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Turkey points to rejig on economy

Former Merrill Lynch banker helms Treasury, Finance

ANKARA, June 4, (Agencies): Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who was sworn into his third presidential term on Saturday, reappointed an internationally respected former banker as finance minister in a sign that his new government might pursue more conventional economic policies.

Erdogan, 69, took the oath of office a week after he won a new five-year term in a runoff presidential race that could stretch his 20-year rule in the key NATO country that straddles Europe and Asia into a quarter-century.

Unveiling the lineup of his new Cabinet, Erdogan announced the reappointment of Mehmet Simsek - a former finance minister and deputy prime minister - to the helm of the economy. Simsek, a former London-based Merrill Lynch banker, returns to the Cabinet as treasury and finance minister after a five-year break from politics.

The appointment comes as Turkey is grappling with a cost-of-living crisis fueled by inflation that peaked at a staggering 85% in October before easing to 44% last month. The Turkish currency has lost more than 10% of its value against the dollar since the start of the year.

Critics blame the turmoil on Erdogan's policy of lowering interest rates to promote growth, which runs contrary to conventional economic thinking that rates should rise to combat inflation. Simsek's appointment is seen as an indication that Erdogan

Crackdown on migrants

Gaddafi son on hunger strike



Hannibal Gaddafi, son of ousted Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, watches an elite military unit exercise in Zlitan, Libya, Sept. 25, 2011. Hannibal Gaddafi who has been held in Lebanon for more than seven years began a hunger strike Saturday, June 3, 2023, to protest his detention without trial, his lawyer said. (AP)

BEIRUT, June 4, (AP): A son of Libya's late leader Muammar Gaddafi, who has been held in Lebanon for more than seven years, began a hunger strike Saturday to protest his detention without trial, his lawyer said.

Hannibal Gaddafi has been held in Lebanon since 2015 after he was kidnapped from neighboring Syria where he had been living as a political refugee. He was abducted by Lebanese militants demanding information about the fate of a Shiite cleric who went missing in Libya 45 years ago.

Gaddafi was later taken by Lebanese authorities and has been held in a Beirut jail without trial.

Attorney Paul Romanos told The Associated Press that his client started the hunger strike Saturday morning and "he is serious and will continue with it until the end." Romanos did not go into details of the case as he was not authorized to speak about it to the media.

Gaddafi issued a statement describing his conditions.

"How can a political prisoner be held without a fair trial all these years?" Gaddafi, who is married to a Lebanese woman, wrote in his statement.

Liberate

The Libyan citizen added that now that he is on hunger strike, "those who are treating me unjustly" will be responsible for the results. He added that "the time has come to liberate the law from the hands of politicians."

Romanos said his client suffers from back pain due to being held in a small cell for years without being able to move or exercise.

The disappearance of prominent Lebanese Shiite cleric Moussa al-Sadr in 1978 has been a long-standing sore point in Lebanon. The cleric's family believes he may still be alive in a Libyan prison, though most Lebanese presume al-Sadr is dead. He would be 94 years old.

Al-Sadr was the founder of a Shiite political and military group that took part in the lengthy Lebanese civil war that began in 1975, largely pitting Muslims against Christians.

Born in the Iranian holy city of Qom, al-Sadr came to Lebanon in 1959 to work for the rights of Shiites in the southern port town of Tyre. In 1974, a year before Lebanon's 15-year civil war broke out, al-Sadr founded the Movement of the Deprived, attracting thousands of followers.

The following year, he established the military wing Amal - Arabic for "hope" and an acronym for the militia's Arabic name, the Lebanese Resistance Brigades - which later fought in Lebanon's civil war. The group is headed by Lebanon's powerful Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri.

Since al-Sadr's disappearance, Libya has maintained that the cleric and his two traveling companions left Tripoli in 1978 on a flight to Rome and suggested he was a victim of a power struggle among Shiites.

Crackdown

In other news, Libyan authorities rounded up thousands of mostly Egyptian migrants and amassed them at the border, activists said Saturday, as Libya continued its crackdown on migrants.

The migrants were detained in raids over the past two days on trafficking warehouses in the border town of Muisaid and other areas in eastern Libya, said Tarik Lamoulou, an activist with the Belaady Organization for Human Rights.

Libya is the dominant transit point for migrants from Africa and the Middle East trying to make it to Europe. The country plunged into chaos following a NATO-backed uprising that toppled and killed longtime autocrat Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. Oil-rich Libya has been ruled for most of the past decade by rival governments in eastern and western Libya, each backed by an array of militias and foreign governments.



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, with a mounted ceremony on the way to the presidential complex following his visit to the Anitkabir, the mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, in Ankara, Turkey, Saturday, June 3, 2023. (AP)



U.S. First Lady Jill Biden, (center), visits the historical Medrassa Ben Youssef in the old Medina of Marrakech, alongside U.S. Ambassador to Morocco Puneet Talwar and his wife, (right), and Moroccan entrepreneurs Ghita Mizdid and Saad Abidi, (left), in Morocco, Sunday, June 4, 2023. (AP)

Toll rises above 300 people

Signaling system error caused crash

BALASORE, India, June 4, (AP): The derailment in eastern India that killed more than 300 people and injured hundreds was caused by an error in the electronic signaling system that led a train to wrongly change tracks and crash into a freight train, officials said Sunday.

Authorities worked to clear the mangled wreckage of the two passenger trains that derailed Friday night in Balasore district in Odisha state in one of the country's deadliest rail disasters in decades.

Jaya Verma Sinha, a senior railway official, said the preliminary investigations revealed that a signal was given to the high-speed Coromandel Express to run on the main track line, but the signal later changed, and the train instead entered an adjacent loop line where it rumbled into a freight loaded with iron ore.

The collision flipped Coromandel Express's coaches onto another track, causing the incoming Yesvantpur-Howrah Express from the opposite side also to derail, she said.

The passenger trains, carrying 2,296 people, were not overspeeding, she said. Trains that carry goods are often parked on an adjacent loop line so the main line is clear for a passing train.

Verma said the root cause of the crash was related to an error in the electronic signaling system. She said a detailed investigation will reveal whether the error was human or technical.

The electronic interlocking system is a safety mechanism designed to prevent conflicting movements between trains. It also monitors the status of signals that tell drivers how close they are to a next train, how fast they can go and the presence of stationary trains on the track.

"The system is 99.9% error free. But 0.1% chances are always there for an error," Verma said. To a question whether the crash could be a case of sabotage, she said "nothing is ruled out."

On Sunday, a few shattered carriages, mangled and overturned, were the only remnants of the tragedy. Railway workers toiled under the sun's glare to lay down blocks of cement to fix the broken tracks. A crew with excavators was removing mud and the debris to clear the crash site.

At one of the hospitals nearly 15 kilometers (9 miles) from the site, survivors spoke of the horror of the moment of the crash.

Pantry worker Inder Mahato could not remember the exact sequence of events, but said he heard a loud bang when the Coromandel Express crashed into the freight.

The impact caused Mahato, who was in the bathroom, to briefly lose consciousness.

Moments later when he opened his eyes, he saw through the door that was forced open people writhing in pain, many of them already dead. Others were frantically trying to get out from the twisted wreckage of his rail car.

For hours, Mahato, 37, remained stuck in the train's bathroom, before rescuers scaled up the wreckage and pulled him out.

"God saved me," he said, lying on the hospital bed while recuperating from a hairline fracture in his sternum. "I am very lucky I am alive."

Mahato's friends weren't so lucky. Four of them died in the crash, he said.

Meanwhile, many desperate relatives were struggling to identify the bodies of their loved ones because of the gruesomeness of the injuries. Few others were searching hospitals to check whether their relatives were alive.

In the same hospital where Mahato was recovering from his injuries, Bulti Khatun roamed outside the premises in a dazed state, holding an identity card of her husband who was onboard the Coromandel Express and traveling to southern Chennai city.

Khatun said she visited the morgue and other hospitals to look for him, but was unable to find him.

"I am so helpless," she said, sobbing.

Fifteen bodies were recovered on Saturday evening and efforts continued overnight with heavy cranes being used to remove an engine that settled on top of a rail car. No bodies were found in the engine and the work was completed on Sunday morning, said Sudhanshu Sarangi, director-general of fire and emergency services in Odisha.

The crash occurred at a time when Prime Minister Narendra Modi is focusing on the modernization of the British colonial-era railroad network in India, which has become the world's most populous country with 1.42 billion people. Despite government efforts to improve safety, several hundred accidents occur every year on India's railways, the largest train network under one management in the world.

Modi visited the crash site on Saturday and talked to rescue officials. He also visited a hospital to inquire about the injured, and spoke to some of them.

Modi told reporters he felt the pain of the crash victims. He said the government would do its utmost to help them and strictly punish anyone found responsible.

In 1995, two trains collided near New Delhi, killing 358 people in one of the worst rail accidents in India.

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: The Kuwaiti Naval Force announced on Sunday that a live-ammunition exercise would take place on June 5-8 daily from 7:00 am until 6:00 pm local-time southeast of the country's waters.

The force said in a statement that the exercise would take place 16.5 nautical miles from east of Ras Julaia area to Qaruh Island and six nautical miles east of Ras Al-Zour to Umm Al-Maradim Island.

The statement asked seafarers to take precaution and avoid the exercise area. (KUNA)

CAIRO: Saudi Arabia and the United States urged Sudan's warring parties Sunday to agree to and "effectively implement" a new cease-fire amid renewed fighting in the northeastern African nation.

Sudan descended into chaos after fighting broke out in mid-April between the military, led by Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, commanded by Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo.

For weeks, Saudi Arabia and the United States have been mediating between the warring parties. On May 21, both countries successfully brokered a temporary cease-fire agreement to help with the delivery of much-needed humanitarian aid to the war-torn country. Their efforts, however, were dealt a blow when the military announced on Wednesday it would no longer participate in the cease-fire talks held in the Saudi coastal city of Jeddah. (AP)

CAIRO: The Arab League condemned on Sunday the Israeli violations against the Palestinian education system, saying that despite the circumstances, Palestinians displayed resilience and perseverance against their aggressors.

In his speech to the 88th meeting for the Palestinian education affairs committee, Assistance Arab League Secretary General for Palestine and occupied Arab lands, Saeed Abu-Ali said that the Israeli occupation was trying its best to cover the national identity of Palestinians via hampering with history and covering facts.

He added that Palestinian universities and educational facilities were in need more than ever for support through the offering grants and scholarships.

The Arab League official condemned the international silence towards Israeli crimes and said that it was paramount for the world to implement measures to prevent Israel from further encroaching on Palestinian rights. (KUNA)

CAIRO: A tanker transporting crude oil broke down in a single-lane part of Egypt's Suez Canal on Sunday, briefly disrupting traffic in the global waterway, Egyptian authorities said.

The Malta-flagged Seavigour suffered a mechanical malfunction at the 12-kilometer (7.5-mile) mark of the canal, said George Safwat, a spokesperson for Egypt's Suez Canal Authority. The tanker was transiting the canal from the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea.

In a phone interview with a local television station, Adm. Ossama Rabei, the head of the canal authority, said the tanker broke down in a single-lane part of the waterway, disrupting the transit of eight other vessels behind it.

Hours later, Rabei said in a statement that navigation at the canal had returned to normal after three tugboats towed the tanker to a double-lane part at the 17-kilometer (10.5-mile) mark. (AP)

BAGHDAD: The security and sovereignty of Iraq is closely linked to Syria's, Prime Minister Mohammad Al-Sudani said on Sunday, highlighting the matter as a chief priority to Baghdad.

Iraq stands prepared to assist Damascus in its efforts to overcome the conflict there, the Iraqi prime minister told visiting Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Al-Mekdad amid talks, according to a statement from his office.

Extending an invitation to the Iraqi prime minister to visit Damascus, the Syrian foreign minister said his country appreciates Baghdad's contributions towards improving regional ties, added the statement. (KUNA)

GAZA: Some 97 percent of water in the Gaza Strip is undrinkable with 25 percent of the area lacking sewage networks, said Palestine Water Authority (PWA) on Sunday.

In a press conference, the authority revealed that around 30 to 40 percent of seawater was polluted as a result of dumping 120 cubic meters of half sanitized and contaminated sewage water.

Due to the over 15 years of Israeli blockade, the environment in the Gaza Strip had been heavily polluted and natural resources were running nearly dry, added the authority, which called on the world to lift the unjust blockade on the people of Gaza. (KUNA)

may abandon policies that many economists have branded as "unorthodox."

In other appointments, Erdogan chose as his foreign minister Hakan Fidan, who has headed Turkey's National Intelligence Agency, MIT, since 2010. A former soldier who holds a doctorate in international relations, Fidan replaces Mevlut Cavusoglu, who had held the post since 2014.

The chief of military staff, Gen. Yasar Gulur, meanwhile, will take up the post of defense minister, Erdogan announced.

Earlier, dozens of foreign dignitaries attended Erdogan's inauguration ceremony at his vast presidential complex in Ankara. They included NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and Carl Bildt, a high-profile former Swedish prime minister. Stockholm hopes to press Erdogan to lift his country's objections to Sweden's membership in the military alliance - which requires unanimous approval by all allies.

Alliance

Turkey accuses Sweden of being too soft on Kurdish militants and other groups that Turkey considers to be terrorists. NATO wants to bring Sweden into the alliance by the time allied leaders meet in Lithuania on July 11-12, but Turkey and Hungary have yet to endorse the bid.

Other leaders in attendance included Azerbaijan's Ilham Aliyev, Venezuela's Nicolas Maduro, Armenia's Nikol Pashinyan, Pakistan's Shahbaz Sharif and Libya's Abdul Hamid Dbeibah.

The republic will be celebrating its centennial in October, and so presiding over a new "Turkish century" became an important campaign slogan for Erdogan. During his inauguration ceremony, Erdogan hailed "the start of the Turkish century, a new period of glory for our country."

"I invite all 81 provinces to come together in fraternity. Let us leave behind the resentments of the campaign. Let us find a way to make up for hurt feelings. Let's all work together to build the Turkish century," he said.

He also expressed his intention to introduce a new constitution, saying: "We will liberate our democracy from the present constitution produced by (the 1980) military coup, and strengthen it with a freedom-promoting, civilian and inclusive constitution."

The inauguration ceremony was preceded by a swearing-in ceremony in parliament. Supporters waited outside despite the heavy rain, covering Erdogan's car with red carnations as he arrived. From there, a procession of cavalry in blue uniforms escorted the president's convoy to the inauguration ceremony.

Erdogan was sworn in amid a host of other domestic challenges, including pressure for the repatriation of millions of Syrian refugees and the need to rebuild after a devastating earthquake in February that killed 50,000 and leveled entire cities in the south of the country.

In power as prime minister and then as president since 2003, Erdogan is already Turkey's longest-serving leader. He has solidified his rule through constitutional changes that transformed Turkey's presidency from a largely ceremonial role to a powerful office.

Also:

ANKARA: The Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, arrived on Saturday in Ankara to attend President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's office taking ceremony.

He was received upon arrival at the airport by the Kuwaiti ambassador to Turkey Wael Al-Enezi, embassy staff and senior Turkish officials.

Sheikh Salem left on Saturday after attending the inauguration ceremony of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, of friendly Türkiye.

He was seen off by Kuwait Ambassador to the Turkish Republic Wael Al-Enezi, the diplomatic staff of Kuwait Embassy and a number of Turkish officials.

Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:14	Asr	15:21
Sunrise ..	04:48	Maghrib ..	18:44
Zohr	11:46	Isha	20:15

Local

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Hot with moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind with speeds of 12-45 km/h with a chance for rising dust over open areas and some scattered

Weather

clouds will appear.

By Night: Rather hot and partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind with speeds of 10-40 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	45	32

Kuwait Airport	46	34
Abdaly	45	28
Jahra	46	32
Salmiyah	39	31
Ahmadi	44	35
Nuwaibis	45	31
Wafra	44	32

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

'World No Tobacco Day' campaign launched

'Quitting smoking has quick, long-term benefits for cardiovascular health'

KUWAIT CITY, June 4: The World Heart Federation is joining the World Health Organization's 'World No Tobacco Day' campaign to encourage people to adopt a healthier lifestyle. A healthy diet is essential in preventing and reducing heart disease risk factors. Daily consumption of nutritious foods such as fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, and whole grain is the foundation of a heart-healthy diet. On the other hand, tobacco poses a serious threat to human health, claiming over eight million lives each year, including 1.2 million non-smokers due to second-hand exposure. Tobacco is a leading risk factor for cardiovascular morbidity and mortality, accounting for approximately 17% of all cardiovascular disease deaths. Tobacco prevention and cessation are among the most effective interventions to prevent heart disease.

Dr Mohammad Al Jarallah, Chief Medical Officer and Head of the department of Cardiology, Sabah Al Ahmad Cardiac Center, Al Amiri Hospital says, tobacco use increases the risk of developing CVD, including coronary heart disease, stroke, and peripheral artery disease. It does so by damaging the lining of blood vessels, causing inflammation and narrowing of the vessels, and increasing blood pressure and heart rate. The chemicals in tobacco smoke also increase the risk of blood clots,

which can lead to heart attacks and strokes.

Dr Rajesh Rajan, Cardiologist, Sabah Al Ahmad Cardiac Center, Al Amiri Hospital says, let's say the slogan together: "Say no to tobacco". Quitting smoking has immediate and long-term benefits for cardiovascular health. Within just a few hours of quitting, blood pressure and heart rate decrease, and within a few weeks, circulation and lung function improve. Over time, the risk of CVD decreases significantly, with the risk of heart attack and stroke decreasing by half after just one year of quitting.

Benefits

In addition to the health benefits for individuals, tobacco cessation also has economic benefits for society. The cost of treating CVD and other tobacco-related diseases puts a significant strain on healthcare systems and economies. By reducing the number of tobacco users, healthcare costs can be reduced, and productivity can be increased, says Dr Jarallah.

The negative impact of tobacco on human health extends beyond direct and indirect exposure. Studies show that tobacco harms the environment throughout its entire life cycle. The production of tobacco and nicotine products has

significant repercussions on deforestation, air pollution, carbon emissions, and climate change, which all affect heart health. Air pollution alone is responsible for nearly 25% of all deaths from ischemic heart disease and stroke. Tobacco farming depletes soil fertility, hinders sustainable food production in low- and middle-income countries, and threatens global food security. Governments should end subsidies for tobacco growing and support farmers in transitioning to alternative sustainable and nutritious crops by providing technical advice, essential supplies, financial aid, and market facilitation, says Dr Rajan.

