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US intelligence says Iran not developing N-weeps

Cabinet ratifies '23-'27 action plan

'Is preparing'

WASHINGTON, July 11, (AP): A U.S. intelligence assessment says Iran is not pursuing nuclear weapons at the moment but has ramped up activities that could help it develop them.

The assessment from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence released Monday says Iran has moved to increase its capacity to produce an atomic bomb since 2020 but has stopped short of that so far.

The findings corresponded with previous U.S. assessments about Iran's nuclear program, although many in Congress and elsewhere have been skeptical of those.

The Biden administration has been defending its desire to return to the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA, since it first took office. That effort has been complicated in recent months by the suspension of its chief negotiator, Rob Malley, who was placed on unpaid leave last month pending an investigation into claims he mis-handled classified information.

"Iran is not currently undertaking the key nuclear weapons-development activities that would be necessary to produce a testable nuclear device," according to the two-page unclassified synopsis of the report.

However, Iran is also pursuing "research and development activities that would bring it closer to producing the fissile material needed for completing a nuclear device following a decision to do so," the report said.

In that regard, Iran continues to violate the terms of the 2015 nuclear deal regarding uranium enrichment that it agreed to with world powers, the report said. The Trump administration withdrew from that agreement in 2018.

"Iran continues to increase the size and enrichment level of its uranium stockpile beyond JCPOA limits," the report said, adding that it also continues to exceed JCPOA restrictions on advanced centrifuge research and development.

These findings have been generally supported by inspections from the UN's nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In addition to the nuclear findings, the U.S. intelligence report said that Iranian ballistic missile programs continue to pose a significant threat to countries around the Middle East. "Iran has emphasized improving the accuracy, lethality, and reliability of its missiles," it said.

Also:

TEHRAN: Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi did not depart on a three-nation tour to Africa as planned, state media reported without elaboration. Raisi was supposed to travel from Tehran on Tuesday morning, but no Iranian news outlets reported him leaving.

The country's media said repeatedly over the past week that the president planned to visit Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe. State media did not elaborate on why he hadn't departed.

Kenya's foreign ministry said in a brief statement that the visit was delayed until Wednesday morning so key memoranda of understanding could be finalized "that are central to the furtherance of relations." The statement said the presidents would have a bilateral meeting after Raisi arrived.

It would be unusual for Iran's president to call off a foreign trip, though domestic visits sometimes are canceled.

In 2018, Iran canceled a visit by Iraq's then-prime minister, Haider al-Abadi, after he said he had no choice but to abide by renewed U.S. sanctions on Tehran even though he opposed them.

Iran's then-foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, reportedly canceled a trip to Italy amid tense nuclear talks, citing his tight schedule.

TEHRAN: Fire erupted at an oil refinery in southern Iran and injured eight firefighters Monday, the official IRNA news agency reported.

The news agency did not say what caused the fire but reported the firefighters were hurt while trying to put out the blaze burning in two of the five tanks at an oil depot near Iran's port of Bandar Abbas.

Authorities said there was concern the fire might spread to more tanks. The port, located at the mouth of strategic Strait of Hormuz, is a major import and export hub.

Similar fires were reported there in the past and at other oil facilities in Iran. Authorities blamed them on decades of international sanctions as well as hot summer weather.

MPs approve 'Audit' resignation

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, July 11: The Cabinet on Monday ratified the government's 2023-2027 action plan.

Titled (correcting the course: product-based economy and sustainable wellbeing), the five-pronged plan breaks down into a number of programs and projects reflecting the government's goals based on the state's developmental plan, noted Deputy Premier Essa Al-Kandari after the Cabinet's session.

This would contribute in accelerating pace of achievement, as well as further fruitful cooperation between the executive and legislative branches, pointed out Al-Kandari, also Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs. The plan is to then be forwarded to the National Assembly.

The Cabinet also congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Kuwaiti people and Arab and Muslim nations on the new Islamic year, which would start on Wednesday July 19.

On this occasion, the Cabinet decided that the government bodies would take Wednesday July 19 as a public holiday and Thursday July 20 as a rest day, and they would resume work on Sunday (July 23).

The Cabinet also ordered the publication of 100,000 copies of the Holy Quran translated into the Swedish language to be distributed in Sweden in coordination with the Foreign Ministry.

The move is meant to let people in Sweden get first-hand knowledge about Islam's Holy Book and the Islamic values and teachings of peace and tolerance as well as to help promote the values of peaceful co-existence between peoples of different faiths and to counter extremism and hatred.

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Photo by Rezk Tawfik

MP Marzouq Al-Ghanim speaks during the National Assembly ordinary session on Tuesday, which included voting on the minutes of the inaugural session on June 20.

Opinion

Oh leadership ... situation is as it has been despite 13 parliaments and 30 governments

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

IF you count the number of parliaments that we have had since liberation to this day, the governments that have been formed since then, and the outputs since then, you will definitely be surprised. None of them either worked to meet the aspirations of the people, nor developed a productive renaissance plan that could meet the aspirations.

Most of them instead fell into the trap of hiding behind the guise of arguments and disagreements with the parliamentarians. Since 1992 to this day, there have been 14 National Assemblies and about 30 governments, but none of them put in their program a responsible and realistic plan that can achieve the popular demands. Therefore, is it possible to bet on the two authorities now for the advancement of the country?

Let us take for instance the housing crisis that has been ongoing since before the liberation. What did successive governments do to solve it? How did the parliament perform? Did any of them do anything that could be relied on?

The housing crisis still exists and is in fact getting worse day by day, because none of those who are responsible for this matter care about it. In short, it is a source of profit for many of them, and therefore any solution will be at their expense.

That is why despite the random distribution of plots in some areas, the crisis continues. On the other hand, other countries resolved it with little effort through realistic decisions that meet the needs of the state first, and the population second, and grant social stability to citizens through self-sufficient housing cities in which all services are provided.

These goals were not achieved in Kuwait, because the idea behind the establishment of the Kuwait Credit Bank remained ink on a paper. Currently, the bank's capital stands at about KD 3.3 billion, and lends citizens about KD 3 billion, but still it falls under the inability to fulfill the many applications submitted to it, in addition to the administrative routine between the Ministry of Oil, Kuwait Municipality and the Ministry of Finance with regard to the allocation of land,

which made the citizens wait for over 20 years to get their "dream house."

On the other hand, there are several solutions, including amending the bank law so that commercial banks - both local and international - participate in it by guaranteeing the state interest of soft loans, and these institutions can then work to grant them to citizens. Also, approved international companies can be chosen to pay the cost of construction of cities from scratch until securing housing for the citizens, just like the way some Gulf countries did. If the borrower is unable to pay the installments, he then can mortgage the house.

There is no doubt that the need for housing puts pressure on citizens, some of whom are forced to borrow in order to obtain a house.

On the other hand, this constitutes a new obstacle to meeting the needs of citizens with limited income, which pushes them to acquire more debt.

That is why consumer loans also constituted an eternal problem that led to a crisis of inability to pay, and caused some to resort to issuing cheques without balance, or trust bonds, which benefited the stakeholders who are part of the deep state by investing in the pains and concerns of the people.

When all these governments and parliaments are unable to meet the needs of the people, the defect is not in the laws, but in the wrong strategy on which political practice and the approach to people's problems were built. This in itself calls for reconsidering the mentality of dealing with crises.

This is due to the fact that the authorities exist to manage the affairs of the people, and work to solve the expected problems. This is what a state does, and where officials always look ahead, and not at their ego and their own interests.

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Palestinian family evicted

Home lost after 45-year battle



Nora Ghaith-Sub Laban touches the door to the home her family was evicted from to make way for Israeli settlers in Jerusalem's Old City, Tuesday, July 11, 2023. (AP)

'I will not stay quiet'

JERUSALEM, July 11, (AP): Israeli authorities evicted a Palestinian family from a contested apartment in Jerusalem's Old City on Tuesday, capping a decades-long legal battle that has come to symbolize the conflicting claims to the holy city.

Activists say the Ghaith-Sub Laban family's removal is part of a wider trend of Israeli settlers encroaching on Palestinian neighborhoods with the government's backing and cementing Israeli control by seizing property in contested east Jerusalem.

Israel describes the eviction as a simple battle over real estate, with settlers claiming the family was squatting in an apartment formerly owned by Jews.

Earlier this year, Israel's Supreme Court struck down the family's final appeal, ending a 45-year-long legal battle and clearing the way for the eviction.

Police officers came to Nora Ghaith-Sub Laban's apartment in Jerusalem's Old City early Tuesday morning, forced open the door and removed the family. Her son, Ahmad Sub-Laban, said the family was barred from reentering the premises.

"When we got back in front of the house, we faced the new reality that our main entrance had been closed and we don't have the right to use it anymore," he said. "They took the key and changed the lock."

Several dozen protesters gathered and chanted "Occupation no more" at passersby outside the block of apartments as police stood by. Jewish settlers also gathered outside, dancing and smiling as they stared at the distraught family. Other settlers poured water down on family members from windows above.

Nora Ghaith-Sub Laban, the family matriarch, said she was in the hospital when police arrived. She accused Israel of trying to "ethnically cleanse" the area of Palestinians and vowed to continue fighting the eviction.

"My tears and all my crying is just sadness for losing my home, I'm parting with my entire life and all my memories that are in this house. But I'm not weak," she said.

But Arieh King, a settler leader and deputy mayor of Jerusalem, said it was a day to celebrate.

"At last after 40 years," he said. "They should be ashamed for using the property that does not belong to them."

The family says it moved into the property in the early 1950s and rented it from a "general custodian" for abandoned properties, first under Jordanian authorities and

then under Israel after the 1967 Mideast war. The case dragged on for decades, as the Israeli custodian and then the Kollle Galicia trust, the original property owner, contested the family's "protected" status.

Among the trust's claims was that the family did not use the property for extended periods. The family has said its members moved out for periods due to illness or attempts to repair the property.

Jerusalem's Old City, home to holy sites of three monotheistic faiths, was captured by Israel along with the rest of east Jerusalem during the 1967 war and later annexed in a move unrecognized by most of the international community.

Israel considers the entire city its capital, while the Palestinian seek east Jerusalem as the capital of a future independent state.

Today, more than 220,000 Jews live in east Jerusalem, largely in built-up settlements that Israel regards as neighborhoods of its capital. Most of east Jerusalem's 350,000 Palestinian residents are crammed into overcrowded neighborhoods where there is little room to build.

The Ghaith-Sub Laban family said authorities did not let them back into the house to recover furniture or medicine for the mother and another son, Rafat. They were only able to grab one item as the authorities forced them out - a plant that has been in the family for 17 years.

"We decided to take it to remember that we lived here, our children grew up here and that we are looking forward to returning to the house," Ahmad Sub Laban said.

Ahmad and his siblings were evicted from the house in 2016. For now, Nora and her husband, Mustafa, plan to stay with their children until they can find a permanent place to live, Rafat Sub Laban said.

Across the city's eastern half, particularly in and around the Old City, settler organizations and Jewish trusts are pursuing other court battles against Palestinian families to clear the way for settlers.

An Israeli law passed after the annexation of east Jerusalem allows Jews to reclaim properties that were Jewish before the formation of the Israeli state in 1948. Jordan controlled the area between 1948 and the 1967 war.

"I will not stay quiet," Nora Ghaith-Sub Laban said. "If I find any loophole in the law, I will use it and I will sue them, because this is my right, and this is my home, and this is my land, and this is my country."

Newswatch

VILNIUS: U.S. President Joe Biden on Tuesday hailed an agreement for Sweden to join NATO as more work remained to determine a path forward for Ukraine's future with the alliance. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy criticized as "absurd" the absence of a timetable for his country's entry.

Biden described the summit as a "historic moment" and said the United States agreed with a proposal, yet to be released publicly, to outline a path for Ukraine's eventual membership. (AP)

ANKARA: Turkey agreed on Monday to clear the way for Sweden's accession to NATO and Sweden vowed full support to Turkey's bid to join the EU, according to a tripartite statement.

"Given the imperatives of the deterrence and defence of the Euro-Atlantic area, Turkey will transmit the Accession Protocol for Sweden to the Grand National Assembly, and work closely with the Assembly to ensure ratification," reads the statement issued following a meeting in Vilnius. (KUNA)



A Palestinian woman stands in the waves of the Mediterranean Sea during the Eid Al Adha festival at the beach in Tel Aviv, Israel, on June 29, 2023. (AP)



OPINION OTHER VOICES

Nearly 50,000 Russians may have died

Data reveals carnage of human loss

Nearly 50,000 Russian men have died in the war in Ukraine, according to the first independent statistical analysis of Russia's war dead. Two independent Russian media outlets, Mediazona and Meduza, working with a data scientist from Germany's Tübingen University, used Russian government data to shed light on one of Moscow's closest-held secrets - the true human cost of its invasion of Ukraine.

To do so, they relied on a statistical concept popularized during the COVID-19 pandemic called excess mortality. Drawing on inheritance records and official mortality data, they estimated how many more men under age 50 died between February 2022 and May 2023 than normal.

Neither Moscow nor Kyiv gives timely data on military losses, and each is at pains to amplify the other side's casualties. Russia has publicly acknowledged the deaths of just over 6,000 soldiers. Reports about military losses have been repressed in Russian media, activists and independent journalists say. Documenting the dead has become an act of defiance; those who do so face harassment and potential criminal charges.

Despite such challenges, Mediazona and the BBC's Russian Service, working with a network of volunteers, have used social media postings and photographs of cemeteries across Russia to build a database of confirmed war deaths. As of July 7, they had identified 27,423 dead Russian soldiers.

"These are only soldiers who we know by name, and their deaths in each case are verified by multiple sources," said Dmitry Treshchanin, an editor at Mediazona who helped oversee the investigation. "The estimate we did with Meduza allows us to see the 'hidden' deaths, deaths the Russian government is so obsessively and unsuccessfully trying to hide."

To come up with a more comprehensive tally, journalists from Mediazona and Meduza obtained records of inheritance cases filed with the Russian authorities. Their data from the National Probate Registry contained information about more than 11 million people who died between 2014 and May 2023.

According to their analysis, 25,000 more inheritance cases were opened in 2022 for males aged 15 to 49 than expected. By May 27, 2023, the number of excess cases had shot up to 47,000.

That surge is roughly in line with a May assessment by the White House that more than 20,000 Russians had been killed in Ukraine since December, though lower than U.S. and U.K. intelligence assessments of overall Russian deaths.

In February, the U.K. Ministry of Defense said approximately 40,000 to 60,000 Russians had likely been killed in the war. A leaked assessment from the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency put the number of Russians killed in action in the first year of the war at 35,000 to 43,000.

"Their figures might be accurate, or they might not be," Treshchanin, the Mediazona editor, said in an email. "Even if they have sources in the Russian Ministry of Defense, its own data could be incomplete. It's extremely difficult to pull together all of the casualties from the army, Rosgvardia, Akhmat battalion, various private military companies, of which Wagner is the largest, but not the only one. Casualties among inmates, first recruited by Wagner and now by the MoD, are also a very hazy subject, with a lot of potential for manipulation. Statistics could actually give better results."

Many Russian fatalities - as well as amputations - could have been prevented with better front-line first aid, the U.K. Ministry of Defense said in an intelligence assessment published Monday. Russia has suffered an average of around 400 casualties a day for 17 months, creating a "crisis" in combat medical care that is likely undermining medical services for civilians in border regions near Ukraine, the ministry said.

Independently, Dmitry Kobak, a data scientist from Germany's Tübingen University who has published work on excess COVID-19 deaths in Russia, obtained mortality data broken down by age and sex for 2022 from Rosstat, Russia's official statistics agency.

He found that 24,000 more men under age 50 died in 2022 than expected, a figure that aligns with the analysis of inheritance data.

The COVID-19 pandemic made it harder to figure out how many men would have died in Russia since February 2022 if there hadn't been a war. Both analyses corrected for the lingering effects of COVID on mortality by indexing male death rates against female deaths.

Sergei Scherbov, a scholar at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria, cautioned that "differences in the number of deaths between males and females can vary significantly due to randomness alone."

"I am not saying that there couldn't be an excess number of male deaths, but rather that statistically speaking, this difference in deaths could be a mere outcome of chance," he said.

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The father and son of Russian army Sgt. Daniil Dumenko, 35, who was killed in Ukraine, mourn his death at a ceremony in Volzhsky, outside Volgograd, Russia, on May 26, 2022. Nearly 50,000 Russian soldiers have died in the war in Ukraine, according to a new statistical analysis. (AP)

Justice working overtime

France stern after thousands of teen arrests

At 19, he was the oldest of the group of teens accused of lobbing Molotov cocktails at the police station of their suburban hometown. "Why?" the judge asked Riad, who was taken into custody after he was identified in video surveillance images of the group from June 29, the second night of nationwide unrest following the police shooting of another suburban teenager outside Paris.

"For justice for Nahel," Riad said. Slumped and slightly disheveled after five nights in jail, he said he didn't know about the peaceful march organized by Nahel Merzouk's family. He explained the cellphone photo of him holding a Molotov cocktail was "for social media. To give an image."

In all, more than 3,600 people have been detained in the unrest across France since the death of Nahel on June 27, with an average age of 17, according to the Interior Ministry. The violence, which left more than 800 law enforcement officers injured, has largely subsided in recent days.

French courts are working overtime to process the arrests, including opening their doors through the weekend, with fast-track hearings around an hour long and same-day sentencing.

The prosecutor noted that Riad had learned where to acquire incendiary devices on Snapchat, the social network which the French government has singled out along with TikTok as fueling the unrest. Riad's lawyer noted his record was clean, and he was blamed for no significant damage or any injuries.

By the end of Tuesday, Riad's sentence was fixed: three years, with a minimum of 18 months behind bars, barred from his hometown of Alfortville for the duration of the term.

He collapsed on the stand: "I'm not ready to go to prison. I'm really not ready." He threw a furtive kiss at his mother as he was led away.

Outside the packed courtroom, a pair of girls asked someone exiting what sentence he'd received. "Three years? That's insane!" one ex-

Groups to appeal ruling

Supreme Court rejects requests for slavery reparations

France's highest court has rejected a request by three groups seeking reparations for slavery in a case that originated on the French Caribbean island of Martinique.

The court's decision on Wednesday said that no one produced evidence showing they had "suffered individually" any damage from the crimes that their ancestors had been subjected to.

One of the lawyers pursuing the case, Alain Manville, called it a "political decision" and said he believed the large amount of money that France would have to pay in reparations was a major consideration for the court. He expressed hope for making the case more global, bringing in "all Afro-descendants" in a move that he believes would lead French judges to

see the case differently.

"We will succeed in this process," Manville said. "I don't know when."

Slavery was abolished in France in 1848, but before that had a significant slave trade, shipping more than 1 million Africans to colonies in the Americas. The International Movement for Reparations and two other groups launched efforts in pursuit of reparations in 2005. French courts have repeatedly rejected their request, but the European Court of Human Rights kept their efforts alive by making their claims admissible.

Another lawyer pursuing the case for reparations, Patrice Spinosi, in an emailed statement said the groups would approach the European Court of Human Rights for a new appeal.

The issue of reparations is widely debated across the Caribbean, where an estimated 5 million slaves were brought over by colonial powers, including Britain and France, and forced to toil on sugar plantations and other fields under brutal conditions.

In 2022, an appeals court in Martinique, which is an overseas department of France, rejected the groups' request, noting that there's a statute of limitations for those crimes and that a French law already allows the implementation of certain measures meant to "bring a memorial contribution to the recognition of slavery and the slave trade" and that it is not for the judiciary to decide if those measures are sufficient. (AP)

claimed.

But the mood in France is stern after unrest that officials estimate caused 1 billion euros (more than \$1 billion) in damage. The killing of 17-year-old Nahel came during a June 27 traffic stop. The shooting, which was captured on video, immediately stirred up long-simmering

tensions between police and young people - nearly all minorities, and overwhelmingly French-born - in housing projects and disadvantaged suburbs.

Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti issued an order on Friday that

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editor's choice



Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:22	Asr	15:28
Sunrise ..	04:56	Maghrib ..	18:50
Zohr	11:53	Isha	20:21

Local

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Very hot with moderate to fresh northwesterly wind with speeds of 22-55 km/h causing rising dust.

By Night: Hot to rather hot with

Weather

moderate to fresh northwesterly wind with speeds of 20-45 km/h causing rising dust.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	46	35	
Kuwait Airport	47	31	
Abdaly	49	31	

Jahra	50	34
Salmiyah	41	33
Ahmad	42	36
Nuwaisib	46	30
Wafra	48	29

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



Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (center) chairs the delegation to the meeting.

Kuwait partakes in GCC-Russia ministers meeting

Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, headed on Monday Kuwait's delegation at the GCC-Russia joint ministerial meeting, hosted by Moscow.

The GCC side was headed by Oman Foreign Minister Bader Al-Busaidi and the Russian side was headed by Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

The meeting highlighted bilateral relations and ways to bolster them in various fields, including discussion on the latest development in the international arena.

Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met on Monday with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on the sideline of GCC-Russia joint ministerial meeting, hosted in Moscow. (KUNA)

Data reveals

Continued from Page 2

Russians who are missing but not officially recognized as dead, as well as citizens of Ukraine fighting in units of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk republics, are not included in these counts.

Kobak acknowledged that some uncertainties remain, especially for deaths of older men. Moreover, it's hard to know how many missing Russian soldiers are actually dead. But he said neither factor is likely to have a huge impact.

"That uncertainty is in the thousands," he said. "The results are plausible overall."

Asked by the Associated Press on Monday about the Meduza and Meduza study, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said during a conference call with reporters he wasn't aware of it as the Kremlin had "stopped monitoring" Meduza. Peskov also refused to comment on the number of deaths mentioned in the study, saying only that "the Defense Ministry gives the numbers, and they're the only ones who have that prerogative."

Meduza is an independent Russian media outlet that has been operating in exile for eight years, with headquarters in Riga, Latvia. In April 2021, Russian authorities designated Meduza a "foreign agent," making it harder to generate advertising income, and in January 2023, the Kremlin banned Meduza as an illegal "undesirable organization."

Moscow has also labeled independent outlet Meduza as a "foreign agent" and blocked its website after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. (AP)

France stern

Continued from Page 2

demanding a "strong, firm and systematic" judicial response. Hearings began the next day, as the unrest continued into the night.

"This is not hasty justice. The message I want to send is that justice is functioning normally in the face of an exceptional situation," said Peimane Ghaleh-Marzban, the president of the tribunal in Bobigny.

"You have many first-time offenders - people who are not deep in delinquency, many minors in school who don't (engage in) habitual criminal activity," Ghaleh-Marzban said.

Despite that, the inclination to convict with jail time appeared to prevail.

In Lyon, France's second-largest metropolitan area by population, the prosecutor said Thursday that of 26 adults who have appeared before the fast-track courts so far, 22 were convicted and sentenced to jail, three requested more time to prepare a defense, and only one was acquitted. According to BFM television on Thursday, 76% of people in the fast-track trials were placed in detention.

The U.N. rights office said the unrest showed it was time for France to reckon with its history of racism in policing, rather than just lash out in punishment, saying the government needed to ensure the use of force "always respects the principles of legality, necessity, proportionality, nondiscrimination, precaution and accountability."

Many French lawmakers demand the maximum penalty - and fast.

Olivier Marleix, a lawmaker from the conservative Republicans party, called for all cases involving the unrest to be handled within 100 days.

"Not to punish this would be an injury to all our law enforcement. Not to punish this would be a failure to understand the gravity of the threat to France," he said Tuesday in the National Assembly.

The officer accused in the death of 17-year-old Nahel, meanwhile, is charged with voluntary homicide but has yet to appear in a courtroom or even have a court date set.

Rayan, an 18-year-old man detained with a group of about 30 young people throwing fuel on his local police station, was accused of filming a 14-second video of incendiaries being hurled at the building in Kremlin-Bicetre. In the footage, he cries out "Light them up!"

It was the first time he'd ever been arrested. He was taken to Fleury-Merogis prison, the European Union's largest, and he wept on the stand on Tuesday. Prosecutors, who accused him of tripping a police officer while fleeing, asked for a 30-month sentence and for him to be barred from his hometown.

"I'm a good person. I've never had a problem with police. I have a family, I work," he said, burying his face in his hands. "I don't even know what I'm doing here."

His brief hearing ended with a 10-month suspended sentence. His parents picked him up the same night from prison to take him home. (AP)

Businesses shocked as finance minister quits

Disagreement over some 'decisions'

'We respect sovereignty'

'Parties must resolve Durra through talks'

KUWAIT CITY, July 11: The Ambassador of the Republic of China to Kuwait, HE Zhang Jianwei, said the Al-Durra field crisis, if any, must be resolved through what he called negotiations and friendly consultations, while at the same time affirming his country's respect for Kuwait's sovereignty, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a statement to the daily, the Chinese envoy said, "The Kuwaiti and Saudi leaderships and their people have the wisdom and ability to solve this problem through consultations and negotiations, and we respect Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity," indicating that his country calls for the settlement of international problems through consultations and political negotiations.

In reply to a question if the Chinese side was asked to play a mediating role to resolve the "Durra field" crisis, he said, "China has played its constructive role in improving relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Iran, but with regards to the Durra oil field, there is no official Chinese position so far, and in principle, we respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of every country in the region."

