Head of Premium Segments, Consumer Banking Group at National Bank of Kuwait said, "This offer comes as part of our ongoing efforts to provide more exceptional and luxurious experiences tailored to the lifestyle of Private, Privilege Banking and Al Shabab Customers, and in order to provide our Premium Customers with innovative offers customized to suit their unique needs."

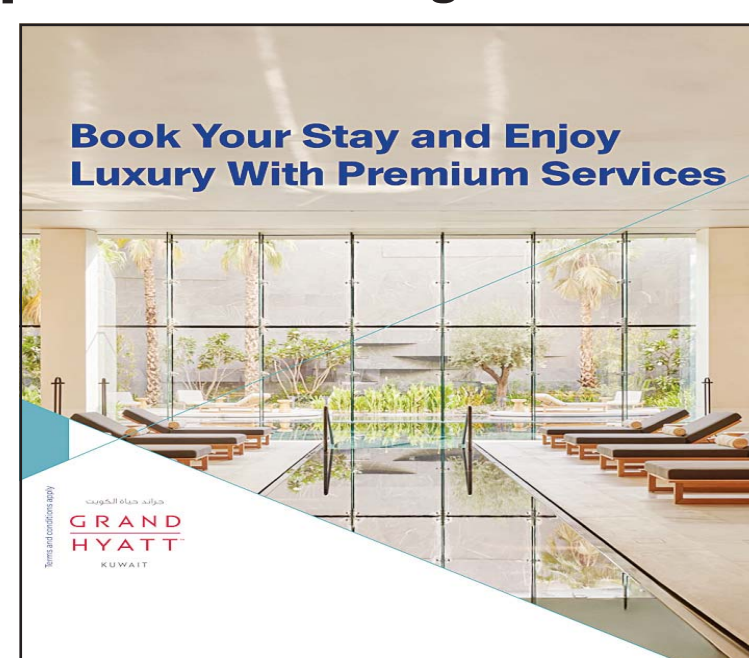
"NBK is always keen to be closer to its customers by providing exceptional offers giving them more luxury and peace of mind. Over the past years, NBK was able to maintain top-notch Premium Banking services, and is always striving to



Syed Intekhab Abbas

#### Intekhab:

We continue providing exclusive exceptional offers tailored to the unique needs of our premium customers



Premium revamp privilege Grand Hyatt.

offer customers a more innovative customer experience," he added.

NBK provides Private and Privilege Banking Customers with an exclusive array of services, including: Family Banking package, Premium Banking Teller Services which grants them priority in making their transactions in a quick and easy way, in addition to card home delivery service, priority status when contacting NBK Call Center on 1801801 available 24/7, along with an exclusive range of travel benefits & concierge services.

The bank also provides a dedicated relationship manager for Privilege Banking Customers and a Personal Banking Officer for Thahabi Customers taking care of all customer's banking needs, as well as access to Premium Banking lounges, diverse investment solutions including: SmartWealth and Watani Brokerage.



# Late-night TV news site hopes to buck media trends

Media

NEW YORK, May 15, (AP) — At first glance, Jed Rosenzweig's new venture would seem like a fool's errand: launching a digital news site during brutal economic times for the media to cover an industry that, by traditional measures, is waning in influence.

That didn't dissuade him. LateNighter, a website and newsletter that follows late-night television comedy, began operations in February.

There's been plenty to chew on since then, including Jon Stewart's return to "The Daily Show," John Mulaney's new Netflix show, Jimmy Kimmel's feud with Donald Trump.

Conan O'Brien resurfacing online and South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem's emergence as a comic foil.

"I haven't come to this project from a business perspective, so much so much as a passion," says Rosenzweig, a veteran entertainment journalist based in Portland, Oregon. "I certainly want it to succeed, and I think it will. ... There's an appetite and a void that we're looking to fill."

He hasn't released any metrics that would indicate how the site is catching on. LateNighter is a small operation, with only two full-time employees, and was essentially self-funded. Rosenzweig is also behind the sister website, Primetimer, and the TV Tattle subscription newsletter. His creation and subsequent sale, at an opportune time, of the home entertainment review site High Def Digest gave him some money to invest, although LateNighter will soon take paid ads.

His 13-year-old son Lem's obsession with "Saturday Night Live" inspired LateNighter, Rosenzweig says.

A couple of influential contributors brought gravitas at the start. Bill Carter, author of "The Late Shift" and one of the industry's most important chroniclers while at The New York Times, is a regular writer. Eric Deggans, TV critic at NPR, has also agreed to do occasional pieces, like an interview with Dulce Sloan of "The Daily Show" that discussed diversity in late-night.

"I'm not sure how often I can do stories for them," Deggans says, "but I'm excited by the opportunity to dig deeper into a genre that has helped build so much of the modern comedy world."

## Ratings

By television ratings alone, late-night isn't the force it used to be. The quartet of NBC's "Tonight Show," CBS' "Late Show," ABC's "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" and "The Daily Show" collectively averaged 10.5 million viewers a night a decade ago. Now, together they pull in 4.8 million people a night, the Nielsen company said. Ad revenue for the shows dropped by 70% between 2015 and 2023.

Asked for an evaluation of LateNighter, former Comedy Central chief executive Doug Herzog said it "seems cool."

"And maybe 10 years too late," he added.

Yet broadcast network entertainment in general has collapsed with cord-cutting and the rise of programming on streaming services. Mulaney's new effort notwithstanding, streaming hasn't been able to replicate the late-night comedy genre. The first "SNL" cast was dubbed the Not Ready for Prime Time Players in the 1970s; this season, the sketch comedy show is NBC's most-watched entertainment show among

viewers under age 50 - better than anything in prime-time.

Besides, television ratings don't reflect the way many people follow late-night stars these days - through highlight clips posted online.

"You can make the argument that it's more influential today than it ever has been," Rosenzweig says.

In its short life, LateNighter has shown the potential to be a solid, creative news source. It wrote an oral history of a groundbreaking Madonna appearance on David Letterman's show, for instance. After O.J. Simpson died, it wrote about his impact on late-night comedy.

The website provides a morning-after recap of late-night monologues - suggested by Kimmel, Rosenzweig says - that has proven so popular that some readers asked for an email alert when it is posted.

Carter writes a few times a week, contributing pieces about the history of "SNL" stars appearing at the White House correspondents' dinner, then evaluating Colin Jost's performance this year. Carter's reputation enabled LateNighter to land an interview with Jimmy Fallon only weeks after the site's start, a signal to the industry to take it seriously.

Besides standard news and features, LateNighter crunches numbers looking for trends. Each week, it measures how many minutes "SNL" cast members get on the air and the length of each guest host's monologue (Mikey Day had the most screen time last week, after host Maya Rudolph). It has calculated which weeknight show gets the most laughs per hour (Seth Meyers during the April week that was counted). Through a partnership with Nielsen, it regularly publishes late-night ratings.

## Variety



Meryl Streep poses for photographers upon arrival at the awards ceremony and the premiere of the film 'The Second Act' during the 77th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Tuesday, May 14. (AP)

## Film

Festival opens with glitz, glamour and stars

# Streep charms Cannes with Palme d'Or

CANNES, France, May 15, (AP) — Beneath intermittent rainy skies, the Cannes Film Festival opened Tuesday with the presentation of an honorary Palme d'Or for Meryl Streep and the unveiling of Greta Gerwig's jury, as the French Riviera spectacular kicked off a potentially volatile 77th edition.

A 10-day stream of stars began flowing down the Cannes' red carpet with the opening night film, "The Second Act," a French comedy starring Lea Seydoux, Vincent Lindon, Louis Garrel and Raphaël Quenard. They play squabbling actors filming a movie directed by an artificial intelligence.

The festival's first lengthy standing ovation, though, went to Streep, who was awarded an honorary Palme d'Or during Tuesday's opening ceremony. After Juliette Binoche introduced her, Streep alternately shook her head, fanned herself and danced while the crowd thunderously cheered.

"I'm just so grateful that you haven't gotten sick of my face and you haven't gotten off of the train," said Streep, who soon thereafter declared Cannes officially open with Binoche.

"My mother, who is usually right about everything, said to me: 'Meryl, my darling, you'll see. It all goes so fast. So fast,'" added Streep. "And it has, and it does. Except for my speech, which is too long."

The reception was nearly as rapturous for Gerwig, the first American female filmmaker to serve as president of the Cannes jury that will decide the festival's top award, the Palme d'Or. Thierry Fremaux, Cannes' artistic director, on Monday praised her as "the ideal director" for Cannes, given her work across arthouse and studio film and her interest in cinema history. And, Fremaux said, "We very much liked 'Barbie.'"

In the days to come, Cannes will premiere George Miller's "Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga," Francis Ford Coppola's self-financed "Megalopolis" and anticipated new movies from Paolo Sorrentino, Yorgos Lanthimos, Andrea Arnold and Kevin Costner.

But much of the drama surrounding this year's Cannes has been off screen.

After French actor Judith Godrèche earlier this year accused two film directors of rape and sexual abuse when she was a teenager, the French film industry has been dealing with arguably its defining #MeToo moment. On Wednesday, Godrèche will premiere her short "Moi Aussi."

Asked about #MeToo expanding in France, Gerwig told reporters in Cannes on Tuesday that it's progress.