The tobacco industry must stop over-exaggerating the economic value of tobacco farming for local and national economies. No matter how we look at it, tobacco harms the health and livelihood of millions throughout its entire life cycle.

On World No Tobacco Day, WHF urges all countries and relevant stakeholders to fully implement the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. In particular, governments should prevent further tobacco industry interference in governmental affairs, scale up tobacco cessation services, help farmers plant food instead of tobacco, and ultimately bring an end to the tobacco pandemic once and for all.



Dr Rajan



Dr Al-Jarallah

Hefty fine for housing 'singles'

Night-time security checks net scores



KUNA photo

Deputy Foreign Minister, Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, meets with the UNIA National coordinator of the Black Sea Grain Transfer Initiative, Abdullah Dashti.

World food security discussed

Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi received on Sunday the United Nations Coordinator for Black Sea Grain Initiative Abdullah Dashti on his official visit to Kuwait.

The two figures tackled matters pertaining to global food security and the importance of maintaining stability in such sector.

His Highness the Crown Prince

Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Sunday His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Crown Prince also received First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. (KUNA)

British envoy woos tourists

'Number of Kuwaiti students in UK is proof of deep-rooted ties'

KUWAIT CITY, June 4: The UK Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis affirmed that the number of Kuwaiti scholarship students in Britain is evidence of the deep-rooted cultural relations between the two countries and that have passed through successive generations. She said, "We look forward to the continuation and development of these relations through the current and future generations", reports Al-Qabas daily.



Belinda Lewis

In an interview with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Thursday, Ambassador Lewis revealed that the number of Kuwaiti scholarship students at various university levels in Britain during the 2022/2023 academic year is 7,014, and the number of students studying in Britain on their expenses is 1,500.

She praised the active societal role played by Kuwaiti students in her country.

Ambassador Lewis explained that the quality of study in Britain is "very high" compared to other countries, given that it has the most prestigious and oldest universities in the world.

Among the privileges that the Kuwaiti students enjoy in Britain are "the multiple flight options that are permanently available, as Kuwait Airways alone has 14 weekly flights to Heathrow Airport."

She called on the students to visit the British Visa Center in Kuwait directly in the event of any inquiries.

The ambassador indicated that the "electronic travel permit" scheduled to be implemented next February will not be applied to students who intend to study in British universities, or to other categories of travelers who wish to visit the United Kingdom for a longer period.

She referred to Kuwaiti companies working in cooperation with the British Council in Kuwait, whose main objective is to assist Kuwaiti students in Britain

Support for rights

NEW YORK, June 4, (KUNA): Kuwait affirmed that time will never strip the Palestinian people of the right to return to their land.

The remarks were made in a speech by Kuwait's Permanent Representative at the United Nations Ambassador Tariq Al-Bannai late Friday, during a meeting of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

The Palestinians' right to return comes in accordance with the international legislations, especially article 194 of the General Assembly and the Arab Peace Initiative, he said.

"While commemorating 75 years since the crisis, we remember with sorrow the crime against humanity the Palestinian people faced in 1948, when hundreds of thousands were forcefully displaced and were forced to stay away from their land and home for over seven decades, Al-Bannai noted.

Kuwait will continue to support the rights of Palestinians, said the ambassador, hailing the efforts of UNRWA workers to ease the suffering of about six million Palestinian refugees in different countries.

He announced Kuwait's pledge of USD 20 million for UNRWA for 2023.

from choosing a program and place of study to carrying out the application procedures through informational meetings and foundational courses.

Ambassador Lewis also touched on the developments of the airport crisis in Britain and its impact on tourists particularly Kuwaitis. She stressed that no strike is currently expected, there will be no complications for tourists, and flights will proceed as normal.

The ambassador called on tourists to visit Britain and discover its cities to a great extent.

KUWAIT CITY, June 4: The Acting Director General of Kuwait Municipality Saud Al-Dabbous affirmed the municipality's serious intention to protect the community identity and address the phenomenon of bachelors living in private and model housing areas, with the cooperation of the concerned bodies and authorities, in order to limit its negative effects, reports Al-Nahar daily.

He highlighted the need for the Environment Public Authority to activate and apply the penalties stipulated in the environment law to the violators, which include a fine of KD 50,000 for housing bachelors who violate the environmental requirements according to the environmental protection law.

Al-Dabbous added that the penalties and sanctions that will be applied against the owners of the violating companies include closing the files of the sponsors of workers in violation of the laws of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) in the chapter on occupational safety and labor law.

In a press statement issued on Thursday after chairing a meeting by the Bachelors Committee with the participation of representatives of government agencies, he explained that the file of violation of Decree Law No. 125/1992 regarding prohibiting the housing of non-families in private and model housing will be under the microscope of Kuwait Municipality with the cooperation of all concerned agencies and bodies during the next stage.

The recommendations of the Bachelors Committee focused on maintaining infrastructure services, limiting damages, and tampering with electrical networks, rain and sewage networks in order to protect lives and public property.

Imposition

Al-Dabbous stressed the need for the imposition of the prestige of the law, adding that electricity will not be restored until the electrical plans are adhered to and matched with reality, as well as other infrastructure services through a specific work mechanism to adhere to the legal deadlines and speed up the documentary cycle through electronic communication.

Meanwhile, during the weekend, the field security sectors of the Ministry of Interior carried out several sudden security campaigns in all parts of the country, and increased the rate of night security deployment in all areas to the maximum degree, with the aim of imposing the prestige of the law, arresting violators, wanted individuals, drug dealers and drug users, and limiting violations, and aggressive and reckless driving, reports Al-Qabas daily.

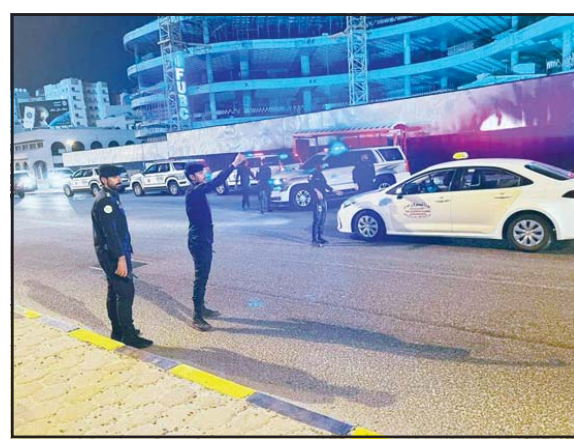
These campaigns resulted in the arrest of 150 violators of the residency law, dozens of wanted persons, three individuals in possession of narcotic substances and alcoholic beverages, six absconders, and 20 individuals on charges of immoral acts, as well as the issuance of citations for 140 various traffic violations.

According to informed security sources, the security deployment process varied between foot patrol officers and checkpoint officers, as well as officers inspecting some places to arrest violators of the residency and labor laws.

The roles of the Traffic Operations Sector, the Public Security Sector, the Criminal Security Sector, and the Residence Affairs Sector represented by the General Administration of Residence Affairs Investigation emerged in the huge deployment which lasted for three days. The security officers carried out the deployment process from 10:30 pm until the early hours of next morning.

Directives were issued to the field security sectors to impose the prestige of the law, ensure full readiness and vigilance, adhere to the standards of control and linkage, continue to make all efforts, develop security plans, enhance security presence and deployment, and conduct patrols to secure all areas in all six governorates.

The increase in the security deployment in Hawally area and the expansion of security campaigns on its streets led by Captain Hussein Kamal and First Lieutenant Saud Al-Jalal, had succeeded in issuing many citations over traffic violations, and reducing aggressive and reckless driving.



Night-time security check at an unidentified location.

Other Voices

Tribal affiliations and polls

By Ahmad alsarraf

Bedouinism originates from the desire or satisfaction to live a simple and normal life free from the manifestations of civilization and its restrictions. A life that has no obligations or limits, but a free flow and wide movement, which makes living in remote and harsh areas, such as deserts, dense forests, or mountainous heights, acceptable, and even beautiful, for many.

With the emergence of cities on the outskirts of various deserts, and their need for manpower, civilization began to attract the son of the desert and seduce him with its joys and pleasures, so he was forced, after many centuries of absolute freedom, to submit to the requirements of the city, and to forget the role of the tribe in his life, to which he had previously resorted to at some point due to the absence of State power, and his need to take refuge in a larger and stronger body.

Over time, Bedouinism began to disappear and tribalism began to decline, with many abandoning their affiliation with it, in words and names, especially since the majority did not have blood relations with it, but rather a need and a benefit.

Suddenly, some parties discovered that it is better to return and belong to the tribe, at least in name, and to benefit politically from its "affiliation" with it. Thus, we began to see a radical change in the results of the elections in the suburban regions, where the people of its cities, who are more ancient, were displaced in favor of the people of the tribe, who are more numerous with the increase in the number of new holders of the nationality of the country.

The government played the biggest role in promoting this pattern, through what it granted to its sheikhs, who became "princes" next, of a pivotal role in securing a prestigious job for them with quick promotions, and other advantages, often material. The former tribal citizen felt that it was more appropriate and more beneficial to re-

turn and belong to his group, which had become his pride.

Thus, it can be said, with confidence, that there is no nomadism in Kuwait, by virtue of logic and reality, and therefore there must be no tribalism, in the understandable sense, but it was "resurrected" to serve the immediate interests of some, and then it became, with time, and with the end of the interest of the one who created it, with his death often, represented a tyrannical, political and social situation that cannot diminish without withdrawing the privileges, often hidden, that it enjoys!

Many people want to live in specific residential areas because of the service "reputation" that these areas enjoy and the social or political prestige that housing represents, compared to others, despite the fact that the price of real estate in these areas is many times more than that of others, and this is not due to the forests that surround these areas. Not the lakes that overlook it, but because of its advantages that can, with a few government decisions, be removed, and the area made undesirable to live in!

Consequently, the many negative, and of course positive, matters or manifestations, their keys lie in the hands of the government, which dominates the interests of the state, and draws its general policies, and whoever has the power to change the attractiveness of a residential area, and turn it upside down, can also change the attractiveness of the tribe or sect.

□ □ □

Note: For nearly 17 years, the corrupt powers and 'bats of hatred' have tried their best to fight and see the downfall of former National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al Ghanim.

They have failed to provide a single evidence to prove their alleged accusations of his bad administration and his poor performance. The reason I trust in Al Ghanim is enhanced because I believe that his enemies are bad losers.

What I said about Al Ghanim is also applicable to former MP and candidate who is contesting parliamentary elections from the Third Constituency Ahmad Al Fadhli.

□ □ □

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Bid to cut power station pollution

Plan to buy renewable energy

KUWAIT CITY, June 4, (KUNA): Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Mutlaq Al-Otaibi said on Saturday that the Ministry would take a decision to purchase renewable energy from "third parties within the next few days."

Minister Al-Otaibi said in a statement that the Ministry is seeking to produce no less than 15 percent of the country's electrical consumption from renewable energy sources by 2030, based on the directives of the political leadership.

Al-Otaibi pointed out that the Ministry has completed surveys and studies, examining experience of neighboring countries in purchasing renewable energy and reducing pollution from power stations that operate with fossil fuels.

Al-Otaibi indicated at the approach to encourage citizens, namely small investors, to establish companies working on installing photovoltaic energy systems and related equipment.

He added that while the Ministry seeks to execute its projects, specifically the Shagaya project, which is expected to produce 4,400 megawatts, it is studying several proposals to implement more renewable energy ventures.

Al-Otaibi pointed out that among the pro-

posals "we are studying currently is establishment of renewable energy projects on the islands of Failaka and Bubiyan, in line with the vision of the Council of Ministers to develop the islands to diversify sources of income. The minister also hinted at plans to install photovoltaic energy systems on the facilities' roofs.

Concerning the Shagaya project, Minister Al-Otaibi pointed out that the joint committee of the Ministry and the Authority for Partnership Projects would issue recommendations regarding the venture, which is expected to have a production capacity of 4400 megawatts in four stages.

Al-Otaibi indicated that the project would contribute to providing more job opportunities.

Meanwhile, KUNA Center for the Development of Media Skills started on Sunday a training program entitled "news writing".

The program, presented by the veteran journalist Talal Al-Kandari, at KUNA from 4- 8 June, focuses on introducing the standards of news writing, different types of news items, sources and editing.

This center, established in 1995, is concerned with increasing the skills of professional journalistic work, improving media content, and bringing theory and practice closer in the field of writing media materials.

LOCAL

Securitymen seize 13-kg drugs, 3,000 narcotic pills from 4 men

250 machine gun rounds, army uniforms seized

KUWAIT CITY, June 4: The General Department of Relations and Security Media at the Ministry of Interior stated that within the framework of the keenness of the senior leadership of the Ministry of Interior to intensify the security presence, arrest violators and outlaws, and address all new methods of promoting narcotic substances, the security authorities seized four people and seized from them about 13 kilos of narcotic substances and 3,000 Captagon tablets, reports Al-Rai daily.

The daily added, during interrogation the suspects have admitted to consuming and

trafficking in drugs. They have been handed over to the concerned authorities.

Meanwhile, Abdally customs officers have arrested a Syrian for the possession of military uniforms and 250 machine gun rounds on his way to Iraq recently, reports Al-Rai daily.

A source from the customs told the daily that during the inspection of a truck driven by a Syrian born in 1965 and loaded with household furniture and luggage, the officers discovered 250 machine gun rounds and military uniforms.

The Syrian driver and the confiscated items were referred to the concerned authorities.

Corpse found on beach: When the Operations Department of the Ministry of Interior received a report that a person had died on the Anjafa Beach, personnel from the Criminal Evidences Department and emergency medical personnel rushed to the spot and referred the remains to Forensics, reports Al-Rai daily.

The daily added, the security authorities are investigating the cause of death. According to a security source the unidentified person was found on the beach wearing a swimsuit

Awareness raised: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has launched a campaign to raise awareness among companies and commercial establishments about the financial crimes through email and the government unified electronic platform -- Sahl, reports Al-Rai daily.

In a press statement, the ministry disclosed that awareness messages are being sent to business persons to educate them about the dangers of money laundering and financing terrorism; while stressing the need to ensure the safety of their financial transactions and maintain their good reputation by avoiding such risks. It added these messages are sent to every commercial license holder from time to time to protect the commercial sector.



Top and above: some photos from the course.

DDI holds Prevention and Management of Diabetic Foot Complications course

KUWAIT CITY, June 4: Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI), established by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, held recently its specialized three-day course on the Prevention and Management of Diabetic Foot Complications, in collaboration with the Primary Health Care Department at the Ministry of Health who assisted in coordinating this course.

This program was held at the Institute and attended by healthcare professionals. Trainees learned to assess and treat the feet in people with diabetes using evidence-based assessment and treatment methods, aimed at reduction of diabetic foot ulceration and amputation. This program was organized and

delivered by Kay Scarsbrook Khan, Chief Podiatrist, Dr. Ebaa Al Ozairi, Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Abdullah Al Ajmi, Consultant Neurologist from DDI, Alice Cusworth, Podiatrist and Andrew Gilmour, Podiatrist.

Foot problems are a major cause of morbidity in people with diabetes. Countries in the MENA region have among the highest rates of diabetes prevalence in the world. It was estimated in 2019 there were approximately 54.8 million adults living with diabetes in the MENA region, this is expected to increase to more than double by 2045.

Despite the high prevalence of diabetes in the MENA region, many of the countries in the region lack ad-

equated foot care provision, foot screening, and self-care education programs. The course provided participants with the knowledge and skills to assess the foot in people with diabetes, screen and categorise an individual's risk of foot ulceration, and provide appropriate education advocating self-care and ulcer prevention. It also aimed to increase knowledge and skills in the assessment and treatment of common foot problems and diabetic foot complications, in line with current international guidelines.

Special thanks to the Primary Health Care Department at the Ministry of Health for their efforts in coordinating this workshop.

Central Prison incident was planned: security sources

KUWAIT CITY, June 4: According to informed security sources from the Central Prison, the suspension of some leaders of the Ministry of Interior within 24 hours of the incident at the Central Prison prior to the start of the work of the committee to investigate the recent prison incident was a plot hatched by several prisoners to cause rampage, reports Aljarida daily.

This was revealed in the report submitted by the committee within a record time of less than 16 hours, followed by the referral of the case to the Public Prosecution.

The report highlighted that the fire of this conspiracy was being fueled by some who are at the forefront of the electoral campaigns. They took advantage of those platforms to denounce the ministry and terrorize it, taking advantage of the electoral atmosphere and the ministry's entry into the stage of maximum preparation for the polls next Tuesday.

Investigation

The committee's speedy completion of the investigation into the events raised a number of questions,

along with the decisions taken, prior to the committee starting its work, to suspend the Assistant Undersecretary for Correctional Institutions and Special Security Forces Affairs Major General Abdullah Saffah, and to relieve the Director General of the General Administration of Correctional Institutions Brigadier General Fahad Al-Obaid from his position and transfer him to the ministry's office, in addition to transferring Brigadier Adnan Murad, Brigadier Youssef Al-Otaibi and Brigadier Khaled Al-Qallaf to alternate operations positions as well as the transfer of Brigadier General Walid Al-Ali from the deportation prison to the Department of Execution of Sentences. The leaders had been planned "election" targets from the time the chaos broke out.

The sources explained that the incident began with the prisoners passing false information about the entry of a large shipment of drugs into ward No. 4 through coordination between a former prisoner, who was released in the last amnesty, and a prisoner, identified as M.K., who was accused of smuggling narcotics

and was sentenced to life imprisonment, as well as another prisoner, identified as H.H., who was sentenced to life imprisonment in a murder case.

Scenario

The pre-prepared scenario began when Special Forces officers went to search the cells at 3:00am to make sure there were no narcotic substances. When the officers asked the prisoners to move to the head-quarter's yard for a body search and to search the cells in their absence, they were surprised when one of the above mentioned two prisoners started screaming, and trying to clash with the officers. He then ordered the other prisoners to go on a rampage, scream and clash with the security officers.