Asked if Saudi-Iranian rapprochement could solve this file, the Chinese ambassador said, "We believe that solving problems is through friendly consultations, and negotiation is the best way."

He pointed out that China continues to make efforts to support stability and peace in the region, and to push for a good-neighborhood policy, stressing that the Chinese president put forward last year the global security initiative. Therefore, we will make great efforts to translate this initiative, which will serve the interest of the region in general and the Gulf in particular.

He noted the close relations and historical partnership between China and the Gulf states, stressing that his country is a strategic partner for the GCC countries.

He pointed out that China played a positive role in resuming and restoring Saudi-Iranian relations, which received wide Arab, regional and global support, in a step that contributes to strengthening security and stability in the region, and works to consolidate relations between countries and peoples.

The natural resources of the Durra field are fully owned by Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, said Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Tuesday, according to KUNA.

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Beware fake messages

KUWAIT CITY, July 11, (KUNA): The Interior Ministry warned the public on Monday against SMS messages sent by scammers asking people to pay traffic fines through a sent link or face bigger fines.

In a press statement, the ministry said that it does not send messages to threaten people with larger fines if they did not pay traffic violation fines.

These are scamming operations that use a website cloning the ministry's website to deceive people, the ministry cautioned.

It noted that it only sends alert messages of the traffic violations to violators on the government digital platform, Sahel application.

It urged the public to make sure that they deal with the ministry's official website before any payment operation.

KUWAIT CITY, July 11: The Finance Minister Manaf Al-Hajri has resigned as Minister of Finance less than a month after the formation of the government, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The daily added, he has submitted his resignation to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmed Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, allegedly following disagreements within the government over 'floundering' decisions that have been taken that affected the country's economic and financial sides.

Reliable sources, told the daily, of particular interest were the differences over the transfer of the affiliation of the Kuwait Investment Authority to the Minister of Economic and Investment Affairs, stressing at the same time that "the separation between the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economic and Investment Affairs caused a state of confusion and lack of clarity among a number of affiliated authorities, which prompted it to address the concerned authorities to clarify its affiliation with any ministry".

The resignation of Al-Hajri, who is known for his competence, high professionalism, and his ability to deal with thorny financial files and his expertise in economic affairs, shocked the economic and financial circles in the country, after he was blessed to assume the Ministry of Finance portfolio which carried the task of implementing radical economic and financial reforms to form a bridge towards sustainable budget that enhances the strength of the state's public finances and preserves prosperity for future generations.

The Council of Ministers had decided to maintain the affiliation of the Kuwait Investment Authority with the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Sa'ad Al-Barak, and not to return it to the Minister of Finance.

Salaries cut directives set to be applied soon

KUWAIT CITY, July 11: According to informed sources, government directives to reduce the salaries of chairpersons and members of the boards of directors of government bodies and agencies will come into effect soon. These directives were issued after monitoring the performance of many of those bodies that did not achieve the desired level of achievement and performance during the last period, reports Al-Rai daily.

They explained that the application of the directives will be within the framework of granting monthly salaries to the boards of directors at the rate of KD 6,000 to the chairman of the authority, KD 5,000 to his deputy, KD 4,000 to a full-time member, and an annual salary of KD 4,000 only to a part-time member.

This trend includes all institutions and bodies that issue decrees, such as Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Naza), the Direct Investment Promotion Authority, the Public Authority for Industry, the Capital Markets Authority, the Public-Private Partnership Authority, and other bodies.

There are two scenarios subject to research and study. The first is the possibility of applying soon to the existing boards so that salaries are reduced and packages of allowances, travel and other benefits are limited to specific items and within a very narrow spending range. As for the second scenario, it pushes towards applying the decision to the new boards of directors that are expected to issue decrees.

Such trends will have different dimensions and repercussions, as they will limit the placement of vacancies in many bodies to workers in the public sector. Technical problems may face the application related to the mechanisms of dealing with the second row of leaders of those agencies who receive salaries that will become more than what the chairpersons and members of their boards of directors receive, according to the expected procedures.

The next stage requires flexible mechanisms for implementation through gradual procedures, as the dealings of heads of bodies and their members with people working in the same entity and receiving higher salaries than them will raise a state of reservation. Therefore, it is possible to follow a policy of referring some of them to retirement, ending services, or assigning advisory tasks, in addition to reducing allowances and benefits as acceptable exits.

The sources stressed that the idea of compromising on the salaries of employees of the second and third ranks will be faced with legal texts that prevent them from being carried out, at a time when the government is interested in providing a stable business model that will be reflected in the performance of these bodies to achieve the required achievements.

HH Amir congratulates Mongolia

KUWAIT CITY, July 11, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable on Tuesday to the President of Mongolia Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh on national day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the president long healthy life and his country further prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also sent a congratulatory cable on Tuesday to the President of Mongolia Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh on national day.

In the cable, His Highness wished the president long healthy life and his country further prosperity.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah then sent a congratulatory cable on Tuesday to the President of Mongolia Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh on national day.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah welcomed Tuesday Minister of Education Dr. Hamad Al-Adwani, who introduced outstanding high school students for the 2022-2023 scholastic year.

During an honoring ceremony, His Highness the Crown Prince advised the

students to select specialties that would contribute to the country's progress, so as to keep pace with accelerated developments.

His Highness the Crown Prince also instructed them to obey their parents, who made efforts that enabled their children to excel in their study.

In addition, His Highness thanked the Ministry of Education, its staff and agencies for efforts made over the past scholastic year, mainly during the exams.

In a speech, Minister Al-Adwani said the ministry had started implementing instructions of His Highness the Crown Prince on developing education through strategies with certain goals to achieve the country's vision.

This was shown in inaugurating Abdullah Al-Salem University with specialties consistent with the State's development goals, along with Kuwait University, Al-Adwani said. Afterwards, Nora Al-Hamly delivered a speech on behalf of the students.

The ceremony was attended by His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Director Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and senior officials.

Other Voices

'Brothers' era, charities' honor

By Ahmad alsarraf

Today we live in the phase of the political victory of the Muslim Brotherhood in Kuwait!

The Brotherhood previously ruled several Arab countries, directly or indirectly, and failed in both cases to achieve anything. Today, they are living their joy, and they will inevitably fail, but not before destroying everything they touch.

The first affected by the Brotherhood's recent "bullying" are the true patriots, however few they are, in addition to the Salaf group, the most backward of them, who will take advantage of the opportunity to achieve some legislative victories and issue a set of laws that restrict freedoms.

It was not strange for some MPs belonging to religious blocs to submit bills to impose imprisonment and fine against the senior officials in case they did not report homosexual workers at their institutions. This dictatorial bill indicates that those who submitted it are abnormal.

They submitted other bills to impose similar penalties to whoever leaves his parents and becomes disobedient. This bill is ridiculous because it interferes in personal relations and I do not think that any country in the world have similar laws since it is not possible to force the children to love their parents.

They announced their intention to submit bills to prevent appointing women as court judges under the pretext that it is part of public authority which women are not capable to occupy. They forgot that Public Prosecution is also part of public authority and ignoring the fact that the MPs include one woman, who is more efficient than the best of them.

This bill may be followed by another aimed at preventing the women from contesting elections. They called for a law to criminalize horoscope, fortune telling, magic, sorcery and divining or priesthood ignoring the fact that some citizens and residents are priests.

Regarding black magic and sorcery practiced to control the victims and destroy their will, those MPs are the most who have practiced and benefited from it. If they are serious, all they have to do is to call upon their

masters to issue statement to prohibit such actions with no need for a specific law.

Practices like taking out evil spirits from the bodies through beating the victim or having sex with them is a main job of their supporters. One of them became rich through such actions and he caused death of a victim because of severe beating while driving out evil spirits out of his body.

Indeed, this is the era of Muslim Brotherhood and their supporters who include corrupt parties. Thus, we expect deterioration on the level of education, politics and society as well as the rest of fields. We will repent later, but what we can do since the majority is not wise enough. After the government was proved failure, the majority aim only at collecting as much as they can from the State paying no concern if the nation's future goes to the hell.

I wrote an article (3/7/2023) about the 19 questions that international institutions directed to our charities, related to combating money laundering and terrorist financing!

Some of the officials of these associations became agitated, and sought to turn the officials of the Ministry of Affairs against me personally, with the aim of silencing me, even though I did not charge any specific party with any accusation.

I do not know why they have forgotten that the mere fact that we allow external parties to interfere in our private affairs is evidence that our situation is not good, and that the purposes and intentions of charity societies do not call for reassurance, and their interference confirms what we have already mentioned that some societies do not really seek to collect money from the wealthy and spending it on the poor, or to spread the religion, and the evidence is its "desire" to establish dozens of associations with different purposes, to achieve one goal, and it may be far from "good".

Another proof of this is their violations that never stopped, the latest of which was the Ministry's request to the associations that claim honor and trust to disclose their "unauthorized" locations and headquarters. Isn't this considered a manipulation of the state, and a dishonorable act by associations claiming honor?

Had it not been for the great efforts made by social affairs ministry officials to tighten control over these charities, the situation would have been much worse.

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Transformation triggers off more reliance upon smart phones

Kuwait experts voice divergent views over digital media

By Dhari Al-Duweish

KUWAIT CITY, July 11, (KUNA): There have been divergent views over the pros and cons of the digitalization of the Kuwaiti media sector over the recent years, involving the quality of digital media platforms and their news credibility, let alone the role of social media.

The Kuwaiti media sector has introduced digital technology in an inescapable step that aims at revamping production and publication, and providing media content in a speedier and more effective mode.

Media digital transformation offers access to more audiences and the content industry in a way that meets the currently growing use of internet and social media platforms, including smart phone applications.

However, this digital transformation triggers off more reliance upon smart phones as a way of delivering content to people, while incredible available information could negatively affect public opinion and put the privacy of individuals and institutions in jeopardy.

In this context, Dr. Ahmad Al-Kandari, a professor of media and public relations at Kuwait University, said digital transformation has enabled everyone to gain easy access to media platforms in order to communicate with fans.

Speaking to KUNA, he listed the advantages of media digitalization as primarily helping governmental institutions to have their own media platforms to directly communicate with people and steer public opinion.

Media revolution

But, the Kuwaiti professor admitted that with this swiftly developing media revolution, it has become very uneasy for people in general and media specialists and academics in particular to keep abreast of this transformation.

"It has become inevitable to read and always follow up on new research (in media digitalization) with a view to developing

learning in the media space," he underlined. Concerning the role of social media in society, the Kuwaiti academic stressed that social media platforms, including ones with specific agendas and purposes, are now playing a big role in influencing people and that's why rules and controls should be set for the virtual space.

For his part, Al-Jareeda Managing Editor Naser Al-Otaibi said media digitalization would lead to the "birth of new Kuwaiti media" including both public and private sectors, and would combine between both old and new mass media.

Digital media platforms play an amazing supportive role for paper media and reflect media institutions' orientations, he said, believing that social media has an undeniable role to play in reporting and influencing audiences and even decision-makers.

But, he casted doubts about the credibility of new stories and content covered by social media in general, sounding the alarm that

this point, in particular, could negatively affect public opinion in any society.

Kuwait News Network Chief Abdullah Boftein opined that both digital and conventional media entities are playing a complementary role in digital media transformation.

The private sector's media role is based on considering and analyzing changes, fathoming out daily media developments and coping with content industry as well as addressing challenges facing paper press and traditional media in Kuwait and across the world, he added.

As for media material quality, he said media material has not been restricted to platforms and newspapers anymore since content makers, including individuals and institutions, have become real rivals to traditional institutions.

But, he warned that some media contents have nothing to do whatsoever with professional journalism and are only meant to attract viewers and incredible scoops.

Low-quality media content like scandals and media bullying of some categories of the society, including features, accents and opinions, may gain great reactions, but, unfortunately, they run counter with genuine and serious media and its societal message.



Group photo from the awards ceremony.

Kuwaiti Youth Assembly members honoured

Her Excellency Mrs Belinda Lewis, His Majesty's Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, and Mr Greg Power, the founder of Global Partners Governance Foundation (GPGF), were honoured to present certificates to the Kuwaiti Youth Assembly members who took part in the Youth Assembly's March visit to London. Notable highlights of their visit included tours of Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament, the latter of which was led by Lord Jeremy Purvis of Tweed, as well as sessions about the work of the UK Youth Parliament and its engagement with senior politicians.

The members of the Youth Assembly who received certificates were as follows:

- Speaker of the Youth Assembly: Mr Nawaf AlAzmi • Youth As-

sembly Spokesperson: Ms Latifah AlFaraih • Head of International Relations Committee: Abdullrahman AlSaidi • Head of the Platform Committee: Jamilah AlOtaibi • Head of Entrepreneurship Committee: Altaf AlMutairi • Member: Saleh AlShammari.

The awards ceremony was also attended by the Deputy Director of the Minister's Office of Youth Affairs, Mr Yousef Jaber AlShammari.

His Majesty's Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, Her Excellency Belinda Lewis said: "I was delighted to welcome members of Kuwait's Youth Assembly to the British Embassy today and hear about their visit to the UK. It was great to meet such an enthusiastic and motivated group and get to understand more about their vision for young people in Kuwait".



Boftein



Al-Otaibi

Cabinet ratifies

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, the National Assembly held its ordinary session on Tuesday, which included voting on the minutes of the inaugural session on June 20.

However, MP Marzouq Al-Ghanim voiced his objection, indicating that two pages of the minutes contain the supposed statement of HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmed Nawaf Al-Ahmed Al Sabah, but the latter did not utter such statement in the session.

The Assembly read the incoming letter of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah who expressed his gratitude to the MPs for greeting him on his return from special vacation in Italy, and the letter of HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah who thanked the MPs for their Eid Al-Adha greetings.

This is in addition to the letter of MP Jenan Bu Shehri urging the ministers to implement Article 116 of the Constitution and refrain from adopting a negative attitude, particularly boycotting the parliamentary sessions; as well as the letter of the Foreign Affairs Committee chairman on withdrawing certain reports from the agenda as per Article 109 of the National Assembly Law.

Following are the approved incoming letters:

- Request of MPs Abdulaziz Al-Saqaabi and Badr Al-Mulla for the Youth and Sports Committee to follow up the cycling sport issues and submit its report at the beginning of the upcoming parliamentary session;
- Request of several MPs for the Interior and Defense Affairs Committee to expedite the completion of reports on amending law number 42/2006 about the specification of constituencies and submit its report within a few weeks;
- Request of MP Muhammad Al-Hewaila for the Housing and Real Estate Affairs Committee to conduct a study on the following:
 - establishment of a residential area in West Hadiya;
 - Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources' hand over of Abu Halifa Park to the Public Authority for Housing Welfare;
 - establishment of South Sabah Al-Ahmad residential area and ensuring the availability of a budget for this project;
- Request of Al-Hewaila for the Public Facilities Committee to carry out the following:
 - study the linking of Wafra Road 306 to the Seventh Ring Road;
 - study and address the problems in Mangaf residential area in cooperation with the concerned institutions;
 - study the reasons behind the delayed completion of Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Resort in Wafra;
 - study ways to speed up the completion of the medical district in Sabah Al-Ahmad City;
 - study the linking of drainage and rain water networks in Sabah Al-Ahmad City with the nearest waste water plant;
 - study the establishment of branches of the colleges and institutes of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training in Sabah Al-Ahmad City;
- Request of Al-Hewaila for the Education, Culture and Guidance Affairs Committee to conduct a study in order to expedite the establishment of the branches of Kuwait University colleges in Sabah Al-Ahmad City;
- Request of several MPs for the State Audit Bureau (SAB) to audit the works of Dhaman Hospitals Company including the financial, legal, administrative and technical

issues since its establishment till date, and submit its report within three months;

• Request of several MPs for the Housing and Real Estate Affairs Committee to conduct a study in order to determine the best sustainable solutions to the housing issue, provide sufficient cash for Kuwait Credit Bank and determine the obstacles to the completion of housing projects, and then submit its report before the end of the next parliamentary year;

• Request of the Disabled Affairs Committee chairman as follows:

- transfer reports on the proposed amendment of Disabled Affairs Law number 8/2010 from the Health, Social and Labor Affairs Committee to the Disabled Affairs Committee;

- Disabled Affairs Committee should monitor the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs' commitment to law number 8/2010, and record the complaints and comments in this regard;

- Request of the Family, Women and Children Affairs Committee chairman for his committee to study all the relevant issues, while the relevant bills should be submitted to the committee;

- Request of MP Osama Al-Shaheen for the Foreign Affairs Committee to follow up the steps that the government took to protect the nation's rights concerning Durra oilfield;

- Request of several MPs for the same committee to follow up governmental measures to protect the wealth of Kuwait and its sovereignty, especially in relation to Durra oilfield and demarcate marine borders with Iran;

- Request of MP Mubarak Al-Tasha for the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee to conduct a study on the reasons behind the price hikes and inflation, and submit its report within one month;

- Request of MP Mubarak Al-Hajraf for the Family, Women and Children Affairs Committee to study the reasons behind the rising divorce rate in the country and recommend solutions;

- Request of Al-Hajraf for the Public Facilities Committee to study the reasons behind the deterioration of public facilities including traditional markets, public parks and streets, in addition to discussing the Silk City issue and development of Kuwaiti Islands;

Meanwhile, Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun decided to discuss the resignation of SAB Chairman Faisal Al-Shaya behind closed doors. The Assembly approved the resignation. In a press statement, MP Khalid Al-Tamar confirmed that he agreed on the approval of the resignation; pointing out that some senior officials were appointed in the past to serve personal interests. He stressed the need to end such misconduct, while praising the efforts of dedicated SAB employees and highlighted the important role of the bureau in uncovering violations.

When the Assembly discussed the Holy Quran burning in Sweden, several MPs talked about the issue and 46 of them signed a request for the Assembly to release its official statement on the issue including the following recommendations:

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs must take the necessary steps to punish whoever offends Islam in general, and God, the Prophets (Peace Be Upon Them) and the Holy Quran in particular as per the relevant international law;
- The international law must stipulate filing a case against whoever offends God, the Prophets (Peace Be Upon Them) and the Holy Quran;
- Urge other countries to reject the asylum applications of those accused of offending God, the Prophets (Peace Be Upon Them) and the Holy Quran;
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs must take the necessary action to deter other countries from patronizing those who offend God, the Prophets (Peace Be Upon Them) and the Holy Quran through diplomatic channels.

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A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Arab states reaction to Sweden's act of attacking Islam should be strong'

"THE State of Sweden has always surprised us with acts attacking Islam and Muslims, claiming that it applies its law and legislative principles that guarantee freedom of expression, and the strange thing is that that country that claims its ability to protect freedoms is unable to protect the citizens themselves, as the owner of the title of the happiest country in the world has turned into the capital of the use of violence among the citizens, after leaving the field for criminal gangs to carry out their activities, especially in the capital, Stockholm, and the fact of the matter is that there is a clear case of hostility towards Islam and Muslims in particular, and this is interfering with freedoms so that hostility is not focused only on Muslims directly," columnist **Mishari Al-Mutairi** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"And I will present to you another evidence of the existence of this state of hostility towards Islam, if Sweden claims that it respects all forms of expression of opinion, even if it affects religious books and sanctities, but rather that it gives its citizens and refugees a permit to do so while it considers that harming the flag of the state a crime punishable by law, and here lies the duality that shows its intentions towards Islam, which does not stop at this only, but the matter came to the kidnapping of children from Muslim families under flimsy and strange pretexts and handing them over to other families even if those families consisted of deviants, and this is what actually happened with a family of Arab refugees.



Al-Mutairi

"Sweden's hostility to Islam may be classified by some as a case of Islamophobia, which is the fear of Islam, especially in light of its spread in Sweden, so that about 10% of Swedes embrace Islam, and thanks to God Almighty, this rate takes an upward curve every day, and this is what prompted intellectually extremist groups in Sweden to attack Islam and insulting Muslims in any way, and in their provocative attempts, they burned the Holy Qur'an more than once, and in one of the incidents, the Qur'an was burned in front of the embassy of one of the countries whose population embraces Islam.

"In fact, Kuwait's position on this was strong, as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned the Swedish ambassador and submitted a protest note against that incident, which reveals the baseness of its perpetrator.

"In the context, the Federation of Associations in Kuwait announced that it had made an inventory of all Swedish products, circulated them to cooperatives, and launched a boycott campaign. And try to avoid the anger of Muslims.

"How I hope that the reaction of the Arab countries will be strong to make Sweden bite the fingertips of remorse for attacking Islam, this valuable religion.

"If Sweden had known the provisions of Islam that guarantee human beings the highest levels of freedom and dignity, they would have burned their constitution instead of burning the Holy Qur'an."

Also:

"In the first week of February 1991, I was in Riyadh in my office at the General Secretariat of the Cooperation Council, when the late Prince Faisal bin Fahd, Head of Youth Welfare in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, called me, inquiring about the validity of the news about the martyrdom of Sheikh Fahd Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber, in Kuwait," columnist **Abdullah Bishara** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"My answer was to confirm the veracity of the news about his death, which occurred at the gates of Dasman Palace, with bullets fired by an Iraqi group heading towards the palace. Prince Faisal replied that he would publish in the Saudi press condolences for the family, Kuwait, and sports fraternity in the Gulf and Asia, then he asked me to hold an emergency meeting for the heads of the Olympic committees in GCC countries to confirm the selection of his son, the young athlete Ahmed Fahd Al-Ahmad, to be the Gulf candidate to head the Asian Olympic Committee.

"In order not to waste time, I immediately contacted Sheikh Isa bin Rashid Al Khalifa in Bahrain, Sheikh Saud Al Thani in Qatar, Ahmed Bu Hussain in the Emirates, and Mr. Al Ghamari in the Sultanate of Oman, and we agreed to meet in the middle of February at the headquarters of the Secretariat in Riyadh.

"Sheikh Ahmed Al-Fahd came to Riyadh, determined to be ready to carry the burden that his father had chosen, and although the atmosphere of the meeting was fraught with sorrows for the loss of the martyr Fahd Al-Ahmad, the collective certainty that Sheikh Ahmed Al-Fahd is the best to succeed his father in his mission in Asia, brought satisfaction to the atmosphere of the meeting.

"The meeting ended with the collective allegiance of the Gulf, and the responsibility for the victory of the Gulf candidate shifted to be sponsored by Prince Faisal bin Fahd, who knows the rules that lead the candidate to win without controversy, and His Highness Prince Faisal bin Fahd successfully led it as a royal contractor with extensive experience in the paths of success within the Asian network.

"And we blessed Sheikh Ahmed with certain confidence in his worth and his belief in good behavior with Asians, and contacts quickly expanded to hold an urgent meeting of the Asian Committee, and with an intense Gulf presence, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Fahd was blessed as Chairman of the Asian Committee, and the vitality of the committee moved from central Asia to its west, where it settled in Kuwait, where Sheikh Ahmed provided it with a new approved headquarters in a private compound in Salmiya, east of Kuwait City, with an income guarantee for the course of work, reassuring the president of the solidarity of his budget.

"Sheikh Ahmed, in the midst of this transformation, was confident of success and walked the steps of ambition calmly, relying on a gradual method of peaceful elevation to the highest platforms, preserving the dignity of the position he occupies. One of the most prominent threads of this map is the strong presence within the Qadisiya Sports Club, which was led by his brother Sheikh Talal, who carries broad indicators in the space of ambition, and is in harmony with what the older brother Sheikh Ahmed Al-Fahd thinks.

"It is noticeable that the two brothers, Ahmed and Talal, adhered to good vocabulary in dealing and tones of humility in communication while maintaining constant intimacy with assistants and close associates, not only with close Kuwaitis, but this approach remained closely with his Asian assistants and with sportsmen in the Asian continent.

"I met him in the framework of the sports meetings of the Gulf Cooperation Council, where his character helped him gain respect from others, and his cheerful spirit was a positive factor in the appreciation of societies, not only in sports, but in all locations, not only in Kuwait but wherever he was.

"His steps were on the path of ambition, in which he was dominated by a lot of softness, unlike his late father, Sheikh Fahd Al-Ahmad, who was always in a hurry in his steps, and he used to express his positions politely, devoid of the influences of dreams that were acting him in every path of his life, so he drew up a map of action the most important of which is preserving his seat, which turned into a starting point for sports and political stations, so he came as Minister of Information in February 2001, and I was among those who were comfortable with his choice.

"His choice of the Ministry of Information was a reflection of his broad relations with Kuwaiti youth,

the breadth of his social contacts and his excellence in building friendships with various colors of Kuwaiti society and his ability to evoke intimacy with others, and he was, despite the high waves of his ambitions.

"Sheikh Ahmad has become the strong voice of the Kuwaiti youth, knowing what he wants and studying what he needs. According to the estimates of the Kuwaiti public opinion, he has become the entrusted person to fulfill the dreams of the youth, and the safe bridge between these youth and the higher leadership.

"His performance as Minister of Information during the years 2001-2003 was devoid of crises. He was aware of the need to preserve freedom of expression, be open to intellectual developments, and reduce taboos from publications. He was a successful minister who possessed social charisma, preserving his position, being present in various Kuwaiti arenas, and understanding political and social diversities and taking into account the sensitivity of Kuwaiti public opinion.