"I think people in the community of movies telling us stories and trying to change things for the better is only good," Gerwig said. "I have seen substantive change in the American film community, and I think it's important that we continue to expand that conversation. So I think it's only moving everything in the correct direction. Keep those lines of communication open."

## Competition

Gerwig is joined on the jury by Lily Gladstone, star of "Killers of the Flower Moon," French actor Eva Green, Spanish filmmaker J.A. Bayona, French actor Omar Sy, Lebanese actor and director Nadine Labaki, Japanese filmmaker Hirokazu Kore-eda, Turkish screenwriter Ebru Ceylan and Italian actor Pierfrancesco Favino.

"I thought I just got over my impostor syndrome last year," said the Oscar-nominated Gladstone. "But I'll start all over again."

The jurors were asked how the many real-world concerns outside the festival might affect their deliberations. One film in competition, Ali Abbasi's "The Apprentice," stars Sebastian Stan as a young Donald Trump. Labaki was questioned on the war in Gaza.

"I truly believe that one of the tools to really change something in the situation we all live in right now, which is a situation I think is not that great, is really through art and through cinema," said Labaki. "It may propose a more tolerant way of seeing things and seeing each other as human beings."

Filmmakers, Favino said, play the important role

of reminding the world of where it can find beauty.

"This is why I decided that I could be here without feeling guilty as a human being," said Favino. "Because if we look for beauty, then we might look for peace."

Other concerns are also swirling around this year's Cannes. Festival workers, fed up with short-term contracts that leave them unqualified for unemployment benefits in between festivals, have threatened to strike. During Tuesday's opening ceremony, two small bands of festival workers protested, including one group that unfurled a banner from the roof of the Palais.

On Monday, the Iranian filmmaker Mohammed Rasoulof, whose film "The Seed of the Sacred Fig" is premiering next week in competition in Cannes, said he had fled Iran after being sentenced to eight years in prison and flogging. The film is said to be a critical depiction of the Iranian government.

As Cannes continues, though, many will be focused on the stars parading the festival's famous red carpet. They'll include Emma Stone, Anya Taylor-Joy, Demi Moore, Selena Gomez, Nicolas Cage and Barry Keoghan. At the closing ceremony on May 25, George Lucas is to receive an honorary Palme d'Or.

Regardless, the 77th Cannes will have a lot to live up to. Last year's festival, widely celebrated for its robust lineup, produced three Oscar best picture nominees: "Anatomy of a Fall," "The Zone of Interest" and "Killers of the Flower Moon."

A good Cannes will help France keep the global spotlight through the summer. The festival will be followed by the French Open, the Tour de France and the summer Olympics in Paris. On May 21, the Olympic flame will be carried up the steps to the festival's hub, the Palais des Festivals.

To help rekindle the spirit of last year's festival, Messi, the canine star of "Anatomy of a Fall," was the first star to hit the red carpet Tuesday. The border collie, enlisted to film daily snippets for French TV, frolicked up and down the carpet while tuxedo-clad photographers hollered "Messi! Messi!"

LOS ANGELES: The time has come to raise a red solo cup. Jason Aldean will pay tribute to the late Toby Keith at the 2024 Academy of Country Music Awards.

The 59th ACM Awards, hosted by Reba McEntire, will take place Thursday at the Ford Center at The Star in Frisco, Texas, just north of Dallas.

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

"I've been a fan of his since the beginning and his songs are some of the first songs I played back in clubs early in my career, including the one I'll be performing on the show," Aldean said in a statement. "I was lucky enough to share the stage with Toby in Oklahoma this last year, and it means a lot to be able to honor him and properly celebrate his iconic career and legacy. He was one of a kind."

Having Aldean, the most recent artist of the decade recipient, honor Keith made sense, ACM CEO Damon Whiteside said in a statement.

"The popularity, influence, and love for Toby Keith is infinite since his passing earlier this year," Whiteside said, adding that the academy was looking forward to welcoming Keith's family.

Luke Combs leads the 2024 nominations with eight nods. For a fifth year in a row, he's up for both male artist of the year and entertainer of the year.

Megan Moroney and Morgan Wallen follow with six each, while Cody Johnson, Chris Stapleton and Lainey Wilson are tied with five. (AP)

BEIJING: A French film week will be held as a part of the 26th Shanghai International Film Festival, scheduled from June 14 to 23, organizers told a press conference on Tuesday.

As this year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of China-France diplomatic relations, the event is curated to showcase the charm of contemporary French movies, said the organizers.

According to the press conference, this year's festival will feature a sci-fi film week centering around artificial intelligence. The event is expected to provide audiences with a diverse cinematic

experience of AI-themed classics and recent releases.

In addition, the sci-fi film week will host special forums to explore how the development of artificial intelligence can propel the film industry forward. (Xinhua)

PARIS: A French court acquitted



Keith



Polanski

filmmaker Roman Polanski Tuesday of defaming a British actor whom he described as a liar after she accused him of sexual assault. The case stems from a 2019 interview with Paris Match magazine, where Polanski allegedly called Charlotte Lewis a liar following her accusations.

The court's ruling did not ad-

dress the truth of the rape allegation but focused solely on whether Polanski's comments in the interview constituted defamation against Lewis.

The verdict was delivered Tuesday afternoon in a Paris court. Lewis said she felt let down by the verdict and would appeal.

"I feel sad," she said. "For us,

it's not over."

Polanski was not in court. His lawyer Delphine Meillet called him to announce the news. She said the court recognized his right to challenge people who make accusations against him. She noted that the verdict came on the opening day of the Cannes Film Festival, calling it "a symbolic day." (AP)

Features

ARABO TIMES

THURSDAY, MAY 16, 2024



People & Places

Obituary

A short story master

Alice Munro, Nobel laureate and literary giant, dies at 92

CANADA, May 15, (AP): Nobel laureate **Alice Munro**, the Canadian literary giant among the world's most esteemed contemporary authors and short story writers, has died at age 92.

A spokesperson for publisher Penguin Random House Canada said Munro, winner of the Nobel literary prize in 2013, died Monday at home in Port Hope, Ontario. Munro had been in frail health for years and retired after her 2012 collection, "Dear Life."



Munro

Of ten ranked with Anton Chekhov and John Cheever, Munro achieved stature rare for an art form traditionally placed beneath the novel. She was the first lifelong Canadian to win the Nobel and the first recipient cited exclusively for short fiction. The Swedish academy lauded her ability to "accommodate the entire epic complexity of the novel in just a few short pages."

Little known beyond Canada until her late 30s, Munro became one of the few short story writers to enjoy ongoing commercial success. Over a half century of writing, she perfected illuminating the universal through the particular, creating stories set around Canada that appealed to readers globally. She produced no single definitive work, but dozens of showcases of her wisdom, technique and talent.

Revered

She was admired without apparent envy, revered by the likes of Jonathan Franzen, John Updike and Cynthia Ozick. Fellow Canadian author Margaret Atwood called her a pioneer for women and Canadians.

"Back in the 1950s and 60s, when Munro began, there was a feeling that not only female writers but Canadians were thought to be both trespassing and transgressing," Atwood wrote in 2013 for the Guardian.

Although not overtly political, Munro participated in the cultural revolution of the 1960s and '70s and permitted her characters to do the same. She was a farmer's daughter who married young, then left her husband and took to "wearing miniskirts and prancing around," as she recalled to The Associated Press in 2003. Many of her stories contrasted her parents' generation with her own, departing from the years when housewives daydreamed "between the walls that the husband was paying for."

Her stories often first appeared in The New Yorker. Her prose style was straightforward, her tone matter of fact, but her plots revealed unending

disruption and disappointments: broken marriages, violent deaths, madness and dreams unfulfilled, or never even attempted.

Moviegoers would become familiar with "The Bear Came Over the Mountain," adapted by Sarah Polley into 2006's "Away from Her." Munro received honors from around the English-language world, including Britain's Man Booker International Prize and the National Book Critics Circle award in the U.S., where the American Academy of Arts and Letters voted her in as an honorary member.

She was a short story writer by choice, and, apparently, by design. Judith Jones, an Alfred A. Knopf editor, did not want to publish Munro's only novel, writing in an internal memo that "there's no question the lady can write but it's also clear she is primarily a short story writer."

Acknowledge

Munro would acknowledge that she didn't think like a novelist.

"I have all these disconnected realities in my own life, and I see them in other people's lives," she told the AP. "That was one of the problems, why I couldn't write novels. I never saw things hanging together too well."

Alice Ann Laidlaw was born in 1931 in Wingham, Ontario, and spent much of her childhood there. Her father was a fox farmer, her mother a teacher and the family's fortunes shifted between middle class and working poor. "Canadian Gothic" was one way she described the community of her childhood.

A top student, she received a scholarship to study at the University of Western Ontario, majoring in journalism as a "cover-up" for her pursuit of literature. She was still an undergraduate when she sold a story about a lonely teacher to CBC Radio. One fellow student wrote to the author that the story reminded him of Chekhov. The student, Gerald Fremlin, would become her second husband. Another fellow student, James Munro, was her first husband. They married when she was only 20, and had four children.