The prisoners began throwing shoes and other items from their cells at the officers, screaming, and trying to get out of the cells. One of them hid on the second floor and filmed everything using a mobile phone that was in his possession. Eventually, the Special Forces officers managed to control the situation.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Tomorrow everyone will be silent except for the voice of conscience'

"MONDAY and Tuesday of June 5 and 6, respectively silence precedes election day, and the day of silence is a habit that has become a law used by the majority of countries that hold presidential or parliamentary elections. In fact, in some countries, such as Australia, for example, it is close to three days," columnist **Souad Fahad Al-Mojil** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"The goal of the Day of Silence is to enable voters to ponder over in whose favor to cast the ballot away from the usual hush of advertising or media influences that the candidate may exercise, and thus leave room for calm and self-consultation before making a choice.

"The Day of Silence undoubtedly confirms the extent to which the voter in any place and any country is affected by speech and the oral means of persuasion that the candidate may practice to gain a vote. In other words, the candidate continues to address the mind and emotion of the voter until the last moments of the electoral campaigns, so the Day of Silence came to leave room for the voter to consult himself and his conscience.

"Evaluation in general at the political level and the level of parliamentary or presidential performance is undoubtedly governed primarily by the quality of actual performance in the aforementioned sites, or at least this is how objective evaluation actually comes, but there are certainly other entrances to gain support that are not directly related to actual performance or purely political action including the psychological state of the mind of the voter, which some candidates bet on, and it may sometimes come in excessive recklessness, as happened with former US President Donald Trump, when he mobilized his remnants and charged them emotionally, so that they stormed the Congressional building.

"We learned in Kuwait and through more than six decades of candidacy and election practice that a politician who enjoys credibility guaranteed by his performance and supported by his positions has a greater ability to convince voters, but such a beautiful picture of evaluation is today exposed to the risks of technology, like everything else. Communication tools and electronic media networks and other tools have today become a direct partner in this evaluation process.

"The majority of them, as we know today, are capable of dubbing, directing, and producing contents, some of which overlap with the conditions of the usual political evaluation processes.

"In democratically developed countries, televised debates between competitors are a tool of electoral campaigns, whether presidential or parliamentary, in which verbal performance, i.e. based on promises put forward precede many arguments based on fixed and actual positions, and usually target voters who do not have accurate details, and therefore evaluate and judge in isolation from the degree of honesty and objectivity, driven either by the speaker's eloquence or his fluency.

"Hence, some electoral political discourses resort to playing with the circle of sensitive and controversial issues that arouse emotion, and thus achieve greater opportunities to change positions and attract votes. Perhaps for these reasons and others, countries enacted the electoral silence day to give the voter an opportunity to stand with oneself and separate from any political or psychological influences.

"Tomorrow in Kuwait, everyone will be silent except for the voice of conscience, which we hope will be conscious and aware of the importance and vitality of its role in resolving matters towards the general interest of Kuwait alone. Today, Kuwait in particular needs a conscience before it needs an orator, political theorist, or affiliation outside the scope of Kuwait's interest and its people.

"The Lebanese political thinker Kamal Jumblatt may have expressed the importance of compatibility between the human conscience and the political position, as he once said: "If one of you is given a choice between his party and his conscience, then he must leave his party and follow his conscience, because a person can live without a party, but he cannot live without conscience.

"The conscience that Kuwait needs the day after tomorrow is a conscience that is free from tribal fanaticism, sectarian drift, and family panic, a conscience that transcends all considerations other than the healthy and pure nationalism; all the best to those who will win the confidence of the people of Kuwait and ride the horses of responsibility and all hope that the individual and personal

conscience will be compatible with the national political stance.

"Tomorrow, then, is the day of silence in Kuwait, followed by the day of revelation and action for the benefit of Kuwait and its people."

Also:

"I met them at one of the seminars of the Women's Cultural Association, which brought together female candidates from various constituencies, looking for someone to adopt the demands of the Kuwaiti women who married the bedouin and gave birth to children," columnist **Iqbal Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"The mother is the one who is responsible for the upbringing, of her children, the mother is the content, the mother is the cultivation of patriotism and the consolidation of religion, customs and traditions among children.

"The mother breastfeeds the child in its cradle out of love for the country more than the father by virtue of her nature as a mother.

"Therefore, the Kuwaiti mother is more deserving of her children enjoying rights that guarantee the children's survival in her homeland without any fear of laws governing their survival or the right to education and medical treatment.

"They do not demand the naturalization of their children. With all due respect to all nationalities, when a Kuwaiti man marries a non-Kuwaiti woman, whether she is Asian, Western or Arab, his children enjoy all rights and duties as a citizen. "What is the difference between a Kuwaiti man and a Kuwaiti woman?"

"I know that there are those who will say that when a Kuwaiti woman marries a non-Kuwaiti, this is her choice, but what I focus on in my article today is the right of permanent residence for children and the related educational and health rights only, and I did not talk about nationality.

"Those I met focused on the issue of permanent residency. If the issue of obtaining citizenship for children is not easy and is not an option now.

"I hope that our deputies coming from both sexes will adopt this issue to help our Kuwaiti sisters who are married to non-Kuwaiti men, to remove from their shoulders the worries of their children staying with them as mothers in their homeland, that homeland that they cannot afford to part with and be far from, where the family and pride are."

"Why does the Kuwaiti citizen not abide by the laws of his country, while he adheres to laws when he is in other countries?" columnist **Ali Al-Jaber Al-Sabah** wrote for **Annahar** daily.

"We know the government has the answer to this question and we hope it will quickly take action. The acts and practices of some citizens and some expatriates are unacceptable.

"I do not know when the patience of our rational government will run out in terms of waiting to effectively deal with outlaws and immoral people like its counterparts in other GCC countries.

"The one who is optimistic about his future and that of his family, loves Kuwait, loyal to the country and knows the ins and outs of things should not hesitate to participate in the election. He must cast his vote for whoever deserves it. I say those who deserve it, not those who love him.

"Differences in tastes and desires among people are natural like the difference in opinions, which does not spoil friendship. Expressing my opinion about concerts does not mean a defect. God forbid, or a criticism of the audience's desire. Every party and occasion has its audience and its fans, so a person cannot prevent others from holding concerts at any time and place, provided that he adheres to the conditions and instructions of the government. This is a constant matter for both the supporter and the opponent.

"Here, I express my astonishment at the large number of people paying exorbitant amounts. Along with their women who wear the most expensive clothes, they usually rush to enter the concert halls to take the places allotted for them. They sit there for two or three hours to listen to songs they heard before, and repeated on radio and television stations.

"What drives them to do so? Is it the passion to watch the artist in person? Is it the love for joining the artist in singing his songs? Is it just an evening to change the atmosphere of the house and coexist with the concert audience? While I am surprised at their desire and patience for these evenings, I wish the audience happiness and the artists success. Thank God, I am not a fan of such artists."

— Compiled by **Mai Elsoukary**

Al-Khashti resigns from KCB: sources

KUWAIT CITY, June 4: Official spokesperson of Kuwait Credit Bank, Secretary of the Board of Directors and Director of the Office of the General Manager Habari Al-Khashti has resigned from the bank, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting reliable sources.

Sources revealed four directors in the bank have submitted their resignation to the state minister for housing affairs in protest against some decisions issued recently that affected the work mechanism.

According to informed sources, there are indications that the members of the Municipal Council may use article 25 of the municipal law in response to the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and the Minister of State for Communications Affairs Fahad Al-Shoula's rejection of the Municipal Council's decision in the previous session to not impose fees for setting up car shades in private and model housing, reports Al-Rai daily.



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Govt acts over modernization of Kuwaiti coast radar system

'System based on artificial and digital intelligence'

KUWAIT CITY, June 4: The government security agencies are making all out efforts to complete the modernization of the Kuwaiti coastal radar system to develop the maritime security system with the latest advanced means and technologies to secure the Kuwaiti coastal areas, islands and territorial waters, reports Al-Anba daily.

The Prime Minister, HH Sheikh Ahmed Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has stressed on protecting the security of Kuwait.

The daily added, the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled, is personally following up the issue and indicated that the project is in the process of being offered to specialized international companies, and it is likely to be completed within a year; which is based on launching a modern structure, system and technology based on artificial intelligence to secure and guarantee the protection of Kuwaiti coasts, islands and territorial waters.

The source explained that the project is a comprehensive system in which the relevant government agencies participate and deal with, including the Maritime Force in the Ministry of Defense, the Coast Guard Department in the Ministry of Interior, marine rescue centers in the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD), Kuwait Ports Authority, the Maritime Transport Department in the Ministry of Communications, and the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR).

This system covers all Kuwaiti territorial waters, islands, coasts and maritime borders, in addition to Kuwait Bay, as it would impose complete security control over these places to prevent penetration and infiltration, serve navigation and the environment, and save efforts of securitymen and security patrols.

The source spoke of some advantages of the system, indicating that it is based on artificial and digital intelligence and gives accurate im-



Kuwaiti Ambassador to Bulgaria Ghazi Al-Fadhly submitted recently his credentials to North Macedonian President Stevo Pendarovski as non-resident Ambassador Extraordinary and Commissioner to his country. The Kuwaiti Embassy in Bulgaria, in a statement, said that Ambassador Al-Fadhly conveyed greetings from 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 and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to President Pendarovski. The Kuwaiti Ambassador affirmed that he would work on measures to bolster relations between the two countries, enhancing them in all possible domains with the terms of respect and understanding. (KUNA)

ages and readings that contribute greatly to the detection of intruders and the sustainability of navigation and maritime transport, in addition to that it helps quickly and effectively to find any missing person or a vessel at sea. This is in addition to controlling any violations of the environment and monitoring environmental

pollution.

Speaking of the system's technologies, the source stated that it contains systems and radar and marine navigation devices, as well as modern surveillance and monitoring cameras, including day and night cameras that monitor objects clearly at night, and thermal cameras known to capture infrared radiation emitted for objects that store or emit heat, such as the bodies of living organisms.

The source added that the system also includes the automatic identification system (AIS), which automatically follows all pieces and objects and detects any penetration, infiltration or poaching, indicating that it is a system that matches the role of the black box in aircraft, as it helps in developing and raising the efficiency of navigation and communications at sea.

The AIS system enables ships to respond to other ships and assists the Coast Guard in tracking any wrong paths. It also contributes to achieving navigational goals such as broadcasting alternative paths in the event of the possibility of a collision on the current path of two ships.

Earlier, a delegation from the Directorate-General of Coast Guard, headed by the Director General, Rear Admiral Talal Al-Mounis, paid a visit to the Directorate-General of Coast and Border Security of Qatar to get firsthand information of the Qatari coastal radar system and benefit from it when installing the second phase of the Kuwaiti coastal radar system, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Informed security sources have been informed that the second phase of the radar system, which is expected to be installed soon, will cover all Kuwaiti territorial waters, including Kuwait Bay, which is currently outside the coverage area of the current radar system.

The sources added that the second radar system is considered very advanced in several aspects, most notably the surveillance cameras and sensors sensitive to marine targets, and the target tracking system, which is distinguished by high quality.

The sources stated that the most prominent features of the second radar system are the protection of Kuwaiti territorial waters from smuggling, piracy and illegal fishing operations in times when it is forbidden to catch some types of fish or use prohibited fishing equipment.



Photos by Rizk Taufiq

Top and above: Some photos from the first-of-its-kind holistic forum hosted by ESK Holding and Mercedes Vazquez.

First-of-its-kind holistic forum held

Focus set on Innovation, Technology, Education & Women's Empowerment

KUWAIT CITY, June 4: ESK Holding, an innovative Digital Transformation company, & Tapping into the Untapped podcast initiative by Mercedes Vazquez a multi-stakeholder dialogue to empower communities to thrive while increasing representation in mission critical industries while building bridges between continents with an existing audience in 13 countries, created & hosted a one-of-a-kind forum in Kuwait on: Innovation, Technology, Education & Women Empowerment.

The forum celebrated the achievements of distinguished empowering and inclusive leaders who shape a transformational role through their actions & in their communities in the following industries: foreign service, energy, banking, education, public sector, cybersecurity, logistics, accessibility, healthcare, telco, entrepreneurship, ... as a representation of innovation in a sustainable and diversified economic fabric that contributes as building blocks to the State of Kuwait's Vision 2035, from a holistic standpoint, industries essential to reimagine the future and global fundamental interconnected principles to enable a thriving knowledge-based economy.

Succeed

As Mercedes Vazquez had said during the opening remarks in the forum: "Ensuring that everyone of every identity and background has access to what they need to succeed, comes with the transformative power of education, that I was humbled to experience last year when I was selected by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to be part of a transformative Global Women in Leadership program at Georgetown University McDonough School of Business with the Kingdom's Qiyadat, for the G20 countries that has an acceptance rate of 2.5% as the only participant based in Kuwait. Education is enlightening and education holds one of the keys to reimagine the future. I now feel the commitment to live up to the program's motto "empower to impact" through actions & by creating platforms of scale for the greater common good as a passionate bridge builder between continents who advocates for leading U.S. technology".

Distinguished panelists at the conference were:

Eng Sara Akbar, CEO at OilServ, one of the most prominent & acclaimed Kuwaiti women leaders, on the pioneering women in the energy sector and skills in a new digital era. Catherine Baker, Economic Officer of the United States in Kuwait, on the role of diplomacy to build bridges between the United States & Kuwait and the role of women in the economic fabric. Emad Al-Ablani, Head of Group Human Resources at the National Bank of Kuwait, on enabling a thriving knowledge-based economy for sustainable progress. Sheikha Suhailah AlSabah, on accessibility & addressing special needs in a digitized era. Mercedes Vazquez, on innovative & responsible Digital Transformation for a resilient digitized economy. Michael Pishko,

President at the American International University & Abdullah AlBaker, CEO & Chairman at AlBaker Associates on Innovation, youth & entrepreneurship. Heba Al-Sawan, Manager of Networks & Technical Support at the Public Authority for Social Security, on the role of women in cybersecurity & transitioning careers for a robust, resilient and secure future. Khalid Albusairi, researcher at Amiri Diwan & CEO at Delicon, on a Private-Public dialogue with Mercedes Vazquez.

Innovation

Haya Al Mana, innovation & entrepreneurship expert at Zain Kuwait, on the role of innovation within Corporates & Zain as a leading telco. Heba AlSawan, Manager of Networks & Technical Support at the Public Authority for Social Security concluded: "Kuwait's Vision 2035 provides a roadmap for sustainable development and progress, and it is up to all of us to work towards its realization. Mercedes graciously hosted this forum "Innovation, Technology, Education & Women Empowerment" inviting open discussions and diverse perspectives towards achieving a shared vision for the future! I would like to express my appreciation to Mercedes for sharing this opportunity to learn and contribute". Khalid Albusairi, researcher at Amiri Diwan & CEO at Delicon expressed "Forum's and dialogues like this are very crucial for the future of Kuwait. The opportunity to hear brilliant minds and to collaborate with diverse backgrounds was a wonderful experience". Dra Afrah Mulla Ali from Kuwait University and the conference's Master Ceremony added: "This Forum marks a before and after of the importance of the economy fabric, topics as essential as cyber security and its importance in the future were addressed, in addition, oil and gas are mentioned as an essential resource, something that interests Kuwait in particular. It was a conference with a lot of information that helps to improve the future of the nation". Austin May, Public Affairs Officer, Area Support Group - Kuwait, US Army: "This forum on technology, education, women's empowerment and everything in between was a fruitful opportunity to hear from a diverse array of thought leaders in Kuwait today. As the future unfolds, as artificial intelligence continues to evolve as an opportunity and threat alike, I hope Kuwait forges a prosperous way forward. As a steadfast partner for 32 years, the US military is working with the Ministry of Defense and the State of Kuwait to ensure stability and peace here and across the region."

By hosting & bringing together stakeholders from various backgrounds, the forum inspired and empowered communities to foster collaboration and contribute to the advancement of innovation, technology, education, and women's empowerment, through interconnected industries in a holistic platform.

Kuwaitis are high-level tourists: envoy

'Peruvian govt submits proposal to exempt Kuwaitis from entry visas'

KUWAIT CITY, June 4: Peruvian Ambassador to Kuwait Carlos Manuel Alfredo Velasco Mendiola said the government of Peru submitted a proposal to exempt Kuwaitis from entry visas to his country for short visits to the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs; hoping this proposal will be approved soon, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The Ambassador revealed that the number of visas issued to Kuwaiti citizens last year ranged from 150 to 200, indicating this number is expected to increase by 50 percent in 2023.

He said "the period for issuing a visa is short, as it takes only two to three days for Kuwaitis with an American or Schengen visa. Kuwaiti tourists are welcome in our country. They are high-level tourists."

He added "the trade exchange between the two countries does not meet expectations; hence, the need for improvement de-

spite the availability of many of our products and commodities in local fruits and vegetables markets. We aspire to improve the level of exchange between the two countries to contribute to achieving food security."

He intends to meet with Kuwaiti officials in order to present his country's expertise and to provide technical assistance in the agricultural field. "In the near future, we will have meetings with officials at the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR). We previously presented our observations to them and they expressed interest in what our country can provide in terms of technical assistance in the agricultural field," he added.

He went on to say that Peru has proposed the operation of direct flights with Kuwait, calling on Kuwaitis to visit his country and enjoy the picturesque nature.

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Beirut examines Kuwait's experience in protecting consumers

Kuwaiti delegation visiting Lebanon presents experience of coping with inflation

BEIRUT, June 4, (KUNA): A delegation of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Industry and Commerce met on Friday representatives of Lebanese economic authorities and associations presenting to the local hosts Kuwait's experience in tackling inflation.



KUNA photo
Head of the Kuwaiti delegation Dr. Mohammad Al-Jalal with the Head of the Lebanese economic authorities, Mohammad Shuqair.

The meeting was held as part of a current visit by the Kuwaiti delegation in response to an invitation from the Lebanese authorities and ESCWA (the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia) to examine the Kuwaiti experience in protecting consumers and checking soaring necessities' prices.

Dr. Mohammad Al-Jalal, the assistant undersecretary for legal affairs, companies and trade permits at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Industry and Commerce, briefed the Lebanese side about legislations that had been enacted at home to reign in the inflation and keep commodities prices at reasonable levels, particularly during the peak of the coronavirus crisis.