"He gave up the media, moving to the Ministry of Energy, which combined oil with electricity. That was in 2003, and he remained its minister until 2006, when he did not escape the arrows of the interrogations, so the divergence occurred with the submission of his resignation, and the many accusations with indications that he was a man of aggravation, and he was absent from the political scene but was back in May 2009, as Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Minister of State for Housing Affairs, Minister of State for Development Affairs, and continued his activity in his association with the threads of athletes in various games and clubs.

"Signs of change appeared in his life in 2011, with the escalation of divergence in jurisprudence, and the noise of thunderbolts rising in political disputes with some centers with the accumulation of rumors, and with analyses about the political goals he wanted to reach.

"Like others, I did not expect his determination to pass through that media political turmoil, with some influential gatherings, and I remembered the human ability to harmonize with changes, and in front of me was King Sihanouk, King of Cambodia, who did not accept a constitutional monarchy, and became a prince who assumed the presidency of the ministry, and then fell into disputes which kept him away for years in Beijing, and suddenly he came back as a representative of Cambodia in the Security Council, at a time when I was a representative of Kuwait, and engaged in a clash with the representative of Moscow, criticizing his behavior in a sarcastic manner, and invited me to a private meeting to discuss his case, and I listened to him, impressed by his flexibility and his ability to tame dangers and I can say that Sheikh Ahmed Al-Fahd is one of the best tamers of political risks.

"On June 21, 2023, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Fahd returned as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, after twelve years of absence, and listened to the tones of his voice during oath-taking ceremony, confident of his future, and sure of his ability to tame the storms."

"The incidents and misfortunes that passed through the Arabian Gulf region have always demonstrated the common destiny of Kuwait and the brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, since the emergence of the region's star that caught the attention of the entire world," columnist **Dr Essa Al-Omairi** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"Serious incidents always demonstrate the value of the relationship between brothers in the two countries. This value is demonstrated by each country whenever they stand by each other every time there is danger. They provide appropriate assistance and support for each other whenever the need arises.

"The Kuwaiti-Saudi relations are characterized by strength and durability always and forever. The ties between the two countries extended for various periods. These relations were established by the rulers of the two countries and passed through prominent stations full of goodness and blessings, while contributing to the consolidation of good and solid relations since a long time ago. These are embodied in many ties, customs, traditions and common history. These relations continue with the passage of time, and became an example of fraternal relations between countries united by common factors and issues of mutual concern.

"We must remember and praise them on every occasion and memory. Let us not forget that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stood heart and soul with its sister Kuwait during Saddam's brutal invasion at the end of the last century.

"The Kingdom and its brotherly people opened the doors of their homes to Kuwaitis during that period of Kuwait's life. The crisis proved the value of the people and leadership of the Kingdom during the reign of the late King Fahd bin Abdulaziz, may God give rest to his soul.

"Therefore, the current situation in the Gulf region and our talk about the Durra field, in which Iran entered its line and showed an unacceptable interference. It did not demarcate the borders until after reaching an agreement on its share in Durra field, which is originally Saudi-Kuwaiti.

"The issue did not stop at this point, but reached the intervention of Iraq through the statement of one of its representatives about Iraq's entitlement to Durra field, which is surprising and not based on facts.

"We say here that the joint will of the Kingdom and Kuwait will succeed, God willing, in confronting this crisis, just as we returned through solidarity and common destiny."

"Perhaps, one of the most important steps to control inflation is the availability of basic data, so we have to support the Central Statistics Bureau and strengthen its role in carrying out periodic price surveys and statistics to monitor all types of inflation," columnist **Dr Abdulaziz Al-Turki** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"This is in addition to the provision of inflation data for decision makers, so the consequences and risks of government decisions and plans, and parliamentary legislation are linked to inflation predictions.

"Whenever too much money is chasing too few commodities, we reach the beginning of inflation. Traditionally, inflation is associated with increase in the prices of goods and services over a specific period due to lack of supply and an increase in demand, coupled with an increase in money supply.

"Central banks usually implement their monetary policies by raising interest rates to reduce liquidity levels, but inflation is a chronic economic disease.

"Among these steps is subsidizing the prices of strategic food commodities, along with fuel, electricity, water and infrastructure services such as communications, transportation, and a safe and secure road network, while breaking the monopoly over food, livestock and construction materials, because the inflation of the price of residential real estate (construction, purchase, rent) burdens the family budget, and destabilizes and accelerates family disintegration.

"Price inflation is not only related to the basket of food, medicine and basic services, or human needs at the bottom of Maslow's hierarchy! Cancerous inflation attacks all aspects of life, hence, the need to combat it in terms of food, services, industry, real estate, education and the economy. In this manner, its devastating consequences will not be reflected on the body of the State, and the pocket of the citizen and his health."

— Compiled by **Mai Elsoukary**



The drug pushers with the seized contraband.

Al-Jarida photo

DGDC seizes 3.5 kg drugs, 1,000 narcotic pills; 10 people nabbed

25 labor law violators arrested from fish market

KUWAIT CITY, July 11: The Criminal Security Sector of Directorate-General for Drugs Control has arrested ten people for possessing of approximately 3.5 kilograms of different types of drugs, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The DGDC personnel have also seized from them 1,000 Captagon pills and 21 types of psychotropic substances.

During interrogation the suspects are said to have admitted to the confiscated items with the intention of trafficking and consuming.

Consequently, both the suspects and the seized contraband have been handed over to the concerned authority for further legal action.

In this context, the Ministry of Interior has affirmed its commitment to actively combat drug dealers and smugglers and the spread of this scourge in the country.



Acting Director General of the PAM and Secretary General of the KRCS during the agreement.

KUNA photo

'Sahem' project discussed with KSHR

PAM inks co-op deal with KRCS on spreading rights' awareness

KUWAIT CITY, July 11, (KUNA): The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) announced on Tuesday, the signing of a cooperation agreement with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, aimed at spreading awareness, developing a culture of human rights and consolidating its values.

The Public Authority for Manpower said in a press statement that the agreement came under the directives of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah aimed at the necessity of cooperation with civil society institutions.

PAM added that the agreement is a strategic humanitarian partnership that serves all segments of society to promote a culture of human rights and contribute to ensuring its practice, praising the humanitarian role of the Kuwait Red Crescent

Society, especially its efforts to promote and spread the culture of volunteer work.

On the other hand, the Public Authority for Manpower discussed with the Kuwaiti Society for Human Rights a project 'Sahem', which aims to enhance the role of community leaders in oversight and accountability to improve public services.

It is noteworthy that the 'Sahem' project aims to build the capabilities and skills of the government, community leaders, and activists with regard to the concepts of good governance, accountability, and the use of mechanisms for monitoring and improving public services.

It also aims to improve government responses to citizens' needs and build community initiative that promotes good governance, integrity and transparency in society.



THE GUEST SHOW

CHAITALI B ROY

Radio Kuwait International English Station

Guest:
Sugandha Menon
Founder Artistic Yoga & Pilates

Director:
Anees Backer

Listen on  EPISODE 131

13/07/2023 @ 10am & 10pm
93.3fm and 963am

The Guest Show poster

TGS presents Sugandha Menon

This Thursday, The Guest Show (TGS) features the ebullient Sugandha Menon, Founder of Artistic Yoga & Pilates in Kuwait.

Sugandha was introduced to yoga at a critical time in her life. She had taken ill and conventional medicine failed to help her. It was by chance that she was introduced to yoga, but it changed her

life. Soon, she decided to share the benefits of yoga with the general public through her yoga programme, which became very popular with the passage of time.

In this episode of The Guest Show, Sugandha speaks to Chaitali B. Roy about her journey with yoga and its universal benefits.

Amazon pushes back against Europe's pioneering new digital rules

Amazon is disputing its status as a big online platform that needs to face stricter scrutiny under European Union digital rules taking effect next month, the first Silicon Valley tech giant to push back on the pioneering new standards.

The online retailer filed a legal challenge with a top European Union court, arguing it's being treated unfairly by being designated a "very large online platform" under the 27-nation bloc's sweeping Digital Services Act.

Amazon, whose filing to the Euro-

pean General Court was made available Tuesday, is the second company to protest the classification. German online retailer Zalando filed a legal claim two weeks ago with a similar argument.

The Digital Services Act imposes new obligations on the biggest tech companies to keep users safe from illegal content and dodgy products, with violations punishable by potentially billions in fines or even a ban on operating in the EU.

The rules, which will take effect on

Aug. 25, are expected to help Europe maintain its place as standard setter in global efforts to rein in the power of social media companies and other digital platforms.

Seattle-based Amazon is one of 19 companies classed as the largest online platforms and search engines under the DSA, which means they will have to better police their services to protect European users from hate speech, disinformation and other harmful online content. (AP)



The Amazon logo is seen in Douai, northern France, April 16, 2020. Amazon is disputing its status as an online platform subject to stricter scrutiny under new European Union digital rules that are set to take effect next month. (AP)

Market Movements

11-07-2023

Change Closing pts

	Change	Closing pts
UAE	- DFM	+0.20 3,985.41
JAPAN	- Nikkei	+0.04 32,203.57
PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	+1.39 45,179.23
PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	+0.30 6,398.64
SAUDI	- Tadawul	+0.67 11,664.50
EGYPT	- EGX 30	+1.13 17,155.23

Business

The Conversation

Meta's Threads is surging, but mass migration from Twitter is likely to remain an uphill battle

By Casey Fiesler

University of Colorado Boulder

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

Twitter's move on July 1, 2023, to limit the number of tweets users can see in a day was the latest in a series of decisions that has spurred millions of users to sign up with alternative microblogging platforms since Elon Musk acquired Twitter last year.

In addition to a surge in numbers on Mastodon, the acquisition and subsequent changes boosted small existing platforms like Hive Social and has spawned brand new upstarts like Spoutible and Spill.

Most recently the microblogging platform backed by Twitter founder Jack Dorsey, Bluesky, saw a surge of sign-ups in the days following Twitter's rate limit, and Meta launched its microblogging platform Threads on July 5. Threads claimed 30 million users on its first day. Even very different forms of social media such as TikTok are benefiting from what many see as Twitter's imminent demise.

As an information scientist who studies online communities, this feels like something I've seen before. Social media platforms tend not to last forever. Depending on your age and online habits, there's probably some platform that you miss, even if it still exists in some form. Think of MySpace, LiveJournal, Google+ and Vine.

When social media platforms fall, sometimes the online communities that made their homes there fade away, and sometimes they pack their bags and relocate to a new home. The turmoil at Twitter is causing many of the company's users to consider leaving the platform. Research on previous social media platform migrations shows what might lie ahead for Twitter users who fly the coop.

Several years ago, I led a research project with Brianna Dym, now at University of Maine, where we mapped the platform migrations of nearly 2,000 people over a period of almost two decades. The community we examined was transformative fandom, fans of literary and popular culture series and franchises who create art using those characters and settings.

We chose it because it is a large community that has thrived in a number of different online spaces. Some of the same people writing Buffy the Vampire Slayer fan fiction on Usenet in the 1990s were writing Harry Potter fan fiction on LiveJournal in the 2000s and Star Wars fan fiction on Tumblr in the 2010s.

By asking participants about their experiences moving across these

platforms - why they left, why they joined and the challenges they faced in doing so - we gained insights into factors that might drive the success and failure of platforms, as well as what negative consequences are likely to occur for a community when it relocates.

Regardless of how many people ultimately decide to leave Twitter, and even how many people do so around the same time, creating a community on another platform is an uphill battle. These migrations are in large part driven by network effects, meaning that the value of a new platform depends on who else is there.

In the critical early stages of migration, people have to coordinate with each other to encourage contribution on the new platform, which is really hard to do. It essentially becomes, as one of our participants described it, a "game of chicken" where no one wants to leave until their friends leave, and no one wants to be first for fear of being left alone in a new place.

For this reason, the "death" of a platform - whether from a controversy, disliked change or competition - tends to be a slow, gradual process. One participant described Usenet's decline as "like watching a shopping mall slowly go out of business."

The current push from some corners to leave Twitter reminded me a bit of Tumblr's adult content ban in 2018, which reminded me of LiveJournal's policy changes and new ownership in 2007. People who left LiveJournal in favor of other platforms like Tumblr described feeling unwelcome there. And though Musk did not walk into Twitter headquarters at the end of October and turn a virtual content moderation lever into the "off" position, there was an uptick in hate speech on the platform, as some users felt emboldened to violate the platform's content policies under an assumption that major policy changes were on the way.

What makes Twitter Twitter isn't the technology, it's the particular configuration of interactions that takes place there. And there is essentially zero chance that Twitter, as it exists now, could be reconstituted on another platform. Any migration is likely to face many of the challenges previous platform migrations have faced: content loss, fragmented communities, broken social networks and shifted community norms.

But Twitter isn't one community, it's a collection of many communities, each with its own norms and motivations. Some communities might be able to migrate more successfully than others. So maybe K-Pop Twitter could coordinate a move to Tumblr. I've seen much of Academic Twitter coordinating a move to Mastodon.

Reluctant Twitter users, others flocking to new Threads app

NEW YORK, July 11, (AP) - Celebrities, lawmakers, brands and everyday social media users are flocking to Meta's freshly minted app Threads to connect with their followers, including many Twitter refugees tired of the drama surrounding Elon Musk's raucous oversight of that platform.

But the real question is: Will they stay? Instagram head Adam Mosseri said in a Threads post Monday that in the five days since its launch, 100 million people have signed up for Threads, which was rolled out as a companion app to Instagram.

Ann Coleman is among them. The 50-year-old, who lives in Baltimore, said she joined Threads after hearing about the platform from a comedian she follows on social media. She said she loves Twitter and has been using it for more than 10 years. She even met her husband on there.

But Coleman, who is politically progressive, has been looking to switch to a new platform because of Musk's political views and changes he's made to Twitter, like upending its verification system. She previously joined the decentralized social network Mastodon, but found it a bit confusing to use.

She said she likes Threads but wishes she could

easily follow all her Twitter friends there. Threads gives Instagram users the option to automatically follow the same accounts they do on the photo-sharing app, which makes it easier for active Instagram users to replicate a similar type of engagement on Threads. But others starting from the ground up will have to do more work.

"If I'm going to leave Twitter entirely, I'm going to have to try and find some of these people" from Twitter, Coleman said.

While she said she has her own concerns about Meta - specifically pointing to the Cambridge Analytica privacy breach, among other things - "it's not with the depth of concern that I do with Musk."

Michael Evancoe, 28, said he hasn't used Twitter much since his personal page was suspended years ago for what the platform attributed to violations of its rules on spam. Evancoe, who now works in production, said he agrees with some of the changes Musk has been making on Twitter and he created a new account earlier this year. But he wasn't able to gain many followers or interactions.

He joined Threads last week, and says he's been able to interact more with other users. But he hopes

that Meta does not moderate the platform overly aggressively.

"I think that would be a deterrent to both interest and engagement as well," Evancoe said.

For its part, Meta has said it will moderate using Instagram's content guidelines. In the past few days, the company has been positioning the much-hyped platform as a new digital town square that's a less toxic version of Twitter, with some executives indicating their aim isn't to replace Twitter but to offer something more palatable to a vast array of users.

"The goal is to create a public square for communities on Instagram that never really embraced Twitter and for communities on Twitter (and other platforms) that are interested in a less angry place for conversations," Mosseri said Friday.

In the first two full days that Threads was broadly available - Thursday and Friday of last week - traffic on Twitter was down 5% compared with the same period a week ago, and down 11% compared with the same period a year ago, according to the web analytics company SimilarWeb. But it also said Twitter traffic has experienced an overall decline even in the absence of Threads.

Wall Street ticks higher ahead of this week's inflation report



People stand near an electronic stock board showing Japan's Nikkei 225 index at a securities firm Tuesday, July 11, 2023, in Tokyo. Asian stock markets followed Wall Street higher Tuesday ahead of an update on U.S. consumer prices that traders hope will show inflation is easing, reducing the need for more interest rate hikes. (AP)

Be wary of scams as Amazon Prime Day rolls off, experts warn shoppers

NEW YORK, July 11, (AP) - Amazon Prime Day is here. And, once again, experts are warning consumers of scams.

Scams targeting online shoppers - often by impersonating companies like Amazon and other major retailers - are nothing new. But phishing attempts increase amid busy spending seen during significant sales events - from Black Friday to, of course, Prime Day, according to the Better Business Bureau.

"This is a huge moment on the retail calendar," Josh Planos, vice president of communications and public relations at the Better Business Bureau, told The Associated Press. "And because of that, it represents an enormous opportunity for a scammer, con artist or even just an unethical business or organization to capitalize on the moment and separate folks from their hard-earned money."

Prime Day, a two-day discount event, kicks off on Tuesday and runs through Wednesday. In guidance published last week, the Better Business Bureau reminded consumers to watch out for look-alike websites, too-good-to-be-true social media ads, unsolicited emails or calls and more near Prime Day and other sales events this month beyond Amazon's.

Scott Knapp, director of worldwide buyer risk prevention at Amazon, identifies two scams that the company has

seen in recent years around Prime Day: Prime membership and order confirmation hoaxes.

Last year, for example, people reported getting unsolicited calls or emails saying that there was something wrong with their Prime membership. Then, they were asked for payment information, like a credit card, and sometimes login credentials as well. Knapp explained - adding that Amazon "or any reputable business" wouldn't ask for those details in that way.

Urging consumers to confirm an order they didn't place is also a common tactic at this time of year, he adds. Scammers might pick something expensive, like a smartphone, to get attention - and again ask for payment information or send a malicious link.

"We sell a lot of stuff and people know the (Amazon) name," Knapp told the AP. "Bad actors try to take advantage of that."

Of course, there's loads of additional scams out there - it's hard to identify more specifics for this year's Prime Day before it begins. Still, experts add, scams will often iterate year after year.

"Typically, the bones remain the same," Planos said, pointing to repeating fake delivery scams, email phishing and more. "It's always a ploy to separate consumers from (their) personal and payment information."

NEW YORK, July 11, (AP): Stocks are ticking higher Tuesday as Wall Street waits for updates later in the week on inflation and corporate profits.

The S&P 500 was 0.3% higher in midday trading and looks to be on track for another quiet day after a listless Monday. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 141 points, or 0.4%, at 34,085, as of 11 a.m. Eastern time, and the Nasdaq composite was 0.2% higher.

Salesforce helped to prop up indexes after climbing 3.3%. The company said it's raising list prices for products by an average of 9%. Amazon was also pushing upward on the market, rising 1.2% on the first day of the annual Prime Day sales event it created. Activision Blizzard jumped 5% after a judge declined to stop Microsoft's \$69 billion takeover of the video game maker.

The week's main event will arrive on Wednesday, when the U.S. government will offer the latest update on inflation at the consumer level. Economists expect to see another slowdown, with prices 3.1% higher in June than a year earlier, down from inflation of 4% in May and just above 9% last summer.

The hope on Wall Street is that a continued easing in inflation will convince the Federal Reserve to stop its hikes to interest rates soon. High rates have helped pull down inflation, but they've also caused cracks in the banking, manufacturing and other industries while also pulling down on prices for stocks

and other investments.

Later in the week, companies will begin telling investors how much profit they made during the spring, and expectations are largely dim. Analysts are forecasting the sharpest drop in earnings per share for S&P 500 companies since the pandemic was crushing the global economy in the spring of 2020.

This upcoming reporting season could mark the trough for corporate profit declines, according to strategists at Bank of America. They point to some resilient trends in the economy, as well as how many companies are offering forecasts for upcoming results that are above analysts' expectations.

Europe

In early trading, the CAC 40 in Paris rose 0.5% to 7,178.65. The DAX in Frankfurt added less than 0.1% to 15,683.25 while the FTSE 100 in London declined 0.3% to 7,264.22.

Asia

Asian stock markets followed Wall Street higher Tuesday ahead of an update on U.S. consumer prices that traders hope will show inflation is easing, reducing the need for more interest rate hikes. Shanghai, Tokyo, Hong Kong and Sydney advanced. Oil prices rose.

Traders looked ahead to Wednesday's update on U.S. consumer prices for signs of whether the Federal Reserve might decide inflation has cooled enough following a year of interest rate hikes. They hope the U.S. central bank will decide no more are needed,

though Fed officials suggest as many as two more increases are possible this year.

Forecasters expect inflation in June to fall to 3.1% from the previous month's 4%. That still would be higher than the Fed's 2% target but down sharply from last year's peak above 9%.

"They will have a hard time justifying further rate increases if headline inflation - which is their mandate - is moving convincingly towards target," said Rubeela Farooqi of High Frequency Economics in a report.

The Shanghai Composite Index gained 0.6% to 3,221.37 while the Nikkei 225 in Tokyo lost added less than 0.1% to 32,203.57. The Hang Seng in Hong Kong advanced 1.1% to 18,679.92.

The Kospi in Seoul surged 1.7% to 2,562.49 and Sydney's S&P/ASX 200 jumped 1.5% to 7,108.90.

India's Sensex opened up 0.6% at 65,759.59. New Zealand declined while Southeast Asian markets advanced.

Oil

In energy markets, benchmark U.S. crude rose 33 cents to \$73.32 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract fell 87 cents to \$72.99 on Monday. Brent crude, the price basis for international oil trading, advanced 31 cents to \$78.00 per barrel in London. It lost 78 cents the previous session to \$77.69.

Currencies

The dollar fell to 140.56 yen from Monday's 141.32 yen. The euro rose to \$1.1019 from \$1.0999.

BUSINESS

China, US agree to maintain high-level economic exchange

China and the US have agreed to maintain high-level exchanges and communications on all levels in the economic field, China's Finance Ministry said Monday.

The exchange, according to state-run Xinhua News Agency, comes in accordance with the consensus reached by the two heads of state during their meeting in Bali last November.

The ministry made the remarks when commenting on the US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen's four-day visit to China that concluded Sunday.

During meetings with Yellen, the Chinese side has expressed the hope that the US will be rational and pragmatic in bringing bilateral ties back to the right track at an early date, the ministry said. It expounded on China's stance on bilateral economic issues and common global challenges, including the mutually-beneficial nature of China-US economic relations, concerns over the US economic sanctions and suppression of China, China's position on healthy economic competition and China's willingness to work with

the US in addressing global challenges.

To achieve sound China-US economic relations, China believes that it is necessary to fully respect the legitimate development rights and interests of all parties and conduct healthy competition in accordance with the principles of market economy and WTO rules. China and the US should seek consensus on important bilateral economic issues through candid communications to inject stability and positive energy into the bilateral economic relations, the ministry said. (KUNA)



Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen speaks during a press conference at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, China, Sunday, July 9, 2023. (AP)

News a worry to homeowners

UK wages rising at a record pace, making higher interest rates more likely

LONDON, July 11, (AP): Wages in the U.K. are rising at a record high rate amid stubbornly high inflation, official figures showed Tuesday, bolstering expectations that interest rates will increase again - to the worry of homeowners who are seeing their mortgage payments spike to levels not seen since the global financial crisis 15 years ago.

The Office for National Statistics said wages, excluding bonuses, rose by 7.3% in the three months to May, matching the highest rate since

records began in 2001. The private sector was the main driver behind the increase.

For months, workers have been seeking pay that keeps pace with high inflation, which is running at 8.7% despite declines in energy prices and a series of interest rate hikes from the Bank of England.

The central bank has been raising rates since late 2021 to get a grip on rising prices, which were first stoked by supply chain problems caused by the coronavirus pandemic and then Rus-

sia's invasion of Ukraine, which sent energy and food prices surging.

The bank lifted its main interest rate by half a percentage point to a 15-year high of 5% last month and warned of further increases if inflation fails to show signs of falling back toward its target of 2%. By making borrowing more expensive, the bank is trying to keep a lid on spending, which should get inflation down.

But with unemployment low, workers have been able to demand higher pay as inflation erodes their spending

power, threatening to further fuel price spikes. That's despite the jobless rate rising to 4%, when economists had anticipated an unchanged reading of 3.8%.

"Soaring wage growth ... gets us into the kind of wage-price spiral dynamics that central banks absolutely hate and usually do anything to avoid," said Neil Wilson, chief markets analyst at Markets.com.

The new wages data cemented expectations that the bank will lift its key interest rate to 5.25% next month, pos-

sibly to 5.5%. That was evident in the fact that the pound rose after the figures were released to a 15-month high against the dollar of \$1.29.

Expectations of higher borrowing rates are having a knock-on effect across lending markets, particularly in the housing market.

For example, the average two-year fixed mortgage rate rose to 6.66% on Tuesday, according to financial information company Moneyfacts. That's the highest level since August 2008, just before the collapse of U.S. invest-

ment bank Lehman Brothers.

Around 2.4 million fixed-rate mortgages are due to expire by the end of 2024, according to figures from trade association U.K. Finance. Households will be looking to lock in new deals, which as things stand, will be substantially more expensive.

"There is a significant increase in rates for customers maturing off their original product," Henry Jordan, home commercial director at Nationwide Building Society, told lawmakers in Parliament.

Providing quick, easy service appointments

Harley-Davidson dealers ranked first of 26 'power sports' brands

MONTEREY, Calif., July 11, (BUSINESS WIRE): Harley-Davidson was ranked first of 26 power sports brands by Pied Piper's 2023 PSI® Service Telephone Effectiveness™ (STE™) Study, which measured the efficiency and quality of service telephone calls from a customer's objective of quickly and easily setting up a service appointment. Following Harley-Davidson in the rankings were Polaris Off-Road, BMW and Indian Motorcycle.