Settling with her family in British Columbia, Alice Munro wrote between trips to school, housework and helping her husband at their bookstore. She wrote in her laundry room, her typewriter placed near the washer and dryer. Isolated from the literary center of Toronto, she managed to get published in several literary magazines and attracted the attention of Ryerson Press. Her debut collection, "Dance of the Happy Shades," was released in 1968 with a first printing of just under 2,700 copies. A year later, it won the Governor's General Award and made Munro a national celebrity - and curiosity. "Literary Fame Catches City Mother Unprepared," read one newspaper headline.



A scene from Abdulussein's World.

Culture

Firm sponsors 'Abdulussein's World' at JACC

Zain promotes Kuwait's art legacy

KUWAIT CITY, May 15: Zain has successfully concluded its strategic sponsorship of the spectacular show **Abdulussein's World**, held at the National Theater of Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Center (JACC). The much-anticipated show celebrated the late Kuwaiti comedy icon **Abdulussein Abdulredah** and his timeless characters and performances. The event, produced by Funoon Center and Scene Productions, entertained huge crowds throughout eight consecutive nights.

Zain believes the private sector has a key role to play in supporting artistic, cultural, and creative projects in Kuwait. This is especially true when it comes to efforts that celebrate Kuwait's rich art legacy and its icons like the late **Abdulussein Abdulredah**. By supporting world-class art performances like

this one, the company strives to contribute to boosting domestic tourism and highlighting young local talents who work hard to bring world-class experiences to fans in Kuwait.

Nostalgic

Zain joined the event by setting up a unique booth to welcome guests before the show and during intermission. The booth was designed with a special nostalgic touch to evoke memories of old TV screens showing memorable scenes from the late artist's popular performances, giving fans a wonderful opportunity to take pictures, make memories, and enjoy hospitality services.

**Abdulussein's World** took audiences through a captivating journey to the past, featuring a mix of spectacular performing arts and nostalgic music pieces that captured the

most memorable moments from **Abdulussein Abdulredah's** shows and characters that span 50 years of television, radio, and theater performances.

Over 80 local talents and artists contributed to the success of the show. In addition, an expert team and director from the UK who specialize in theatrical production were brought in to help create a show befitting the late artist's legacy. The record-breaking nine shows featured huge crowds throughout eight consecutive nights.

Zain is always keen on supporting projects that add value to the local artistic and cultural scenes. The company will spare no efforts to shoulder any project with a creative and ambitious vision to serve the community and contribute to the growth of the local entertainment industry.



Jury member Eva Green enters the opening ceremony of the 77th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Tuesday, May 14. (AP)



Ignatieff



Sanborn

Variety

MADRID: Canadian historian and writer **Michael Ignatieff** has won Spain's Princess of Asturias Award for Social Sciences for his "critical reflections on the major conflicts of our time," prize organizers said Wednesday.

With more than 20 books that range from human rights, foreign policy, economics, and nationalism, among other topics, the 77-year-old Ignatieff has become, in the jury's words, "an essential reference to navigate our current times of war, political polarization and threats to freedom."

His titles include "The Needs of Strangers" (1984), "Isaiah Berlin: A Life" (1998), and "Human Rights as Politics and Ideology" (2001). He also has published numerous articles and opinion columns.

Ignatieff has taught and researched at many of the world's leading universities, including Harvard, Cambridge and Oxford, and was rector of the Central European University.

He was also heavily involved in Canadian politics, rising to its Liberal Party's presidency in 2009 and leading the opposition in parliament.

The 50,000-euro (\$54,000) Princess of Asturias Award is one of eight prizes covering areas including the arts, communication, science and sports that are handed out annually by the foundation. (AP)

MEXICO CITY: **Michelin Guide** unveiled on Tuesday its Guide of Mexico of 2024 in which 18 restaurants were picked as Michelin-starred.

Michelin Guide entered Mexico for the first time, indicating the Mexican cuisine has won more international recognition.

The Michelin Guide of Mexico includes Mexico City, Quintana Roo, Oaxaca, Baja California, Baja California Sur and Nuevo Leon.

A total of 157 restaurant establishments, ranging from down-to-earth taco joints to cosmopolitan eateries, have been selected for the Michelin Selection list.

On the list, 16 restaurants were awarded one Michelin star, and two restaurants from Mexico City were awarded two stars. Michelin three-star restaurants did not appear on the list this time.

"Mexico attracts gourmets and travelers in search of extraordinary experiences. Chefs from all walks of life use their talents to bring the local culture to life, thus making Mexico an outstanding culinary destination," said **Gwendal Poullennec**, international director of the Michelin guides, at the awards ceremony.

According to Michelin Guide officials, the Michelin Guide now covers 24 regions on three continents and evaluates more than 40,000 restaurants. (Xinhua)

BEIJING: The Russian language version of a book featuring discourses on Chinese modernization by **Xi Jinping** has been published by the Central Compilation and Translation Press.

Compiled by the Institute of Party History and Literature of the

CPC Central Committee, the book collects a series of key discourses by Xi between November 2012 and October 2023 regarding Chinese modernization.

The Russian version and the previously published English and French versions of the book will help foreign readers gain deeper insights into the theoretical system and practical requirements of Chinese modernization, and is of great significance to enhancing the international community's understanding on jointly striving toward modernization. (Xinhua)

GENEVA: Eight watches belonging to auto racing icon **Michael Schumacher** sold Tuesday for nearly 4 million Swiss francs (\$4.4 million) at a Geneva auction.

The top piece in the sale, organized by Schumacher's family, was a watch given to the German racing superstar by former Ferrari CEO **Jean Todt** as a Christmas present in 2004. The hammer came down at a price of 1.2 million francs, or

1.5 million including the buyer's commission.

That was well within the pre-sale estimate range of 1-2 million francs.

The custom-made platinum timepiece from F.P. Journe, the *Vagabondage 1*, features 18-carat white gold, a red watch face and images of a Ferrari logo, Schumacher's racing helmet and a "7" - to honor his seven World Championship victories.

**Remi Guillemin**, head of watches for Europe and the Americas for auction house Christie's, declined to identify the buyer, but said that five watches in the Ruthenium collection - a boxed set - were purchased by the same buyer.

While most of the eight watches sold within the pre-sale estimates, an Audemars Piguet featuring a Ferrari prancing horse emblem, sold for a hammer price of 330,000 francs - well above the top of the expected range at 250,000. (AP)

NEW YORK: **David Sanborn**, the Grammy-winning saxophonist who played lively solos on such hits as **David Bowie's** "Young Americans" and James Taylor's "How Sweet It Is (To Be Loved By You)" and enjoyed his own highly successful recording career as a performer of melodic, contemporary jazz, has died at age 78.

A spokesperson confirmed that Sanborn died Sunday in **Tarrytown**, New York. The cause was complications from prostate cancer.

"The news of the loss of David Sanborn to the music world has deeply saddened me," pianist **Bob James**, who collaborated with Sanborn on the Grammy-winning "Double Vision" album, wrote on Facebook. "I was so privileged to share major highlights of my career in partnership with him. His legacy will live on through the recordings. Every note he played came straight from his heart, with a passionate intensity that could make an ordinary tune extraordinary." (AP)



Director **Quentin Dupieux**, (from left), **Raphael Quenard**, **Vincent Lindon**, **Lea Seydoux** and **Louis Garrel** pose for photographers at the photo call for the film "The Second Act" at the 77th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Wednesday, May 15, 2024. (AP)

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Kidney transplantation surgeries soar in Kuwait: 140 procedures in 2023

Kuwait's kidney transplant success rate exceeds 90pct: official

KUWAIT CITY, May 15, (KUNA): The success rate of kidney transplantation in Kuwait exceeds 90 percent, said a leading medical figure on Wednesday.

The high rate of success in the transplant field was announced by the President of the Arab Society of Nephrology and Renal Transplantation (ASNRT) and Head of specialized Kidney diseases unit at Hamed Al-Essa center of Kidney transplant, Turki Al-Otaibi.

Dr. Turki Al-Otaibi said in a press statement - after winning the association's elections - that this percentage is attributed to the availability of appropriate medications to suppress immunity and work on matching tissues between the donor and recipient to a greater extent, using modern technology.

He explained that the number of kidney dialysis patients in Kuwait is 2,500, 88 percent of whom are on hemodialysis programs, and the rest are on peritoneal dialysis, receiving treatment through nine kidney dialysis centers spread across all governorates of Kuwait.

He mentioned that through regular follow-up at the center, the transplanted kidneys are maintained, and medical and surgical problems are



Dr Turki Al-Otaibi

treated promptly, emphasizing that the kidney diseases and transplantation team is responsible for medical care for recipients before and after transplantation.

Dr. Al-Otaibi noted that the main causes of kidney failure - in Kuwait and worldwide - are diabetes, hypertension and glomerulonephritis, pointing out that the best option for tearing said cases is kidney transplantation, which surpasses kidney

dialysis in terms of effectiveness.

He said that although kidney transplantation is best, it is not the dominant treatment for kidney failure due to global barriers preventing the replacement of all dialysis treatments with transplantation.

He said that in 2023, 305 potential kidney transplantation recipients were evaluated, including 95 patients undergoing the necessary examinations before kidney transplantations, and that 210 medically suitable patients were added to the transplant waiting list, which included 450 cases.

Al-Otaibi affirmed that in 2023, 140 kidney transplant surgeries were performed at Hamed Al-Essa Organ Transplant Center (78 from living donors and 62 from deceased donors), in addition to 80 kidney transplant surgeries performed abroad, all were added to the follow-up list at external clinics, where regular follow-ups and all necessary tests are conducted according to modern international standards.