He also spoke about the Kuwaiti Government support for traders and central markets through low taxes and securing all commodities in need for the domestic market.

For his part, Faisal Al-Ansari, in charge of monitoring prices at the Kuwaiti ministry, explained how the Kuwaiti authorities focused on maintaining prices of 39 basic products. He also shed light on safe mechanisms for raising prices while maintaining consumers' protection.

Mohammad Shuqair, the head of the Lebanese economic authorities, said he was elated with the Kuwaiti delegation's mission in the country and expressed hope that the country might

witness better times with respect of the economic conditions once gas under the seabed has been extracted. He also showed optimism as a result of rapprochement among some Arab states.

Moreover, Shuqair called upon Kuwaiti entrepreneurs to invest in Lebanon particularly in promising sectors, namely the gas.

Lebanon is expected to explore for gas at an offshore zone in September -- following a US-mediated maritime border demarcation deal with the Israelis.

The Lebanese are expected to search for gas at several offshore regions, some located close to the Israeli-controlled sea areas in the south.

On Thursday, Lebanese Minister of Economy Amin Salam, who hosted the Kuwaiti delegation, said Beirut is aspiring to take lessons from Kuwait's successful experience in the consumer protection sector.

Kuwait, UK FMs discuss bolstering ties, world developments

Kuwaiti students on scholarships to UK show deep-rooted ties: UK envoy

KUWAIT CITY, June 4, (KUNA): UK Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis said that the number of Kuwaiti students sent to study in Britain is evidence of the deep-rooted cultural ties between both sides that have passed through generations.

Speaking to KUNA on Thursday, Lewis said that the number of Kuwaiti students in the UK during the academic year 2022-23 was 7,014 students on scholarships and 1,500 self-funding students.

The quality of studying in the UK is excellent compared to other countries due to them being prestigious and old universities, she explained.

Among the privileges appreciated by Kuwaiti students in the UK are the multiple options that are permanently available to various airlines, as Kuwait Airways alone has 14 weekly flights to Heathrow Airport, she added.

She urged students to visit the UK Visa Application Center in Kuwait directly in the event of any inquiries, noting that the electronic travel permit scheduled to be implemented next February will not be applied to students who intend to study in British



KUNA photo
Belinda Lewis, UK Ambassador to Kuwait.

universities.

With regard to the developments of the airport crisis in the UK and its impact on tourists in general and Kuwaitis in particular, she indicated that there is no expected strike at present, and there will be no

complications for tourists, as flights will proceed as normal.

Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and UK Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs James Cleverly discussed via phone, Wednesday, ways to enhance the deep historic relations on all possible domains.

In a statement by the Foreign Minister, Cleverly expressed the United Kingdom's gratitude towards Kuwait's efforts to evacuate British citizens from Sudan, affirming that this gesture reflected strength of relations and strategic partnership between Kuwait and the UK.

The two officials also delved into preparations for the 70th anniversary of the Kuwait Investment Office in London, established in 1953.

Recent regional and international developments in Syria, Sudan, and elsewhere were discussed in addition to the preparations for the upcoming Ukraine reconstruction conference hosted by the UK on June 21-22, the statement concluded.

Kuwait calls for setting up technology in Arab countries' educational sector

Kuwaiti Education Minister, ISESCO Chief discuss cooperation

RABAT, June 4, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Education and Higher Education Hamad Al-Adwani on Wednesday called for overhauling the teaching sector in the Arab world and integrating modern technology into the curricula.

Al-Adwani, speaking at the inaugural session of the 13th conference of the Arab ministers of education, has affirmed that digital transformation constitutes a major challenge for the educational sector in the Arab world. However, it may prove an opportunity "to improve the quality of education and create an environment that motivates students toward learning and exploring and innovating."

"In the shadow of the rapid developments, we ought to step over the traditional hurdles and adopt modern and innovative technologies to facilitate education," he said. "We cannot attain such goals alone; we ought to cooperate and share those who possess the expertise and the know-how and the technology."

Infrastructure

He called for focusing on developing the infrastructure of digital learning and training cadres on modern technologies to advance the sector.

Kuwait's Minister of Education and the Chairman of the National Committee for Education, Science and Culture, Dr. Hamad Al-Adwani and Director-General of the Islamic World Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ISESCO), Dr. Salem Al-Malik, discussed developing cooperation in

education, science and culture.

During a meeting in Rabat, Morocco, Al-Malik touched on the organization's vision and strategic directions, and the most prominent programs and activities it carries out to serve its member states, stressing the organization's keenness to strengthen partnership with Kuwait, said ISESCO in a statement Thursday.

For his part, Al-Adwani praised ISESCO's development and modernization of its work mechanisms and its new vision for the future, noting that Kuwait attaches great importance to cooperation with the organization and supporting its efforts.

Also:

KUWAIT CITY: Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr. Hamad Al-



KUNA photo
Dr. Hamad Al-Adwani, Minister of Education and Higher Education.

Adwani spoke of the ministry's keenness on developing higher art institutes as well as its interest in faculty's sci-

entific research as this will positively reflect on the students' education.

The higher institute of dramatic arts reported Sunday that Al-Adwani said this in a speech at the institute's graduation ceremony.

The Minister congratulated the graduates and their parents, and extended his thanks and appreciation to the institute's management and faculty.

Institute Director Dr. Hussain Abdullah stated in his speech that the pursuit of knowledge is the sole way towards the development of nations, and commended Kuwait's keenness on improving its educational establishments.

The Director mentioned that the institute carries the responsibility of initiating creatives in various artistic fields.

200 to 300 visas issued per day

About 150 Kuwaiti students studying doctorates in medical specializations

KUWAIT CITY, June 4: The Italian ambassador to Kuwait, HE Carlo Balducci, says 2023 will be special for Kuwaiti tourists visiting Italy since a big number of Kuwait's are applying for visas this summer noting that "the consular section at the embassy issues between 200 and 300 visas per day, this is a big number equivalent to about 5 times the number of visas granted in the years preceding the Corona pandemic, reports Al-Rai daily.



HE Carlo Balducci, Italian Ambassador to Kuwait.

Balducci told the daily on the eve of the Republic Day celebrations which falls on June 2, visas to Kuwaitis are issued within 24 hours and the Italian embassy in Kuwait is considered the fastest in issuing visas among the Italian embassies around the world.

He indicated "the Schengen visa file for the Kuwaitis is moving in the right direction in Brussels, and "we hope that the issue will be resolved next year."

He disclosed many Italian companies are operating in Kuwait, directly or through local partners.

When he arrived in Kuwait in 2019, he said, "The Italian exports to Kuwait were estimated at one billion Euros, and in 2022 the exports doubled to two billion Euros, despite the epidemic and the economic crises caused by wars in the region and the world.

The volume of Kuwaiti exports

to Italy of diesel fuel, oils and petrochemical products increased by 1000 percent from 2021 to 2022, reaching 35 million Euros in 2021, and about 330 million Euros in 2022. This is a remarkable indicator. It is important to develop our economic relations."

Balducci went on to say, "From today, we will start operating eight direct weekly flights to Italy via Kuwait Airways to Rome and Milan, and in mid-June there will be additional direct flights by the Italian airlines mandated by law, at a rate of 3 flights per week."

He pointed out that "there are about 150 Kuwaiti students studying for a doctorate degree in Italian universities, especially in the medical specialty, and we are working to increase the number of these students, as most courses in Italian universities are given in English, and the distance between the two countries is only 4 and a half hours through direct flights."

Month-long workshop with 90 students from Class VI

Indian Public School organizes skill education program



KUWAIT CITY, June 4: In accordance with the CBSE NEP 2020 policy that requires students to attend Skill Education courses which would prepare and expose them to various vocational skills, the Indian Public School organized a Job Shadowing Programme at the school premises in collaboration with INJAZ Kuwait along with the volunteer mentors from companies such as Alghanim Industries, Talent Cycle, DHL and Otis.

The month-long workshop started on May 3, 2023 with 90 students from Class VI. The students were divided into groups of 10 and activities related to the theme 'Junior Innovation Camp' were organized by the school.

Activities such as Word Search, Product Development, Logo Designing and Product Naming features etc. were presented to a panel of judges. Students were awarded according to their performance.

The students of class VII worked on the theme 'It's My Business' and for class VIII it was 'Entrepreneur Master Class'.

The session concluded on May 25, 2023 with students being engaged in various thought provoking and commendable activities and the outstanding ones were honored with medals.

Also an Innovation Camp was organized for the Class XII Commerce and Humanities students on May on the same day at the school auditorium. The creative and inventive teams came up with profitable and lucrative ideas regarding their products and services, ensuring that a level of pragmatism is maintained throughout.

A survey was also conducted immediately after the product launch. The winners of the competition were selected based on their presentation and performance.

The teams were judged and awarded with gold, silver and bronze medals by the Principal of Indian Public School, Mrs A. Cherian.

The student community of Indian Public School benefitted immensely from the program and participated enthusiastically. They were all praise for this memorable workshop which prompted them to showcase their creative skills and recognized their hidden talents.



Photos from the event.

JOINT OPERATIONS

SAUDI ARABIAN CHEVRON INC. - KUWAIT GULF OIL COMPANY (K.S.C.)

Tender: JO/SC487/WH22

Sale of Scrap

Joint Operation Wafra SAUDI ARABIAN CHEVRON INC. - KUWAIT GULF OIL COMPANY (K.S.C.) invites the bidders (companies / institutions) willing to participate in the subject tender to express their desire/interest by sending a fax to the Contracts Team Fax No. +965 23981345 or by e-mail Contracts-WJO@Chevron.com in order to provide you the method to pay non-refundable fee of **Kuwaiti Dinar One Hundred Thirty (KD 130/-)** and collect the Sale documents and bidding envelopes available for collection until the **Sunday, June 18, 2023** (the last day to register for the tender).

Sale of Various used & scrap Pipes, Tubing, Casing, Sucker Rods, Heater tubes, Engines, Pumps, Transformers, Production Separator, Tanks, Pipe Spools, Pipe Supports, Pipe Fittings, Structural Supports, Valves, Well Head Manifolds, Flame Arrestors, Engine Spare Parts, Cables and Cable Drums, Miscellaneous Electrical Items, Miscellaneous Inventory Material, Miscellaneous Scrap etc.

A Pre-Tender Meeting, obligatory for all participants having purchased a copy of the Sale Documents and deposited the fee, will be held on **Monday June 19, 2023** in Joint Operation Wafra to explain the tendering procedure and visit the site for inspection.

The Bidding envelope(s) provided by the Company shall be deposited in the appropriate "Contract Box" located in the reception area of the Joint Operations Main Office Building at the Admin. Camp, Wafra, Kuwait, **before 09:00 hours on Monday, July 3, 2023.** Tender received after this date and time will be rejected.

For more information please call:

Telephone: +965 23983639 ext. 3312-2220

Fax: +965 23981345

gold prices pushed back to USD 1,948

Gold prices fell back in last week's trading to close at USD 1,948 an ounce, following US senate debt ceiling bill.

A report issued by local Dar Al-Sabaek mentioned that the recently signed bill reinvigorated investors' sense of risk-taking as it lessened fears of US falling back on debt payments; causing the US dollar to regain its strength. US treasury bonds yield also

directly increased following the debt ceiling bill, this along with American data reflecting strong labor market, effectively decreased gold prices 1.3 percent.

As long as American data shows continuous improvements, investors will continue to stray away from the precious metal, indicated the report, adding that gold prices would rejuvenate should the US put stop to

interest rate increase policy.

Gold August futures retreated by 26 dollars an ounce, whereas US dollar indicator against other main currencies increased 0.5 percent to 104 points.

On a local scale, the report stated that the price of a 24-carat gram reached KD 19.48, whereas the 21-carat gram reached KD 17. (KUNA)

OPEC's 186th ministerial meet concludes

The ministers of oil of the OPEC member countries concluded their 186th regular meeting in Vienna on Saturday on the eve of the ministerial meeting of the OPEC+ alliance.

Emerging from the meeting, the ministers declined to make any press comments, which aroused speculations of a further production cut, that could

be decided at tomorrow, Sunday.

The OPEC+ Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC) is scheduled to convene tomorrow morning at the OPEC HQ tomorrow morning to set the stage for the plenary meeting of the 13-member alliance.

The JMMC will present its regular report on the oil market

to the OPEC+ ministers to help them decide on the production levels, according to an earlier statement from OPEC media center.

Kuwait's Minister of Finance, Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs and Minister of Oil Manaf Al-Hajeri leads the country's delegation to the meetings. (KUNA)

Market Movements

02-06-2023

Change Closing pts

		Change	Closing pts
JAPAN	- Nikkei	+376.21	31,524.22
PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	+81.43	6,512.01
PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	+82.51	41,356.23
UK	- FTSE 100	+117.01	7,607.28
EUROPE	- Euro Stoxx 50	+65.91	4,323.52

Business

CB consumer confidence in the US reaches a 6-month low at 103.7

US House & Senate pass debt ceiling resolution to avoid catastrophic default on US obligations

By National Bank of Kuwait

The US dollar index fell on the week, last trading around 104.01. EUR/USD decreased to close at 1.0706, while GBP/USD increased by 0.91% ending the week at 1.2448. USD/JPY fell below the 140.00 threshold this week, last trading at 139.91. Meanwhile, equities closed mixed this week. The S&P 500 gained 3.04% while the Nikkei 225 also increased 0.43%. Finally, the Euro Stoxx 50 edged lower by 0.40%.

United States

US Consumer Confidence Reaches 6 Month Low

Consumer confidence in the United States fell to a 6-month low, after the Conference Board index came in at 103.7 in May, slightly below the previous print of 103.7. The report revealed growing uncertainty around the economy, specifically as it relates to employment and future expectations. Ataman Ozyildirim, Senior Director of Economics at The Conference Board stated, "Consumers' view of current conditions became somewhat less upbeat while their expectations remained gloomy." The assessment of employment conditions saw the biggest drop, with consumers reporting that jobs are 'plentiful' falling 4% from 47.5% in April to 43.5% in May. Finally, Ozyildirim added, "consumers also became more downbeat about future business conditions, weighing on the expectations index."

US Labor Market Tight & Robust

Job openings in April surprised to the upside, with openings at their highest level since January. The JOLTs job openings report revealed 10.1 million job openings versus 9.8 million in March and 9.4 million as an expected figure. The non-farm employment report further supported the idea of a robust labor market, after 339K jobs were added to the US economy versus an expectation of 193K and previous figure of 294K. This was driven by gains in sectors such as professional business (64K), government (56K), healthcare (52K), and hospitality (48K). Despite this, the unemployment rate ticked up to 3.7% from 3.4% previously as more people started to look for work. Average hourly earnings dropped to 0.3% monthly from 0.4% previously, representing a drop to 4.3% from 4.4% previously on an annual basis. The strong labor market data is not enough to alter market expectations, which overwhelmingly favors a pause in rate hikes at the upcoming FOMC meeting.

Fed Official Signals Pause

The latest remarks from Federal Reserve governor Phillip Jefferson show that he supports a pause in rate hikes for the upcoming FOMC meeting. Commenting on interest rates, Jefferson said, "skipping a rate hike at a coming meeting would allow the [FOMC] to see more data before making decisions about the extent of addi-

Highlights

- US House & Senate pass the debt ceiling resolution to avoid a catastrophic US default on obligations.
- CB consumer confidence in the United States reached a 6-month low at 103.7 amid growing uncertainties surrounding employment and future business expectations.
- According to the JOLTs report, the US had 10.1 million job openings versus 9.8 million previously, significantly beating expectations.
- Non-farm employment report showed 339K jobs added to the US economy vs an expectation of 193K, meanwhile unemployment rate ticks up to 3.7% as more people seek jobs.
- Annual Eurozone CPI inflation falls to 6.1% headline and 5.3% core in May, below forecasts amid market expectations for further rate hikes by the European Central Bank.
- Manufacturing PMI in China surprises to the downside, coming in at 48.8 stoking fears of global slowdown in growth.
- Annual headline CPI in Australia accelerates to 6.8% from 6.3% previously, driven by housing and fuel costs and increasing the pressure on the RBA to deliver a rate hike.

tional policy firming." However, he did warn that a pause to assess the effects of rate hikes does not necessarily mean that they "have reached the peak rate for this cycle."

US Leaders Reach Debt Ceiling Agreement

Following a period of intense negotiations, President Joe Biden and the Republicans led by Kevin McCarthy have reached a debt ceiling deal prior to the deadline. The agreement would see the debt limit suspended until January 2025, meaning President Biden would not have to deal with a deadlock and the politics surrounding it in a pivotal election year for 2024. Furthermore, the agreement sees Biden and democrats retain all the clauses in the Inflation Reduction Act, a victory for them in an economic and climate sense as Republicans have long tried to alter or repeal the act. Despite this, the Republicans have also gained major traction. The deal ensures that non-defense spending will remain flat for 2024, and will increase by a capped 1% in 2025 and for the next six years. Additionally, the agreement involves an expedited gas pipeline in West Virginia that Democrats have long opposed. There will also be cuts to the IRS, COVID relief funds, and an expansion in work requirements, which could see millions lose access to food stamps. Instead, House Republicans ensured that the deal would see full funding for military veteran's health care and would expand the PACT Act's toxic exposure fund. Finally, the

deal would guarantee that student loan repayment would resume at the end of the summer following Biden's decision to pause it during the height of the COVID pandemic in 2020. However, Republicans were not able to repeal Biden's plan to provide up to \$20,000 in debt relief for qualified student borrowers and his income-driven repayment plan that benefits lower-socioeconomic households.

The US House passed the debt-ceiling bill with a 314-117 majority vote. Several lawmakers, including Democrat Bernie Sanders opposed the deal, saying that "[he] cannot in good conscience, vote for the debt ceiling deal." Despite this, the Senate also voted to pass the resolution, thus ending the debt-ceiling dispute for the next year and a half.

The dollar weakened over the week against a basket of other currencies, with the US dollar index last trading around 104.