2023 Pied Piper Service Telephone Effectiveness Rankings by Brand - www.piedpiperpsi.com

"Powersports customers soon decide whether their service experience is a reason to keep their product or get rid of it," said Fran O'Hagan, Pied Piper CEO. "Customers who find scheduling a service appointment difficult vote with their feet by moving to another dealership or independent shop, or postponing service."

The study was completed between March 2023 and May 2023, when Pied Piper phoned each of 1,608 dealerships representing all the major powersports brands, posing as a service customer attempting to schedule a service appointment. Overall STE scores range from 0 to 100, and are calculated from a mix of 39 individually weighted efficiency and quality data points that support the customer mission of quickly and easily setting up a service appointment for a specific date and time. 62% of the total score is determined by efficiency measurements, while 38% of the total score is determined by quality measurements.

Eleven percent of the study's powersports customers hung up their phone having failed in their attempt to schedule service. Twenty-five percent of the customers quickly accomplished their objective, speaking with a service advisor within one minute, and scheduling an appointment within one week. Seven percent of the dealerships nationally went further, achieving STE scores over 80, by providing an interaction with their service customers that was both "frictionless" and proactively helpful.

Performance of each measurement

varied by brand and dealership, and the following are examples of performance variation by brand:

Since 2007 Pied Piper has applied Prospect Satisfaction Index® (PSI®) "fact-based mystery shopping®" to measure how effectively dealerships for each major brand follow proven best practice sales & service behaviors. On average, dealerships with higher PSI scores have proven to sell more vehicles to the same quantity of online or in-person sales customers. The same fact-based PSI approach has also been applied to measure behaviors that maximize service customer loyalty.

A dealer's relationship with a service customer typically starts with a customer phone call to schedule a service appointment. STE has been used to measure the effectiveness of those phone calls for more than ten years, but 2023 marks the first time that STE results have been compiled into industry studies.

Founded in 2003, Pied Piper Management Company, LLC is a Monterey, California, company that helps brands improve the omnichannel sales & service performance of their retailers, by establishing fact-based best practices, then measuring and reporting performance. Examples of other recent Pied Piper PSI studies are the 2023 PSI® Internet Lead Effectiveness® (ILE®) Auto Industry Study (Cadillac was ranked first), and the 2023 PSI® ILE® Powersports Industry Study (Polaris Inc's Indian Motorcycle brand was ranked first), and the 2023 PSI® Service Telephone Effectiveness™ (STE™) Auto Dealer Group Study (Group 1 Automotive was ranked first). Complete PSI industry study results are provided to vehicle manufacturers and national dealer groups.

Manufacturers, national dealer groups and individual dealerships also order PSI evaluations - in-person, internet or telephone - as tools to measure and improve the omnichannel sales and service effectiveness of their dealerships. For more information about the fact-based PSI process, go to www.piedpiperpsi.com.

Wyss Center appoints Dr. Craig as head of business devt & licensing

GENEVA, July 11, (Business Wire): The Wyss Center, a leading non-profit research center dedicated to innovating and accelerating technologies and therapies for neurological and mental health disorders, is pleased to announce the appointment of Craig Cook, MD, MBA, to the leadership team as Head of Business Development and Licensing. Dr. Cook brings more than 25 years of impressive executive leadership and entrepreneurial expertise in the fields of biotech, medtech and clinical medicine.

"The addition of Craig to the Wyss Center team comes at a pivotal time," said Erwin Bottinger, MD, CEO of the Wyss Center, "Craig brings a wealth of experience in translating medical technologies and therapies into clinical impact. His proven track record of business development and licensing within the healthcare sector as well as his deep understanding of the complex landscape of neurological and mental health disorders will be instrumental in advancing the Wyss Center's strategic priorities and expanding the reach of our scientific advancements and technologies."

"I am thrilled to join the Wyss Center and contribute to its groundbreaking work in revolutionizing the treatment landscape for neurological and mental health disorders," said Craig Cook, MD, MBA. "I look forward to building on the Center's impressive neuroscience and neuro technology portfolio, and forging lasting partnerships and ventures that will advance the mission of the Center and drive technologies and therapies from research into valuable clinical and commercial opportunities that can significantly impact patient's lives."

Dr. Cook joins the Wyss Center after an outstanding career in the pharmaceutical, biotech, and medtech sectors. His achievements include appointments to CEO positions in publicly listed biotech companies as well as assum-

ing key roles at the C-level, board, and founder levels in multiple life science ventures. Dr. Cook's extensive track record complements the Wyss Center's commitment to neurological and mental health, strengthening its science and technology portfolio.

Notable roles in his career include serving as Chairman of PreciHealth, leading the development of next-generation medical diagnostics; additionally he served as CEO of Herantis Pharma Plc specializing in neurodegenerative diseases, and CEO of Midatech Pharma Plc focusing on therapies for rare brain tumors in adults and pediatrics. Dr. Cook has also held key positions at multinational biotech and pharmaceutical companies such as Serono, Novartis, and Eli Lilly, with a specific emphasis on CNS and mental health. Furthermore, he has successfully founded or co-founded impactful ventures including SedateUK, a pioneer in anesthesia innovation and training; Longevity IQ, promoting an evidence-based scientific approach in preventive medicine and neurological and mental well-being; and SpaceCode Healthcare, a pioneering life science technology company.

Dr. Cook's educational qualifications include an MD from Wits University in South Africa, an MBA from the London Business School, an MSc in Translational Medicine from Kings College London, a DA in Anesthesiology, and a BSc in Pharmacology.

The Wyss Center is an independent, non-profit, research organization that innovates and accelerates technologies and therapies to transform the lives of people with neurological and mental health disorders.

The Center pursues transformational technologies in artificial intelligence, bio- and neuroengineering to restore essential neural functions and deliver precision therapeutics for people with debilitating neurological and mental health disorders.

Countries, companies can now apply for 'provisional' licenses

UN debates deep sea mining

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, July 11, (AP): A U.N. agency tasked with regulating the deep sea is debating whether to open the Earth's watery depths to countries and companies that as of Monday were allowed to start applying for provisional mining licenses.

The International Seabed Authority, based in Jamaica, launched a two-week conference on the issue Monday, a day after it missed a deadline to approve a set of rules and regulations to govern deep sea mining in international waters.

"We have a lot of work ahead of us," said Juan José González, the authority's council president.

The authority has issued more than 30 exploration licenses but no provisional licenses - so far.

The debate on whether to allow companies to extract precious metals from the deep sea that are used in electric car batteries and other green technology comes as more than a dozen countries call for a ban or moratorium given environmental concerns.

Scientists have said that minerals in the deep sea take millions of years to form, and that mining could unleash noise, light and suffocating dust storms. However, companies have argued that deep sea mining is cheaper and has less of an impact than land mining.

Most of the current exploration is focused in the Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone, which covers 1.7 million square miles (4.5 million square kilometers) between Hawaii and Mexico. It is occurring at depths ranging from 13,000 to 19,000 feet (4,000 to 6,000 meters).

On Monday, Canada announced that it supported a moratorium because there is no regulatory framework in place nor a deep understanding of the environmental impacts of deep sea mining.

"It is critical that the international community recognize its collective responsibility to safeguard the health and integrity of our shared global ocean for future generations," the government said in a statement.

The 36-member council of the International Seabed Authority is expected to debate the issue on Friday. But it's unclear when or if it would actually vote on whether to allow mining in deep international waters given sharp divisions over the issue.

"There's really no appetite to vote," said Duncan Currie, an international and environmental lawyer and legal adviser to the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, a Netherlands-based alliance of environmental groups.

Currie, who was at the conference, said in a phone interview that he envisioned three scenarios: the authority agrees on a legal and technical framework by the end of the year; the issue goes to Germany's International Tribunal for Law of the Sea if there's no consensus; or, a metals company submits a work plan to one of the authority's commissions, which would then have to submit it to the council for a vote.

González, the president of the council, urged members to "stay open and attempt to reach consensus" as he began the conference.

Appeals court again blocks construction on Mountain Valley Pipeline

FALLS CHURCH, Va., July 11, (AP): A federal appeals court has again blocked construction on a segment of a contentious natural gas pipeline being built through Virginia and West Virginia, this time doing so even after Congress ordered the project's approval.

The stay issued Monday by the 4th



Some of the employees children who took part in the event.

Gulf Bank promotes financial literacy among the children of employees

KUWAIT CITY, July 11: Organizing a special day for children to highlight and encourage work-life balance

Hanan Al-Khalifa: We aim to instill financial literacy in the new generation and teach them about the importance of savings, in order to enhance their knowledge of banking transactions.

As part of its continuous efforts to consolidate the principles of social sustainability and believing in the importance of work-life balance, Gulf Bank welcomed its employees' children on an ordinary working day, where plenty of educational and recreational activities were organized for them.

On this occasion, the Assistant General Manager of Human Resources at

Gulf Bank, Ms. Hanan Al-Khalifa, said: "Allowing employees to accompany their children to work, aligns with our commitment towards creating a positive work environment at Gulf Bank. This helps to promote work-life balance, and further highlights our eagerness to support our employees on a personal and professional level."

She added: "We were keen to organize a series of various activities, designed for different age groups, with the aim of teaching children about banking services and financial literacy. The activities included creative workshops, fun games and entertaining surprises to ensure an exceptional experience for both the children and parents alike."

Al-Khalifa indicated that educational workshops were created with the aim of enriching the children's financial information, and to encourage the spirit of teamwork. Additionally, the children were given a chance to visit Gulf Bank's Head Office to experience banking transactions both theoretically and practically.

She further stressed the importance of instilling financial literacy in the new generation and to teach them about the importance of savings, in order to enhance their knowledge of banking transactions and terminology; hence, why the bank facilitated fun and engaging activities to help the children learn this new information effortlessly.

that Congress overstepped its authority by enacting the law, saying it violates the separation of powers outlined in the Constitution.

"Congress cannot pick winners and losers in pending litigation by compelling findings or results without supplying new substantive law for the courts to apply," lawyers for

the environmentalists wrote in court papers.

The law was passed last month as part of a bipartisan bill to raise the debt ceiling. The provision that deals exclusively with the Mountain Valley Pipeline was included after negotiators failed to reach an agreement on broader regulatory reform.

BUSINESS

'market to grow at a CAGR of 9.5%

According to a market study published by Dataintel, titled, "Global Logistics Automation Market by Type (Warehouse Management, Transportation Management), By Application (Retail, E-commerce, Manufacturing, Others), and Region: Size, Share, Trends and Opportunity Analysis, 2022-2030," the market is anticipated to grow at a CAGR of 9.5% during 2022 to 2030.

Key players covered in the

report. Download PDF Sample here: <https://dataintel.com/request-sample/?reportid=154901>

The report covers data on emerging trends, market drivers, growth opportunities, and restraints that can change the market dynamics. It provides an in-depth analysis of the market segments, industry players, and crucial strategies that helps market players to expand their business. (AP)

oil refinery fire injures 8 firefighters

Fire erupted at an oil refinery in southern Iran and injured eight firefighters Monday, the official IRNA news agency reported.

The news agency did not say what caused the fire but reported the firefighters were hurt while trying to put out the blaze burning in two of the five tanks at an oil depot near Iran's port of Banda Abbas. Authorities said there was concern the fire might spread to more tanks. The port,

located at the mouth of strategic Strait of Hormuz, is a major import and export hub.

Similar fires were reported there in the past and at other oil facilities in Iran. Authorities blamed them on decades of international sanctions as well as hot summer weather.

Temperatures in Bandar Abbas reached nearly 37 degrees Celsius (97 degrees Fahrenheit) on Monday. (AP)

Eco Forum Global kicks off

China's only national-level global forum focusing on ecological civilization, Eco Forum Global Guiyang 2023, kicked off on Saturday in Guiyang, the capital of southwest China's Guizhou Province.

This year's event, themed "Pursuing modernization of harmony between humanity and nature - promoting green and low-carbon development," attracts over 2,500

participants with both online and offline activities.

Themed sub-forums, exhibitions on the latest techniques, products and technologies in green and low-carbon industries, as well as business promotion activities, will be held during the two-day event.

Since its inception in 2009, the forum has successfully convened 11 sessions. (AP)

In partnership with Zain and SACGC and in collaboration with the Avenues

Innovation Nation kicks-off to empower youth's tech & digital skills

KUWAIT CITY, July 11: Zain announces the kick-off of Innovation Nation, a unique experience that comes in partnership with Sabah Al Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC) and in collaboration with the Avenues. The initiative runs daily from 9-19 July and offers a unique set of rich content, courses, and workshops with the aim of empowering children and youth's technical and digital skills in a fun, informative, and innovative way.

The opening ceremony was attended by Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al Roudhan, Mabaneq CEO Waleed Khalid Alsharian, and SACGC GM Neda Al Dehani. The project is the first fruitful result of Zain and SACGC's recently signed strategic partnership to invest in the talents and skills of Kuwait's children and youth to contribute to the national economy by empowering tech and digital competencies, which are core requirements of today's careers.

Innovation Nation brings many daily courses for young people aged 7-14 years. Each course or workshop runs for two hours and is supervised and facilitated by experts and certified trainers from SACGC. The content is presented in an out-of-the-box way with fun, informative, and innovative educational methods that appeal to young people.

The content offered by Innovation Nation mainly covers the essentials of



From the 3D Printing workshop.

a variety of technical and digital topics that are aligned with the requirements of modern markets and careers, including electronics, robotics, 3D printers, programming, artificial intelligence, and more. The initiative offers a great opportunity for parents to positively fill their children's free time while they shop at the Avenues.

Zain recently signed a memorandum of understanding with SACGC - a center of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) - to build a new strategic partnership that focuses on elevating the digital literacy of the youth, empower creativity and innovation, and enhance the local start-up ecosystem in the community.

The MoU aims to foster a joint collaboration between the two partners to achieve a number of targets, including elevating digital literacy, develop digital competencies, support the local startups ecosystem, empower Kuwaiti inventors and innovators to excel, and more to serve the nation's developmental, economic, and social goals. The partnership targets young people of 7-35 years, and includes insightful programs, workshops, and more to share expertise and achieve these shared goals.

This particular activity is the first of many projects under Zain's all-new initiative, Innovation Nation, under which all of Zain's innovation and entrepreneurship programs will fall, especially within science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) areas. The initiative mainly targets the youth, and centers around a number of pillars, including entrepreneurship, investment, startup acceleration, supporting inventors, fostering innovation, and more.

On its part, Mabaneq reflects its social responsibility by launching and supporting a range of CSR activities and projects in collaboration with many of its partners. The company believes that such initiatives aim at investing in the talents of young people and help create an innovative, digitally capable generation, ultimately benefitting the entire community.



Eaman Al Roudhan, Waleed Alsharian and Neda Al Dehani at the opening ceremony.



From the Robotics workshop.



Innovation Nation runs daily at the Avenues until July 19.

Sabah Al Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity was established in 2010 as an initiative by His Highness the Late Amir and former Chairman of the board of directors of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah. The center was founded to nurture Kuwaiti Human

capital and resource with innovation, technical knowledge, and expertise to enhance the development and growth of Kuwait.

SACGC is dedicated to facilitating knowledge and investing in exceptional and high achieving individuals within the entrepreneurial and innovation fields. The center also aims to foster

an environment that generates impact across the community that will, in turn, boost social, economic, and cultural development.

The center boasts five dedicated scientific clubs each specializing in a different area: the programming club, the robotics club, the science and math club, the electronics club, and the de-

sign club. SACGC also offers support to young people and innovators who wish to execute their own projects under the supervision of the center's engineers and trainers, offering specially designed courses to support unique projects, and even manufacturing tools and services like digital engraving, laser cutting, 3D printing, and more.

Rivals not only 'clashing' on the ground but battling economically for revenue from ports

'17.3 million of Yemen's 21.6 million people need aid'

UNITED NATIONS, July 11, (AP): Sporadic armed clashes between Yemen's Houthi rebels and government forces are now also battling over revenue from ports, trade, banking and natural resources, the country's U.N. envoy said Monday.

Special Representative Hans Grundberg told the U.N. Security Council that the fight over economic wealth "has become inseparable from the political and military conflict."

While fighting has decreased markedly in Yemen since a truce in April 2022, he said, "continued sparks of violence alongside public threats to return to large-scale fighting increase fear and tensions."

Grundberg said Yemenis have enjoyed the longest period of relative calm since the civil war erupted in 2014, but "the situation on the ground remains fragile and challenging." He pointed to clashes in five frontline areas, including Hodeida where Yemen's main port is and the oil-rich eastern province of Marib which Iran-backed Houthi rebels attempted to seize in 2021.

Yemen's conflict began when the Houthis swept down from their northern stronghold and chased the internationally recognized government from the capital of Sanaa. A Saudi-led coalition intervened the following year on behalf of the government and in time the conflict turned into a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

The war has devastated Yemen, already the Arab region's poorest country, and created one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters. More than 150,000 people, including fighters and civilians, have been killed.

The restoration of Saudi-Iran ties in April has raised hopes of progress in ending the conflict.

Grundberg said that although the truce was not renewed when it expired last October, the lessening of combat has opened the door for serious discussions with the parties on ending the war. He urged both sides to take "bold steps" toward peace.

Burgan Bank announces names of draw winners

KUWAIT CITY, July 11: Burgan Bank announced today the names of the Kanz account monthly draw winners, who will each take home a KD 2,000 cash-prize. All Kanz customers who maintain a minimum balance of KD 200 for at least one week before the draw date, are included in the draw, and their chances of winning increase with higher deposits.

The 20 lucky winners are:

- Aeshah Naser Almansour
- Aisha Abdullah Al Mehrey
- Ali Naser Alsaffar
- Shaikh Ameer Fahad Alsabah
- Aziza Sadeq Alqallaf
- Eisa Akbar Kourduni
- Fatema Khaled Khalaf
- Hasan Mohammad Alneamah
- Khaled Abdulkareem Alsaleh
- Khaled Mohammad Alenezi
- Khalid Zahir Ali
- Kinda Mohammad Eskandar
- Mohamed Tahoun
- Mohammad Fayeze Alzarban
- Mohammad Rasheed Alsaeel
- Moudhi Rashed Alrashed
- Nasser Mohamad Mahmud
- Suad Hussain Aldashti
- Waleed Ahmad Alnajjar

• Zaben Fares Aldhafaeri

In addition to the monthly draw of the Kanz account, Burgan Bank also offers a semi-annual KD 500,000 prize and a mega annual prize of KD 1,500,000. Kanz Account is accessible to any individual and can be opened in Kuwaiti Dinar or in major currencies (USD, EURO, GDP)

with a minimum KD 200 requirement for account opening.

More information on opening a Kanz account, the draws or any of the Bank's products and services, is available at any of Burgan Bank branches, through the Call Center at 1804080 and Burgan Bank website www.burgan.com.



Displayed names of the winners.

"This means an end to the conflict that promises accountable national and local governance, economic and environmental justice, and guarantees of equal citizenship for all Yemenis, regardless of gender, faith, background or race," he said.

On the economic front, Grundberg said, the value of the Yemeni riyal has dropped more than 25% against the U.S. dollar in the past 12 months in the southern port city of Aden, which is now the seat of the internationally recognized government. Conflict-related road closures have more than doubled the cost of transporting goods, he said.

Joyce Msuya, the U.N. assistant secretary-general for humanitarian affairs, said 17.3 million of Yemen's 21.6 million people need aid. She said one of the main reasons for the immense level of humanitarian needs is the deteriorating economy. "Only by stabilizing the economy

can we reduce the staggering number of people in need," she said. She said that includes "the long overdue resumption of oil exports from government-held areas" and an end to the "obstruction to the transport of commercial goods from government- to Houthi-controlled areas."

Halfway through the year, Msuya said, the \$4.3 billion U.N. appeal for Yemen is only 29% funded and the World Food Program's operation to help the severely malnourished is reaching just 40% of needs. Without more funding by September, she said WFP "may be forced to cut as many as five million people from food assistance."

U.N. humanitarian coordinator David Gressly reported a key step in efforts to avoid an environmental disaster in the Red Sea, telling the council that the Houthis provided authorization Monday for the transfer of 1.1 million barrels of crude oil from

the Safer, a rusting tanker moored 50 kilometers (31 miles) northeast of the Houthi-controlled port of Hodeida.

The Yemeni government bought the tanker in the 1980s to store up to 3 million barrels of oil pumped from the Marib oil fields. Because of the war, the tanker was not maintained since 2015, with seawater seeping into the hull causing damage that increased the risk of sinking and a major oil spill.

Gressly said that since the salvage ship Ndeavor arrived at the Safer site May 30 it has stabilized the tanker so its oil can be transferred. He said the tanker Nautica is preparing to sail from Djibouti and should start taking on oil from the Safer by early next week. The operation will take about two weeks, he said.

"The completion of the ship-to-ship transfer of the oil will be a moment when the whole world can have a sign of relief," Gressly said.

The Conversation

Just ask ex-Tumblr users

Mass migration from Twitter is likely to be an uphill battle

By Casey Fiesler
University of Colorado Boulder

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

□ □ □

Elon Musk announced that "the bird is freed" when his US\$44 billion acquisition of Twitter officially closed on Oct. 27, 2022. Some users on the microblogging platform saw this as a reason to fly away.

Over the course of the next 48 hours, I saw countless announcements on my Twitter feed from people either leaving the platform or making preparations to leave. The hashtags #GoodbyeTwitter, #TwitterMigration and #Mastodon were trending. The decentralized, open source social network Mastodon gained over 100,000 users in just a few days, according to a user counting bot.

As an information scientist who studies online communities, this felt like the beginning of something I've seen before. Social media platforms tend not to last forever. Depending on your age and online habits, there's probably some platform that you miss, even if it still exists in some form. Think of MySpace, LiveJournal, Google+ and Vine.

When social media platforms fall, sometimes the online communities that made their homes there fade away, and sometimes they pack their bags and relocate to a new home. The turmoil at Twitter is causing many of the company's users to consider leaving the platform. Research on previous social media platform migrations shows what might lie ahead for Twitter users who fly the coop.

Several years ago, I led a research project with Brianna Dym, now at University of Maine, where we mapped the platform migrations of nearly 2,000 people over a period of almost two decades. The community we examined was transformative fandom, fans of literary and popular culture series and franchises who create art using those characters and settings.

We chose it because it is a large community that has thrived in a

number of different online spaces. Some of the same people writing Buffy the Vampire Slayer fan fiction on Usenet in the 1990s were writing Harry Potter fan fiction on LiveJournal in the 2000s and Star Wars fan fiction on Tumblr in the 2010s.

By asking participants about their experiences moving across these platforms - why they left, why they joined and the challenges they faced in doing so - we gained insights into factors that might drive the success and failure of platforms, as well as what negative consequences are likely to occur for a community when it relocates.

Regardless of how many people ultimately decide to leave Twitter, and even how many people do so around the same time, creating a community on another platform is an uphill battle. These migrations are in large part driven by network effects, meaning that the value of a new platform depends on who else is there.

In the critical early stages of migration, people have to coordinate with each other to encourage contribution on the new platform, which is really hard to do. Essentially becomes, as one of our participants described it, a "game of chicken" where no one wants to leave until their friends leave, and no one wants to be first for fear of being left alone in a new place.

For this reason, the "death" of a platform - whether from a controversy, disliked change or competition - tends to be a slow, gradual process. One participant described Usenet's decline as "like watching a shopping mall slowly go out of business."

The current push from some corners to leave Twitter reminded me a bit of Tumblr's adult content ban in 2018, which reminded me of LiveJournal's policy changes and new ownership in 2007.

People who left LiveJournal in favor of other platforms like Tumblr described feeling unwelcome there. And though Musk did not walk into Twitter headquarters at the end of October and turn a virtual content moderation lever into the "off" position, there was an uptick in hate speech on the platform as some users felt emboldened to violate the platform's content policies under an assumption that major policy changes were on the way. (AP)



A group photo of the panel discussion participants and program participants.

Bank takes engagement and enablement of its talent very seriously: Al-Musalam

KFH inaugurates Leadership Excellence Program in partnership with Headspring

KUWAIT CITY, July 11: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) inaugurated the Leadership Excellence Program in partnership with Headspring, the joint venture between IE Business School and the Financial Times, to support the learning and growth journey of KFH's leaders.

Besides the Leadership Excellence Program participants, the event was attended by Chief HR Officers from Kueyit Turk and Ahli United Bank Kuwait, in addition to Headspring Chief Relationship Officer, Vice President Corporate Partnerships MENA, and FT Journalists.

In his welcome speech, KFH Group Chief Human Resources Officer, Zeyad Abdullah AlOmar, said "it gives me great pleasure to welcome you all as we gather here today to inaugurate the yearly Leadership Excellence Program in partnership with Headspring", indicating this series of leadership programs will be a good base to help solidify the link as a "One" unified KFH Group."

Operate
"KFH Group is the leader in the markets we operate in. As we continue this journey as banking pioneers, we are required to continue serving our customers in the best way possible, challenge the banking norms, innovate, and be agile while doing all of this," AlOmar added.

Speaking to the participants of the program across KFH Group, AlOmar said: "You have corporate aspirations to meet, a successful story to live up to, and most importantly a banking legacy to continue. Leadership comes with responsibilities, firstly, a responsibility towards yourself, through committing to continued development, using all the tools and opportunities available to do so. In addition, as leaders, you have a collective responsibility to empower and inspire those around you, fostering a culture of continuous learning and growth amongst the teams you lead and more importantly guiding jointly all the Group to achieve the corporate aspirations that has been set."