He mentioned that after the opening of the new Kuwait Kidney Transplant Center, this number will increase with the availability of all necessary specialties in one place, facilitating the process for patients.

'Lifestyle changes before medication'

5 natural ways to lower blood pressure

CLEVELAND, May 15: One in three adults worldwide has high blood pressure according to the World Health Organization. Left untreated, the condition - also known as hypertension - could lead to strokes, heart attacks, heart failure, kidney damage and many other health problems. The good news is that simple lifestyle changes can help to significantly reduce blood pressure, says an expert from global health system Cleveland Clinic ahead of World Hypertension Day on May 17.

"Blood pressure management is often 70% lifestyle and 30% medications," says preventive cardiologist Luke Laffin, MD, Co-Director, Center for Blood Pressure Disorders. "While some people can lower blood pressure with lifestyle changes alone, the two approaches are complementary. If you take blood pressure medication but don't make lifestyle changes, your medications won't work effectively."

Here, Dr. Laffin evaluates five effective lifestyle modifications and their estimated impact on reducing systolic blood pressure. Systolic blood pressure is the top number in a blood pressure reading and should ideally measure 120 mmHg or less.

**1. Eat less salt**  
"Cutting your salt intake is probably the most important way to lower high blood pressure," Dr. Laffin says. "In fact, studies show that a low-sodium diet has the same effect as one-and-a-half to two blood pressure medications."

The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends no more than 1,500 mg (or about one teaspoon) of salt per day. However, because this amount is so strictly limited, Cleveland Clinic providers set the limit at 2,300 mg. "The AHA recommendation is an aspirational goal," Dr. Laffin says. "If you can get there without changing your diet a radical amount and being miserable, that's great - but getting to 2,300 milligrams or less can go a long way."

Dr. Laffin points out that it takes about 10 to 14 days to adjust to a low-sodium diet, and then some foods will begin to taste too salty. He adds that

choosing smart salt substitutes such as potassium chloride can help. It is also important to check food labels as sodium is hidden in many foods.

**Impact:** Lowering sodium intake from 3,500 mg - the American average daily intake - to 2,300 mg could drop a person's blood pressure by 2 to 3 mmHg. Limiting sodium intake to the AHA's limit of 1,500 mg a day, should drop it by 5 or 6 mmHg.

**2. Consume more potassium**

Potassium can help lower blood pressure because it gives the kidneys an assist in getting rid of excess sodium. "Potassium is the inverse of sodium," Dr. Laffin explains. "Too much sodium increases blood pressure, and too little potassium increases blood pressure."

A diet that's high in fast food, processed food, carbohydrates, potatoes and meat is a diet that is likely to be low in potassium, Dr. Laffin says. "Instead, try to take in 3,000 to 3,500 mg of potassium per day by eating foods like bananas, tomatoes, avocados, cantaloupe, carrots, grapefruit, kiwi, lima beans, nectarines, and spinach."

Importantly, Dr. Laffin points out this advice does not apply to patients with kidney disease, who should avoid consuming too much potassium, as the kidneys may not be able to get rid of it.

**Impact:** For individuals with hypertension and healthy kidneys, increasing potassium intake to recommended levels should drop blood pressure by 4 to 5 mmHg.

**3. Adopt the DASH diet**  
The DASH diet - which stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension - was created specifically to lower blood pressure. Dr. Laffin says research into this diet is so positive that it is now considered one of the most important non-pharmaceutical measures for controlling hyperten-

sion. "The DASH diet is a really balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains and can be done in combination with a low-sodium diet," Dr. Laffin says. "It can be really helpful in lowering your blood pressure, and people who adopt the DASH diet usually meet low-sodium and high-potassium guidelines, and may lose weight, too."

**Impact:** Following the DASH diet can drop systolic pressure up to 11 mmHg in just a few weeks.

**4. Get physical**  
"Being sedentary can increase blood pressure," Dr. Laffin says. "Moreover, exercise, especially aerobic activity, is incredibly effective in reducing blood pressure. It forces your blood vessels to expand and contract, which keeps them flexible. It also increases blood flow and encourages the creation of new blood vessels, among other benefits."

Other options recommended by Dr. Laffin include dynamic resistance exercises (for example, bicep curls with weights) and isometric resistance exercises (for example, wall push-ups).

**Impact:** Doing 150 minutes of aerobic activity a week can lower blood pressure by 5 to 8 mmHg. Dynamic resistance exercises have the potential to lower blood pressure by 4 to 5 mmHg, depending on factors such as frequency, number of repetitions and heaviness of weights used.

**5. Achieve a healthy weight**  
As an individual's weight increases, so does his or her blood pressure, and losing even a few kilograms can have a significant impact on lowering systolic blood pressure, says Dr. Laffin. "The fat cells that we get around our mid-section are metabolically active cells. They secrete all kinds of hormones, which ultimately raise blood pressure," he explains.

**Impact:** Every loss of 1kg (2.2-pound) loss should result in a drop of 1 mmHg in blood pressure.

Dr. Laffin adds that smoking, stress, lack of sleep and drinking alcohol can also contribute to high blood pressure directly and indirectly, so should be avoided.

Dr. Laffin



Dr Laffin

Will algorithms replace human workers?

The role of AI in X-ray diagnosis: enhancing or replacing doctors?

WASHINGTON, May 15, (AP): How good would an algorithm have to be to take over your job?

It's a new question for many workers amid the rise of ChatGPT and other AI programs that can hold conversations, write stories and even generate songs and images within seconds.

For doctors who review scans to spot cancer and other diseases, however, AI has loomed for about a decade as more algorithms promise to improve accuracy, speed up work and, in some cases, take over entire parts of the job. Predictions have ranged from doomsday scenarios in which AI fully replaces radiologists, to sunny futures in which it frees them to focus on the most rewarding aspects of their work.

That tension reflects how AI is rolling out across health care. Beyond the technology itself, much depends upon the willingness of doctors to put their trust - and their patients' health - in the hands of increasingly sophisticated algorithms that few understand.

Even within the field, opinions differ on how much radiologists should be embracing the technology.

"Some of the AI techniques are so good, frankly, I think we should be doing them now," said Dr. Ronald Summers, a radiologist and AI researcher at the National Institutes of Health. "Why are we letting that information just sit on the table?"

Summers' lab has developed computer-aided imaging programs that detect colon cancer, osteoporosis, diabetes and other conditions. None of those have been widely adopted, which he attributes to the "culture of medicine," among other factors.

Radiologists have used computers to enhance images and flag suspicious areas since the 1990s. But the latest AI programs can go much further, interpreting the scans, offering a potential diagnosis and even drafting written reports about their findings. The algorithms are often trained on millions of X-rays and other images collected from hospitals.

Across all of medicine, the FDA has OK'd more than 700 AI algorithms to aid physicians. More than 75% of them are in radiology, yet just 2% of radiology practices use such technology, according to one recent estimate.

Promises

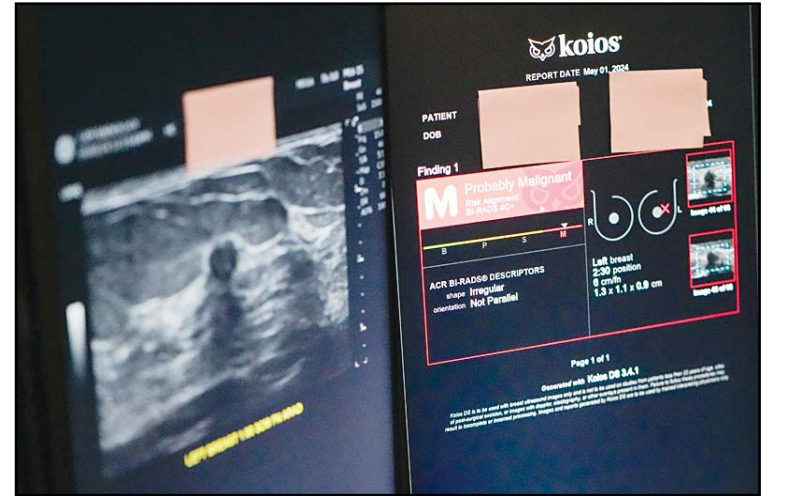
For all the promises from industry, radiologists see a number of reasons to be skeptical of AI programs: limited testing in real-world settings, lack of transparency about how they work and questions about the demographics of the patients used to train them.

"If we don't know on what cases the AI was tested, or whether those cases are similar to the kinds of patients we see in our practice, there's just a question in everyone's mind as to whether these are going to work for us," said Dr. Curtis Langlotz, a radiologist who runs an AI research center at Stanford University.

To date, all the programs cleared by the FDA require a human to be in the loop.

In early 2020, the FDA held a two-day workshop to discuss algorithms that could operate without human oversight. Shortly afterwards, radiology professionals warned regulators in a letter that they "strongly believe it is premature for the FDA to consider approval or clearance" of such systems.