Europe

Eurozone Inflation Cools

Annual CPI inflation in the Eurozone fell to 6.1% in May from 7.0% previously, beating market expectations of 6.3%. Furthermore, annual core CPI dropped to 5.3% in May from 5.6% in April, again beating expectations of 5.5%. The bloc's largest economies, Germany and France, saw noticeable slowdowns in regards to the pace of price growth. Despite this, ECB President Christine Lagarde signaled that there is still "ground to cover to bring interest rates to sufficiently restrictive levels." Markets are still pricing in a 25 bps hike by the European Central Bank next meeting following the release of CPI data and Lagarde's comments. The EUR/USD currency pair ended the week lower, last trading at 1.0706.

Asia Pacific

China Manufacturing PMI Ignites Fears of Global Slowdown in Growth
China's disappointing recovery from lifting COVID

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar
USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30735.

Rates - 4th June, 2023

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.0724	1.0633	1.0778	1.0706	1.0500	1.0900	1.0764
GBP	1.2342	1.2325	1.2544	1.2448	1.2300	1.2600	1.2472
JPY	140.68	138.45	140.93	139.94	138.00	141.00	137.97
CHF	0.9049	0.9012	0.9148	0.9089	0.8900	0.9200	0.8998

The Conversation

COVID-19 clawbacks, spending caps and a cut

What House Republicans got in return for pushing US to the brink of default

By Raymond Scheppach
University of Virginia

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

House Republicans pushed the U.S. to the edge of a fiscal crisis because they wanted deep cuts in government spending.

So, based on the deal President Joe Biden signed into law on June 3, 2023, how did they do?

In broad strokes, the deal suspends the debt limit until January 2025, freezes nondefense discretionary funding at current levels and makes a few additional cuts and policy changes that were designed to appeal to enough Republicans and Democrats to get it through Congress. The deal also includes an incentive to motivate lawmakers to pass a budget on time in four months.

That provision and the 2025 expiration date should mean the U.S. will avoid any self-inflicted fiscal crises until at least after the next presidential election.

No one got everything they wanted. Biden didn't get the clean debt ceiling increase he had insisted on for months. Republicans didn't get most of what they sought in a bill they passed in April - though they did get some of it.

As a professor of public policy and former deputy director at the Congressional Budget Office, I believe the deal, which passed through both Houses of Congress just ahead of the June 5 deadline to avoid default, does hardly anything to address America's long-term debt problem. To me, this outcome shows why a debt ceiling standoff is not the right way to solve it.

Let's take a closer look at what I would consider the five main components of the new law to see what they'll accomplish.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program has been a Republican target for a while.

Under current law, an individual must work or be in training for 80 hours per month if they receive SNAP food benefits in three or more out of 36 months, is able-bodied, does not live with dependent children and is under 50 years old. This entitlement program is 100% funded by the federal government but is administered by states, which have the ability to waive the requirements in some low-unemployment areas.

The new deal expands the eligibility requirements to people up to age 54 and limits some of the state waiver authority. It excludes veterans and homeless people from the tougher work requirements and will expire in 2030.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated the changes would result in a net gain of 78,000 people getting benefits, according to a letter sent to Congress May 30. And while that provision was intended to reduce spending, because of the exclusions the CBO expects it to actually increase spending by US\$1.8 billion over the next decade.

The bill also contains some additional work requirements for welfare recipients for the temporary assistance for needy families program, but the changes are relatively minor.

The main way the agreement restricts federal spending is through the temporary cap on nondefense discretionary spending.

Spending on everything other than defense, entitlements like Social Security, and veterans benefits will stay flat in next year's budget relative to the 2023 amount and increase 1% the following year, with no limits after that.

But ultimately, the caps apply to just a small share of total government spending - less than 13%. So not only is it a very minor reduction in spending, it involves a small fraction of the federal budget.

In their House bill, Republicans had sought a larger cut in discretionary spending.

Entitlement programs will be unaffected by the deal, while defense spending will grow by 3.3% next year, as Biden requested in his budget.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, the savings from the caps will amount to about \$1.3 trillion over the next decade, with another \$188 billion in total interest savings.

But I - and the White House - believe the actual savings will be much more modest, likely under \$200 billion. The White House puts it at as little as \$136 billion.

That's because enforcement mechanisms exist for only the first two years of the deal, and some accounting tricks make the total savings seem higher than they are. After that anything goes, and Congress has a record of restoring funding lost to those types of caps.

Debt deal 'imposes' work requirements for food aid



Bags of turkey await an annual Thanksgiving food giveaway at The Redeemed Christian Church of God New Wine Assembly, Nov. 22, 2022, in Washington. Democrats are deeply conflicted about the food aid requirements President Joe Biden negotiated as part of the debt-ceiling deal. (AP)

New condition frustrates many Dems

WASHINGTON, June 4, (AP): Democrats are deeply conflicted about the food aid requirements that President Joe Biden negotiated as part of the debt ceiling deal, fearing damage has been done to safety net programs that will be difficult to unravel in the years ahead as Republicans demand further cuts.

Bargaining over toughening work requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, commonly known as food stamps, became the focal point for the White House and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., up until the end. Negotiators from both sides made clear, publicly and privately, that it was the biggest area of disagreement and almost led to the talks breaking down several times.

In the end, Democrats warily accepted new requirements for some able-bodied recipients in exchange for food aid.

Republicans agreed to drop some work requirements for veterans, homeless people and others.

The result of the tense back-and-forth was a deal that played to both sides, but one that many Democrats agonized over as they weighed whether to vote for the package that Biden signed Saturday. Many struggled to square cutting access to food for marginalized communities with an outcome that allowed the United States to avoid defaulting on its debt.

"In order for this country to not default on its bills, we then turned and made our most vulnerable communities default," said Rep. Cori Bush, D-Mo. Years before she came to Congress, Bush lived in a car with her then-husband and two young children after the family had been evicted from their rental home.

The federal aid program provides monthly funds - sometimes as little as \$6 a day - to allow low-income individuals and families to buy groceries. It is the largest program in the country focused on fighting hunger, with 41 million people using benefits last year alone to purchase food, according to the Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service, which administers the program.

US, Taiwan sign trade deal over China's opposition

The United States signed a trade agreement Thursday with Taiwan over opposition from China, which claims the self-ruled island democracy as part of its territory. The two governments say the U.S.-Taiwan Initiative on 21st Century Trade will strengthen commercial relations by improving customs, investment and other regulation. The measure was signed by employees of the unofficial entities that maintain

relations between the United States and Taiwan, a center for high-tech industry. They have no formal diplomatic ties but maintain unofficial relations and have billions of dollars in annual trade. The agreement is intended to "strengthen and deepen the economic and trade relationship," the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative said in a statement. The deputy USTR, Sarah Bianchi, attended the signing.

The Chinese government accused Washington of violating agreements on Taiwan's status and demanded the U.S. government stop official contact with the island's elected government. Taiwan and China split in 1949 after a civil war. The island never has been part of the People's Republic of China, but the mainland's ruling Communist Party says it is obligated to unite with China, by force if necessary. (AP)

Germany reports labor shortage in one-sixth of pros

Germany has labor shortages in one-sixth of professions and the number is growing, the national labor agency said Friday as ministers prepare to travel to Brazil to encourage the recruitment of caregivers. Germany has Europe's biggest economy. The Federal Labor Agency said its annual analysis showed that 200 out of about 1,200 professions it surveyed had labor shortages last

year, up from 148 the previous year. It said that bus drivers, service jobs in hotels and restaurants, and jobs in metalwork were among those that joined the list. Other professions where Germany is struggling to fill jobs are in nursing care, child care, the construction industry and automotive technology, along with truck drivers, architects, pharmacists and information technology

specialists. The labor agency said that it's keeping an eye on another 157 professions that could potentially develop labor shortages. The agency pointed to a "mismatch" between demand for labor and potential employees, and said that only 26% of jobless skilled workers seeking employment last year were looking for a job in one of the areas with shortages. (AP)

The Conversation

Clogger flagged as a potential villain

How AI could take over elections – and undermine democracy

By Archon Fung, Harvard Kennedy School and Lawrence Lessig, Harvard University

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

Could organizations use artificial intelligence language models such as ChatGPT to induce voters to behave in specific ways?

Sen. Josh Hawley asked OpenAI CEO Sam Altman this question in a May 16, 2023, U.S. Senate hearing on artificial intelligence. Altman replied that he was indeed concerned that some people might use language models to manipulate, persuade and engage in one-on-one interactions with voters.

Altman did not elaborate, but he might have had something like this scenario in mind. Imagine that soon, political technologists develop a machine called Clogger - a political campaign in a black box. Clogger relentlessly pursues just one objective: to maximize the chances that its candidate - the campaign that buys the services of Clogger Inc. - prevails in an election.

While platforms like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube use forms of AI to get users to spend more time on their sites, Clogger's AI would have a different objective: to change people's voting behavior.

As a political scientist and a legal scholar who study the intersection of technology and democracy, we believe that something like Clogger could use automation to dramatically increase the scale and potentially the effectiveness of behavior manipulation and microtargeting techniques that political campaigns have used since the early 2000s. Just as advertisers use your browsing and social media history to individually target commercial and political ads now, Clogger would pay attention to you - and hundreds of millions of other voters - individually.

It would offer three advances over the current state-of-the-art algorithmic behavior manipulation. First, its language model would generate messages - texts, social media and email, perhaps including images and videos - tailored to you personally. Whereas advertisers strategically place a relatively small number of ads, language models such as ChatGPT can generate countless unique messages

for you personally - and millions for others - over the course of a campaign.

Second, Clogger would use a technique called reinforcement learning to generate a succession of messages that become increasingly more likely to change your vote. Reinforcement learning is a machine-learning, trial-and-error approach in which the computer takes actions and gets feedback about which work better in order to learn how to accomplish an objective. Machines that can play Go, Chess and many video games better than any human have used reinforcement learning.

Third, over the course of a campaign, Clogger's messages could evolve in order to take into account your responses to the machine's prior dispatches and what it has learned about changing others' minds. Clogger would be able to carry on dynamic "conversations" with you - and millions of other people - over time. Clogger's messages would be similar to ads that follow you across different websites and social media.

Three more features - or bugs - are worth noting. First, the messages that Clogger sends may or may not be political in content. The machine's only goal is to maximize vote share, and it would likely devise strategies for achieving this goal that no human campaigner would have thought of.

One possibility is sending likely opponent voters information about nonpolitical passions that they have in sports or entertainment to bury the political messaging they receive. Another possibility is sending off-putting messages - for example incontinence advertisements - timed to coincide with opponents' messaging. And another is manipulating voters' social media friend groups to give the sense that their social circles support its candidate.

Second, Clogger has no regard for truth. Indeed, it has no way of knowing what is true or false. Language model "hallucinations" are not a problem for this machine because its objective is to change your vote, not to provide accurate information.

Third, because it is a black box type of artificial intelligence, people would have no way to know what strategies it uses.

If the Republican presidential campaign were to deploy Clogger in 2024, the Democratic campaign would likely be compelled to respond in kind, perhaps with

a similar machine. Call it Dogger. If the campaign managers thought that these machines were effective, the presidential contest might well come down to Clogger vs. Dogger, and the winner would be the client of the more effective machine.

Political scientists and pundits would have much to say about why one or the other AI prevailed, but likely no one would really know. The president will have been elected not because his or her policy proposals or political ideas persuaded more Americans, but because he or she had the more effective AI. The content that won the day would have come from an AI focused solely on victory, with no political ideas of its own, rather than from candidates or parties.

In this very important sense, a machine would have won the election rather than a person. The election would no longer be democratic, even though all of the ordinary activities of democracy - the speeches, the ads, the messages, the voting and the counting of votes - will have occurred.

The AI-elected president could then go one of two ways. He or she could use the mantle of election to pursue Republican or Democratic party policies. But because the party ideas may have had little to do with why people voted the way that they did - Clogger and Dogger don't care about policy views - the president's actions would not necessarily reflect the will of the voters. Voters would have been manipulated by the AI rather than freely choosing their political leaders and policies.

Another path is for the president to pursue the messages, behaviors and policies that the machine predicts will maximize the chances of reelection. On this path, the president would have no particular platform or agenda beyond maintaining power. The president's actions, guided by Clogger, would be those most likely to manipulate voters rather than serve their genuine interests or even the president's own ideology.

It would be possible to avoid AI election manipulation if candidates, campaigns and consultants all forswore the use of such political AI. We believe that is unlikely. If politically effective black boxes were developed, the temptation to use them would be almost irresistible. Indeed, political consultants might well see using these tools as required by their professional responsibility to help their candidates win. And once one candidate uses such an effective tool, the opponents could hardly be expected to resist by disarming unilaterally.

Critical hurdle cleared

California bill requiring Big Tech cos to pay for news gaining momentum

SACRAMENTO, Calif., June 4, (AP) - A California bill that would force Big Tech companies to pay media outlets for posting and using their news content cleared another critical hurdle Thursday. The measure is among hundreds of bills that passed in the state Senate and Assembly this week before Friday - the last day a bill can pass out of its original chamber and get a chance to become law later this year.

The bill, which passed the Assembly floor with bipartisan support, would require companies such as Google and Meta to share with California media companies their advertising revenue stemming from the news and other reported content. The amount would be determined through an arbitration process. The bill would also require at least 70% of the shared revenue go toward journalists' salaries.

Such payments would help local media organizations survive after many have seen their advertising revenues nosedive in the digital era, said the bill's author, Democratic Assemblymember Buffy Wicks. California has lost more than 100 news organizations in the past decade, she said. "The California Journalism Preservation Act will not save journalism, but it will provide a support for news outlets and journalists at a moment when the stakes could not be higher," Wicks said

Thursday. The bill is backed by major journalism unions such as the News Media Alliance and Media Guild of the West, which represents The Los Angeles Times and other newstrooms. The California Labor Federation joined in supporting the bill Thursday, saying the bill would protect journalism jobs by "leveling the playing field between publishers and social media websites."

Meta, which owns Facebook and Instagram, threatened to pull all news content from its platforms if the bill becomes law. The company has made similar threats to the U.S. Congress in 2022 and the Canadian government this year when those lawmakers attempted similar measures to bolster local journalism.

Meta also said the California bill would create a "slush fund" primarily benefiting out-of-state newspaper chains and hedge funds. "The bill fails to recognize that publishers and broadcasters put their content on our platform themselves and that substantial consolidation in California's local news industry came over 15 years ago, well before Facebook was widely used," a Meta spokesperson said in a statement a day ahead of the vote. "It is disappointing that California lawmakers appear to be prioritizing the best interests of national and international media companies over their own constituents."

GBK announces 10 winners of 'AlDanah Monthly Draw'

KUWAIT CITY, June 4: The last chance to deposit and qualify for the KD 2 Million Grand Draw is September 30, 2023

As part of its ongoing commitment to reward its customers and account holders, Gulf Bank has announced the 10 monthly winners of the AlDanah account draw for the month of May 2023. The lucky winners who will be taking home a prize of KD 1,000 each, are:

1. Mahmoud Yousef Al-Ebraheim;
2. Reem Abdullateef Shukhair Roudhan;
3. Hashem Fayroz Dalwai;
4. Naser Saeed Ali Al-Ajmi;
5. Hamida Ghuloom Hasan Al-Yousefi;
6. Mohammad Lafi Ali Al-Ghawas Al-Rashidi;
7. Abdullah Nayef Merdhi Al-Ajmi;
8. Huda Salman Mohammad Ali BoHamad;
9. Makiya Yousuf Hasan Mohammed Ali;
10. Eman Husain Abdulreeda Al-Mail

The last opportunity to deposit and qualify for the grand draw prize of KD 2 million, is September 30, 2023, which is set to happen on January 18, 2024, in the presence of representatives from both the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Ernst & Young.

The AlDanah account is one of the most rewarding savings accounts in Kuwait, with its periodic draws that award valuable prizes and multiple benefits for

account holders. Gulf Bank's AlDanah account offers monthly opportunities to win KD 1,000 to ten lucky winners, in addition to two quarterly draws with KD 100,000 prizes each, a semi-annual draw prize of KD 1,000,000 and a grand draw prize of KD 2,000,000. Gulf Bank is the only bank in Kuwait that proudly creates two millionaires a year. AlDanah customers stand to win the semi-annual draw prize of KD 1 million, whose winner Gulf Bank announced last July, and an upcoming grand draw prize of KD 2 million. The annual grand draw is currently scheduled to take place next year on January 18, 2024, in the presence of representatives from both the Ministry of Commerce and Ernst & Young.

In order to increase one's chances of winning, customers must maintain a minimum of KD 200 in their accounts, or deposit continuously to increase their chances of winning. AlDanah account holders are eligible to win Gulf Bank's upcoming monthly, quarterly, and annual AlDanah draws.



Al Danah – winner announcement

With oil prices slumping, OPEC+ states are 'weighing' more cuts

Brent crude gives up post-cut gains

FRANKFURT, Germany, June 4, (AP) - The major oil-producing countries led by Saudi Arabia and Russia are wrestling with whether to make another cut in supply to the global economy as the OPEC+ alliance struggles to prop up sagging oil prices that have been a boon to U.S. drivers and helped ease inflation worldwide.

The 23-member group were meeting Sunday at OPEC headquarters in Vienna after sending mixed signals about possible moves. Saudi Arabia, dominant among the oil cartel's members, has warned speculators that they might get burned by betting on lower prices. Russia, the leader of the non-OPEC allies, has indicated no change to output is expected.

The decision comes amid uncertainty about when the slow-growing global economy will regain its thirst for fuel for travel and industry, and with producers counting on oil profits to bolster their coffers.

Oil prices have fallen even after OPEC+ slashed 2 million barrels per day in October, angering U.S. President Joe Biden by threatening higher gasoline prices a month before the midterm elections. Then, several OPEC members led by the Saudis made a surprise cut of 1.16 million barrels a day in April.

International benchmark Brent crude climbed as high as \$87 per barrel but has given up its post-cut gains and been loitering below \$75 per barrel in recent days. U.S. crude has dipped below \$70.

Those lower prices have helped U.S. drivers as the summer travel season kicks off, with prices at the pump averaging \$3.55, down \$1.02 from a year ago, according to auto club AAA. Falling energy prices also helped inflation in the 20 European countries that use the euro drop to the lowest level since before Russia invaded Ukraine.