AlOmar pointed out that KFH firmly believes in investing in its leaders where KFH prioritizes the continued development of its leaders by equipping them with the latest thinking, approaches, and learnings available.

AlOmar indicated the Leadership Excellence Program has been tailored based on data and insights born out of previous program instances, capitalizing on numerous one-on-one sessions with KFH Group Leadership to obtain the core focus areas and topics, infused with the latest thinking in the banking industry, and are based on relevant topics to the times we currently operate in as an integrated KFH Group.

AlOmar said to the participants "the effectiveness of the programs mainly lies with you. I urge all of you as KFH Leaders to immerse yourself in the program. Work on learning and more importantly, log and jot down how you will ap-



Mohammed Al-Musalam during the panel discussion.



Zeyad Abdullah AlOmar delivering his speech.



Participants in the panel discussion.



A section of the audience.

ply that learning in our Group operations. Learning opportunities not only comes from our program leads from Headspring, but also comes

from your colleagues around you. Learning and engaging with each other will surely reap many benefits for us across the Group which will

start in this program but surely continue thereafter."

KFH Executive Manager - Talent Management Mohammed Al-

Musalam

Meanwhile, during a discussion panel held as part of the inauguration ceremony of the program,

KFH Group Executive Manager - Talent Management Mohammed Al-Musalam said that "KFH tackles the retention of its' Talent following a multiple dimension approach, indicating that KFH takes the engagement and enablement of its talent very seriously where it tracks this through an Annual Employee Survey to measure how engaged and enabled KFH employees are compared to banking peers, and global entities. Al-Musalam added that continuous review and action planning is applied to help further improve engaging and enabling KFH employees which has resulted in a highly engaged workforce with turnover / attrition rates lower than our peers."

Al-Musalam added "KFH provides a differentiated value proposition in all the markets we operate in. Associating with the Brand, the culture, the story, the leadership in the banking products we offer, multiple progression opportunities within the organization, gives our employees a lot to bank on from a value perspective. We continuously work on emphasizing that associating with KFH as a brand comes with responsibility, but we see our leaders always rising to that."

Development

Discussing the linkage between the drive for leadership development at the KFH Group level vs. the strategic objectives, Al-Musalam explained: "As the banking leader in the markets we operate, and as we continue this leadership, our leaders are continuously being challenged to maintain and enhance our status within the markets we operate in. With the constant changes be it from typical market competitors or from new market entrants (FinTech's) our leaders are always up on their feet to continue leading the way for this industry. This challenge requires us to prioritize their development, which happens on a yearly basis for our leaders based on a special development track. Al-Musalam added that the Talent Development team invests a significant part of their time to further enhance this development track, assess its effectiveness, refresh it with the latest thinking to expand the scope of our leaders."

KFH Leadership Excellence Program - Years of continuous development for our KFH Leaders

About KFH Leadership Excellence Program: The Leadership Excellence Program is the flagship program designed to equip KFH Leaders with the tools and latest thinking to enhance their effectiveness as Leaders. This year, KFH has focused on further enhancing the program where it now covers 50 KFH Group Leaders from our respective entities and including Ahli United Bank. In addition, the program ensures that both levels covered under the program are interlinked and allows our Leaders in both levels to interact and work together towards solving the challenges as part of the program. All KFH Group Leaders went through an intricate selection process to ensure KFH talent pipeline is further supported with this new cohort.

New adjunct therapy disrupts tormenting thinking patterns

FTP delivered thru mobile games fights depression

WASHINGTON, July 11: Americans keep their smartphones close, as any mental health therapist knows from watching patients cradle their devices and check them furtively for messages. The Gallup Poll found that 91% of people between ages 30 and 49 “keep it near almost all the time during waking hours.”

The neuroscientists and digital experts who founded Hedonia saw an opportunity in this modern-day penchant, a chance to provide a novel-yet-simple therapy for patients with depression, anxiety, and other mood disorders.

That’s the basis for facilitating thought progression, FTP for short. FTP is a new adjunct therapy delivered through mobile games that patients play for 15 to 30 minutes daily.

FTP is designed to disrupt tormenting thinking patterns, lack of motivation, and the inability to experience pleasure, which are characteristic of mood disorders. And it’s grounded in years of neuroscientific research at Harvard Medical School and elsewhere.

Neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine are the brain’s chemical messengers. They affect mood, sleep, appetite, and memory. Depression, for instance, has long been attributed to a chemical imbalance in the brain.

Improve

Medicines for depression known as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) work by blocking serotonin reuptake into nerve cells after it carries a message, making more serotonin available to pass messages between nerve cells. SSRIs like Prozac (fluoxetine), Lexapro (escitalopram), and Celexa (citalopram) have been proven to improve the lives of many with depression and anxiety.

Over the years, however, it’s become clear to medical and mental health professionals that depression and anxiety are also thought disorders, according to Moshe Bar, Ph.D., the chief scientific officer of Hedonia and former director of the Cognitive Neuroscience Lab at Harvard Medical School.

“Ask anyone with depression, and they will tell you: Beyond a negative mood, the sources of their suffering are tormenting thinking patterns, lack of motivation, and lack of pleasure in life,” Bar says.

Therapists recognize the self-defeating thinking that is typical of people with depression. Bar identifies those patterns as:

- A tendency to ruminate, to dwell on negative feelings, their causes and consequences in an inescapable loop.
- Narrow and slow-moving thinking.
- Inhibition about what they should do or say.
- Focusing on little details with difficulty seeing “the big picture.”

Those behaviors are not only observable in patients’ behavior; they also revealed themselves in magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) studies of the brains of participants. In one such study Prof. Bar’s lab found that:

1. People with depression activate the brain’s network supporting expansive thinking significantly less than those without depression.
2. People who ruminate and have constricted thinking experience a “critical loss” in neuron volume in the regions of the brain central to mood and memory.

“The effect of depression is evident in all levels of brain functioning, from molecules to brain structures, to cognition,” Bar says.

Over nearly two decades, Prof. Bar and other researchers have tested their hypotheses that changing the flow of thought could affect symptoms of depression for the better. In other words, facilitating thought progression could improve individuals’ moods through noninvasive, simple exercises that would encourage them to:

- Broaden their thought patterns to be more associative.
 - Think fast.
 - Widen their thinking to become more global and “big-picture.”
- “Mood affects the way we think. But can the way we think affect our mood?” wrote Prof. Bar and Malia F. Mason, professor in the Columbia School of Business, writing about results of their research that indicated the answer is a resounding, “Yes.”
- Mason and Bar measured the moods of two groups of study participants:
- One group read chains of words that circulated around the same topic, imitating ruminative thinking. An example of such a “constrained” chain of words: lettuce, tomato, green, head, vegetable, cabbage, carrot, food, leaf, salad, hamburger.
- A second group read chains of words in which the associations from word to word expanded and progressed. For example: thread, needle, shot, nurse, drugs, alcohol, wine, cheese, mouse, cat, dog, bone.
- In the researchers’ analysis, the participants who read the progressive word chains showed significant improvement in mood when compared with the group whose word chains were constrained.
- In another study, participants were divided into two groups: One group read some text at a slow-to-normal pace, and the other read the same text at an increasing speed. The results: Fast reading significantly improved the readers’ mood.
- Other researchers asked a group of study participants to focus on a global landscape. They asked a second group to focus on small details within the landscape. The first group, which looked at the “big picture,” had improved mood.

Research

These and other studies, published in peer-reviewed journals, form a body of research demonstrating that facilitating thought progression (FTP) by expanding people’s thinking patterns and speed can improve their mood — without the cost, risks, or side effects of medications.

Prof. Bar knew that millions could benefit from FTP if he could lift it out of labs and into their hands. He teamed up with Adi Pundak-Mintz, a longtime friend and investor, and Samuel Keret, a founding team member at Waze, a wildly successful app that Google eventually acquired.

For his next project, Keret wanted to do something with social impact. The Waze experience demonstrated how “sticky” apps are ones that people find fun, entertaining, and useful.

A digital application appealing to people with mood disorders could engage them in FTP exercises daily for 15 to 30 minutes. Mobile gaming, the Hedonia founders concluded, could do just that.

“If you can deliver FTP with a game, it will stick,” Keret says. “A game can create engagement and retention. And this is a good way for people who are unmotivated and lethargic to come back and use the treatment again and again.”

Importantly, Hedonia’s FTP-based games are not meant to spark only moments of feeling good. Instead, through repeated play, they aim to increase the volume of neurons in the cortical regions of the brain that regulate mood and memory. These are the same regions that medications like SSRIs affect.

“So we have a new approach and a new way to make it accessible to patients,” Keret says. “It’s complementary to other treatments, including medication, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), and other forms of treatment.”

Bar notes that depression is a worldwide public health problem that affects millions and continues to defy easy answers.

Ganirelix Acetate Injection not made with preservatives

Expanding access to women’s health Kabi launches generic fertility drug

Latest innovations to empower scientists

Bruker enables advanced life-science and green-technology research in UK

LAKE ZURICH, July 11: Fresenius Kabi announced that it has launched Ganirelix Acetate Injection, a generic fertility drug, as part of the company’s expansion in women’s health. Ganirelix Acetate Injection is available immediately from Fresenius Kabi in 250 mcg/0.5 mL pre-filled syringes.

Ganirelix Acetate Injection is indicated for the inhibition of premature surges in luteinizing hormone, or LH, a chemical in the body that triggers reproductive processes such as ovulation. Ganirelix is used to treat women who are undergoing controlled ovarian hyperstimulation, a fertility therapy.1

“We’re pleased to expand our Women’s Health portfolio with the introduction of Ganirelix Acetate Injection, which was developed to provide hopeful parents with more choice when navigating in vitro fertilization and other fertility treatments,” said John Ducker, president and CEO of Fresenius Kabi USA.

Ganirelix Acetate Injection is the third product offering in Fresenius Kabi’s Women’s Health portfolio, which includes Chorionic Gonadotropin for Injection, USP (hCG) and Progesterone Injection, USP. Fresenius Kabi plans to continue to expand its Women’s Health portfolio, helping to meet the growing demand for reproductive health options in the U.S.

Over the last six years, the total number of Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) cycles has increased by 44 percent according to the latest national data released by the Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology (SART), possibly due to the resumption of post-COVID services and increased demand. Currently, more than two percent of all births in the U.S. are a result of successful ART cycles.

Fresenius Kabi Ganirelix Acetate Injection is not made with preservatives or latex. It is a generic medication that is the therapeutic equivalent to Organon’s Ganirelix Acetate injection, 250 mcg/0.5 mL.

Ganirelix Acetate Injection is indicated for the inhibition of premature luteinizing hormone (LH) surges in women undergoing controlled ovarian hyperstimulation.

Ganirelix Acetate Injection is contraindicated under the following conditions:

- Known hypersensitivity to Ganirelix Acetate or to any of its components.
 - Known hypersensitivity to gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH) or any other GnRH analog.
 - Known or suspected pregnancy.
- Ganirelix Acetate Injection should be prescribed by physicians who are experienced in infertility treatment. Before starting treatment with Ganirelix Acetate, pregnancy must be excluded. Safe use of Ganirelix Acetate during pregnancy has not been established.



Fresenius Kabi Ganirelix Acetate Injection.

GLASGOW, Scotland, July 11: At the EUROMAR Conference 2023 in Scotland, Bruker showcases the latest innovations in magnetic resonance technology for life science and materials science research. Bruker’s contributions to science in the United Kingdom (UK) will be further strengthened by recent orders for two 1.2 GHz Avance™ nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectrometers from the University of Warwick and the University of Birmingham. This major science infrastructure investment will enable groundbreaking research into materials properties for energy storage and biofuels, as well as structures and interactions of proteins, nucleic acids, carbohydrates, lipids, and metabolites in cell and pathobiology research, and drug discovery.

Both the University of Warwick and the University of Birmingham already utilize Bruker 1.0 GHz NMR spectrometers, and the additional 1.2 GHz Avance™ systems will propel this core UK NMR research infrastructure to new capabilities, with unparalleled sensitivity and resolution, empowering scientists to dive deeper into the intricacies of materials and biomolecular systems.

Bruker also showcases the new Ascend Evo 400 MHz NMR magnet that sets new standards for operational convenience and cost of ownership with improved liquid helium hold-time of one year, reducing the frequency for helium refills and streamlining laboratory operations. This novel magnet also has further improved field homogeneity, with new cryogenic shimming technology originally developed for ultra-high field magnets, in order to make sample shimming and operation even easier.

Bruker is committed to providing solutions for reducing helium consumption, such as the new Heli-

oSmart-R system for collecting helium gas boil-off from magnets. The HelioSmart-R recovery solution has now been successfully installed in pharmaceutical labs (Merck in Darmstadt, Germany) and academic labs (University of South Carolina, US) and Bruker anticipates numerous additional installations throughout 2023. The new HelioSmart-L solution for liquefaction collects and liquefies helium boil-off from NMR magnets with over 95% recovery rate. HelioSmart-L collects steady-state helium boil-off during operations and during refills, and then purifies and liquefies the helium - creating a closed loop for improved sustainability.

Collaboration

Bruker advances its collaboration with the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zürich (ETHZ) on accelerating protein structure determination by AI. At the heart of the collaboration is NMRtist, a cloud computing service that uses deep learning-based approaches to fully automate analysis of protein NMR spectra.

Professor Roland Riek of ETHZ, Head of the Bio-NMR group in the Department of Chemistry and Applied Biosciences, commented: “Protein structure determination by NMR is a very time-consuming process and requires extensive manual intervention. Our goal was to leverage deep learning and AI to make it faster and more automated, while still achieving accurate results.”

The results obtained by the NMRtist cloud-based platform, such as resonance assignments, will be seamlessly integrated into more complex workflows in the future, addressing a variety of research questions. This collaboration between Bruker and ETHZ marks an important step in advancing protein structure determination. With

AI-driven automation at its core, this partnership will continue to provide researchers with faster access to accurate results for many classes of proteins, while saving both time and expense in the process.

Bruker has recently introduced the SciY™ platform, which offers advanced and versatile software solutions for data analysis and management, research lab and bioproduction QC digitalization, as well as for scientific workflow automation. By integrating high-performance lab software solutions, the SciY platform provides a broad suite of vendor-agnostic software and automation solutions for the digital transformation of the life science and biopharma industries. The launch of SciY is led by Bruker’s Integrated Data Solutions division in collaboration with software and biopharma automation companies Mestrelab Research, Arxspan, Optimal Industrial Technologies, ZONTAL, and Optimal Industrial Automation. With innovative, modular software solutions, the SciY platform simplifies data acquisition and interpretation, maximizing the value of data in biopharma research, development and manufacturing.

Dr. Falko Busse, President of the Bruker BioSpin Group, concluded: “We are pleased to support the advancements in scientific and drug discovery research in the United Kingdom with Bruker innovations. We view the UK investments in advanced life and materials science research infrastructure as pivotal for the advancement of science, drug discovery and a green-tech economy, and we are proud to support these visionary endeavors. Our latest advancements in magnetic resonance instrumentation and software, now enhanced by artificial intelligence will provide our customers with greater capabilities and productivity for scientific research.”

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Also:

IRVINE Calif.: A promising treatment for vaginal tears impressed judges at the UCI Stella Zhang New Venture Competition enough to earn the team VagAligna the \$20,000 first prize in the 2023 competition at the University of California. **Irvine Paul Merage School of Business.** According to team leader **Fiza**

Qureshi, there currently are no healing treatments for women suffering from vaginal tears, most commonly occurring during childbirth – pain medicine and time are all that’s available. She and her teammates – **Hailey Matyac, Angie Espino, and Maile Adams** – have come up with a healing protein to be administered through an adhesive hydrogel applied directly on the wound.

Because this is a medical product, it will require clinical trials and FDA approval. But, Qureshi said, this team of bio-medical engineers has come up with the very first direct healing solution for an all-too-common problem.

That promise was enough to convince the five judges at the Grand Finale to award VagAligna the first prize for 2023 out of the 10 finalists presenting Thursday evening. The second prize, \$5,000, went to Leprendo, an online specialty food product and produce company connecting producers directly with restaurant chefs and private consumers.

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Madonna says she's 'on the road to recovery'

Franklin's sons clash over her wishes in trial over dual wills

PONTIAC, Mich., July 11, (AP) — Two sons of the late singer Aretha Franklin gave opposing opinions Monday about the Queen of Soul's final wishes, testifying in an unusual trial that will determine whether a 2014 handwritten document found in couch cushions will lead her estate.

Franklin died in 2018 at age 76 without a formal, typewritten will, and five years later her legacy still is tied up in a suburban Detroit court after a niece found different sets of handwritten papers at her home.

The issue for a jury: Does a 2014 document count as a will under Michigan law? If so, it could trump a 2010 handwritten will that was found in a locked cabinet at the same time. The older version, however, was notarized and repeatedly signed by Franklin.

Ted White II, a son who played guitar during his mother's performances, favors the 2010 document.

"With all the time I spent working with her administratively ... every other document that she ever signed was something that was done conventionally and legally" and with assistance from a lawyer, White, 60, told the jury.

He, acknowledged, however that the 2010 will found at the same time in 2019 was also written by his mother's hand.

There are differences between the documents, though they both appear to indicate that Franklin's four sons would share income from music and copyrights.

Four large posters showing pages from the 2014 document were presented to the jury.

That version crossed out White's name as executor of the estate and

named another son, Kecalp Franklin, in his place. Kecalp Franklin and grandchildren would get his mother's main home in Bloomfield Hills, which was valued at \$1.1 million when she died but is worth much more today.

Kecalp Franklin, 53, said he doesn't consider it unusual that important papers like a will would be discovered in the living room.

Asked by his attorney where Aretha Franklin often read mail, made important phone calls, signed documents and even slept, Kecalp Franklin repeatedly said, "on the couch."

Testimony

A niece, Sabrina Owens, who managed the estate immediately after Franklin's death, did not appear in court Monday, but her testimony from a formal interview was read aloud. She explained how she was determined to search Franklin's house for critical records.

"She would use the kitchen and living room - that was about it," Owens said. "So when I got to the sofa, I lifted up that far right cushion and there was three notebooks there."

The jury will hear closing arguments Tuesday.

The last public accounting filed in March showed the estate had income of \$3.9 million during the previous 12-month period and a similar amount of spending, including more than \$900,000 in legal fees to various firms.

Overall assets were pegged at \$4.1 million, mostly cash and real estate, though Franklin's creative works and intellectual property were undervalued with just a nominal \$1 figure.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Madonna says she is focused on her health and getting back on stage after a "serious bacterial infection" that led to her hospitalization in an intensive care unit for several days last month.

"I'm on the road to recovery and incredibly grateful for all the blessings in my life," the pop superstar wrote on Instagram. "My first thought when I woke up in the hospital was my children. My second thought was that I did not want to disappoint anyone who bought tickets for my tour. I also didn't want to let down the people who worked tirelessly with me over the last few months to create my show."

"My focus now is on my health and getting stronger and I assure you, I'll be back with you as soon as I can," she continued.

The North American leg of her career-spanning Celebration Tour, originally scheduled to kick off July 15 in Vancouver and run through October 8 in Las Vegas, has been postponed. Her tour will now start on October 14, at London's O2 Arena.

Live Nation confirmed the postponement. "Rescheduled dates will be announced as soon as possible. Fans are encouraged to hold onto their tickets as they will be valid for the new dates once announced," a statement read.

According to her manager Guy Oseary, on June 24, Madonna "developed a serious bacterial infection which led to a several-day stay in the ICU," as he wrote on Instagram a few days later. "Her health is improving, however she is still under medical care. A full recovery is expected."

People

Variety



This image released by Paramount Pictures shows Tom Cruise in a scene from 'Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning, Part One.' (AP)

Film

'An enemy is everywhere and nowhere'

Take the leap with Cruise in new 'MI'

By Mark Kennedy

Wondering if you should choose to accept the latest "Mission: Impossible" entry? Maybe you're sick of all the bombast at the movie theater lately? Well, put it another way: Do you really want to disappoint Tom Cruise?

On the first day cameras were rolling for "Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning, Part One," Cruise drove a motorcycle off an actual 4,000-foot Norwegian cliff and then parachuted down. He did it for you. The least you can do to repay him is watch his movie, right?

If you do give in, you're in for a treat - a heart-pounding, never dragging, mission accomplished that takes audiences from the frozen Bering Sea to the rooftop of Abu Dhabi International Airport and the narrow alleyways of Venice.

It's got plenty of facemasks being ripped off, a car chase through Rome, a shoot-out in the desert, a sword fight on a bridge and an intense, runaway train sequence that may top anything the franchise has ever produced.

"This is getting exciting," one character says early on and you'll heartily agree.

Christopher McQuarrie returns for the third time as director of the spy series - he also helped write Cruise's "Top Gun: Maverick" - and he's brought back love interest/spy Rebecca Ferguson, comic relief buddies Simon Pegg and Ving Rhames, Vanessa Kirby as The White Widow and Henry Czerny as slimy Eugene Kittridge.

Newcomers include Esai Morales as a very bad baddie and Pom Klementieff as his psychotic aide. Hayley Atwell also makes her impressive debut, playing a master thief and possible romantic partner for Cruise's Ethan Hunt. (If that makes too many love interests, you'd be right.)

The bad guy isn't a guy this time, it's a haywire form of conscious artificial intelligence that has infiltrated every nation's computer systems and rep-

resents a Hollywood fever dream of this emerging technology. (And maybe a swipe at CGI, too.)

This AI can foul up every digital device with "the power to bring the world to its knees" - or at least to a pre-internet, analog state. It's "an enemy that is everywhere and nowhere." The filmmakers aren't too keen in giving too many specifics, leaving it an existential threat and giving it the very non-threatening nickname, The Entity.

"Dead Reckoning," as the "Part One" in the full title suggests, is another action franchise going epic with several-part arcs - like "Spider-Verse" and "Fast & Furious" already this year - and uses a two-part special key as the plot device that everyone desperately needs, like in "Transformers: Rise of the Beasts."

The key here is sought by Cruise, our thief/love interest, a US Special Operations team, Morales' nasty Gabriel and the arms dealer The White Widow. It soon gets swiped, pickpocketed and seized, jumping from owner to owner like an unwanted Secret Santa office gift.

Humanity

What's so special about this key? Somehow, the AI needs it and one estimate of its worth is \$100 million, which seems pretty cheap, to be honest. "The fate of the world rests on finding whatever the key unlocks," we are told. Rhames' Luther warns his friend: "Ethan, you're playing fourth dimensional chess with an algorithm."

If other "Mission: Impossible" outings have sometimes felt that Hunt is, well, a little robotic, this time the filmmakers allow some humanity to peek through. Cruise shows some delightful annoyance at having to sit in the passenger seat as his car careens backward through Rome, like an exasperated Drivers' Ed instructor after a long day. He also shows a tender side in Venice as he cuddles Ferguson in the twilight and they hold hands on a gondola.

Speaking of that car chase in Rome - the second

time this year that the iconic Spanish Steps have been shattered by a brash, hulking US franchise - we get the delightful image of Cruise and Atwell handcuffed together scooting along in a tiny, vintage yellow Fiat 500.

"Is anyone NOT chasing us?" she asks.

All the interested parties come together at one of those big, elegant Eurotrash dance parties with dark lighting, thumping rave music and writhing dancers on platforms that only Hollywood seems to love, a sequence most recently bettered by "John Wick: Chapter 4" in Berlin.

Then a movie that started filming pre-pandemic and has a two-and-a-half-hour runtime, culminates with Cruise's motorcycle leap, a breathless fight sequence on top of a steam train and then a derailment that forces the good guys to climb through railcar after railcar vertically as they dodge debris, bad guys and even, in a sly move, a falling piano.

Are you possibly not going to accept this mission? Tom Cruise basically flew for you. It would be rude to leave him hanging.

"Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning, Part One," a Paramount Pictures release that's only in theaters starting Friday, is rated PG-13 for "intense sequences of violence and action, some language and suggestive material." Running time: 156 minutes. Three and a half stars out of four.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Several films big and small were to be available on VOD starting from Tuesday, including "Transformers: Rise of the Beasts," set in 1994 and starring Dominique Fishback and Anthony Ramos. There's also the independent gem "The Starling Girl," a coming-of-age story about a teenage girl (Eliza Scanlen) who is trying to find her identity while adhering to the rules of her isolated religious community. Her life gets complicated when she develops a crush on the handsome youth pastor (Lewis Pullman). (AP)

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif.: A California judge has dismissed charges against a reality TV show doctor and his girlfriend who had been accused of drugging and raping women in a case that drew international attention.

Court records show that charges of assault with the intent to commit a sexual offense were dismissed against Dr Grant Robicheaux, a surgeon who previously appeared on a Bravo TV show called "Online Dating Rituals of the American Male," and girlfriend Cerissa Riley.

The decision came after a preliminary hearing before Superior Court Judge Michael Leversen, who determined there was not sufficient evidence on the charges to proceed to trial, the Orange County Register reported.

The pair also faces drug charges and is due to appear in court July 19. Robicheaux is also charged with possession of an assault weapon. They previously pleaded not guilty.

The state attorney general's office, which has been prosecuting the case, said the agency is reviewing the decision.

The couple's attorneys did not immediately comment on the decision, a spokesperson said.