But European regulators in 2022 approved the first fully automatic software that reviews and writes reports



The Koios DS Smart Ultrasound software, used to get a second opinion on mammography images, is seen on a computer screen, Wednesday, May 8, 2024, at Mount Sinai hospital in New York. In the near term, experts say AI will work like autopilot systems on planes - performing important navigation functions, but always under the supervision of a human pilot. (AP)

Experts urge family meals

Screen time during meals causes childhood obesity

KUWAIT CITY, May 15: A recent scientific study has uncovered an unexpected factor contributing to childhood obesity: the use of phones and television during meal times. According to findings reported by the British newspaper "The Telegraph," children who engage with electronic screens while eating are more likely to experience significant weight gain, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Researchers from the University of Minho in Portugal discovered that children allowed to use devices during meals were 15% more likely to carry excess weight compared to those who did not. The study, which involved 735 children aged between six and ten years, examined their eating habits over a 24-hour period and surveyed parents about screen usage rules during meal times.

Experts caution that the study's findings may underestimate the issue, as some parents may not openly admit to allowing screen use during breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Dr. Ana Duarte,

the lead researcher, noted the decline of family meals, attributing it to busy schedules. She emphasized that when children eat while watching TV or using mobile phones, they tend to overeat as their attention is diverted by screens.

Tam Fry, co-founder of the Child Development Foundation, lamented the disappearance of family meals and the health consequences for children, such as developing adult diseases like diabetes. He criticized the normalization of leaving children unsupervised with phones or in front of the television, labeling it as harmful to their health. Fry expressed disappointment that despite efforts over the past two decades to address obesity, the problem persists.

The researchers highlighted the link between excessive screen time and health issues such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and sleep disturbances. The study underscores the importance of reducing screen usage during meals to promote healthier eating habits and combat childhood obesity.

for chest X-rays that look healthy and normal. The company behind the app, Oxipit, is submitting its US application to the FDA.

The need for such technology in Europe is urgent, with some hospitals facing monthslong backlogs of scans due to a shortage of radiologists.

In the US, that kind of automated screening is likely years away. Not because the technology isn't ready, according to AI executives, but because radiologists aren't yet comfortable turning over even routine tasks to algorithms.

"We try to tell them they're overtreating people and they're wasting a ton of time and resources," said Chad McClennan, CEO of Koios Medical, which sells an AI tool for ultrasounds of the thyroid, the vast majority of which are not cancerous. "We tell them, 'Let the machine look at it, you (review and) sign the report and be done with it.'"

Radiologists tend to overestimate their own accuracy, McClennan says. Research by his company found physicians viewing the same breast scans disagreed with each other more than 30% of the time on whether to do a biopsy. The same radiologists even disagreed with their own initial assessments 20% of the time, when viewing the same images a month later.

About 20% of breast cancers are missed during routine mammograms, according to the National Cancer Institute.

And then there's the potential for cost savings. On average, US radiologists earn over \$350,000 annually, according to the Department of Labor.

In the near term, experts say AI will work like autopilot systems on planes - performing important navigation functions, but always under the supervision of a human pilot.

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The winners of the 1st Double Elimination IBAK Strikeout tournament

### IBAK organizes tourney to develop badminton in Kuwait

In line with its vision to promote and develop badminton in Kuwait, The Indian Badminton Association - Kuwait (IBAK) conducted its 1st Double Elimination IBAK Strikeout tournament recently which attracted over 160 badminton enthusiasts from various clubs in Kuwait.

The categories included Flight 1 Profes-

sional Doubles, Flight 2 Advanced Doubles, Flight 3 Intermediate Doubles (Open of All), and Flight 4 Lower Intermediate Doubles (Open of All)

Players from various club & nationalities participated in this tournament with great enthusiasm and exhibited their skills behind the constant cheers from their families and

friends. Most of the games were very tightly fought with high intensity, leaving spectators an impression of watching grand finale.

The tournament was well coordinated and arranged in a professional manner. Thanks to IBAK Chairman Dr. Manimaran Chozhan and IBAK President Aneesh Mathew and all the committee members who worked tirelessly to

make the tournament a grand success.

IBAK has so far conducted various tournaments and will soon be conducting the Kuwait Badminton League 2024 in October 2024.

Category Gold Silver Bronze  
Flight 1 - Professional Jabbar & Hisham, Himanshu & Dhruva Suryakanth & Farhaan

Flight 2 - Advanced Subin & Moo Sabih, Sahil Ajay & Noushad

Flight 3 - Intermediate Renish & Shabbir, Vinod & Ahmed, Sharron & Varun  
Flight 4 - Lower Intermediate Lijo & Sharnad, Praveen & Sadiq, Aditya & Hariharan  
IBAK can be reached on www.ibakwt.org or ibakcommittee@gmail.com

## Delhi stays alive for IPL playoffs with '19-run' win over Lucknow



Delhi Capitals' captain Rishabh Pant plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Delhi Capitals and Lucknow Super Giants in New Delhi, India. (AP)

### Pakistan beat Ireland to grab series

**NEW DELHI, May 15, (AP):** Delhi Capitals kept their hopes alive for the Indian Premier League playoffs with a 19-run win over Lucknow Super Giants.

Delhi completed its league campaign with 14 points but its playoff hopes depend on other results as Sunrisers Hyderabad, Chennai Super Kings and Royal Challengers Bengaluru are also in the running for the remaining two spots.

Kolkata Knight Riders and Rajasthan Royals have qualified for the playoffs.

Tristan Stubbs powered Delhi to 208-4 as the South African power-hitter dominated the death overs and smacked unbeaten 57 off 25 balls. Opening batter Abhishek Porel provided the early momentum with a 33-ball knock of 58.

#### CRICKET

Ishant Sharma's (3-34) triple strike in the power play had Lucknow reeling at 44-4 before Nicholas Pooran made a whirlwind 61 off 27 balls and No. 8 batter Arshad Khan (58 not out) smashed a 25-ball half-century took Lucknow to 189-9.

Porel set up Delhi's early momentum despite Jake Fraser-McGurk falling to Khan's second legitimate delivery of the game for a duck

when he holed out at a long-on.

Porel added 92 runs with Shai Hope (38) before both exited while going for big shots. Captain Rishabh Pant, back after serving a slow over-rate suspension of one match, made 33 off 23 balls but it was Stubbs' clean hitting that powered Delhi.

Stubbs smacked Afghanistan fast bowler Naveen-ul-Haq (2-51) for 22 runs in the penultimate over as the South African ended up with four sixes and three fours.

Pooran revived Lucknow when he countercharged with four sixes and six boundaries before he was smartly held up by Axar Patel low at extra cover. Delhi was eyeing a big win



Pakistan's Azam Khan bats during the third T20 international match between Ireland and Pakistan at the Castle Avenue Cricket Ground, Dublin. (AP)

when Krunal Pandya got stumped for run-a-ball 18 off Kuldeep Yadav (1-33) in the 15th over before Khan's late onslaught brought down the target to 29 off the final two overs.

But fast bowlers Mukesh Kumar and Rasikh Salam squeezed Khan and gave away only nine runs off the final two overs as Lucknow stayed at No. 7 with 12 points from six wins with its last league game against Mumbai Indians to go.

Meanwhile, Pakistan blew away Ireland by six wickets and won its Twenty20 series 2-1.

The Pakistanis chased down 193 with 3.1 overs to spare on Sunday to level the series and had no problems overhauling Ireland's 178 on

Tuesday with three overs remaining.

Captain Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan crushed the home bowling in a second-wicket stand of 139 runs.

Babar lashed 75 off 42 balls and Rizwan clobbered 56 off 38. They were out in consecutive overs on the verge of victory.

Successive sixes by Azam Khan wrapped it up 181-4 to 178-7.

"Big tournament coming up and this is good practice," Babar said with the T20 World Cup next month.

Rizwan hardly saw the strike in the first three overs but once he lost his opening partner Saim Ayub, he opened up. Rizwan hit three sixes and four boundaries.

Babar struck four sixes in one Ben White over - the 14th - and finished with five maximums and six boundaries.

His 39th fifty-plus score broke Virat Kohli's record in T20s.

Ireland was looking good for eclipsing its Sunday total halfway through its innings.

Captain Lorcan Tucker and opener Andy Balbirnie blazed 85 runs for the second wicket. Balbirnie made 35.

Tucker hit 73 off 41 with 13 boundaries but when he was caught at deep extra cover, Ireland folded in the face of outstanding death bowling.

Shaheen Shah Afridi finished with 3-14 off four overs, Mohammad Amir contributed 1-32 and Imad Wasim was an economical 1-23.

Pakistan moves to England for a four-match T20 series starting on Tuesday.

### Fever fall to Connecticut in WNBA opener

## Aces honored with rings, 2nd as quest to three-peat starts

LAS VEGAS, May 15, (AP) - The Las Vegas Aces received their championship rings and then unveiled and raised their WNBA banner, lifting it into place on Tuesday night alongside their first title banner won two seasons ago.

Las Vegas celebrated its back-to-back titles ahead of its 89-80 regular-season opener against the Phoenix Mercury. And, it doesn't sound as if the Aces are finished.

"We're back," owner Mark Davis told the sellout crowd. "Not only are we back, we're back-to-back world champions."

He concluded by saying, "All I can say is let's three-peat."

Las Vegas brings its roster back for another run at the title, but point guard Chelsea Gray remains out with a leg injury suffered in last season's Game 3 of the WNBA Finals.

The Aces debuted their new silver and black uniforms, more closely mirroring the unis of Davis' other Las Vegas team, the Raiders.