The U.S. recently replenished its Strategic Petroleum Reserve - after Biden announced the largest release from the national reserve in American history last year - in an indicator that U.S. officials may be less worried about OPEC cuts than in months past.

The Saudis, on the other hand, need sustained high oil revenue to fund ambitious development projects aimed at diversifying the country's economy. The International Monetary Fund estimates the kingdom needs \$80.90 per barrel to meet its envisioned spending commitments, which include a planned \$500 billion futuristic desert city project called Neom.

That may have been one motivation behind Energy Minister Abdulaziz bin Salman's warning to speculators that they will be "ouching" if they keep betting on lower oil prices.

Bin Salman's pointed comment isn't

AUB launches a Banking 'Simulation' Model initiative in a branch within AU



Naqeab Amin Naqeeb with a group of AU representative during the opening of the Banking Simulation Model.

Practical scenarios to be implemented

KUWAIT CITY, June 4: As part of the memorandum of understanding signed between Ahli United Bank (AUB) Kuwait and the Australian University (AU), with the aim of enhancing cooperation and coordination between the two sides, AUB announced the launch of a Banking Simulation Model initiative for one of its branches within AU. The initiative aims to provide banking training for AU students at the branch, enabling them to understand the operations carried out in the bank branches. Practical scenarios will be implemented to explain the role of each employee at the branch, as well as the role of AUB employees in implementing and conducting various banking operations. AUB Banking Simulation Model within AU stands out for its ability to blend academic education with market knowledge and the possibility of conducting a variety of scenarios that encompass various sectors of the banking system.

It is worth mentioning that the MOU signed between AUB and AU last year reflects the active participation of the bank and the university in strengthening

cooperation in training postgraduate students and university graduates on the best banking practices. It also aims to bring them closer to practical real-world experiences through effective training programs. Moreover, the MOU provides exceptional training programs for bank employees through AU professors and experts.

Furthermore, the MOU provides holistic practical training programs for AU students. These training programs assist them to develop and enhance their personal skills. They also serve as a fundamental cooperation pillar in establishing direct links between academic education and practical application in areas of creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Similarly, they support research and development projects.

In his comment on the launch of AUB branch's simulation model within AU, Mr. Naqeeb Amin, General Manager of Human Resources at AUB expressed his pleasure with the achievements realized under the MOU signed between AUB and AU. He emphasized that the banking simulation model represents a

unique experience in demonstrating the services provided by banks in an easy and simplified manner, explaining how to benefit from them. It also provides an excellent opportunity for young people to train in the necessary skills for banking work and making wise decisions in a safe and multidimensional simulation environment. Through this training model, young people can develop skills in planning, organization, communication, problem-solving, strategic thinking, and other vital skills necessary for improving their abilities.

Mr. Amin also highlighted that AUB is committed to enhancing partnerships with relevant actors in Kuwait to support and develop ambitious national talents striving for excellence. Furthermore, the bank aims to provide suitable job opportunities for them in crucial sectors such as the banking industry.

Mr. Amin underlined that AUB firmly believes that the first step towards achieving broad social development lies in encouraging the training of young people and honing their skills and capabilities.

necessarily a prelude to a cut at Sunday's meeting, said James Swanston, Middle East and North Africa economist at Capital Economics.

"Our expectation is that OPEC+ will stick with current output quotas," he said, adding that "there have been signs that the government may be readying to live with lower oil prices and running budget deficits."

On top of that, Russia may find current prices to its liking because its oil is finding eager new customers in India, China and Turkey. Western sanctions over the war in Ukraine have

forced Russian oil to sell at discounts of around \$53 to \$57 per barrel.

At those prices, Moscow's shipments avoid triggering the \$60 price cap imposed by the Group of Seven major democracies to try to limit oil profits flowing into Russia's war chest. The price ceiling allows the world's No. 3 oil producer to keep supplying non-Western customers to avoid a global shortage that would drive up prices for everyone.

Insurers and shipping companies largely based in Western countries are barred from handling Russian oil if

it is priced above the cap. Russia has found ways to evade the limits through "dark fleet" tankers, which tamper with transponders showing their locations or transfer oil from ship to ship to disguise its origin.

An OPEC+ "production cut could push the price of Russian oil above the G7 price cap of \$60 per barrel, which would make it difficult to transport and thus to sell the oil," commodity analyst Carsten Fritsch at Commerzbank wrote in a research note. "Russia appears to be doing good business at the current price level."

renewable energy on its way to break records

The International Atomic Energy Agency said on Thursday that renewable energy is on its way to breaking records, as governments put efforts to spread it faster.

A new report by the agency shows that with the global energy crisis, solar PV energy and wind power are set to make the largest annual increase in renewable energy ever.

The report revealed that global additions to renewable energy capabilities are expected to jump by a third this year, with increasing political momentum, high fossil fuel prices and concerns about energy security, which

leads to the strong spread of solar PV and wind energy.

The agency added in its report that the growth is set to continue next year, with the total renewable electricity capacity in the world rising to 4,500 gigawatts - equivalent to the energy production in China and the US combined - according to the latest renewable energy market update issued by IAEA earlier Thursday.

The agency affirmed that global renewable energy additions are set to rise by 107 gigawatts, the largest absolute increase, to more than 440 gigawatts, in 2023. (KUNA)

lower energy prices behind better economic outlook in EU

Lower energy prices and a strong labour market supported moderate growth in the first quarter of 2023, dispelling fears of a recession, according to the European Commission spring economic forecast published Monday.

The European economy has managed to contain the adverse impact of Russia's war against Ukraine, weathering the energy crisis thanks to a rapid diversification of supply and a sizeable fall in gas consumption.

Markedly lower energy prices are working their way through the economy, reducing firms' production costs. Consumers are also seeing their energy bills fall, although private consumption is set to remain subdued, it said.

This better-than-expected start to the year lifts the growth outlook for the EU economy to 1.0 percent in 2023 and 1.7 percent in 2024.

Upward revisions for the euro area are of a similar magnitude,

with GDP growth now expected at 1.1 percent and 1.6 percent in 2023 and 2024 respectively.

After peaking in 2022, inflation continued to decline in the first quarter of 2023 amid a sharp deceleration of energy prices.

In March inflation reached a historic high of 7.6 percent, but it is projected to decline gradually over the forecast horizon as profit margins absorb higher wage pressures and financing conditions tighten. (KUNA)

Warba issues sustainability report for the year 2022

'Committed Towards Sustainable Tomorrow'

KUWAIT CITY, June 4: Warba Bank issued its first sustainability report for the year 2022 on environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices, which provides an accurate account of the focused and wide-ranging efforts of the Bank's practices related to environment, social and governance throughout 2022

Warba Bank's sustainability report titled "Committed Towards a Sustainable Tomorrow" aims at promoting sustainability and strengthening enduring robust relationships with all its stakeholders. Recognizing the significance of its environmental, social, and economic impact, Warba Bank remains committed to offering transparency about its contributions to sustainable development.

The report complies with international standards such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) in addition to emphasizing the role played by Warba Bank - as a leading national financial institution, and prominent Islamic bank. Warba Bank is committed to meeting international sustainability standards, diligently aiming to contribute to the overall well-being of Kuwaiti society. Our endeavour permeates various facets of our operations, encompassing numerous practices, partnerships, and activities. This dedication begins within our innermost circle - our bank, extending to our employees, and reaching out to larger circles that include our valued clients, the broader Kuwaiti society, the national economy, and ultimately, the environment. By aligning our corporate social responsibility initiatives with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and the Kuwait National Development Plan 2035, we contribute actively to addressing critical issues like climate change, reducing carbon emissions from economic activities, and promoting financial inclusion. Our endeavors are a testament to our dedication towards a sustainable and prosperous future.

The report includes disclosures on the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In addition to following the Central Bank of Kuwait's guidelines on sustainable financing, the Sustainability Reporting Regulations of the Capital Markets Authority, Boursa Kuwait's ESG Guide and follow the metrics set by international institutions such as MSCI and FTSE.

Reflecting on the report, Chairman Mr. Hamad Musaed Al-Sayer commented, "In line with the pioneering standards of sustainability reporting, Warba Bank places emphasis on key topics that define our operations. At the heart of our approach is our unwavering commitment to sustainability and governance. Our steadfast market presence, the Bank's instrumental role in fostering innovation and driving digital transformation, as well as our nurturing work environment are other areas of focus. Equally important are our active community involvement and our tangible impact on the local environment, along with a range of other critical topics. Our objective is to continue setting benchmarks in responsible banking, illustrating our commitment to a prosperous and sustainable future." Al-Sayer elaborated that Warba Bank views sustainability as a driving force within the Bank's strategic vision. This vision aspires to establish the Bank as a leading entity in the realm of Islamic banking services. "Sustainability is deeply embedded within the operational guidelines and model at Warba Bank," he explained. As an Islamic bank, incor-

porating sustainability forms an integral part of our strategic outlook. Our core values revolve around upholding the highest ethical standards in every transaction, adhering to the most effective environmental, social, and corporate governance practices. "We aim to position Warba Bank at the forefront through our sustainable performance," Al-Sayer asserted. Looking ahead, we are keen on enhancing this approach while maintaining open, transparent communication with our stakeholders. We remain committed to disclosing our non-financial performance and shedding light on our role and impact concerning environmental, social, and corporate governance indicators." Al-Sayer also explained that sustainability is closely intertwined with Warba Bank's financial performance and the financial inclusivity it fosters. He highlighted that Warba Bank regularly issues reports demonstrating consistent profit growth, robust liquidity ratios, and a strong capital base that not only supports business expansion but also ensures regulatory compliance. Al-Sayer emphasized the bank's relentless efforts to enhance asset quality and evolve credit facilities policies and governance systems in line with industry best practices. He drew attention to Warba Bank's involvement in financing the National Petroleum Company's environmental fuel project and various construction projects. These strategic are aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Al-Sayer emphasized that Warba Bank is deeply committed to environmentally-friendly operations, extending financing and technical support to projects that are mindful of environmental factors and aim to reduce emissions. This approach is integral to our contribution towards building a new Kuwait. Alongside this, Warba Bank plays a vital role in stimulating growth, bolstering large local companies, supporting small and medium enterprises, and fostering entrepreneurship - initiatives designed to benefit current and future generations. Warba Bank also gives considerable importance to human resources development, nurturing talent, and engaging the youth. These areas form a key part of Warba's sustainability strategy, with the bank steadfastly focusing on attracting particularly the talent among Kuwaiti citizens.

Al-Sayer continued, stating, "Warba Bank is committed to upholding transparency and continually evolving its policies and professional conduct at work. We strive to integrate environmental standards, social values, governance, and sustainability into our operations as part of enhancing our employees' culture and reinforcing the Bank's principles. We are also making strides towards empowering women and amplifying their representation within the workforce across all Warba departments. We're proud to report significant progress in increasing the representation of women on our team, in alignment with our sustainability strategy. Furthermore, the Bank's management is diligently working to assess and elevate the customer experience, particularly through digital transformation and innovative enhancements to our services."

Regarding financial inclusion, a key element of sustainability, Al-Sayer noted, "Warba Bank has seen a substantial increase in the number of new accounts opened by clients. We have expanded access to our banking products and services to include people with special needs, enabling greater financial inclusivity. Furthermore, Warba has ensured the constant availability of its banking services to clients through our around-the-clock digital solutions." As for our efforts to advance social responsibility - a fundamental pillar of sustainability - our initiatives have been holistic and far-reaching, significantly impacting society. These initiatives encompass diverse sectors, including healthcare, humanitarian aid, environment, youth,



Winners display their prizes.



Officials look on as a winner receives a prize.



Officials inspecting one of the cuisines.

LuLu Hypermarket 'honors' winners of Food Fest promotion with grand prize distribution ceremony

KFH announces winners of draw

KUWAIT CITY, June 4: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the winners of the AIRabeh draw with 20 customers winning cash prizes worth KDI,500 each for the 19th and 20th weeks of 2023.

The winners of KD 1,500 each are: Zainab Al-Rasheedy, Ahmad Saad Al-Deen, Huda Al-Busairi, Rashed Al-Ameeri, Duaa Saleh, Salem Al-Enzi, Ronaldo Lancers, Mudhi Al-Shammari, Meshaal Al-Mutairi, Bader Al-Mutairi, Suad Al-Omari, Alexander George, Abdullaziz Al-Falah, Faisal Al-Failakawi, Ali Al-Daihani, Belal Mohammad, Faisal Al-Ajmi, Ahmad Al-Rasheedi, Saad Al-Azemi, Salem Al-Mutawa.

The AIRabeh campaign provides prizes and draws that offer customers several chances of winning "weekly, monthly and quarterly". The campaign crowns 536 winners throughout the year.

The draw took place under the supervision of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The campaign is part of KFH's ongoing efforts to offer exceptional products and services that meet customers' aspirations, enhance the Bank's leadership in the local and global markets, as well as reflect its excellence in offering innovative banking solutions as per the highest quality standards.

The Al-Rabeh account is a salary account available to customers wishing

to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Customers can open Al-Rabeh account in any of KFH branches in Kuwait, or through the Bank's online channels. The account can be opened in the Kuwaiti Dinar and is targeted for customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Salary transfer is a prerequisite for customers to enter the draw provided that the transfer of salary to Al-Rabeh account is constant.

Regarding the terms and conditions of the prizes and draws, a customer is able to deposit 3 salaries during the 3 months prior to the draw, and the minimum balance of the account should not be less than KD 50 at the end of each month during the 3 months prior to the draw. Ten draws take place on a weekly basis for amount of K.D 1,500 for 10 winners each, 1 KG of KFH gold will be drawn monthly for one winner and K.D 25,000 for one winner every quarter, reaching a total number of 536 winners during the year.

KFH is keen to further meet customers' requirements and aspirations and their increasing needs as well as offer innovative and modern services, therefore achieving customer satisfaction, which is one of the fundamentals at KFH. The Bank has achieved a qualitative shift in the level of financial services by utilizing technology.

Goals.

Al-Ghanem further noted that Warba Bank has a proven track record in supporting education and students. He highlighted that the bank actively participates in graduation ceremonies and sponsors graduation projects, reinforcing its position as one of the most significant backers of students' graduation projects.

Al-Ghanem explained that "Warba" was one of the most prominent supporters and contributors to the "Let's Be Aware" campaign launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait in cooperation with the Kuwait Banking Association, believing in the importance of promoting financial culture among the various segments of society and within the framework of sustainability.

Al-Ghanem highlighted that Warba Bank's diverse and comprehensive community initiatives align with the UN sustainable development goals, reflecting the bank's influential national and societal role. Al-Ghanem adds, "As the development momentum continues in Kuwaiti society and its aspirations grow, Warba Bank remains attuned to market needs. We are committed to developing innovative banking products and services, in addition to launching educational and awareness initiatives and programs.

Our goal is to bolster the national economy and strengthen its resilience against any unforeseen challenges." Warba Bank has achieved remarkable successes in a relatively short period, securing a leading position in the realm of Islamic digital banking services for individuals. It is one of the local banks with the largest shareholder base, particularly notable for its social contributions. These factors have enabled Warba Bank to foster close relationships with all members of society. Moreover, Warba Bank ranks among the 50 largest banks in the Middle East in terms of market value for the year 2023, accord-

KUWAIT CITY, June 4: LuLu Hypermarket, the leading hypermarket chain in Kuwait and the region, wrapped up its exciting 'LuLu Food Fest' promotion with a grand prize distribution ceremony at the hypermarket's AIRai outlet. The event, which was held on 3 June, celebrated the success of the festival and acknowledged winners of various contests and competitions held during the promotion period.

The LuLu Food Fest, which commenced on 24 May, captivated food enthusiasts across all outlets of the hypermarket in Kuwait, by showcasing an array of high quality food products at amazing prices, and organizing exciting contests and competitions as part of the food festival.

Among the competitions were cooking contests in Arabic, Indian, Italian, Philippine and Continental cuisines, as well as in preparing desserts, that allowed participants to exhibit their culinary talents. The event also featured other thrilling competitions such as 'Wow the Master Chef', 'Cake Challenge', 'Junior Chef', and a 'Barista Contest'.

Winners of the first, second and third places in each category were presented with generous gift vouchers worth KDI100, KD75, and KD50 respectively.

Furthermore, in line with the International Year of Millets 2023, a special Healthy Food Contest using millets was organized on 28 May. The competition aimed to promote the significance of millets and encourage the adoption of healthy eating habits. An exhibition on the range and versatility of millets that was held on the occasion was inaugurated by Indian Ambassador H.E. Adarsh Swaika.

The Ambassador also presented prizes to the winners of the various cookery contests, including the Millets Healthy Food Contest. In his speech, he highlighted the successful completion of Millets related activities in all Indian schools across Kuwait.

Furthermore, he officially inaugurated the International Year of Millets promotion that will be held across all LuLu Hypermarkets, emphasizing the collective effort of the Indian embassy in promoting and celebrating this significant event.

The Ambassador also expressed excitement about the upcoming months, promising a range of engaging activities and programs related to millets. Millets, being highly nutritious and versatile grains, hold immense importance in promoting healthy lifestyles and sustainable food choices.

LuLu Hypermarket continues to uphold its commitment to nurturing culinary talent and promoting healthy food choices in the country, and with its successful Food Fest, the hypermarket once again reinforced its position as the leading destination for food enthusiasts in Kuwait.

Forbes Middle East classification noting that the Bank was established on February 17, 2010 by an Amiri decree with the aim of reviving the economic situation after the crisis in Kuwait. On April 7, 2010, Warba Bank joined the group of Islamic banks registered with the Central Bank of Kuwait. The bank met the aspirations of Kuwaitis and earned their trust, as it succeeded, shortly after its establishment, in positioning high in the banking sector, and occupied a leading position in the field of retail Islamic digital banking services.

JYSK Kuwait Opens fifth location at Al Khiran Mall

KUWAIT CITY, June 4, 2023: JYSK, the Scandinavian home furnishing brand for sleeping and living, franchised by Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. (AAW), announced the opening of its fifth branch at Al Khiran Mall, the heart of the south, in Sabah Al-Ahmed Sea City to serve residents and visitors of Al Ahmadi Governorate.