The case drew international attention in 2018 when Robicheaux and Riley were charged in connection with up to seven victims who authorities said were plied with drugs and assaulted at the pair's home in the upscale community of Newport Beach when they were incapable of resisting.

The case was also tied up in a contentious political battle between Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer and his predecessor Tony Rackauckas, who Spitzer accused of improperly handling the case and using it to draw publicity. (AP)

LONDON: British detectives met with representatives of the BBC on Monday over allegations that a leading presenter paid a teenager for explicit photos. But police said they had not opened a criminal investigation, and a lawyer for the young person denied anything inappropriate had happened. The UK's publicly funded national broadcaster has suspended the male star, who has not been

named, over allegations he gave a youth 35,000 pounds (\$45,000) starting in 2020 when the young person was 17.

Though the age of sexual consent in Britain is 16, it is a crime to make or possess indecent images of anyone under 18.

London's Metropolitan Police force said detectives were "assess-



Robicheaux



Riley

ing the information discussed at the meeting and further enquiries are taking place to establish whether there is evidence of a criminal offence being committed."

"There is no investigation at this time," the force said.

The Sun newspaper, which first reported the allegations, said that the young person's mother had

complained to the BBC in May but that the presenter had remained on the air. The parents then went to the tabloid with the story.

In a further twist, a lawyer for the young person - who also has not been named - told the BBC that "nothing inappropriate or unlawful has taken place between our client and the BBC personal-

ity." The lawyer said the allegations reported in The Sun were "rubbish."

The newspaper defended its actions, saying it "reported a story about two very concerned parents who made a complaint to the BBC about the behavior of a presenter and the welfare of their child." (AP)

Features

ARABIC TIMES

WEDNESDAY, JULY 12, 2023

People & Places

Music

'Michael' audio movie

Killer Mike keeps his amplified voice active

LOS ANGELES, July 11, (AP): It might have taken a decade to offer a solo music project, but the rapper hailing from Atlanta has certainly kept his amplified voice active.

As a member of Run the Jewels, Killer Mike, along with producer El-P, pumped out four critically acclaimed albums. He made noise outside of music as a social-political activist who has spoken out against inequality for Black people, race relations and became a vocal supporter of Sen. Bernie Sanders' 2016 US presidential campaign.

The Grammy-winner hosted Netflix's "Trigger Warning with Killer Mike," a 2019 documentary series about issues that affect the Black community. He also made an emotional plea to calm a protest against police brutality that turned violent in Atlanta.

Now, Killer Mike wants to offer an extension of his efforts with the recently released "Michael," his first solo album since 2012. He calls his sixth studio offering an audio movie about a "prodigal son" filled with church, soul music and Southernisms.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Killer Mike talked about his grandparents' influence, comparing himself to Logan — aka Wolverine — from X-Men, and the reason elected officials should be leaned on more than him.

The rapper was about to kick off his 19-city tour on July 10, before he and El-P goes on a four-city Run the Jewels tour to celebrate their 10th anniversary in the fall.

AP: Why compare yourself to Logan?

Killer Mike: Logan was gruff as a defense mechanism, and he loved hard. He went hard for his people. He could heal quickly. He was resilient. At first, it was just bones, and it was pain. That's not all my life. But as a Black man in America, we can identify with that character. You can identify with Logan... I was always attracted to that character. A lot of times, we get looked at as indestructible — whether it's playing sports, being an advocate or being a martyr for a cause. I just wanted to show that I'm a human being. I'm flesh and bones under here.

AP: Why did it take more than a decade for you to release a solo album?

Killer Mike: You set a goal. You're one half of what you feel could potentially be one of the greatest rap groups ever. If you see it through and you and your rap partner set a marker that in order to be an official rap group, you have to do like the groups that you looked up to — from EPMD, Outkast and Led Zeppelin. You got to put out four classic records. I think Run the Jewels accomplished that. Over the course of a decade, we forged away and created what I would say is arguably the greatest rap group active today.

AP: Where did you learn to become outspoken for important causes?

Killer Mike: I was shaped because my grandmother was active. I didn't have a choice but to be active. It's like flying home from a tour with Rage Against the Machine to testify on behalf of small Black club owners. It may seem strange. But if you grew up in Atlanta in my neighborhood, that's what you're supposed to do. You show up on behalf of your community.

AP: What lessons were ingrained into you?

Killer Mike: I'll give you what my grandfather gave me: Take care of yourself and your sisters. Don't embarrass yourself, me and your grandmama's name. Build a family name that you don't want to embarrass. Build goodwill in your community on a hyperlocal level. And lastly, he told me don't embarrass Black people. That meant to be noble and honest. I'm sincere in the things I do. I'm not a prostitute. I'm not selling myself out for issues. I'm not selling myself out for clout. I'm sincere in the things I'm about. All I ever wanted to be was an emcee. God gave me what I wanted. Everything I'm called to be in addition to that, I consider just a repay on the promise that God gave me. It's my way of repaying and showing thanks and gratitude for what my ancestors and God have given me.

AP: Should you be the primary voice on political and social issues?

Killer Mike: I'm not prostituting myself for every social campaign. We have a group of people who are qualified to do that. You have an amazing amount of people doing the work on an everyday basis that you should be following and reaching out to. I'm not here to replace them. Attorney Benjamin Crump is out there doing a noble job like Johnnie Cochran. We need to be standing with him. We don't need to try to replace him. I am simply trying to make sure that I help to mobilize those that are actually organizing on a daily basis. We have organizers that deserve to be followed. As athletes and entertainers and common people, we should be making sure they have a platform to do that — more so trying to be the next one.

AP: Would your grandmother be proud of how far you've come?

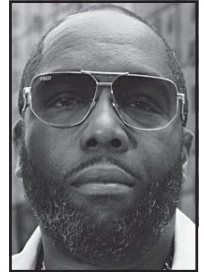
Killer Mike: She'd be proud. She used to say "That's my grandson, Killer Mike." I imagine her somewhere with her ancestors or with her sweet white Jesus saying, "That's my grandson."

AP: What do you want people to take away from "Michael"?

Killer Mike: Listen to this with your eyes closed from start to finish. I guarantee you're going to feel something. You're going to see the characters come to life before you. You're going to see the smell. You're going to see the sights. I sent the album to Jay-Z about a year ago when it was still unfinished. He sent back "I loved it!" He said it felt like I had went to my aunt's house and watched a movie. Your aunt will let you watch the movies your momma won't. I was very flattered by that compliment. I hope others take the chance to participate in listening.

AP: You're a co-founder of Greenwood, a majority Black and Latinx-owned bank. How's business been going since it launched in 2020?

Killer Mike: It's growing with over 100,000 accounts now. I'm excited to have ventured into helping people get out of the industry of payday loans and into real accounts. I've been happy when I walk into a store and someone says, "Mike, I'm going to buy you a water. I've got my Greenwood card." That's absolutely amazing. From a business perspective, my wife and I want to expand. We want to expand the Swag Shop barbershop. We have three locations including one in State Farm Arena. On a homebound basis, I hope to help Frederick Douglass High School, my alma mater, to continue to be a school that produces great leaders. I want to be a cornerstone in my own community.



Killer Mike



BTS performs during the KIIS-FM Jingle Ball concert on Dec. 6, 2019, in Inglewood, Calif. Debut memoir from the seven-member K-pop group BTS, 'Beyond the Story: 10-Year Record of BTS', was a smashing success from moment the public learned of an anonymous, forthcoming text. (AP)



This cover image released by Flatiron Books shows 'Beyond the Story: 10-Year Record of BTS,' a 544-page, glossy oral history of the world's biggest boy band. (AP)



Spacey



Lil Nas X

Variety

COPENHAGEN, Denmark: Police in Norway's capital briefly stopped four Americans who rode through an Oslo tunnel on electric scooters, and a Norwegian newspaper said one of them was rapper Lil Nas X.

Authorities briefly closed the Festning tunnel, but none of the scooter riders were detained or charged.

The tourists had followed a GPS route into the 1.8-kilometer (1.1 mile) downtown tunnel late Monday, police said. The four "used large parts of the roadway," so a road traffic center had to shut down some lanes, police said.

"They apologized. We have escorted them out," the police department said on Twitter.

Norwegian newspaper Dagbladet reported Tuesday that Lil Nas X, whose real name is **Montero Lamar Hill**, was one of the four tourists.

The musician is in Oslo to perform at the outdoor Slottsfell festival nearby on Wednesday.

It was not the first time that a foreign tourist rode through part of a vast and busy tunnel system in the center of the Norwegian capital on an electric scooter. In 2019, a man who said he followed a route given by Google Maps entered the nearly 16-kilometer (10-mile) long Opera Tunnel complex. He was not charged or detained. (AP)

LONDON: An aspiring actor who accused **Kevin Spacey** of being a "vile sexual predator" who drugged and assaulted him when he sought his mentorship acknowledged Monday that he later joked with friends.

The man testified that he used humor to cope with the trauma he experienced after he fell asleep or passed out at the Hollywood star's flat.

"It became a running joke and that's me running with the joke," he said of the mockery he made of the incident for a "sense of catharsis."

The man is the fourth and final alleged victim to accuse the two-time Academy Award winner at trial of sexual assaults in Britain between 2001 and 2013 when Spacey worked at the Old Vic Theatre in London.

Spacey, 63, is on trial in a London court on 12 charges that include sexual assault, indecent assault and causing a person to engage in activity without consent. He denies all the allegations, and his lawyer has suggested the accusers are looking for payouts from Spacey.

The witness said he hadn't complained about Spacey for nearly a decade after the 2008 incident because he wanted to work in the industry. He said it was a David vs. Goliath kind of situation and he feared "getting slammed by his lawyers."

Music

'Beyond the Story' gives singular access to band

BTS memoir a love letter to their fans

LOS ANGELES, July 11, (AP): Like most releases from the world's biggest band, the debut memoir from the seven-member K-pop group BTS, "Beyond the Story: 10-Year Record of BTS," was a smashing success from moment the public learned of an anonymous, forthcoming text.

But unlike most BTS drops, the 544-page book became a bestseller before the subject matter was even revealed, thanks in large part to Taylor Swift fans.

In May, a listing for "4C Untitled Flatiron Nonfiction Summer 2023" inspired online speculation from Swift's cohort: an author and title was going to be revealed on June 13, and they believed the popstar was leaving them numerical easter eggs, or hints, as she often does in her rollout campaigns. Thirteen is Swift's favorite number. The page count, 544, when added individually, equals 13, like in the equation 5 + 4 + 4 = 13.

But there was a more obvious connection to be made. June 13, 2013 was the day BTS debuted, sharing their first ever single, the rebellious trap-pop, "No More Dream." So, when it was revealed that the text was actually an oral history of the band, written by journalist Myeongseok Kang with the members of BTS (RM, Suga, V, Jung Kook, Jin, Jimin, J-Hope) to celebrate their 10 years together, enthusiasm shifted to the K-pop audience.

And the excitement is warranted. "Beyond the Story: 10-Year Record of BTS," is an exhaustive archive of the boy band, a definitive document for diehard ARMY, the name of BTS' fanbase.

Translated into 23 languages and released on July 9, or "ARMY Day" for BTS fans, the book details the band's entire career chronologically, leaving no moment unexcavated.

Kang serves as the reader's guide, offering necessary context to BTS'

revolutionary approach to the culture of the K-pop idol industry. At each turn, the band speaks from a personal perspective, outlining their hopes, thoughts, feelings, and experiences — the unrivaled access that sets this official biography apart from the countless unofficial ones. Many of these stories will be familiar to ARMY, but the band's personal recollections provides a feeling of freshness.

More often than not, BTS' quotes lead with a waited emotionality, though there's quite a bit of humor as well. Fans will surely react when reading Jin describing Suga's 2013 dietary habits, which included blending chicken breasts, grape juice, and bananas for quick protein.

Challenges

Throughout "Beyond the Story" are 330 QR codes to inspire fans to pause their reading and reacquaint themselves with a video's choreography or re-listen to a single, like after learning Suga cried while writing and recording "Outro : Tear." It might not be the prettiest feature of a book filled with glossy images of the band throughout their distinct eras, but it does solve a problem unique to pop culture books. How can a reader experience the subject while learning about it?

For the casual and curious fan, "Beyond the Story" may present a few challenges. It requires some familiarity with the mechanics of the idol industry to fully appreciate how BTS challenged those expectations. As an example: the reader must understand that before a K-pop idol group is put together and presented to the world publicly, or "debuted," they enter a training process and are labeled "trainees," who live in dormitories together, where they are educated on dancing, singing, speaking to the media and beyond.

Only then can they appreciate BTS'

unique approach to the formulaic star system: That the band held their own "classes" for each other; Suga, RM, and J-hope teaching the others about hip-hop.

At one point, they were only trainees at their company HYBE (then known as Big Hit Entertainment), which limited networking opportunities and mentorship typically necessary for success. They focused on an American music market early on in unexpected ways, laying the foundation for their success in this country. They embraced YouTube, Vlive, and vlogs over traditional reality competition shows, like other K-pop groups. They chose to dance in an individual hip-hop style instead of kalgunmu, or "razor sharp group dancing." There are endless examples, presented through Kang's expertise of the industry.

Clearly, this is a book for BTS' fans, a love letter to the community that made their career and a reminder that there is always more to learn about them.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Kool & The Gang and summer go together like peanut butter and jelly. The R&B, funk and soul icons — celebrating their 60th anniversary next year — have a new album, "People Just Wanna Have Fun." The first single is infectious stuff, the happy, funky "Let's Party," featuring vocals from **Sha Sha Jones**. The band is led by founding members **Robert "Kool" Bell** on bass and **George "Funky" Brown**, the keyboardist, drummer and producer, whose memoir "Too Hot: Kool & The Gang & Me" arrived Tuesday. In addition to Jones, vocals on the album also include **Shawn McQuiller**, **Lavell Evans**, **Dominique Karan**, **Rick Marcel** and **Walt Anderson**, plus rappers **Ami Miller & Ole**.

During cross-examination, defense lawyer **Patrick Gibbs** confronted the witness with the jokes he later made about Spacey and apparent texts or calls he made to the star after the incident.

The man acknowledged he initially resisted requests by police for phone data and social media accounts but denied obstructing the investigation, which couldn't find his records from the time of the incident.

He denied staying in contact with Spacey for four months after the incident despite data from the actor's phone that appeared to show phone calls and text mes-

sages to the witness' number.

The man vigorously rejected suggestions he made up the allegations because he was ashamed of engaging in relations with Spacey.

"This line of questioning is offensive," he said. "Nothing happened that was consensual."

The Associated Press doesn't typically name alleged victims of sex crimes and British law bars providing information that could reveal their identities.

The witness said that Spacey was one of his idols and that he wrote to the actor

because he "craved inspiration" and hoped to meet up for a coffee and advice. He said he was stunned when Spacey called him several weeks later and invited him to meet later that night for a drink.

In the man's interview with police played for jurors, he became choked up as he provided details about the incident that he said he had never told friends. He said he pushed Spacey away and the actor told him to leave.

Gibbs questioned the man's timeline with records from Spacey's phone that appeared to show the actor called him during the time he claimed to be out cold on the sofa. Gibbs suggested Spacey phoned the witness while he was on his way home after having consensual contact, but the man said Spacey probably called him while he was unconscious to cover his tracks.

The man said he decided to come forward in 2017 after Spacey was accused of sexual misconduct in the US when the #MeToo movement erupted.

The man said he sued Spacey after an American lawyer told him he could win him \$10 million, but denied he made up the allegations to cash in after years of financial struggles and a gambling problem that forced him to life off loans from friends and relatives.

He said he went to police after a friend told him he would be more credible if he reported a crime before filing suit.

Spacey, who is free on unconditional bail, could face a prison sentence if he's convicted.

One of Hollywood's biggest names until sexual misconduct allegations derailed his career, Spacey won a best supporting actor Academy Award for the 1995 film "The Usual Suspects" and a lead actor Oscar for the 1999 movie "American Beauty." He ran London's Old Vic between 2004 and 2015. (AP)



Nick Lieberman, (left), Molly Gordon, Noah Galvin and Ben Platt attend the special screening of "Theater Camp," at Metrograph, Monday, July 10, in New York. (AP)

The Conversation

'Model organism'

Zebrafish share 'skin' similarities with people

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

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By Craig Ceol

UMass Chan Medical School

Melanocytes are a small subset of epidermal cells that play an outsized role in protecting your skin from the damaging effects of sun exposure. They do this by synthesizing melanins, which are pigments sent to other skin cells to shield them from harmful ultraviolet light. A lack of functioning melanocytes causes a wide range of skin conditions, including skin cancer and vitiligo, an autoimmune condition in which the body attacks melanocytes and causes patches of depigmented skin.



Gupta

For nearly 20 years, I have been studying melanocytes and the role they play in disease. Difficulties growing human melanocytes in cell cultures have led researchers like me to use alternative models to study them.

My lab and others have pioneered the use of zebrafish to study melanocytes. Using this small freshwater fish as a model organism, my team and I recently discovered a new way in which melanocytes regenerate. This process

enables flexibility for these cells to recover from injuries and may be applicable to other types of tissues.

New students and nonscientists often ask me, "Why zebrafish?" There are several reasons why zebrafish are good models to study melanocytes.

Melanocytes in zebrafish are similar in many ways to those in people. These cells develop in embryos in the same way those in humans do, use the same genetic programs and make the same melanins. Melanocyte dysfunction in zebrafish also leads to the same diseases and cancers found in people.

Unlike melanocytes in mouse or human skin, zebrafish melanocytes are externally visible in their dark stripes and spotted scales. Researchers can place the whole fish directly under a microscope and see the cells without the need for a biopsy.

Experiments

Importantly, researchers can manipulate and perform experiments on zebrafish melanocytes in ways that are unethical or not feasible to do with people. Unlike studies that use isolated melanocytes in a petri dish, these experiments can take place in the context of a whole animal, where we can monitor the surrounding skin and other biological factors for their influence on how melanocytes behave and function.

In work spearheaded by Tyler Frantz, a graduate student in my lab, our team has focused our attention on the process by which new melanocytes regenerate after injury.

Melanocyte regeneration is important for recovering from skin disorders such as vitiligo. It's also relevant to age-related conditions like hair graying, in which melanocyte stem cells either die or become dormant and no longer produce the mature melanocytes that give hair its color.

To study melanocyte regeneration, we removed these cells from zebrafish and followed their process of regrowth. Since melanocyte stem cells in zebrafish are externally visible, we tracked these cells in real time to see how they divided and matured. Additionally, we measured which genes were expressed in individual melanocyte stem cells and their descendants during regeneration.

We found that dying melanocytes trigger this regenerative process by sending the signal for melanocyte stem cells - cells that can give rise to new melanocytes - to activate. Surprisingly, we identified two types of stem cells that each took a different route to make new melanocytes. One type of stem cell directly converted into melanin-producing melanocytes. The other type of stem cell divided to create two types of daughter cells. One type was new melanocytes, and the other was new stem cells ready to respond to future injury.

Researchers have known that a single stem cell is capable of making the multiple types of cells needed to regenerate tissue. Our zebrafish studies indicate that multiple different stem cells in skin, and potentially other tissues, can together reconstruct one particular cell type after injury. The involvement of multiple stem cells likely enables regeneration to nimbly adjust to different types of injuries.

Our findings from zebrafish are likely relevant to human skin. When we examined cells taken from the fluid within a blister in human skin, we found cells that look remarkably similar to zebrafish melanocyte stem cells. We are planning to see whether these human cells are activated in skin regeneration to make new melanocytes, which would confirm their identity as melanocyte stem cells.

Ultimately, we envision using these findings to develop treatments that reinvigorate melanocyte stem cells, which could help reverse skin color loss in vitiligo and other diseases. Such treatments may also help counteract age-related pigment loss in hair and skin.

The unique features of zebrafish have allowed us to uncover a new mode of cellular regeneration. Because of cross-species similarities, we expect that these and many other findings from research using zebrafish may be applied to human biology.

Also:

WASHINGTON: Federal officials on Tuesday called for more testing and research on xylazine, the powerful animal sedative that's spreading through the nation's illicit drug supply, but they stopped short of recommending new restrictions on the veterinary medication.

A six-point plan from the White House's drug control office aims to scale up testing, treatment and efforts to intercept illegal shipments of xylazine, which is being mixed into fentanyl and other illicit opioids.

The White House declared xylazine-laced fentanyl an "emerging threat" in April and called for a national strategy to combat its use. Xylazine, sometimes known as tranq, can cause breathing and heart rates to fall to dangerous levels when used in humans. When injected it can cause large open sores and infections, sometimes leading to amputation.

In the report released Tuesday, drug czar **Dr. Rahul Gupta** said administration officials will "explore" making xylazine a scheduled drug, subject to regulatory restrictions similar to opioids and amphetamines.

While some states have already scheduled the drug, those efforts have faced pushback from veterinarians, farmers and others who regularly work with it. Federal scheduling limits how drugs can be prescribed, dispensed and stored. Several bills in Congress aim to tighten use of xylazine without limiting its legitimate use in sedating horses, sheep and other animals.

The bulk of the White House's plan focuses on improving how use of the drug is tracked and treated by health professionals.

"We need more testing to get a national picture of the threat," Gupta told reporters.

Current testing for xylazine is a patchwork of different approaches, with some medical examiners and health departments regularly detecting the drug in deceased overdose victims and collected drug paraphernalia. Recent federal figures suggest use has mushroomed in recent years. But a standardized testing approach is needed to understand the trajectory and scope of the drug's spread.

The plan also calls for the development of rapid tests for use by hospital staff and community workers who treat patients experiencing overdoses. Developing medical billing codes for the treatment of xylazine-impacted patients is another step needed to complete the data picture, officials said.



A boy cools off in a public fountain in Seoul, South Korea, Monday, June 19, 2023. A heat wave warning was issued in Seoul as temperatures soared above 34 degrees Celsius (93 degrees Fahrenheit) Monday. As the heat breaks records, weakening and sickening people, it's worth remembering that dire heat waves have inspired effective efforts to prevent heat illness. (AP)

Health

'Know the warning signs of heat illness'

Extreme heat takes a toll on mind, body

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M., July 11, (AP) — The Southwestern US is bracing for another week of blistering temperatures, with forecasters on Monday extending an excessive heat warning through the weekend for Arizona's most populated area, and alerting residents in parts of Nevada and New Mexico to stay indoors.

The metro Phoenix area is on track to tie or to break a record set in the summer of 1974 for the most consecutive days with the high temperature at or above 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43 Celsius). Even the morning low temperatures are tying historic records.

Along the US-Mexico border, federal agents reported that extreme temperatures over the weekend contributed to 45 people being rescued and another 10 dying.

With so many consecutive days of excessive heat, forecasters, physicians and local health officials throughout the Southwest are recommending that people limit their outdoor exposure and know the warning signs of heat illness.

Knowing the signs

From heavy sweating and dizziness to muscle spasms and even vomiting, experts say heat exhaustion and heat stroke are likely to become more common. In coming decades, the US is expected to experience higher temperatures and more intense heat waves.

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness and happens when the body loses its ability to sweat.

The skin gets hot and red, and the pulse quickens as the person's body temperature climbs to 103 F (39 C) or higher. Headaches set in, along with nausea, confusion and even fainting.

Jon Fleming, an emergency medicine physician and scientist at the University of New Mexico, said the body tries to compensate by pumping blood to the skin as a way to cool off. And the more a person breathes, the more they lose fluids, becoming increasingly dehydrated.

Important electrolytes like sodium and potassium also can be lost when sweating.

"So one of the first things that happens is, your muscles start to feel tired as your body starts to shut away," he said. "And then you can start to have organ damage where your kidneys don't work, your spleen, your liver. If things get really bad, then you start to not be perfusing your brain the same

way."

Experts say it's important to recognize the signs of heat stroke in others, as people may not realize the danger they're in because of an altered mental state that may involve confusion.

In the case of heat stroke, experts suggest calling 911 and trying to lower the person's body temperature with cool, wet cloths or a cool bath.

With heat exhaustion, the body can become cold and clammy. Other signs include heavy sweating, nausea, muscle cramps, weakness and dizziness. Experts say the best thing to do is to move to a cool place, loosen clothing and sip some water.

Older people, children and those with health conditions can face greater risks when the temperatures are high.

During extreme heat events, one of the most common ways people can die is from cardiovascular collapse, experts said, because of the extra energy the heart has to expend to help the body compensate for the hot temperatures.

In general, health officials say staying indoors, seeking air-conditioned buildings and drinking more water than usual can stave off heat-related illnesses. Caffeine and alcohol are no-nos. Eating smaller meals more often throughout the day can help.

Learning the limits

Researchers at Arizona State University are trying to better understand the effects of extreme heat on the body and what makes hot weather so deadly.

They're using a special thermal mannequin called ANDI that is outfitted with nearly three dozen different surface areas that are individually controlled with temperature sensors and human-like pores that produce beads of sweat.

"A lot of research that I and my colleagues do is just really focused on understanding how people are responding to higher levels of extreme heat over longer periods of time and then what we can do about it," said Jenni Vanos, an associated professor at ASU's School of Sustainability.

There are 10 thermal mannequins in existence, with most used by athletic clothing companies for testing. ASU's manikin is the first that can be used outdoors thanks to a unique, internal cooling channel.