#### BASKETBALL

Davis sat next to Aces minority owner and seven-time Super Bowl champion Tom Brady. From the Raiders, coach Antonio Pierce and punter AJ Cole were in attendance, as was Vegas Golden Knights goalie Logan Thompson.

Davis and WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert greeted coach Becky Hammon and the players when they were introduced to the crowd.

WNBA Finals MVP A'ja Wilson was greeted with chants of "MVP!" by the announced sellout crowd of 10,419, a record for the team at Michelob Ultra Arena.

"We're so grateful to have a fanbase that is supportive of us," Wilson told the fans. "We're blessed to be in this situation. We worked our butts off to get to this point, so we just want to say thank you."

Engelbert could have been in Connecticut for Caitlin Clark's debut, but instead took center stage in Las Vegas.

Fever 92 Connecticut 71  
In Uncasville, Caitlin Clark struggled early in her WNBA debut before finishing with 20 points and 10 turnovers as the Indiana Fever fell to the Connecticut Sun.

Alyssa Thomas led the Sun with 13 points, 13 assists and 10 rebounds, registering the 12th triple-double of her career. DeWanna Bonner added 20 points and Dijonai Carrington had 16. Carrington also was a major reason for Clark's early offensive struggles, hounding the guard.

The NCAA's all-time Division I scoring leader, who finished the game 5 for 15 from the field, went scoreless in the first quarter. She missed her first four shots before finally

getting on the board midway through the second period.

Clark stole the ball around the foul line and drove the length of the court before laying the ball in. She later added two free throws and hit a 3-pointer with 29.9 seconds left in the first half to finish the opening 20 minutes with seven points, hitting two of her seven shot attempts. The Fever trailed 49-39 at the break.

The Fever got within 63-57 late in the third quarter on two free throws by Clark, but couldn't get closer the rest of the way.

Clark did start heating up from the field, hitting four 3-pointers, including one from long range.

Clark broke the WNBA all-time record for turnovers in a debut game that was held by Cynthia Cooper-Dyke when she had eight.

Bonner moved into fifth on the WNBA's career scoring list, moving ahead of former Phoenix Mercury teammate Candice Dupree, who finished her career with 6,895 points. Bonner passed Dupree on a layup midway through the third quarter.

Lynx 83 Storm 70

In Seattle, Alanna Smith scored 16 of her career-high 22 points in the first half, Naphessa Collier scored seven of her 20 points during a decisive fourth-quarter run, and the Minnesota Lynx beat the Storm 83-70, spoiling the Seattle debuts of Skylar Diggins-Smith and Nneka Ogumike.

Smith carried the Lynx in the first half before Collier took over late, and Minnesota leaned on its defense to frustrate the Storm into a difficult night at the offensive end. Seattle's Jewell Loyd, last year's leading scorer in the WNBA at 24.7 points, was held to 10 points on 3-of-19 shooting.

"Seattle is a good team and I feel like we really shut them down in the second half, especially," Collier said. "Just covering down for each other, really working as a unit and when we're doing that it's really fun."

The opener was supposed to be the unveiling of the new-look Storm after they finished with the second-worst record in the league at 11-29 last season following the departure of Breanna Stewart in free agency and the retirement of Sue Bird.

Bird, who recently became part of Seattle's ownership group, was in her court-side seat for the opener to see how Diggins-Smith and Ogumike meshed with their new team. Diggins-Smith returned to the floor after missing the 2023 season while on maternity leave and Ogumike left behind Southern California for the first time in her WNBA career to sign with Seattle after spending her first 12 seasons with the Los Angeles Sparks.



Las Vegas Aces guard Kelsey Plum (10) shoots against Phoenix Mercury guard Diana Taurasi (3) during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Las Vegas. (AP)

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## Australia and Uzbekistan confirmed as Women's Asian Cup hosts

BANGKOK, May 15, (Agencies): Australia and Uzbekistan have been confirmed as the hosts of the 2026 and 2029 editions of the AFC Women's Asian Cup respectively, the Asian Football Confederation said on Wednesday.

AFC Executive Committee ratified the AFC Women's Football Committee's recommendations at its third meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand, on the eve of the 34th AFC Congress, said the Asian football governing body.

"The development of the women's game in Asia has grown immensely in recent years and the launch of the AFC Women's Champions League later this year is a monumental stride forward that will transform the standards of our flagship women's national team competition in the decades to come," said AFC President Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa.

"I am confident that we will see a more vibrant and competitive edition in 2026 in Australia where the unrivaled passion for

the women's game is so palpable, setting the perfect stage for Uzbekistan to surpass all expectations in 2029," he added.

Having just co-hosted the FIFA Women's World Cup last year, Australia will host the continent's premier women's national team competition for the second time in history having staged the 2006 edition while Uzbekistan will become the first Central Asian nation to organize the tournament.

□ □ □

FIFA finally set a date Wednesday to play the first Women's Club World Cup tournament in January and February 2026.

The first edition should involve 16 teams though FIFA's ruling council did not specify how they would qualify or where they could play.

Barcelona and Lyon are the top-ranked European teams and have combined to win 10 Champions League titles since 2011. They will meet in the next final on May 25 in Bilbao, Spain.



# Nuggets, Knicks close in on conference finals

Jokic celebrates MVP trophy in style

**DENVER, May 15, (AP):** Nikola Jokic received the Michael Jordan award from Commissioner Adam Silver before tipoff, then delivered a memorable playoff performance to celebrate his third MVP trophy.

Jokic scored 40 points and dished out 13 assists and the Denver Nuggets shut down Anthony Edwards in a 112-97 win over the Minnesota Timberwolves that put the reigning NBA champs one win away from the Western Conference finals.

Jokic also had seven rebounds with no turnovers as the home team won for the first time in this semifinal series.

Jokic's domination even had his opponents smiling.

Jokic even had another rim-rattling dunk, something he's not

## BASKETBALL

known for. When asked if Minnesota's collection of rim protectors necessitated such moves, Jokic cracked,

Aaron Gordon added 18 points and 10 boards, and Jamal Murray scored 16, saying when Jokic has it going, there's no need for anyone else to try to be the hero.

Trapped and doubled all night, Edwards was held to 18 points on 5-of-15 shooting. Karl Anthony-Towns led the Wolves with 23 points and Rudy Gobert scored 18.

With their first three-game losing streak of the season, the Wolves will have to snap their skid Thursday night at Target Center to force a Game 7 back in Denver.

Jokic, who was presented with his third MVP trophy by commissioner Adam Silver in a pregame ceremony, scored 19 first-half points in leading Denver to a 50-44 lead at the half. He added 16 points in the third quarter when the Nuggets pushed their lead to 14.

After the Wolves used a mini-run to pull to 103-92, Jokic nailed a 3-pointer at the shot clock buzzer over a helpless Gobert, who recently won his fourth NBA Defensive Player of the Year award, to make it a 14-point cushion with just over 3 minutes left.

Edwards averaged 33.3 points in the first four games of the series and the Wolves were looking for somebody else to step up. Although KAT did just that, Edwards missed eight of his first nine shots, had five points at halftime and didn't find his shooting touch until the game had gotten away from the Timberwolves.

Minnesota's veteran point guard Mike Conley was scratched just before tipoff with a sore right Achilles. He was injured when he missed a 3-pointer on the Wolves' final possession in their loss on Sunday. Nickeil Alexander-Walker started in his spot and had 14 points and five assists.

In his pre-game comments, Wolves coach Chris Finch also expressed dismay at the NBA fining Rudy Gobert \$75,000 for making a money gesture following a call by referee Scott Foster in Game 4.

That was \$25,000 less than Murray was fined for his actions in Game 2, when he, too, made the money sign and threw both a towel and a heat pack toward an official.

When Towns went to the bench with his third foul late in the first half, Gobert pointed at Kyle Anderson, instructing him to guard Jokic. TNT announcer Reggie Miller was agitated at Gobert, saying, "You're the Defensive Player of the Year! You guard the MVP!"

It mattered little who was guarding the three-time MVP on this night.

The New York Knicks have one more step to climb to reach the Eastern Conference finals for the first time since 2000.

Jalen Brunson, after a couple rough games, looks ready to take it.

Brunson scored 44 points, reaching 40 for the fifth time in this post-season, and the Knicks beat the Indiana Pacers 121-91 for a 3-2 lead in their playoff series.

The Knicks rebounded from a blowout loss and guaranteed themselves at least one more game at Madison Square Garden in front of their roaring fans who had been aching to see big games in late spring again. Josh Hart had 18 points and 11 rebounds, and Deuce McBride scored 17 points after he was inserted into the starting lineup.

The No. 2-seeded Knicks can win the series Friday night at Indiana after the first two-day break between games in the series. Caitlin Clark's WNBA home debut with the Indiana Fever is scheduled for Thursday night at Gainbridge Fieldhouse, causing the extra day that perhaps can benefit a New York team that is playing without four key players.

Game 7, if necessary, would be Sunday afternoon.

Brunson hurt his right foot in



Minnesota Timberwolves center Rudy Gobert (left), and Denver Nuggets guard Kentavious Caldwell-Pope watch the ball during the second half of Game 5 of an NBA basketball second-round playoff series in Denver. (AP)

## US and Saudi Arabia expected to be willing hosts

# FIFA moves toward ending soccer 'tradition' and letting league games be staged in other countries

Game 2 and was limited to 18 points Sunday, his lowest of the postseason, when the Pacers ran the Knicks off the floor in a 121-89 romp. He kept insisting he was fine and there was no reason to question that Tuesday.