Located on the ground floor, JYSK's Al Khiran branch spans over 2,300 square meters of retail space and offers an extensive collection of home furniture, ranging from Scandinavian living and sleeping room sets to dining room sets, alongside a wide array of outdoor furniture sets such as garden and pool seating furniture. Additionally, customers can choose from a variety of home and outdoor accessories, all available at competitive prices.

AAW's Deputy CEO, Mr. Khalid Al Mutawa, stated, "In 2017, we marked the grand opening of our first JYSK store in Kuwait, initiating a mission with a distinct and clear goal, to make JYSK's Scandinavian furniture and accessories accessible to all in Kuwait. Since then, we've introduced a new store each year in various regions across the country, each thoughtfully situated to best serve its surrounding areas. Today, JYSK has a nation-wide network of stores and is a staple in households in Kuwait, with prominent locations in Dajeej, Shuwaikh, The Avenues Mall, Assima Mall, and, most recently, Al Khiran Mall in southern Kuwait. This latest expansion brings JYSK's wide-selection of home and garden furnishings to customers in the chalet area, Al Wafra, Fahaeel, and Sabah Al Ahmed residential neighborhoods."

JYSK Country Manager, Mr. Georges Abi Haidar, said:

"We are thrilled to open the fifth JYSK branch in Al Khiran Mall, the newest and largest mall in the southern region of Kuwait. We look forward to welcoming our customers and visitors and meeting their needs."

Al Khiran Mall is a mixed-use development project by Tameen Group that combines shopping and entertainment. It features the largest marina in Kuwait and a 1.25 km walkway offering a unique view. The mall spans over 70,000 square meters of retail space, housing more than 250 shops, restaurants, and cafes.

The JYSK Al Khiran branch is open from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Sundays through Wednesdays and from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. on Thursdays through Saturdays.



JYSK store at Al Khiran



Chairman Hamad Musaed Al-Sayer.



Chief Executive Officer, Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem.

Ramco Systems strengthens its presence in ME

Global enterprise software company Ramco Systems announced the opening of its wholly owned subsidiary in Qatar, to support and transform the region's business houses and MNCs in the area of ERP, HR, and payroll. Located in Doha, the subsidiary was inaugurated by Her Excellency, Mrs. Angelina Premalatha, Embassy of India.

As one of the fastest growing countries in the Middle East, Qatar

presents a wealth of opportunities for Ramco to further strengthen its position as a key enterprise software provider. The expansion into Qatar will enable Ramco to not only better serve its existing clientele, but also empower other local enterprises embrace digital transformation and derive significant business benefits.

By establishing a local presence, Ramco aims to meet the growing demand for its enter-

prise solutions in the region. These cutting-edge solutions will enable businesses to transform their operations, improve efficiency and elevate their employee experience through a single standardized platform.

Sandesh Bilagi, Chief Operating Officer, Ramco Systems, said, "Qatar is emerging as one of the leading countries in the world in new technology adoption, innovation and digital transformation. (AP)

US sanctions Iranian firm for helping govt censor net

The US imposed sanctions on an Iran-based technology firm on Friday for its role in facilitating the Iranian government's censorship of the internet as anti-government protests have swept the country since September.

A firm known as Arvan Cloud, its co-founders Pouya Pirhosseinloo and Farhad Fatemi, and a United Arab Emirates-based firm were all sanctioned for helping to facilitate the Iranian gov-

ernment's attempts to control and censor internet traffic.

Internet disruptions were instituted after homegrown anger over the September death of Masha Amini, an Iranian-Kurdish woman detained by the country's morality police, escalated into large-scale protests.

US Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control says Arvan Cloud provided interception services for the government, allow-

ing Iranian authorities to control and censor incoming and outgoing traffic and surveil data on the servers. The firm also blocked websites at the request of Iran's Committee to Determine Instances of Criminal Content.

"Free and unrestricted access to information is a fundamental right of all peoples, including in Iran," said Brian E. Nelson, Treasury's under secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence. (AP)

The Conversation

Firms must fully face up to their responsibilities

What is 'ethical AI' and how can companies achieve it?

By Dennis Hirsch and Piers Turner
The Ohio State University

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

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The rush to deploy powerful new generative AI technologies, such as ChatGPT, has raised alarms about potential harm and misuse. The law's glacial response to such threats has prompted demands that the companies developing these technologies implement AI "ethically."

But what, exactly, does that mean?

The straightforward answer would be to align a business's operations with one or more of the dozens of sets of AI ethics principles that governments, multistakeholder groups and academics have produced. But that is easier said than done.

We and our colleagues spent two years interviewing and surveying AI ethics professionals across a range of sectors to try to understand how they sought to achieve ethical AI – and what they might be missing. We learned that pursuing AI ethics on the ground is less about mapping ethical principles onto corporate actions than it is about implementing management structures and processes that enable an organization to spot and mitigate threats.

This is likely to be disappointing news for organizations looking for unambiguous guidance that avoids gray areas, and for consumers hoping for clear and protective standards. But it points to a better understanding of how companies can pursue ethical AI.

Our study, which is the basis for a forthcoming book, centered on those responsible for managing AI ethics issues at major companies that use AI. From late 2017 to early 2019, we interviewed 23 such managers. Their titles ranged from privacy officer and privacy counsel to one that was new at the time but increasingly common today: data ethics officer. Our conversations with these AI ethics managers produced four main takeaways.

First, along with its many benefits, business use of AI poses substantial risks, and the companies know it. AI ethics managers expressed concerns about privacy, manipulation, bias, opacity, inequality and labor displacement. In one well-known example, Amazon developed an AI tool to sort résumés and trained it to find candidates similar to those it had hired in the past. Male dominance in the tech industry meant that most of Amazon's employees were men. The tool accordingly learned to reject female candidates. Unable to fix the problem, Amazon ultimately had to scrap the project.

Generative AI raises additional worries about misinformation and hate speech

at large scale and misappropriation of intellectual property.

Second, companies that pursue ethical AI do so largely for strategic reasons. They want to sustain trust among customers, business partners and employees. And they want to preempt, or prepare for, emerging regulations. The Facebook-Cambridge Analytica scandal, in which Cambridge Analytica used Facebook user data, shared without consent, to infer the users' psychological types and target them with manipulative political ads, showed that the unethical use of advanced analytics can eviscerate a company's reputation or even, as in the case of Cambridge Analytica itself, bring it down. The companies we spoke to wanted instead to be viewed as responsible stewards of people's data.

The challenge that AI ethics managers faced was figuring out how best to achieve "ethical AI." They looked first to AI ethics principles, particularly those rooted in bioethics or human rights principles, but found them insufficient. It was not just that there are many competing sets of principles. It was that justice, fairness, beneficence, autonomy and other such principles are contested and subject to interpretation and can conflict with one another.

Principles

This led to our third takeaway: Managers needed more than high-level AI principles to decide what to do in specific situations. One AI ethics manager described trying to translate human rights principles into a set of questions that developers could ask themselves to produce more ethical AI software systems. "We stopped after 34 pages of questions," the manager said.

Fourth, professionals grappling with ethical uncertainties turned to organizational structures and procedures to arrive at judgments about what to do. Some of these were clearly inadequate. But others, while still largely in development, were more helpful, such as:

- Hiring an AI ethics officer to build and oversee the program.
- Establishing an internal AI ethics committee to weigh and decide hard issues.
- Crafting data ethics checklists and requiring front-line data scientists to fill them out.
- Reaching out to academics, former regulators and advocates for alternative perspectives.
- Conducting algorithmic impact assessments of the type already in use in environmental and privacy governance.

The key idea that emerged from our study is this: Companies seeking to use AI ethically should not expect to discover a simple set of principles that delivers

correct answers from an all-knowing, God's-eye perspective. Instead, they should focus on the very human task of trying to make responsible decisions in a world of finite understanding and changing circumstances, even if some decisions end up being imperfect.

In the absence of explicit legal requirements, companies, like individuals, can only do their best to make themselves aware of how AI affects people and the environment and to stay abreast of public concerns and the latest research and expert ideas. They can also seek input from a large and diverse set of stakeholders and seriously engage with high-level ethical principles.

This simple idea changes the conversation in important ways. It encourages AI ethics professionals to focus their energies less on identifying and applying AI principles – though they remain part of the story – and more on adopting decision-making structures and processes to ensure that they consider the impacts, viewpoints and public expectations that should inform their business decisions.

Ultimately, we believe laws and regulations will need to provide substantive benchmarks for organizations to aim for. But the structures and processes of responsible decision-making are a place to start and should, over time, help to build the knowledge needed to craft protective and workable substantive legal standards.

Indeed, the emerging law and policy of AI focuses on process. New York City passed a law requiring companies to audit their AI systems for harmful bias before using these systems to make hiring decisions. Members of Congress have introduced bills that would require businesses to conduct algorithmic impact assessments before using AI for lending, employment, insurance and other such consequential decisions. These laws emphasize processes that address in advance AI's many threats.

Some of the developers of generative AI have taken a very different approach. Sam Altman, the CEO of OpenAI, initially explained that, in releasing ChatGPT to the public, the company sought to give the chatbot "enough exposure to the real world that you find some of the misuse cases you wouldn't have thought of so that you can build better tools." To us, that is not responsible AI. It is treating human beings as guinea pigs in a risky experiment.

Altman's call at a May 2023 Senate hearing for government regulation of AI shows greater awareness of the problem. But we believe he goes too far in shifting to government the responsibilities that the developers of generative AI must also bear. Maintaining public trust, and avoiding harm to society, will require companies more fully to face up to their responsibilities. (AP)

Secure backup software

Impossible Cloud launches Partner Program for VARs

HAMBURG, Germany, June 4: Impossible Cloud, the revolutionary cloud platform that offers decentralized, multi-service cloud solutions, has announced the launch of its Partner Program designed to help partners and resellers seamlessly implement, demo and integrate Impossible Cloud's efficient, performance-driven solutions into enterprise environments.

The company also announced a number of award-winning global backup solutions providers as alliance partners. These include Comet Backup, an inaugural partner, as well as Acronis. Clients will now be able to use these companies' fast, secure backup software seamlessly in conjunction with Impossible Cloud's S3-compatible storage to safeguard data, ensure business continuity and prepare for emergencies.

The program has been developed to support various prospective channel partners – including value-added resellers (VARs), systems integrators (SIs), managed service providers (MSPs) and independent software vendors (ISVs) – in their efforts to bring more innovative and profitable solutions to customers leveraging the emerging B2B benefits of web3. These benefits include increased capacity, reduced costs, decreased complexity and improved security compared to traditional cloud providers. The solution also offers a flexible, consumption-based infrastructure enabling MSPs to adjust the storage resources they provide their clients in a manner that is secure, efficient, measurable and reliable.

"VARs and SIs want to increase their average revenue per sale with either higher volume or higher margin," said Lennart Rother, Director of Growth, Impossible Cloud. "They're looking for products with a competitive advantage that will provide new routes to market and enable them to offer advantageous pricing without sacrificing quality. Acronis and Comet Backup are ideal launch partners for the partner program; their services are trusted around the globe, are accessible in multiple languages, and - like Impossible Cloud - offer adjustable solutions that scale with growth."

Intensity

The new Partner Portal fosters a collaborative space that efficiently connects Impossible Cloud Technology Partners and Channel partners within a comprehensive environment encompassing product details, educational materials, marketing assets and technical assistance. The portal's Control Console provides a user-friendly interface and dashboards designed to streamline the process and to ease enrollment of new or trial accounts.

"Growing data intensity is feeding the growth and market power of a handful of dominant cloud storage providers," added Josh Flores, Gen-

eral Manager, Comet Backup. "Impossible Cloud provides an ideal solution for resellers and other partners looking to offer an enterprise-grade alternative with a considerable price advantage. This relationship opens up strong opportunities for us and our clients."

Impossible Cloud recently announced the general availability of its enterprise-grade, native cloud storage solution delivering all the capabilities of traditional cloud storage along with the key benefits of web3 technology. It is the first decentralized, enterprise-grade cloud for fast, outage-proof, Kubernetes-friendly, AWS S3-compatible object storage, designed to enable switching from web2 via a single line of code and to deliver cost savings of up to 75%. Impossible Cloud's services can be procured using fiat currencies, eliminating a critical roadblock that has slowed B2B adoption of web3 technologies.

Solutions

In March the company announced a €7 million seed round co-led by HV Capital and 1kx, joined by Protocol Labs, TS Ventures, and very early Ventures.

Impossible Cloud is a revolutionary cloud platform that offers decentralized, multi-service cloud solutions. The platform is based on web3 technology and decentralized infrastructure, which allows it to be scalable, secure, and cost-effective. With just a single line of code, customers can access Impossible Cloud's Storage.

Comet Backup is an all-in-one backup platform for businesses and IT providers, providing fast, secure backup software for IT professionals and businesses worldwide, localizing to 13 languages. It enables organizations to secure their data, deliver business continuity and disaster preparedness. Comet Backup has an intuitive, easy-to-use web console where users can remotely manage and protect devices to back up critical files, folders, databases, emails, servers or even entire devices to a local on-premise location or any of the leading cloud providers.

Acronis unifies data protection and cybersecurity to deliver integrated, automated cyber protection that solves the safety, accessibility, privacy, authenticity, and security (SAPAS) challenges of the modern digital world. With flexible deployment models that fit the demands of service providers and IT professionals, Acronis provides superior cyber protection for data, applications, and systems with innovative next-generation antivirus, backup, disaster recovery, and endpoint protection management solutions powered by AI. With advanced anti-malware powered by cutting-edge machine intelligence and blockchain based data authentication technologies, Acronis protects any environment - from cloud to hybrid to on premises - at a low and predictable cost.

WASHINGTON, June 4: Apple appears poised to unveil a long-rumored headset that will place its users between the virtual and real world, while also testing the technology trendsetter's ability to popularize new-fangled devices after others failed to capture the public's imagination.

After years of speculation, the stage is set for the widely anticipated announcement to be made Monday at Apple's annual developers conference in a Cupertino, California, theater named after the company's late co-founder Steve Jobs. Apple is also likely to use the event to show off its latest Mac computer, preview the next operating system for the iPhone and discuss its strategy for artificial intelligence.

But the star of the show is expected to be a pair of goggles – perhaps called "Reality Pro," according to media leaks – that could become another milestone in Apple's lore of releasing game-changing technology, even though the company hasn't always been the first to try its hand at making a particular device.

Apple's lineage of breakthroughs date back to a bow-tied Jobs peddling the first Mac in 1984 – a tradition that continued with the iPod in 2001, the iPhone in 2007, the iPad in 2010, the Apple Watch in 2014 and its AirPods in 2016.

But with a hefty price tag that could be in the \$3,000 range, Apple's new headset may also be greeted with a lukewarm reception from all but affluent technophiles.

If the new device turns out to be a niche product, it would leave Apple in the same bind as other major tech companies and startups that have tried selling headsets or glasses equipped with technology that either thrusts people

'Reality Pro' set to be star of the show

Apple's headset aimed at thrusting the masses into alternate realities



Apple CEO Tim Cook discusses the Apple Watch at the Apple event at the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium in San Francisco, Sept. 9, 2015. If Apple unveils a widely anticipated headset equipped with mixed reality technology on Monday, it will be the company's biggest new product since the introduction of the Apple Watch nearly a decade ago. (AP)

into artificial worlds or projects digital images with scenery and things that are actually in front of them – a format known as "augmented reality."

Apple's goggles are expected to be sleekly designed and capable of toggling between totally virtual or augmented options, a blend sometimes known as "mixed reality." That flexibility also is sometimes called external reality, or XR for shorthand.

Alternate

Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg has been describing these alternate three-dimensional realities as the "metaverse." It's a geeky concept that he tried to push into the mainstream by changing the name of his social networking company to Meta Platforms in 2021 and then pouring billions of dollars into improving the virtual technology.

But the metaverse largely remains a digital ghost town, although Meta's virtual reality headset, the Quest, remains the top-selling device in a category that so far has mostly appealed to video game players looking for even more

immersive experiences.

Apple executives seem likely to avoid referring to the metaverse, given the skepticism that has quickly developed around that term, when they discuss the potential of the company's new headset.

In recent years, Apple CEO Tim Cook has periodically touted augmented reality as technology's next quantum leap, while not setting a specific timeline for when it will gain mass appeal.

"If you look back in a point in time, you know, zoom out to the future and look back, you'll wonder how you led your life without augmented reality," Cook, who is 62, said last September while speaking to an audience of students in Italy. "Just like today you wonder how did people like me grow up without the internet. You know, so I think it could be that profound. And it's not going to be profound overnight."

The response to virtual, augmented and mixed reality has been decidedly ho-hum so far. Some of the gadgets deploying the technology have even been derisively mocked, with the most no-

table example being Google's internet-connected glasses released more than a decade ago.

After Google co-founder Sergey Brin initially drummed up excitement about the device by demonstrating an early model's potential "wow factor" with a skydiving stunt staged during a San Francisco tech conference, consumers quickly became turned off to a product that allowed its users to surreptitiously take pictures and video. The backlash became so intense that people who wore the gear became known as "Glassholes," leading Google to withdraw the product a few years after its debut.

Microsoft also has had limited success with HoloLens, a mixed-reality headset released in 2016, although the software maker earlier this year insisted it remains committed to the technology.

Magic Leap, a startup that stirred excitement with previews of a mixed-reality technology that could conjure the spectacle of a whale breaching through a gymnasium floor, had so much trouble marketing its first headset to consumers in 2018 that it has since shifted its focus to industrial, healthcare and emergency uses.

Daniel Diez, Magic Leap's chief transformation officer, said there are four major questions Apple's goggles will have to answer: "What can people do with it? What does this thing look and feel like? Is it comfortable to wear? And how much is it going to cost?"

The anticipation that Apple's goggles are going to sell for several thousand dollars already has dampened expectations for the product. Although he expects Apple's goggles to boast "jaw dropping" technology, Wedbush Securities analyst Dan Ives said he expects the company to sell just 150,000 units during the device's first year on the market – a mere speck in the company's portfolio. By comparison, Apple sells more than 200 million iPhones, its marquee product a year. But the iPhone wasn't an immediate sensation, with sales of fewer than 12 million units in its first full year on the market.