The university also has developed a new "warm room," or heat chamber where researchers can simulate heat-

exposure scenarios from around the globe. Temperatures can reach 140 F (60 C) inside the room - and wind and solar radiation can be controlled for experiments.

Vanos said measuring short- and long-wave radiation in the environment can also tell researchers how much a surface - or a person - in a specific location of a city would heat up.

"And so under these extreme conditions, what's going to really be able to be modified or changed within the urban environment is shade," she said. "In a place like Phoenix or really any sunny hot area, shade is a really critical factor to be able to reduce that overall heat load of the human body."

Finding relief

While air conditioners are cranked up and fans are blowing full blast, residents across the region are anxiously awaiting the start of the monsoon season, hoping it will help to keep the heat at bay.

But so far, the summer thunderstorms - which usually bring cloud cover, lightning and downpours to the Southwestern desert - are absent due to the ongoing El Niño weather pattern, National Weather Service meteorologist Sam Meltzer said.

"It looks like things are going to be abnormally dry over the next couple of months," Meltzer said, noting that storms that might break the heat depend on wind patterns drawing moist air from the Gulf of California into Arizona, New Mexico and Nevada.

"But that doesn't mean we aren't going to get thunderstorm activity," Meltzer said. "It just might be delayed."

Meltzer worked in Phoenix before transferring last winter to Las Vegas. He noted that while temperatures rose last month in the Phoenix area, June stayed abnormally cool in southern Nevada.

The official daytime temperature at Harry Reid International Airport in Las Vegas remained below 100 F (37.8 C) for a record 294 days before temperatures reached 102 F (38.9 C) on June 30. The previous record of 290 days, from 1964 to 1965, had stood for 58 years.

Still, it's not just the air temperature that people need to worry about, Vanos said. Humidity can make it more difficult for the body to produce sweat as a way to cool off.



In this photo provided by NASA, technicians lift the mirror of the James Webb Space Telescope using a crane, April 13, 2017, at the Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md. Astronomers have discovered the most distant black hole yet using the Webb Space Telescope, but that record isn't expected to last. Webb already has spotted other black holes that appear to be even more distant, but those findings are still under review. (AP)



Kocevski



Finkelstein

Discovery

Most distant black hole found: Astronomers have discovered the most distant black hole yet using the Webb Space Telescope, but that record isn't expected to last.

The black hole is at the center of a galaxy dating to within a mere 570 million years of the Big Bang. That's 100 million years closer to the beginning of the cosmos than a black hole identified in 2021 by a Chinese team using a telescope in Chile.

Webb already has spotted other black holes that appear to be even closer to the Big Bang nearly 14 billion years ago, but those findings are still under review, said University of Texas at Austin astronomer **Steven Finkelstein**, one of the lead researchers. The finding has been accepted for publication by the *Astrophysical Journal Letters*.

Because the signals from this particular black hole are weak, more observations are needed, according to the Texas-led team.

There are untold numbers of dormant black holes, some even more distant than this one. But without any glowing gas, they are invisible, Finkelstein said.

Detected in February, this particular one is active and actually puny as black holes go - equivalent to about 9 million times the mass of our sun. That's close in size to the one in our own Milky Way galaxy, according to the team.

Using Webb, the team also spotted two other small black holes from the early universe, dating to around 1 billion years after the Big Bang. The observations suggest that these downsized versions may have been more common as the cosmos took shape than previously thought.

"There are probably many more hidden little monsters out there waiting to be found," Colby College's **Dale Kocevski**, who was part of the team, said in an email. (AP)

Volcano erupting in Iceland: A volcano in southwestern Iceland began erupting Monday following heightened seismic activity in the area, the country's meteorological authorities said, 11 months after its last eruption officially ended.

The eruption is in an uninhabited valley near the Lillí-Hrútur mountain, some 30 kilometers (19 miles) southwest of the capital, Reykjavik.

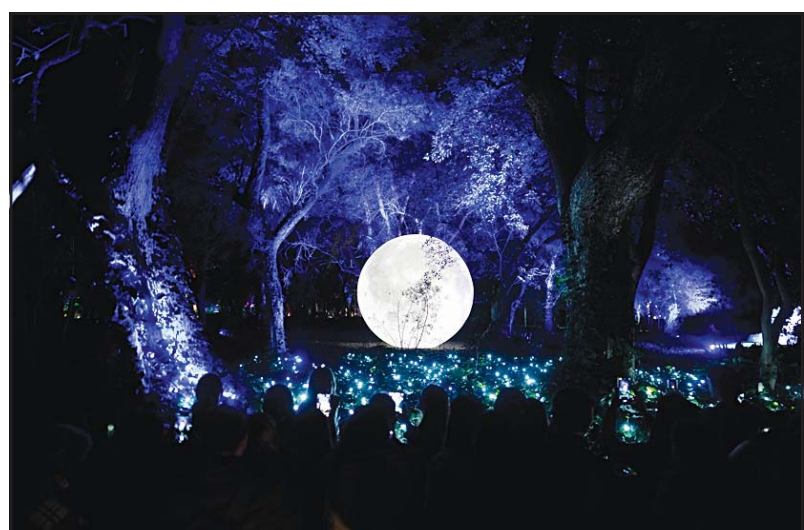
The area, known broadly as Fagradalsfjall volcano, has erupted twice in the last two years without causing damage or disruptions to flights, despite being near Keflavik Airport, Iceland's international air traffic hub.

The airport remained open Monday and no flights were affected.

"The eruption is small and there is presently no emission of ash to the atmosphere," the Icelandic Meteorological Office said. Lava is emerging as "a series of fountains"

from a 200-meter (656-foot) long fissure on the slopes of the mountain, it added.

"The lava fissure appears small at first sight," television reporter Kristjan Unnarsón, who was aboard a helicopter about an hour after the eruption began Monday after-



People visit the Secret Garden exhibit at the Carlos Thays Botanical Garden, home to over 1,500 plant species in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Thursday, July 6. The July show transforms the traditional public space into a private museum to mark the park's 125th anniversary and honor its creator, French landscape architect Carlos Thays. (AP)

noon, told viewers.

Authorities urged people not to trek to the volcano, saying there may be "dangerously high levels of volcanic gases" accumulating close to the eruption.

"It is not a little hike," Kristin Gudmundsdottir, a natural hazard specialist at the Met Office, told The Associated Press. "We need to wait and see how the eruption develops."

A 2021 eruption in the same area produced spectacular lava flows for several months. Hundreds of thousands of people flocked to see the spectacular sight. (AP)

Panda twins born in SKorea: A giant panda has given birth to twin cubs at a theme park in South Korea.

Ai Bao gave birth to the cubs, both female, last Friday at the Everland theme park near Seoul, the park's operator, Samsung C&T Resort Group, said in a statement Tuesday.

It's the first time that panda twins have been born in South Korea, the resort group said.

Both Ai Bao and her newborns are in good health, it said.

Decades of conservation efforts in the wild and study in captivity saved the giant panda species from extinction, increasing its population from fewer than 1,000 at one time to more than 1,800 in the wild and captivity. The life expectancy of a giant panda in the wild is about 15 years, but in captivity they have lived to be as old as 38. (AP)

World Athletics shows no sign of budging and says its rules 'remain in place'

Semenya wins appeal against testosterone rules

STRASBOURG, July 11, (AP) — Champion runner Caster Semenya won a potentially landmark legal victory on Tuesday when the European Court of Human Rights decided she was discriminated against by sports rules that force her to medically reduce her natural hormone levels to compete in major competitions.

The ruling by the Strasbourg, France-based court questioned the "validity" of the contentious international athletics regulations in that they infringed Semenya's human rights.

But the two-time Olympic champion's first legal success after two failed appeals in sports' highest court and the Swiss supreme court came with a major caveat. Amid her bid to be allowed to run again without restriction and go for another gold at next year's Olympics in Paris, Tuesday's judgment, while major, did not immediately result in the rules being dropped. That might still take years.

The South African athlete's challenge against the testosterone rules be-

gan in 2018.

It has gone from the Switzerland-based Court of Arbitration for Sport to the Swiss supreme court and now the European rights court. The 4-3 ruling in Semenya's favor by a panel of human rights judges merely opened the way for the Swiss supreme court to reconsider its decision.

ATHLETICS

That might result in the case going back to CAS in Lausanne. And only then might the highly controversial rules enforced by World Athletics be possibly removed.

The 32-year-old Semenya, who has been barred by the rules from running in her favorite 800-meter race since 2019 and has lost four years of her career at her peak, has only 13 months until Paris. In a statement soon after the European rights court's decision was

published, World Athletics showed no sign of budging and said its rules would "remain in place."

"We remain of the view that the ... regulations are a necessary, reasonable and proportionate means of protecting fair competition in the female category as the Court of Arbitration for Sport and Swiss Federal Tribunal both found," World Athletics said.

World Athletics also said it would be "encouraging" the government of Switzerland to appeal the ruling. Switzerland was the respondent in the case because Semenya was challenging her last legal loss in the Swiss supreme court. Switzerland's government has three months to appeal.

The Swiss government was also ordered to pay Semenya 60,000 euros (\$66,000) for costs and expenses. There was no immediate reaction from Semenya or her lawyers in South Africa.

While Semenya has been at the center of the highly emotive issue of sex eligibility in sports and is the issue's

figurehead in challenging the rules, she is not the only athlete affected. At least three other Olympic medalists have also been impacted by the rules that set limits on the level of natural testosterone female athletes may have if they want to compete. World Athletics says there are "a number" of other elite athletes who fall under the regulations.

There are no testosterone limits in place for male athletes. Semenya's case is not the same as the debate over transgender women who have transitioned from male to female being allowed to compete in sports, although the two issues do have crossover.

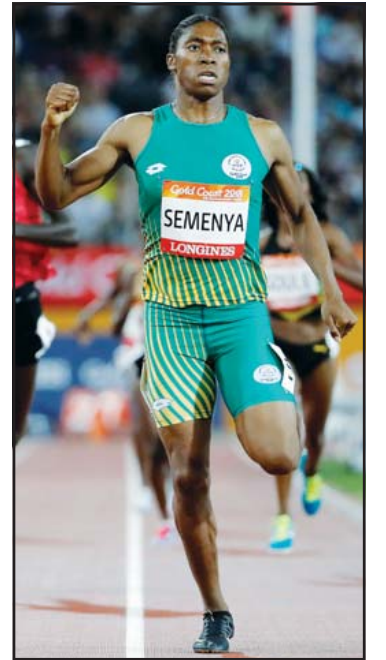
Semenya was identified as female at birth, raised as a girl and has been legally identified as female her whole life. She has one of a number of conditions known as differences in sex development, or DSDs, which cause naturally high testosterone that is in the typical male range.

Semenya says her high natural testosterone should be considered a genet-

ic gift in the same way as a basketball player's height or a swimmer's long arms.

While track authorities can't challenge Semenya's legal gender, they say her condition includes her having the typical male XY chromosome pattern and physical traits that make her "biologically male," an assertion that has enraged Semenya. World Athletics says Semenya's testosterone levels give her an athletic advantage that is comparable to a man competing in women's events and there needs to be rules to address that.

To do that, track has enforced rules since 2019 that require athletes like Semenya to artificially reduce their testosterone to below a specific mark, which is measured through the amount of testosterone recorded in their blood. They can do that by taking daily contraceptive pills, having hormone-blocking injections, or undergoing surgery under the rules. If athletes choose one of the first two options, they would effectively need to do it for their entire careers to remain eligible to compete regularly.



In this file photo, South Africa's Caster Semenya celebrates after winning the woman's 800m final at Carrara Stadium during the 2018 Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast, Australia. (AP)

For first time, 'every' player at WWC will be paid at least \$30K



United States' Sophia Smith (11) takes a shot against Wales' Lily Woodham (2) in the first half of a FIFA Women's World Cup send-off soccer match in San Jose, Calif. (AP)

'We still have a ways to go'

ZURICH, July 11, (AP) — A group of players across the globe asked FIFA late last year to increase the prize money for this summer's Women's World Cup. There had been pleas from the women to boost those funds before, but this time it was different.

The players not only wanted a prize pool equal with the men's World Cup, they also sought a guarantee that a percentage of the prize money would go directly to the players themselves.

While it wasn't true equity with the men's World Cup, FIFA indeed raised the prize pool for the women's tournament by more than three times that of the 2019 event in France.

But more than that, soccer's governing body agreed in June that a chunk of those funds should be paid straight to the players - all 732 of them. Every player will earn at least \$30,000, with the amount increasing the further along that teams progress in the tournament. The 23 players in the title-winning squad will each get \$270,000.

That's significant for many of the players, who in some cases don't

SOCCER

have club teams that pay salaries, are semi-pros or even amateurs. FIFA released a report last year that said the average salary for female players was \$14,000 a year.

And not only that, the conditions the players will experience on the ground in Australia and New Zealand - such as travel and accommodations - are now equitable to those provided the men.

"We still have a ways to go, but having them direct the payments to players is huge - it's a life-changing thing for many of these players entering the tournament. Coming away with each player making \$30,000 is huge because usually that money goes to federations and those players don't see any, or much of that money," U.S. forward Alex Morgan said.

A \$152 million fund was set for the first 32-team Women's World Cup. The total covers prize money, team preparation and payments to

players' clubs. That's a big boost from the 2019 Women's World Cup in France, which had a \$40 million fund, with \$30 million in prize money.

In contrast, the prize money pool for the men's World Cup last year in Qatar was \$440 million. The nations that got knocked out after the group stage made \$9 million apiece.

FIFPRO, the global players union, backed the effort by 150 players from 25 nations - including the United States, Japan and Germany - to push FIFA for more equitable terms. The result was a letter to FIFA President Gianni Infantino dated Oct. 19, 2022. The Associated Press obtained a copy of the letter.

"It's really positive that we have shown them (the players) what's possible through their collective voice - through their collective action and the solidarity that they have between each other - and this really intrinsic, inherent drive to want to push the women's game forward and create sustainable models for themselves and for the industry more broadly," said Sarah Gregorius, FIFPRO's director global policy and strategic relations for women's soccer.

"It just shows what happens when

players come together united behind very clear principles for change for themselves, but also a legacy for players to come," she added.

Earlier this year, Infantino said that the ultimate goal is equity between the men's and women's games by the 2026 Men's World Cup and the 2027 women's edition.

The U.S. bargained for equal pay with their male counterparts in a groundbreaking agreement reached last year that will split tournament winnings equally among all players. But the United States is the only country that has such an arrangement.

For many teams at the World Cup, that kind of equality isn't realistic. So the \$30,000 can mean a college education, even a down payment on a home. And for those who aren't paid well - or at all - by their clubs, it can mean a chance to play without having another job.

"That is a lot of money, and it can be used for a lot of things. I know definitely a lot of my teammates are happy for that money," said Michelle Alozie, who plays for Nigeria and the Houston Dash of the National Women's Soccer League.

The prize money pool trickles down to all participating teams. The 16 nations that exit the group stage will get a total of \$2.25 apiece million from FIFA -- \$690,000 to share among the players and \$1,560,000 for the federation.

FIFA will pay \$10.5 million to the title-winning nation. The majority of that, \$6.21 million, will be distributed among the players with the remaining \$4.29 million going to the federation.

In addition to helping pay the players, the teams and federations that haven't often seen the big stage will benefit, too. Each team is receiving nearly \$1 million in preparation funds.

"It means a lot to every player stepping into that tournament because it really means that the women's game has finally taken the steps that we've been fighting for," U.S. defender Crystal Dunn said. "We're playing for federations to do better by their players. And I think this prize money is a testament to all of our fights - the collective fight."

"When we step on to the field, yes, we are opponents, but at the end of the day we're all fighting for this game to grow, and for everybody."



In this file photo, Mexico's Katty Martinez (9) and Haiti's Kethna Louis vie for the ball during a CONCACAF Women's Championship soccer match in Monterrey, Mexico. (AP)

Haiti have no sponsors

WCup showcases inequity within the women's game

LONDON, July 11, (AP) — As the Women's World Cup approached, Jamaican players started to panic.

They were uncertain about training camps, accommodations and even pay heading into what for many would be the biggest tournament of their careers.

So they took to social media. A number of the Reggae Girlz, as they are affectionately known, went public with their concerns, pleading with the Jamaican Football Federation to address "subpar" conditions.

The mother of one player took it a step further: She started a GoFundMe page to raise money to make sure the team and the support staff is provided what they need to be successful - such as adequate hotels and compensation.

"These girls deserve better. They have proven themselves on an international platform that they belong. And they need support, whether it's from parents, friends, or fans, to let them know that we see what they've accomplished, and we're proud of them," said organizer Sandra Phillips-Brower, the mother of midfielder Havana Solaun.

The World Cup always draws attention to the inequities between men's and women's soccer. But it also highlights the inequity within the women's game itself.

Teams like the United States and England, with greater support from their federations, enjoy the best that money can buy: Things like sports psychologists, massage therapists and team chefs.

SOCCER

Other teams, like Jamaica and South Africa, are uncertain they'll even get paid. So they're using social media and collective action to draw attention to their plight.

"All the teams are using their voices a lot more. We know these things because players are talking about it," U.S. forward Megan Rapinoe said. "Even when they're subjected to the discrimination and unequal treatment, they're still speaking out. They're still using their voice. That's really important."

The Reggae Girlz felt compelled to speak out at a time when their attention should be solely focused on competing in the World Cup.

"On multiple occasions, we have sat down with the federation to respectfully express concerns resulting from subpar planning, transportation, accommodations, training conditions, compensation communication, nutrition, and accessibility to proper resources," players said in a post on social media. "We have also showed up repeatedly without receiving contractually agreed upon compensation. We were told that all out requests and concerns would be resolved in a timely manner."

The GoFundMe site has raised more than \$45,000, and Phillips-Brower was figuring out how to distribute the funds to best serve the players and staff. The Jamaican Football Federation did not respond to emails seeking comment.

Jamaica hasn't gone as far as South Africa's women, who boycotted a preparation match against Botswana near Johannesburg. Thulaganyo Gaoshubelwe, the president of the South African Football Players Union, said the incident was partly caused by poor pay for the players.

"They are fighting for their rights," Gaoshubelwe said in a video posted on



In this file photo, Costa Rica's Raquel Rodriguez, (center), is congratulated by her teammates after scoring a goal against Panama during a CONCACAF Women's Championship soccer match in Monterrey, Mexico. (AP)

his union's Twitter account. "SAFA doesn't want to include money in their contracts. We must fight for the rights of these players."

A foundation set up by African soccer president and billionaire businessman Patrice Motsepe responded by creating a fund to be shared by the players.

Haiti, making its World Cup debut, has no sponsors as the country reels amid political disarray and poverty. The team's training center was closed because of the threat of a local gang. The teams' supporters donate equipment.

Even Canada is in a dispute with its federation over pay. Players say they weren't paid in 2022 - which included qualifying - until an interim funding agreement with Canada Soccer was reached in March. The team headed off to Australia without a funding agreement in place.

FIFPRO, the global players union, backed an effort by players from across the globe who urged FIFA to increase prize money, equalize accommodations and other conditions enjoyed by players at the men's World Cup, and compensate players directly for participation.

FIFA agreed, doubling preparation funds for the teams, increasing prize money by nearly 300% and guaranteeing that every player at the event will be paid at least \$30,000, and more based on performance.

FIFPRO said it is working closely with FIFA to make sure those funds indeed go to the players, addressing concerns that the money could be pocketed by federations.

Despite the disparity between teams, there are success stories.

Costa Rica's women took a stand, successfully securing a contract last year that defined bonuses, allowances, travel and other basic needs - modeled off of the men's agreement with the federation. The deal is the first of its kind in Latin America.

"A lot of federations now are slowly getting into the trend of being better. Because now you see a lot of girls in those countries have been professional athletes, so they have an idea of what it means to be a professional athlete. And when they go back to the respective national teams, they are able to also help and say 'Hey, we need this, we need that, it helps us because we have it in our teams,'" said South Africa forward Thembi Kgatana, who plays for Racing Louisville in the National Women's Soccer League.

Agnelli banned for another 16 months

ROME, July 11, (AP) — Former Juventus president Andrea Agnelli was banned from soccer for another 16 months after he was charged with fraud for the way he handled player salary cuts during the coronavirus pandemic.

It adds to a two-year ban already inflicted on Agnelli for a false accounting case.

Agnelli was also fined 60,000 euros (\$65,000) by the Italian soccer federation on Monday after being judged responsible for wrongdoing in relationships with player agents and partnerships with other clubs.

Juventus and seven other former Juventus directors agreed to a plea bargain with the federation in May over the salary case, while Agnelli was the only figure in the case who decided to be judged.

At the start of the pandemic,

Juventus said 23 players agreed to reduce their salary for four months to help the club through the crisis. But prosecutors claim the players gave up only one month's salary.

Juventus, which was docked 10 points last season for false accounting in a separate legal case, risked a further points deduction.

Agnelli and Juventus have denied wrongdoing. He and the entire Juventus board resigned in November following the investigation by Turin prosecutors into false accounting.

It's developing into a busy week of legal cases for Agnelli, whose latest appeal over the two-year ban stemming from the false accounting case is due to be heard on Tuesday.

Also, UEFA is expected to decide soon if Juventus should be banned from the Conference League next season due to its legal troubles.

Pistons and Isaiah Stewart agree on \$64 million, 4-year extension

Blazers willing to wait months to resolve Lillard saga if necessary

LAS VEGAS, July 11, (AP): Damian Lillard wants to be traded to the Miami Heat. The Portland Trail Blazers know this yet haven't abandoned hope that the seven-time All-Star changes his mind.

And whether he does or not, the Blazers insist that they're in no hurry.

General manager Joe Cronin, at the news conference where the team unveiled its new five-year, \$160 million contract with Jerami Grant, spoke at length about the impasse with Lillard. He offered no specifics on talks - not negotiating publicly - and revealed that he hasn't spoken with Lillard since the franchise cornerstone asked to be traded.

"We're going to be patient," Cronin said Monday. "We're going to do what's best for our team. We're going to see, you know, how this lands. And if it takes months, it takes months."

Lillard's trade request became publicly known on July 1, the first full day of free agency in the NBA. After the Blazers revealed that Lillard - who has

spent all 11 of his pro seasons in Portland - asked out, agent Aaron Goodwin confirmed days later that the seven-time All-NBA selection wants to go to Miami.

"Dame's position won't change," Goodwin told The Associated Press last week. "This entire situation was about building an opportunity for Portland to win or giving him another opportunity that he wants, which is Miami."

The entire matter is complicated on so many levels - that the trade request became public, that Lillard wants to be traded only to Miami (he doesn't have a no-trade clause, and Portland is under no obligation to honor that request), that he is beloved as an all-time great in Portland and that not having him on the roster simply means the team probably won't have enough to truly compete in the loaded Western Conference.

"As a team, you always hope that you have more options," Cronin said. "To have limited options like that, I

wouldn't call it frustrating, but it prevents you from perhaps getting the best return. So, it's something that we'll have to work through."

And in his eyes, there's still hope that Lillard changes his mind - although there's been no indication that will happen.

"I haven't lost hope, just because I understand this league is complicated and things change very quickly sometimes," Cronin said.

BASKETBALL

The Blazers have a core of young talent - Anfernee Simons just turned 24, Shaedon Sharpe is going into his second season after being the No. 7 pick in 2022 and point guard Scoot Henderson is entering the league as the No. 3 pick in this draft. Cronin said he gets why Lillard would look at the Blazers, as currently constructed, and feel like there isn't a clear path to contending for a title this coming season.

"I could see why Dame would look at it and say, 'Well, this isn't a win-now opportunity, or at least as much of a win-now opportunity in some other places,'" Cronin said. "So, from that regard, I understand his position and I respect it and it makes sense to me why he would like to go elsewhere."

But Cronin also believes that great days are coming for Simons, Sharpe and Henderson.

"Those guys are going to impact winning very soon in this league," Cronin said.

Lillard is coming off a season in which he averaged 32.2 points for the Trail Blazers. He is a member of the NBA's 75th anniversary team, but he has never been close to a title in his 11 seasons in the league.

He met with Portland multiple times, asking for the roster to be upgraded to the point where he can compete for a championship. But those efforts did not go to Lillard's liking. And now, the trade watch is on.

"It's just hard. How do you replace

Damian Lillard? Who is the person in the marketplaces that is available that is a better player than Dame?" Cronin said. "No team more than us knows what this market looks like. We've been trying for 18 months to find the Dame equivalent at another position or someone that's 80% of Dame, even. So, that's the challenge and that's why we've got to keep working."

The Detroit Pistons and Isaiah Stewart have agreed on a \$64 million, four-year contract extension, according to a person familiar with the deal.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on Monday night on condition of anonymity because the agreement had not been announced. ESPN was first to report the post player's deal with the Pistons.

Stewart averaged a career-high 11.3 points and 8.1 rebounds last season. He has averaged nine points and 7.8 rebounds over his three-year career and was entering the last year of his

rookie contract.

The Portland Trail Blazers drafted the former Washington star with the No. 16 pick in 2020 and within the next week, he was traded to Houston and Detroit.

The 6-foot-8 Stewart provides a much-needed physical presence for the Pistons.

Detroit's rebuilding hopes are tied largely to Cade Cunningham's comeback from shin surgery, along with second-year pros Jaden Ivey and Jalen Duren, and rookie wing Ausar Thompson.