Pulling up quickly for 3-pointers off the dribble or using his series of fakes and spins to set up soft jumpers in the lane, Brunson shot 18 for 35 and again looked like the player who finished fifth this season in MVP voting, not the one who shot 10 for 26 in Game 3 and 6 for 17 on Sunday.

He scored 28 in the first half, a Knicks playoff record, and then put away the game in the fourth with seven straight points, capped by a three-point play that made it 106-86 with 7:57 to go.

Brunson, who scored 43 in Game 1 to become the fourth player in NBA history with four consecutive 40-point games in the playoffs, had plenty of help.

Alec Burks, who had been out of the rotation entirely until re-emerging after a rash of injuries, added 18 points off the bench and Isaiah Hartenstein had seven points and 17 rebounds. Hartenstein grabbed 12 on the offensive end, helping the Knicks overwhelm the Pacers 53-29 on the glass, with 20 offensive rebounds leading to 26 second-chance points.

Pascal Siakam scored 22 points for the sixth-seeded Pacers, who will try to stay unbeaten at home in the post-season to force the decisive game. Myles Turner added 16 but All-Star Tyrese Haliburton had only 13 after averaging 29.7 over the last three games.

Indiana got off to a strong start before the Knicks surged ahead with an 11-0 run en route to a 38-32 lead after one. Carlisle burned three timeouts in the quarter, the crowd seemingly growing louder with each.

Brunson had consecutive baskets for a 13-point lead early in the second quarter and then had the first basket in a 9-0 run that made it 65-47 with 2:11 remaining. A 17-0 run in the third turned an eight-point lead into an 89-64 bulge.

The Knicks haven't reached the conference finals since the Pacers beat them in 2000 in the sixth meeting between the teams in eight years. With Patrick Ewing, Latrell Sprewell and Larry Johnson among the players from that era in the crowd, this one had some of that 1990s Knicks-Pacers fierceness in a game featuring five technical fouls.

Isaiah Jackson was called for a foul for a hard pick that knocked Donte DiVincenzo to the court in the first half. Hartenstein walked up and got chest-to-chest with Jackson, and Burks also came in and appeared to bring his hand up and make contact with Jackson. All three players were called for technical fouls.

Later, after DiVincenzo slammed down the miss of Brunson's jumper, he and Turner got tangled up as DiVincenzo tried to fight through a pick. They then screamed at each other after a foul was called and both were given technical fouls as the crowd chanted DiVincenzo's name while referees reviewed the play.

GENEVA, May 15, (AP): FIFA moved Wednesday toward ending decades of soccer tradition by ordering a review of its policy that currently blocks domestic league games being played in other countries.

Fans are likely to object to their teams' home matches potentially being moved thousands of miles (kilometers) away, though it has become routine for United States pro sports leagues to stage games in Europe, Asia and South America that help build their brands and fan bases.

The U.S. and Saudi Arabia are expected to be willing hosts to lure competitive games from top European countries, and FIFA recently agreed to withdraw from an ongoing court case in New York filed by pro-

## SOCCER

moter Relevent to challenge the veto on organizing competitive league games.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino did not take questions or hold a news conference in Bangkok where the soccer body's council met Wednesday and agreed to create a working group to review so-called "out-of-territory" games.

So far, soccer authorities in Italy, Spain and France have been able to go abroad to countries including Saudi Arabia, China and Israel but only for their domestic Super Cup - largely ceremonial games between the previous season's national league and cup title holders.

The new FIFA policy will likely

## Girona likely to be demoted to Europa League

### Abu Dhabi owners given options to meet entry rules

GENEVA, May 15, (AP): The Abu Dhabi investors in Manchester City and Girona have been offered divestment options by UEFA to let both compete in the Champions League next season by complying with integrity rules for teams that share owners.

Girona has made a stunning run to

a guaranteed top-four finish in Spain's La Liga, with three key players either loaned or sold via Man City's influence including Brazilian star Sávio.

Girona, also part-owned by the brother of Man City manager Pep Guardiola, will go into the elite European competition for the first time. City

won the 2023 Champions League title and will finish in the top two of the English Premier League.

But the teams have severely tested UEFA's rules on multi-club ownership that guard against collusion in games.

Failing to comply with UEFA's rules with a proposal by June 3 should see one of the two teams, likely Girona, demoted to the second-tier Europa League. The team finishing higher in its domestic league takes priority.

According to a UEFA document seen on Tuesday by The Associated Press, two options are open to City Football Group, the Abu Dhabi-created operation with stakes in 13 clubs worldwide including 100% of Man City and 47% of Girona.

## SOCCER

CFG could solve the problem by selling shares to an independent third party that reduces one ownership stake to below 30%, or transfer all shares in one club to a blind trust overseen by a panel appointed by UEFA.

The trustee could be picked by CFG in a UEFA-approved model that applied this season in a compliance deal for AC Milan, Toulouse and their United States investor Red Bird Capital.

The multi-club ownership issue for UEFA and CFG has loomed since Girona's league-leading fast start in September.

UEFA declined comment all season pending Girona's confirmed qualification in the Champions League this month. UEFA also did not comment on a possible pending issue with Jim Ratcliffe's ownership stakes and influence at Manchester United and Nice - both could qualify for the next Europa League.

On Tuesday, UEFA's club finance monitoring panel wrote to soccer stakeholders to clarify updates to its multi-club rules for entry to European club competitions that were first drafted in the 1998-99 season.

Man City and Girona drew scrutiny for CFG having "decisive influence" over both because the Abu Dhabi operation holds at least 30% of the shares in both, and because of the clubs' transfer dealings this season.

Girona seemed to meet the UEFA panel's criteria for clubs that "transferred, permanently or temporarily, three or more players with the other club, directly or indirectly via related parties, during the season."

Girona has two players on its squad who belong to other CFG clubs: Right back Yan Couto, on loan from Man City, and winger Sávio, on loan from French club Troyes.

Sávio is the revelation of the season in Spain. His dribbling and speed on the left flank have caused mayhem in opposing defenses. The 20-year-old has scored 10 times and is one of the league's top assist-makers with nine passes for goals. Sávio's end-of-season permanent move to Man City that was reported in February should not be affected by any UEFA decision.

Couto has excelled in joining in the attack from his position of right back, delivering eight assists.

After completing a loan at Girona, Venezuela midfielder Yangel Herrera was sold by City to its sibling club last July.

## Corinthians qualify

RIO DE JANEIRO, May 15. (Xinhua): Yuri Alberto scored twice as Corinthians clinched a berth in the Copa Sudamericana knockout stage with a 4-0 home win over Argentinos Juniors on Tuesday.

Alberto netted either side of Wesley Gassova's 41st-minute strike before Fausto Vera completed the rout in second-half stoppage time.

The Brazilian side now has 10 points from five games, a point behind Group F leaders Racing Montevideo. Argentinos Juniors are third in the group with six points.

"It's great to have the support of the fans and my teammates, who have helped me a lot," Bojra said in reference to a lean scoring spell early in the year.

"It's nice that they recognize my dedication, even if the criticism was warranted," the 31-year old added.

In their Copa Sudamericana games on Tuesday, Racing Mon-

## SOCCER

tevideo won 2-1 at Nacional Asuncion. Independiente Medelín drew 1-1 at Defensa y Justicia. Sportivo Ameliano prevailed 1-0 at home to Rayo Zuliano and Nacional Potosi edged to a 2-1 home victory over Trindense.

Meanwhile, Miguel Borja scored a goal in each half as Argentina's River Plate eased to a 2-0 home win over Paraguayan side Libertad in their Copa Libertadores Group H clash.

The Colombian forward struck in the 41st and 84th minutes at Monumental stadium as the Buenos Aires giants secured their fourth win from five games.

Martin Demichelis' men are now all but guaranteed of finishing top of the group while Libertad need an improbable sequence of results to advance to the knockout stage.

"Miguel is a player who is capable of scoring a lot of goals," Demichelis said of Borja, who has netted 17 times in 20 outings across all competitions this year.



New York Knicks' Jalen Brunson (left), drives past Indiana Pacers' Aaron Nesmith during the second half of Game 5 in an NBA basketball second-round playoff series in New York. (AP)





Real Madrid's Jude Bellingham (right), scores his side's opening goal during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Deportivo Alaves at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

# Sports

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## Man City on verge of Premier League title

Haaland scores twice in win over Tottenham



Tottenham's Cristian Romero (left), and Manchester City's Erling Haaland challenge for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester City at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London. (AP)

**LONDON, May 15, (AP): Erling Haaland scored twice as Manchester City beat Tottenham 2-0 and moved to within one win of a record fourth-straight Premier League title.**

The three-time defending champion will go into the final round of games on Sunday with a two-point lead over second-place Arsenal.

City hosts West Ham in its last league game of the season, while Arsenal is also at home against Everton.

"The tennis players say 'the serve to win Wimbledon', the last game, is the most difficult one," City manager Pep Guardiola said. "We know what we're playing for. The tension is there, the rival is so good. It's why it is difficult, we know that."

Haaland fired City ahead in the 51st minute at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium when he converted Kevin De Bruyne's cross from close range.

He struck his second from the penalty spot in the first minute of stoppage time after Pedro Porro had brought down Jeremy Doku.

### SOCCER

Victory means City is in control of its own fate in the race for the title, despite being pushed right to the wire by Arsenal.

Guardiola is now within touching distance of a sixth league championship in seven seasons.

No other English team has managed to win four top flight titles in a row, while City is also looking to secure back-to-back league and FA Cup doubles.

Going into Tuesday's game one point behind Arsenal, Guardiola had warned his players that anything other than maximum points would bring an end to their dominance of England's top division. That only increased the pressure on his team, which was also looking to end a four-game losing run in the league at Spurs.

And the occasion appeared to get to City's players in a nervous first half.

"They were playing for the consequences of the result. When you do that you are going to lose the Premier League," Guardiola said. "They are human beings, I understand the pressure."

Haaland's goal six minutes into the second eased the tension. But while his goals were decisive, City had to rely on substitute goalkeeper Stefan Ortega to keep Spurs at bay as the home team pushed for an equalizer.

Coming on in the 69th after Ederon had sustained a head injury in a collision with Cristian Romero, Ortega quickly had to block a close-range effort from Dejan Kulusevski.

Later he produced another save to deny the Spurs forward, but Ortega's finest moment came in the 86th when Son Heung-min raced through on goal.

With only the keeper to beat, Son looked certain to score as he fired low toward the corner. A draw would have put Arsenal in the driver's seat for the title heading into Sunday's season finale - but Son could only watch as Ortega shot out a leg to deflect the ball.

Guardiola, watching on, had his head in his hands before falling to the ground in relief.

Shortly after, Doku lured Porro into a lunge in the Spurs box and referee Chris Kavanagh pointed to the spot.

Haaland put the game beyond doubt by blasting his shot into the top corner for his second of the match and 38th of the season.

City's win also meant Aston Villa secured fourth place and qualification for next season's Champions League ahead of Tottenham in fifth.

Aston Villa's players sprayed Champagne and received a congratulatory message from Prince William as they celebrated qualification for the Champions League to crown the club's remarkable five-year turnaround in fortunes.

Over at Tottenham, the atmosphere was much more downbeat.

"I think the last 48 hours has revealed to me that the foundations are fairly fragile," Tottenham manager Ange Postecoglou said after a dramatic evening when the Premier League's fourth and final representative for next season's Champions League was confirmed.

The Villa squad had gathered for the team's end-of-season awards on Tuesday night and were watching on TV as Tottenham slipped to a 2-0 loss to Manchester City, a result that had more ramifications than simply for the Premier League's title race.

Kroos criticizes officials for call

### Real Madrid trounce Alaves after presenting league trophy to fans

MADRID, May 15, (AP): Real Madrid presented its 36th Spanish league trophy to its fans at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium, then followed up the celebrations with a 5-0 rout of Alaves that featured a pair of goals by Vinicius Junior and another by Jude Bellingham.

Federico Valverde and Arda Guler also scored for Madrid, which was yet to play at the Bernabeu since clinching the league two rounds ago. The club celebrated the title on Sunday through the streets of Madrid, but it couldn't go through its traditional celebration at the Bernabeu because of a concert at the stadium.

### SOCCER

It couldn't celebrate when it clinched the title in advance with a win against Cadiz on May 4 because it had to play Bayern Munich a few days later in the semifinals of the Champions League, a game it won 2-1 to make it to the June 1 final against Borussia Dortmund in London.

"I'm really pleased with the team's performance, we need to get into a good rhythm. We have a very important game left to crown our season," Vinicius said. "We always enjoy wearing this shirt and playing for these fans at this stadium. My dream since I was a child was to play here and now we have the opportunity to deliver this victory for many kids who want to be here but can't."

Alaves' players gave Madrid a guard of honor before the match, lining up near the sideline and applauding Madrid players as they entered the field. Madrid captain Nacho Fernandez stepped onto the field carrying the



Real Madrid's Federico Valverde reacts during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Deportivo Alaves at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

league trophy.

The other 35 league trophies were represented in images placed around the midfield circle.

Coach Carlo Ancelotti used the regular starters again after giving them some rest in a 4-0 win at Granada on Saturday.

Bellingham opened the scoring in the 10th minute, Vinicius scored his first goal in the 27th and Valverde found the net in first-half stoppage time. Vinicius got his second in the 70th and Guler sealed the result in the 81st.

It was the ninth straight league win for Madrid and sixth in its last seven matches in all competitions. It reached 93 points from 36 matches, 17 points more than second-place Barcelona.

Earlier, relegation-threatened Mallorca drew 1-1 at Osasuna, moving to 15th place and staying seven points from the demotion zone.

Girona missed a chance to overcome Barcelona for second place after a 1-0 loss to mid-table Villarreal at home. Girona stayed in third place after the loss, one point from Barcelona and five ahead of fourth-place Atletico Madrid.

Meanwhile Real Madrid midfielder Toni Kroos criticized match officials for their controversial offside call which benefited his team against Bayern Munich during the Champions League semifinals.

Bayern defender Matthijs de Ligt thought he'd equalized to send last week's game to extra time when he fired the ball into Madrid's net in the 13th minute of stoppage time.

But referee Szymon Marciniak had already blown his whistle after his assistant quickly raised his flag for a possible offside infringement.

Too quickly, Kroos said Wednesday.

"It's bad handling. You have to let play continue," the Germany player said in a podcast he runs with his brother Felix. "I think the mistake is primarily the linesman's."

Bayern was trailing 2-1 and needed a goal to force extra time to keep alive its hopes of reaching the final. UEFA tells match officials not to stop play immediately for tight offside calls. And TV replays showed it was a very close call.

"If he raises the flag now, the referee assumes that his linesman sees it exactly that way and trusts him that it was probably three meters offside," said Kroos, who said he understood Bayern's frustrations. "The anger is justified because you just have to play the situation to the end, 100%."

Kroos said he was unsure if Madrid defenders would have stopped de Ligt's shot had there not been an intervention from the referee.

Excitement builds

### Kuwait in pool four as IHF releases classifications for Handball WCup

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 15: The International Handball Federation has released the team classifications for the 29th World Handball Cup, slated to be co-hosted by Croatia, Denmark, and Norway from January 14 to February 2, 2025.

Kuwait secured a fourth pool, alongside Bahrain, Tunisia, Chile, Cape Verde, Guinea, and America, as well as the qualifier invited by the International Federation of the Game.

The top classification features Denmark, France, Sweden, Germany, Egypt, Hungary, Slovenia, and Portugal. In the second classification, we find Austria, Norway, Iceland, Croatia, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, and the Czech Republic. Finally, the third classification includes Qatar, Brazil, Poland, Argentina, Cuba, North Macedonia, Japan, and Algeria.

The draw for the World Cup involving these 29 handball teams will take place in the Croatian city of Zagreb on the 29th of this month. Kuwait marks its return to the international stage after a 14-year hiatus since its last participation in the 2009 World Cup held in Croatia. This marks our Kuwait's ninth appearance in the World Cup,

following participations in 1982, 1995, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, and 2009. Qualification for the World Cup was secured by clinching fourth place in the concluding Asian qualifiers.

Meanwhile, the Handball Federation will host a ceremony today at 5:30 PM at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex hall, honoring the youth and junior teams for their outstanding performances. The youth team secured second

### HANDBALL

place in the recently concluded Arab Championship in Morocco, while the junior handball blue also achieved second place in the Gulf Games held in the Emirates.

Due to time constraints and the participation of our national junior and youth teams in the World Cup qualifiers, the Federation's Competitions Committee has postponed the League Cup Championship to the beginning of the next season.

In the last round of the handball general league's 13th round, Al-Tadamon clinched its first victory against Al-Sahel with a score of 24-23. Kuwait Club defeated Al-Fahaheel 42-25, and Al-Yarmouk emerged victorious over Khaitan with a score of 34-25.



A file photo of Kuwaiti players celebrating.

### Milan wins chaotic sprint 11th stage, Pogacar stays in pink

FRANCAVILLA AL MARE, Italy, May 15, (AP): Italian cyclist Jonathan Milan sprinted to victory at the end of the 11th stage of the Giro d'Italia on Wednesday, while Tadej Pogacar kept his firm grip on the leader's pink jersey.

Milan, who rides for the Lidl-Trek team, edged out Tim Merlier and Kaden Groves in a bunch sprint that was made even more chaotic by the headwind at the finish at Francavilla al Mare.

It was Milan's second win in this

year's race - he also sprinted to victory on the fourth stage - and his third overall following last year's debut Giro win.

It was a lengthy slog on Wednesday but the 207-kilometer (129-mile) route from Foiano di Val Fortore featured just one third-category climb before it headed along the Adriatic coast.

The final four kilometers had some risky road traffic but Pogacar finished safely with the rest of the contenders

to maintain his lead of 2 minutes, 40 seconds ahead of Daniel Martinez.

Last year's runner-up Geraint Thomas, who is third, picked up two potentially valuable bonus seconds but was still 2:56 behind Pogacar.

Thursday's 12th stage starts flat along the coast but then cuts inland for four fourth-category climbs on a 193-kilometer (120-mile) route from Martinsicuro to Fano.

The Giro ends in Rome on May 26.