The Pistons won an NBA-low 17 games last season, and Dwane Casey stepped down as coach with one year left on his contract to take a role in the front office. The three-time NBA championship-winning franchise has earned a spot in the playoffs just twice in 14 years.

Shooting to speed up a turnaround, team owner Tom Gores gave Monty Williams a six-year contract shortly after the 2022 NBA Coach of the Year was fired by the Phoenix Suns.

'He needs a chance to rest'

Spurs decide that Wemby SL is over after two games

LAS VEGAS, July 11, (AP): Victor Wembanyama's first, and likely last, Summer League is over.

The San Antonio Spurs said Monday that they have seen all they needed from the No. 1 pick in this year's draft and won't play him during their remaining games in Las Vegas.

Wembanyama's final numbers from two games: 36 points, 20 rebounds, eight blocks and three assists on 41% shooting from the floor. He played about 54 minutes.

The shutdown wasn't a surprise; the Spurs never planned for Wembanyama to play the entirety of Summer League, and now they'll have a chance to use the minutes he would have gotten to take a look at other players.

"I'm going to sit down with the Spurs to know what the next months are going to be like," Wembanyama said Sunday night after what became his summer finale. "When to go on vacation, when to start back working out, where I'm going to practice, in San Antonio or somewhere else. I just know I've got two to three months - two to three great months - that are coming and they're going to change my life."

Shutting him down from games - San Antonio has either three or four games left in Las Vegas - starts what will be a needed break for the 19-year-old from France whose last professional season in his homeland started nearly a year ago. He was in the French playoffs until a few days before the draft in June, and his schedule has been crazed since.

BASKETBALL

Put simply, the Spurs believe he needs a chance to rest and reset to get ready for training camp that starts in early October and then an 82-game regular season.

"In the past month, I think basketball wasn't even 50% of my schedule," Wembanyama said. "I can't stand it. I know it's a special moment in my life, but I'm glad it's over. Honestly, I just want to hoop. I just want to work out, lift because this is my life. Obviously, every first pick is going to go through this. And it just makes me better for the future."

It has been a whirlwind few days in Las Vegas for the Spurs. Wembanyama's debut on Friday night had a circus-like atmosphere with a sold-out crowd and enormous attention; Sunday's game wasn't quite the same, but the crowd was still huge. And more big news came between those games on Saturday when Gregg Popovich's new five-year contract to remain coach and president of the team was announced.

As would be expected, the Popovich signing delighted Wembanyama.

"There's something great going on, starting," Wembanyama said. "We kind of knew it was going to happen, but now it's, let's get it rolling. We can get started now."

Wembanyama took part in the NBA's required rookie transition program on Monday, where he spoke with NBA Commissioner Adam Silver - who has raved about the 7-foot-3 star many times since first meeting him in Paris in January.

"I'm not sure if anything else I'd say could put more pressure on him, because there's already so much pressure on him and attention," Silver said Monday while speaking to the Associated Press Sports Editors convention in Las Vegas. "But it seems, at least initially, that he's well equipped to



San Antonio Spurs' Victor Wembanyama drives up the court against the Portland Trail Blazers during the second half of an NBA summer league basketball game in Las Vegas. (AP)

handle it."

And everyone from teammates, opponents and even NBA greats like Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Jerry West have raved about what they've seen from Wembanyama in recent days.

"The difficulty is learning how you can best contribute to a winning effort," Abdul-Jabbar told him. "That's what you've got to learn how to do with your skill set. You will find out what that is basically in preseason. You'll find out a lot about that."

Vegas is a showtown. Wembanyama put on a show, and the Spurs said it was enough. And now his focus shifts to his first real season.

"He's amazing," San Antonio guard Blake Wesley said. "He's an amazing person on and off the court."

Chris Paul worked out with new teammate Stephen Curry on Sunday morning in Las Vegas. His assessment of the session: They didn't miss too many shots.

Evidently, Paul's time with the Golden State Warriors is off to a flying start.

The veteran point guard revealed more than a few things in his first official interview session as a member of the Warriors: He isn't ready to concede that he's no longer a starter, he doesn't expect this to be his final season as a player and he gleans the same joy from the game now as he did when he was a kid.

And as for how it'll all fit, he doesn't expect that to be a problem.

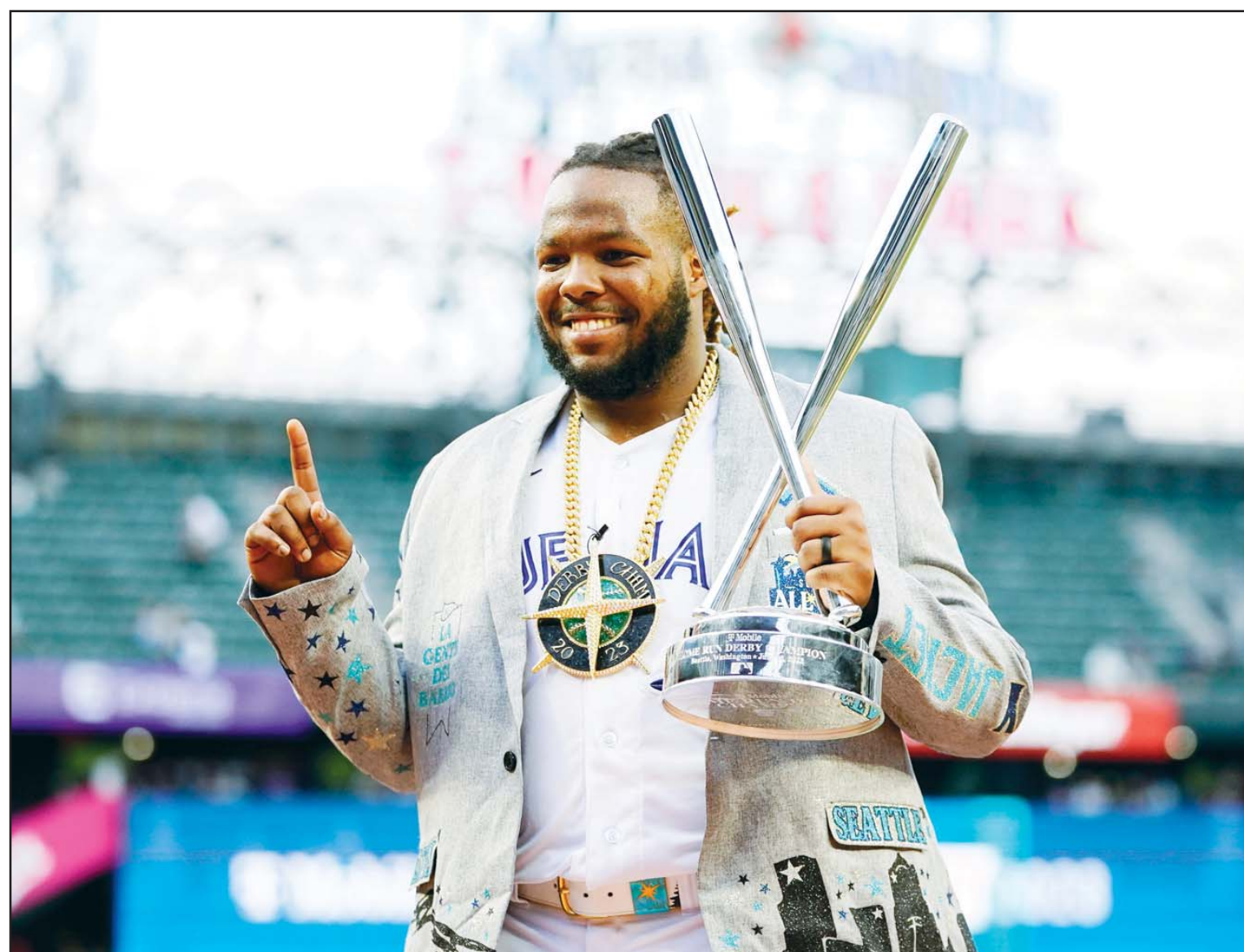
"Not to like sound crazy or whatnot, but at the end of the day, it's basketball," Paul said. "You know, it's not brain surgery. I'm going into a situation with a bunch of guys who've been playing together for a long time."

Paul got traded twice this summer, first from Phoenix to Washington as part of the move that sent Bradley Beal to the Suns, and then again to Golden State as part of the move that sent Jordan Poole to the Wizards.

It's a move that the Warriors hope leads to both short- and long-term gains. The 38-year-old Paul can still play; the 12-time All-Star averaged 13.9 points and 8.9 assists this past season for Phoenix, effective still in his 18th season in the league.

He's also not under contract after this coming season. Poole is entering a four-year deal; the big-spending Warriors just couldn't keep all their highest-paid players together given the constraints of the new Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Vladimir Guerrero 'joins' Vladimir Sr. as 1st father-son Home Run Derby winners



American League's Vladimir Guerrero Jr., of the Toronto Blue Jays, holds his trophy after winning the MLB All-Star baseball Home Run Derby in Seattle. (AP)

Arozarena beaten in final round

SEATTLE, July 11, (AP): Of course a Junior had to do something special in Seattle.

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. won the All-Star Home Run Derby on Monday night, matching Vladimir Sr.'s 2007 title to become the first father-son duo to accomplish the feat.

As far as who might win a head-to-head swing-off, well, that depends.

"It's kind of difficult right now," the Toronto Blue Jays star said with a wide grin, speaking through a translator. "With the time, with the minutes, I'll win. If it's by outs, he'll win."

In a ballpark made famous by the Mariners' Ken Griffey Jr. a generation earlier, Guerrero beat Tampa Bay's Randy Arozarena 25-23 in the final round. He was 8 when his father won the crown in San Francisco.

"I don't remember much about 2007," Vladimir Jr. said. "I guess I was too young."

BASEBALL

Guerrero totaled 5 1/2 miles of homers - 29,390 feet to be exact. He defeated Julio Rodríguez 21-20 in the semifinals after the Mariners star hit a record 41 in the first round in front of his hometown fans.

Batting against Blue Jays manager John Schneider, Guerrero was the last semifinalist to swing and the first finalist, setting a final round record for homers to top the mark Pete Alonso set when he beat Guerrero 23-22 in 2019.

With Guerrero Jr. catching his breath while watching, Arozarena hit against Tampa Bay field coordinator Tomas Francisco.

Arozarena had 21 homers in his initial 2 minutes. He had 23 with 7 seconds left in his automatic 30 seconds of bonus time before lining and popping up on his final four swings.

Guerrero had 1 minute of bonus time, earning an additional 30 seconds because he twice reached 440 feet.

"Obviously, the power that he has was incredible," Arozarena said through a translator. "For me, I felt good going into that round. But also he was able to get a minute of bonus time. I only had the 30 seconds of bonus time."

Vladimir Guerrero Sr. won the 2007 derby while with the Los Angeles Angels, beating the Blue Jays' Alex Rios 3-2 in the final.

Arozarena had the most overall homers over the three rounds, 82 to Guerrero's 72, and the most distance at 33,077 feet. Arozarena overcame Luis Robert of the Chicago White Sox 35-22 in the

semifinals. Robert hit the longest drive of the night, a 484-foot shot to left in the second round. That topped the high of 476 feet by Barry Bonds in the 2001 derby in Seattle.

Trying to become the youngest Derby winner at age 22, Rodríguez knocked out Alonso, a two-time champion who hit 21. Rodríguez beat Corey Seager 32-24 in the first round last year at Dodger Stadium, then knocked out Alonso 31-23 before losing to Juan Soto 19-18 in the final.

Arozarena beat Texas' Adolis García 24-17 in the opening pairing before a crowd of 46,952 at T-Mobile Park. García is the godfather to Arozarena's daughter, and the two jumped into each other's arms during warmups.

Robert knocked out Baltimore's Adley Rutschman 28-27 in the opening round. Rutschman hit 21 left-handed, and the switch hitter then turned around to the right side and hit six more right-

handed during a 30-second bonus round. From Portland, Oregon, Rutschman grew up attending Mariners games.

Guerrero, back for the first time in four years, defeated the Los Angeles Dodgers' Mookie Betts 26-11 in the first round. Four years ago at Cleveland, Guerrero hit 29 in the first round and 40 in the second, then lost to Alonso in the final.

Alonso was trying for his third title in four years. Griffey Jr. is the only three-time winner, taking the title in 1994, '98 and '99. Guerrero Sr. was a nine-time All-Star but never won a World Series. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2018.

Guerrero Jr. is a three-time All-Star and was MVP of the game two years ago in Denver. What's in the future? A World Series ring? Joining dad in the Hall?

"I'm a little bit too young to think about that right now," he said. "When I get there, then I'll think about it, I'll see if I match my dad or was better than my dad or not."



Minnesota Twins pick Charlie Soto (left), and Raúl Ibáñez pose for a photo in baseball's amateur draft in Seattle. (AP)

Union sign Fofana on loan from Chelsea for next season

BERLIN, July 11, (AP): Union Berlin bolstered its Champions League preparations on Tuesday by signing Ivorian forward David Datro Fofana from Chelsea on loan for next season.

The 20-year-old Fofana rarely played for Chelsea after the English Premier League club signed him for a reported fee of around 12 million euros (\$13.1 million) from Norwegian team Molde FK in January. He made only three short league appearances for Chelsea. Union hopes to give him more chances to shine in the Bundesliga.

"David's speed and his flexible offensive qualities are highly interesting for us," Union sporting director Oliver Ruhnert said. "We want another goal-scoring player who will give our attacking game additional impetus."

Fofana is Ruhnert's second signing in three days from English clubs following United States midfielder Brenden Aaronson's arrival on loan from Leeds on Sunday.

Union, which was promoted to the Bundesliga for the first time only in 2019, finished fourth in the league last season to clinch Champions League qualification for the first time. It will play its European games at Olympiastadion, a venue traditionally used by city rival Hertha Berlin. Hertha was rel-

egated from the Bundesliga last season.

Tottenham signs Israel forward Manor Solomon as free agent from Ukrainian champion Shakhtar

Manor Solomon joined Tottenham as a free agent on Tuesday after leaving Shakhtar Donetsk which is pursuing legal action against FIFA for losing its players during the war on Ukraine.

SOCCER

Tottenham said the Israel international, who spent last season in the English Premier League on loan at Fulham, has signed a deal through 2028. It is subject to receiving a work permit.

FIFA passed emergency transfer rules last year, and renewed them through the 2023-24 season to allow foreign players and coaches contracted to Ukrainian and Russian clubs to unilaterally suspend their contracts because of the Russian military invasion.



Czech Republic's Marketa Vondrousova in action against Jessica Pegula of the US during their women's singles match on day nine of the Wimbledon tennis championships in London. (AP)

Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

Svitolina stuns Swiatek to reach semis

Vondrousova ousts Pegula

WIMBLEDON, England, July 11, (AP): Three months after returning from maternity leave, Elina Svitolina reached the Wimbledon semifinals by beating top-ranked Iga Swiatek 7-5, 6-7 (5), 6-2 Tuesday.

The 28-year-old Ukrainian gave birth to her daughter in October and returned to the WTA tour in April. She received a wild-card entry to the grass-court tournament one month after reaching the quarterfinals at the French Open.

"First of all I'm going to have a beer, probably," Svitolina said on court. "At the beginning of the tournament if someone would tell me that I will be

TENNIS

in the semifinal and beating world No. 1, I would just say that they're crazy." Swiatek, a four-time major champion, won her third French Open title last month but was playing in the Wimbledon quarterfinals for the first time.

At one point, Svitolina won 20 of 22 points against Swiatek on Centre Court, including 16 of the final 18 points in the first set.

Svitolina will next face Marketa Vondrousova for a spot in Saturday's final. It will be the Ukrainian player's second appearance in the Wimbledon semifinals. She lost to eventual champion Simona Halep at that stage in 2019.

"I'm just going to enjoy tonight and then get some treatment, get some massage, much needed and then just regroup and be ready for the next big battle," Svitolina said.

Svitolina has been ranked as high as No. 3 in the world and also reached the U.S. Open semifinals in 2019. She is currently ranked 76th. To reach the semifinals this year, she has beaten four Grand Slam champions - Venus Williams in the first round, Sofia Kenin in the third, Victoria Azarenka in the fourth and Swiatek in the quar-



Ukraine's Elina Svitolina returns to Poland's Iga Swiatek in a women's singles match on day nine of the Wimbledon tennis championships in London. (AP)

terfinals.

Vondrousova won five straight games in the final set to beat fourth-seeded Jessica Pegula 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 on No. 1 Court. The left-handed Czech who reached the French Open final in 2019 trailed 4-1 in the third set but didn't lose another game after that.

"I'm just trying to stay in every game. It can change pretty quickly," Vondrousova said. "She got so much better in the second set. She was pushing me today."

Pegula is now 0-6 in Grand Slam quarterfinals. The 29-year-old American was playing at this stage at Wimbledon for the first time.

Vondrousova had won only four matches on grass heading into the tournament at the All England Club. But she has won five in a row on the surface over the last eight days.

"My best result here was second round. It's amazing. I'm just loving grass now," Vondrousova said.

The victory for Vondrousova is

her fourth over a seeded player at this year's Wimbledon tournament. She beat No. 12 Veronika Kudermetova in the second round, No. 20 Donna Vekic in the third round and No. 32 Marie Bouzkova in the fourth round.

Pegula was leading 3-1 in the third set when play was suspended so that the roof over No. 1 Court could be closed with rain approaching. Pegula then held serve in the next game to lead 4-1 before Vondrousova took over.

Ons Jabeur is getting another shot at

Elena Rybakina, a year after losing to her in the Wimbledon final.

It's just the quarterfinals this time around, but the Tunisian player has to go through the defending champion to have a chance of winning her first Grand Slam tournament.

The sixth-seeded Jabeur routed two-time champion Petra Kvitova 6-0, 6-3 in the fourth round at the All England Club.

"I'm probably going for my revenge," Jabeur said on court. "It was

a difficult final last year. It's going to bring a lot of memories."

Jabeur has been a Grand Slam runner-up twice - both times last year. After losing to Rybakina in three sets at Wimbledon, she lost to Iga Swiatek in straight sets at the U.S. Open - falling just short of becoming the first African or Arab woman to win a major tennis tournament in the sport's professional era.

Two things jump out to Jabeur when she thinks about the Wimbledon loss to Rybakina, who represents Kazakhstan but was born in Russia.

"The fact that I was really exhausted like emotionally," she began. "I wanted to keep pushing, but I felt little bit empty. Second thing, maybe what my coach kept telling me, to stick more to the plan, to do certain things, even though I was thinking something else in that match."

The 28-year-old Jabeur hopes to "play more freely, just think about each point and not the results."

Mission accomplished on Monday, when Jabeur felt free enough on Centre Court to execute a David Beckham-style - Jabeur is a fan of the England great - half-volley kick on a bouncing ball while up a set and 3-1.

The ninth-seeded Kvitova, who eliminated Jabeur in the first round at Wimbledon in 2019, dug herself a hole from the start, committing a double-fault and three unforced errors to hand Jabeur a service break in the first game.

Rybakina advanced Monday when Beatriz Haddad Maia retired from their match with a lower back injury with Rybakina leading 4-1.

"Now I'm feeling much better and more confident coming and playing on Centre Court," Rybakina said. "It is different from the first round. I think it was just overall the atmosphere and the nerves to play the first match to get used to the grass, just to play some matches here. I think now mentally I'm much better. Physically also good now."

In other women's results, second-seeded Aryna Sabalenka reached the quarterfinals by beating No. 21 Ekaterina Alexandrova 6-4, 6-0. The Australian Open champion will next face Madison Keys. The American, seeded No. 25, defeated 16-year-old Mirra Andreeva 3-6, 7-6 (4), 6-2.

Vingegaard keeps yellow jersey

Bilbao sprints to first Tour de France stage win

ISSOIRE, France, July 11, (AP): Pello Bilbao sprinted to his first Tour de France stage victory and also gained significant time in the overall standings, which was still led by Jonas Vingegaard at the end of the tricky 10th stage on Tuesday.

Bilbao raised his arms above his head in celebration at the end

of one of the hardest stages of the Tour so far, finishing the undulating 167-kilometer (104-mile) route from Vulcania to Issoire just ahead of Georg Zimmermann and Ben O'Connor in the sweltering heat of central France.

Most of the overall contenders finished just over three minutes further back and that saw Bilbao move up from 11th to fifth, less than two minutes off the podium.

Defending champion Vingegaard maintained his 17-second advantage over two-time winner Tadej Pogacar. Jai Hindley was in third place, 2 minutes, 40 seconds off the pace.

After the first rest day on Monday, the Tour kicked off the second week with a difficult stage featuring five categorized climbs and almost no flat sections. The soaring temperatures were made even more brutal by the heat reflecting off the roads.

CYCLING

of one of the hardest stages of the Tour so far, finishing the undulating 167-kilometer (104-mile) route from Vulcania to Issoire just ahead of Georg Zimmermann and Ben O'Connor in the sweltering heat of central France.

Kuwait increase medals tally

AIGIERS, July 11, (KUNA): Kuwaiti fencers grabbed two medals: one silver and one bronze, of the Epee competition in the Algeria-hosted Arab Games. Fencers Hussein Foudry won the silver medal in the Men's Epee contest and his compatriot Abdulaziz Al-Shatti got the bronze medal of the same competition.

It was relentless from the start and many riders were clearly suffering. But eventually a break of 14 formed.

Kristis Neilands looked like one of the strongest of the 14 and he attacked on the final climb, crossing the Côte de la Chapelle-Marcousse with a 30-second advantage. However, he was chased down by Spain's Bilbao on the descent and caught with just over 3 kilometers remaining.

The Latvian cyclist eventually finished the stage in fourth.

O'Connor was the first to attack

This takes Kuwait's medals tally up to eight medals: four silver and

FENCING

four bronze, since the start of the Arab Games on July 5th.

as he knew the sprint didn't suit him but Bilbao was straight on him, with Zimmermann swiftly catching up. But Bilbao launched his sprint off Zimmermann's wheel and held him and O'Connor off for the win.

Wednesday's 11th stage features three lower-category climbs on the 180-kilometer (112-mile) route from Clermont-Ferrand to Moulins and is expected to end in a sprint finish.

The Tour ends in Paris on July 23.

After Bayern links, Kane to hold talks with new Tottenham boss

LONDON, July 11, (AP): After links to Bayern Munich, Harry Kane returns to work at Tottenham this week for pre-season training.

The uncertainty around the England captain's future at Spurs, however, is not going away.

New Spurs manager Ange Postecoglou held his first news conference on Monday since joining from Celtic and was immediately asked about Kane, who enters the final year of his contract at the London club.

"I haven't had any assurances (about his future) and I wouldn't expect any assurances," the Australian manager said. "He's one of the premier strikers in the world and I want him involved."

Postecoglou, known for being a blunt speaker, plans to hold a meeting with Kane this week.

"My conversation with him will be about how we can make this club successful and I've got no doubts that's what he wants as well," Postecoglou said. "What I want is to introduce myself to Harry and give him my vision of the football club and get a sense from him on what he thinks the club needs to do to be successful, and walk out on that training pitch and try to make it happen."

Tottenham wants to tie the club's all-time leading goal-scorer to a new long-term contract.

Bayern, however, may test that resolve, having reportedly made two bids, with the latest one valued at 68.5 million pounds (\$88 million).

The question is whether that will tempt others to the table.

Manchester United has long been linked with Kane, and wants to sign a replacement for Cristiano Ronaldo this off-season.

Real Madrid needs to replace the departed Karim Benzema and has also been mentioned in connection with Kane. Then there is Paris Saint-Germain, which is intent on selling Kylian Mbappe unless its World Cup-winning forward signs a new contract.

That means four of European soccer's biggest clubs are potentially in the market for a top-class center for-

ward this summer.

It has been claimed that Spurs chairman Daniel Levy's preference would be to sell abroad if he was to sell at all. The theory goes he would even be prepared to accept a smaller transfer fee, rather than see a club great playing for another English team.

That would take United out of the running. And while manager Erik ten Hag is an admirer of England's all-time leading scorer, there is a growing expectation that he will look elsewhere.

Madrid is likely to be leading the chase for Mbappe, having tried to sign him in 2021. But the France international has said he plans to see out the final year of his contract. PSG's transfer strategy is heavily dependent on Mbappe's movement or non-movement.

Bayern has acted quickest but, even in the final year of Kane's contract, a bid of \$88 million looks low. Levy has gained a fierce reputation for his negotiating skills and managed to keep Kane away from the clutches of Manchester City two years ago.

Tottenham's bargaining position is weaker now as it risks losing one of the finest strikers in history for nothing.

SOCCER

In a year, Kane will likely be able to take his pick of any of Europe's leading clubs. If he stays in England he would have the chance to fulfil his ambition of surpassing Alan Shearer's all-time record of 260 Premier League goals.

While Levy might not want to be the man who sold Kane, the prospect of losing him for nothing would surely be worse.

That is why interest from Bayern may be more tempting than Tottenham is ready to admit - especially if it draws out other bidders and ultimately drives up his price.

In an ideal world for Levy and Tottenham fans, the meeting with Postecoglou this week will convince Kane he can achieve his ambitions of winning silverware right where he is. That despite the London club having had five managers in the last four years and failing to qualify for the Champions League last season, success is within reach.



Kane



Spain's Pello Bilbao crosses the finish line to win the tenth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 167 kilometers (104 miles) with start in Vulcania and finish in Issoire, France. (AP)