App turns normal iPhones into 360 cam

Polycam launches new AI-based 360 Capture

SAN FRANCISCO, June 4: Polycam, the world's most popular 3D scanning app for iOS, web and Android, announced the launch and implementation of their new feature, 360 Capture.

Polycam has been simplifying the 3D capture process so that anyone can scan the world around them with their mobile device, DSLR camera, or drone to get beautiful, accurate 3D models.

Now, with the launch of 360 Capture, Polycam users will be able to take 360 images directly on their iPhone – no 360 camera or LiDAR sensor needed. Users can view and share the 360 images by themselves, or set them as the background of a 3D model.

This new feature is possible because of generative artificial intelligence technology. This AI, powered by Stable Dif-

fusion, is being used to complete unseen areas in the 360 image. In other words, it allows the app to generate what normal panoramas can't capture – above and below. This enables a much more natural user experience for capturing 360 photos that is similar to how people already capture panoramas.

360 Capture is an additional capture mode that exists alongside LiDAR,

PHOTO, and ROOM features already available on the Polycam app. This new feature will be supported on all iPhones starting from iPhone 11 and newer. Any existing Polycam users with these supporting phone models can utilize unlimited 360 Capture for free beginning June 1. A small watermark on the 360 photo can be removed by upgrading to Polycam Pro.

STRIDE Fitness sprints into summer with fun events

With summer goals right around the corner, it's time to HIIT your local STRIDE! STRIDE Fitness, the leading boutique fitness brand offering cardio-strength interval workouts on and off the treadmill, announced several fun events and offers throughout June, including a special challenge for Global Running Day on June 7. The international holiday is a time to celebrate one of the world's most popular forms of ex-

ercise, running, and its incredible benefits. STRIDE Fitness is taking part by offering a Global Running Day Distance challenge, including an exciting giveaway for one lucky winner that participates. "We are excited to celebrate Global Running Day on such a large scale; there is truly no better place to do so than at STRIDE Fitness studios, where we believe everyone is a runner regardless of age, ability or

fitness level," said Jeff Stokes, President of STRIDE Fitness. "We encourage seasoned members and new faces alike to join us for our distance challenge on June 7, as well as all kinds of other fun activities we have planned throughout the month." Along with Global Running Day, STRIDE Fitness is commemorating Men's Health Month and Father's Day with a free first class for all fathers. (AP)

Cutera® marks Acne Awareness Month with AviClear

CUTERA, INC (Nasdaq: CUTR) a global leader in aesthetic and dermatology solutions, celebrates the start of Acne Awareness Month and a year since the unveiling of AviClear, the first FDA-cleared energy-based device for the treatment of mild, moderate, and severe acne. Engineered with all skin types in mind, the AviClear laser selectively targets and suppresses the sebaceous glands, eliminat-

ing acne at the source, providing a durable solution to acne. Since its launch, AviClear has made waves in the industry, winning ten major beauty awards from top industry publications including NewBeauty, Elle, Good Housekeeping and two wins from Cosmopolitan. With the device's rising popularity, thousands of people worldwide have already been treated with AviClear while Cutera con-

tinues to invest in research and new applications. "Until now, the only other treatment that targeted sebaceous glands came with significant side effects - it's safe to say that AviClear has revolutionized the way my practice treats acne patients," said Dr. Paul Jarrod Frank a board-certified dermatologist and founder of bespoke aesthetic healthcare brand PFRANKMD™. (AP)

Musculoskeletal treatment is expensive, complex

TailorCare provides value-based care option for MSK patients

NASHVILLE, Tenn, June 4: Valtruis, a WCAS company, has announced the launch of TailorCare, a risk-based company that provides evidence-based, clinically-designed care navigation to patients living with joint, back, and muscle pain. TailorCare empowers patients to make informed treatment decisions based on their musculoskeletal (MSK) symptoms, goals, and lifestyle, which leads to better health outcomes, lower costs and happier patients. "MSK care is expensive, complex and riddled with patient frustration, creating strain on the healthcare system. Current solutions are either narrowly focused or overly broad - we believe specialty care is best delivered with a targeted approach and that high-quality care must be comprehensive and connect the dots along the patient journey. We are thrilled to announce the launch of TailorCare, built specifically to address the fragmented category of MSK spend," said Anna Haghgoie, managing director at Valtruis.

"Our goal is to partner with the highest value specialists in the market, and we are excited to have UMP alongside us on this journey," said Karey Witty, managing director at Valtruis. "To partner with an organization of that reputation and scale validates the opportunity we see in the space, advancing both TailorCare and UMP's strategic initiatives."

Strategy

As CEO, Winokur brings 25 years of experience in healthcare leadership roles, building strategy and significant revenue streams for payors, provider organizations, digital health companies and medical device manufacturers. Among her many accomplishments, Winokur has started and scaled multiple businesses, generating revenues of up to \$4B. She served as the chief executive officer of NeuHealth, Bright Health Group's value-based care business, and helped start Bright Health in 2016 as its chief business officer. Winokur was previously a senior executive for Aetna, helping to build the company's population health management business, where she launched a dozen new businesses to serve both employer and provider customers.

"Rachel is a passionate leader with a track record of leading successful healthcare organizations. Her vision and expertise in the delivery of value-based care make her a perfect fit to lead TailorCare. We are excited to support Rachel and her team as they work towards their goal of transforming how MSK care is delivered," said Haghgoie.

Valtruis, a WCAS company, provides a unique platform that invests in and partners with disruptive leaders whose mission is to align, and transform healthcare through what is truly value-based care. Founded on a commitment to accelerate meaningful change, Valtruis brings the functional expertise, access to capital, and an expansive network that advance our partners' evolution from early-stage development to industry-leading enterprises. Together, Valtruis and its partner companies will break through the systemic barriers in the healthcare industry to reduce costs, expand access, increase quality, and radically improve the patient experience.

TailorCare is a risk-based care navigation company that takes a deeply personal, data-driven approach to improving patient outcomes for joint, back, and muscle conditions. By combining a careful assessment of patients' symptoms, health history, preferences and goals with predictive data and the latest evidence-based guidelines, we help patients choose—and navigate—the most effective treatment pathway for them, every step of the way.

Firm aims to detect cancer early when it can be cured

Pathfinder study analysis shows efficient diagnostic resolution following MCED test

MENLO PARK, Calif, June 4: Grail, LLC, a healthcare company whose mission is to detect cancer early when it can be cured, has announced results from a retrospective analysis of the interventional Pathfinder study to assess whether diagnostic evaluations of individuals who received a cancer signal detected (CSD) result with the Galleri® multi-cancer early detection (MCED) test were appropriately directed by the test's cancer signal origin (CSO) predictions. The findings demonstrated that in the majority of cases (78%), the test's CSO-directed initial diagnostic evaluation led to a diagnostic resolution. The findings were presented during a poster discussion session at the 2023 American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting.

"USPSTF-recommended cancer screening tests have reduced cancer-related mortality, but there are no established screening methods for many other types of cancer. MCED blood tests have the potential to be a powerful tool to screen for multiple cancers simultaneously from a single blood specimen," said Deb Schrag, MD, MPH, Chair, Department of Medicine at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York and Pathfinder investigator. "In the Pathfinder Study, the MCED test's prediction of cancer signal origin helped to direct the clinical workup to either confirm a diagnosis of cancer or establish that one was not present. Focused workups help limit exposures to excessive testing."

Participants

This analysis was conducted on 39 Pathfinder participants who received a CSD test result from both Galleri and an earlier version of the MCED test and had diagnostic evaluations. Diagnostic resolution was achieved in 82% of participants (n=32) after initial evaluation. Of those, the test's CSO-directed predictions led to diagnostic resolution in 78% of cases (25/32). The remaining seven participants required additional workup due to persistent clinical suspicion of cancer based on prior cancer history or abnormal or equivocal findings on initial evaluation. In all seven cases, additional workup led to diagnostic resolution.

Diagnostic workup was not prescribed by the protocol and was performed at the discretion of the ordering provider, and funded by Grail. Whole-body imaging (PET/CT or CT chest/abdomen/pelvis) was ordered for specific indications in 27 cases, and included 9 with a prior cancer history, 10 with non-localizing CSO (hematologic or indeterminate), and 1 with both. Although whole-body imaging was useful for hematologic and indeterminate CSOs, it did not contribute to diagnostic resolution in 51% of the participants (20/39).

World facing a demographic crisis

Hevolution to host panel on 'healthspan' investing at BIO International Convention

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, June 4: Hevolution Foundation, a global non-profit organization that provides grants and early-stage investments to incentivize research and entrepreneurship in healthspan science, announces its participation at the upcoming BIO International Convention, taking place at the Boston Convention Center, June 5-8, 2023. As part of its commitment to advancing healthspan research and entrepreneurship, Hevolution will be hosting a thought-provoking panel discussion, "Healthy Returns: Healthspan Investment Comes of Age."

The session, scheduled for Tuesday, June 6th at 3:00pm ET, will be moderated by William Greene, MD, Chief Investment Officer of Hevolution Foundation. Esteemed authorities from the biopharmaceutical and investment fields will serve as panelists: ■ Jens Eckstein, PhD, Managing Partner at Apollo Health Ventures ■ Alexander Fleming, MD, Founder

and Chairman of Kinexum, and former head of metabolic disease review at the FDA ■ Kristen Fortney, PhD, Founder and CEO of BioAge Labs ■ Andrew Levin, MD, PhD, Managing Director at RA Capital ■ John McDonald, Corporate Vice President of Global R&D Business Development at Novo Nordisk

The world is facing a demographic crisis, marked by the challenges posed by unhealthy aging. As societies age rapidly while fertility rates decline, there is a pressing need to extend the healthy years of life, also known as healthspan. This imperative also presents a unique opportunity for biopharma investors to make a substantial impact on the future of healthcare and society, and it may represent one of the biggest investment opportunities of the 21st Century.

The discussion will delve into the ongoing evolution of healthspan re-

search from a niche field towards becoming a central focus of the biopharmaceutical industry, potentially driving the next wave of R&D innovation. The session will explore the promises and potential pitfalls for investors in this burgeoning sector. Additionally, panelists will address growing pains in the field and propose strategies to overcome them, unveil emerging areas of investment focus, and share their insights into the future of healthspan research and its implications for biopharma investors.

"We are excited to host this distinguished panel of experts at the BIO International Convention," commented Dr. Greene. "The discussion promises to shed light on the transformative power of healthspan investment and its potential to shape the future of healthcare. We invite BIO attendees to join us as we explore the unique opportunities and challenges in this rapidly evolving field."

a cancer signal detected result and the number and types of diagnostic tests that were used (primary endpoint). MCED test performance was a key secondary endpoint, including positive predictive value (PPV, the percent of cancer signal detected results that were confirmed to be cancer) and the accuracy of the predicted cancer signal origin. MCED test performance was measured using both earlier and refined versions of Galleri.

Refined

The earlier version of the test was refined to reduce the detection of pre-malignant hematologic conditions, which are fairly common, and improve prediction of the cancer signal origin. Participants were followed for 12 months after enrollment. Final results of the Pathfinder study were previously reported at the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) Congress 2022.

Grail is a healthcare company whose mission is to detect cancer early, when it can be cured. Grail is focused on alleviating the global burden of cancer by using the power of next-generation sequencing, population-scale clinical studies, and state-of-the-art machine learning, software, and automation to detect and identify multiple deadly cancer

types in earlier stages. GRAIL's targeted methylation-based platform can support the continuum of care for screening and precision oncology, including multi-cancer early detection in symptomatic patients, risk stratification, minimal residual disease detection, biomarker subtyping, treatment and recurrence monitoring. Grail is headquartered in Menlo Park, CA with locations in Washington, D.C., North Carolina, and the United Kingdom. Grail, LLC, is a subsidiary of Illumina, Inc. (NASDAQ:ILMN) currently held separate from Illumina Inc. under the terms of the Interim Measures Order of the European Commission.

Galleri is the first-of-its-kind multi-cancer early detection (MCED) test that has demonstrated the ability to detect a shared cancer signal across more than 50 types of cancer through a routine blood draw. The Galleri test can improve the opportunity for asymptomatic early detection by screening for multiple cancers, most of which lack recommended screening tests. Galleri has demonstrated a low false positive rate and high positive predictive value (the proportion of people with a positive screening result who are diagnosed with cancer) in asymptomatic people at an elevated risk for cancer.

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Homecoming on film

Award-winning Mariupol docu screened for 1st time in Ukraine

KYIV, Ukraine, June 4, (AP) — The award-winning film “20 Days in Mariupol” made its premiere in Ukraine on Saturday, seen for the first time by some of the Ukrainian medics and first responders who were chronicled in the documentary about how Russian forces bombed and blasted their way into the southeastern port city last year.

Repeated standing ovations in a packed Kyiv cinema, mixed with tears and hugs, greeted those Ukrainian civil servants who toiled nearly non-stop in and around a Mariupol hospital that was a centerpiece of the film about the city early on in Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022.

For some, the screening served as an unsettling flashback to their own brush with death in the city — a fate inescapable for untold numbers of other victims of Russia’s invasion, including toddlers, infants and expectant mothers whose final moments were caught on video shown in the film.

“It was very hard emotionally because it reminded me of when we were leaving Mariupol, there were still a lot of casualties,” said Serhii Chornobryvets, 25, an ambulance worker who treated countless patients in the city, and is now a military medic. “I could have saved more people, but I didn’t.”

“Watching that movie brought all those feelings back,” he added. Many viewers expressed their gratitude that the footage — part of journalism about the siege — eventually got out to the world for history’s sake.

The documentary by Associated Press journalist Mstyslav Chernov was built on some 30 hours of film from reporting along with AP photographer Evgeniy Maloletka and AP producer Vasilisa Stepanenko

about the earliest phase of the Russian invasion of Mariupol.

They were the three international journalists to hold out longest in Mariupol during the Russian siege, serving as the world’s eyes and ears amid the horrors of the onslaught. Their work along with Paris-based colleague Lori Hinnant won the prestigious Pulitzer Prize award for public service for the AP in May.

As communications networks collapsed and Russian forces closed in, it was never certain the footage would get out. Some was sent in snippets by mobile phone, the rest carried out in the journalists’ final flight from the city.

Devastation

“After this material was published, the entire world started helping us — as the real fighters that we are,” said Volodymyr Nikulin, a Mariupol police officer and a standout of the documentary for his cool-headed determination that word of the devastation reach a global audience. “Already this movie has become part of our history.”

The 94-minute film has received numerous awards, including at the Cinema for Peace competition, the Cleveland International Film Festival, and at the Sundance Film Festival in January, where it had its world premiere. A wider opening in US theaters begins next month.

“I hope it gives voice to all Ukrainians,” said Chernov, expressing his hope that it could help pave the way for international justice and accountability. “It’s painful to think how small this piece really is ... those 20 days are a tiny fraction of all the tragedies that happened” in many parts of Ukraine.

Also:

KYIV, Ukraine: The show must go on, even when its Ukrainian director is drafted by the army weeks before opening night.

“Silence, Silence, Silence, Please,” a play that tackles Russia’s war in Ukraine had its world debut in Portugal last week, but it’s chief creator was conspicuously missing from among the packed audience.

Pavlo Yurov had meant to be there. Weeks before the opening, he had gone to get special documentation that would permit him to make a trip out of Ukraine. Men of fighting age are barred from leaving, but there are exceptions and Yurov, 43, expected to be given a pass to attend his own show.

Instead he was drafted by Ukraine’s National Guard and is now a press officer attached to a brigade preparing to participate in a much anticipated counteroffensive.

So Yurov had no choice but to stay, while his actors took to the stage in the Portuguese city of Coimbra and performed, and his name flashed in neon lights outside the theater halls.

The play is art imitating life. Drawn from real-life experiences of Ukrainians living under constant shelling and enduring Russian occupation, it touches on the lives of soldiers and paramedics working on the front lines of the war, and volunteers delivering humanitarian aid to the population.

But Yurov wanted the play to touch the audience in a deep and immersive way. The show forces the audience to confront the psychological toll of being exposed to constant artillery fire and of inhabiting life in survival mode.

Variety



This image released by A24 shows Greta Lee, left, and Teo Yoo in a scene from ‘Past Lives.’ (AP)

Film

Song makes gorgeous, achingly wistful feature debut

‘Past Lives,’ a meditation on love, chance

By Jocelyn Noveck

Two minutes away, the Uber app promises at one point in “Past Lives.” And if you’re like me, you may find yourself — perhaps for the first time in your Uber-riding life — hoping that promise is a bald-faced lie.

Because you’ll want more minutes, many more, for the couple presumably about to be separated by that Uber, even though they’re simply staring at each other on the street, saying absolutely nothing.

This is but one small moment of playwright Celine Song’s gorgeous, achingly wistful feature debut. But it highlights her striking confidence as a filmmaker. Time and again, Song, who both writes and directs here, makes the unflashy, understated choice — and in so doing, damed near breaks our hearts, with a tale that feels universal yet rich in detail, urgent yet un-rushed. And if, also like me, you suddenly feel tears forming, they may surprise you, precisely because nobody’s been trying to force them.

We begin with a trio chatting in a New York bar — a woman flanked by two men. We’re too far away to hear what they’re saying or understand how they’re connected, and we hear distant voices speculating: “Maybe they’re tourists, and he’s the tour guide?”

Flashback 24 years to Seoul, where Nora (then called Na Young) and close friend Hae Sung, both 12, are walking home from school. Nora, her hair in long braids, is crying because she lost first place on a school assignment to Hae Sung. (She’s an ambitious sort.) The friendship — too early for romance — is about to be sadly interrupted, because Nora’s family is moving to Canada.

Twelve years pass. Nora (Greta Lee, terrific in a smart, restrained performance that echoes her director’s style) has now moved to New York as an aspiring playwright (yes, much of this story is autobiographical.) On a lark one day, she tries to look up figures from her past. Searching for Hae Sung, she learns he was recently looking for her, too.

They schedule a video chat — at first halting, but soon they’re chatting day and night. Hae Sung (Teo Yoo) is still living at home, common for young Koreans, and studying at university. He has plans to go to China. Nora is moving ahead with her own dreams (her goal has shifted from a Nobel to a Pulitzer.)

Distance

When the distance becomes too painful, Nora calls for a break. Not long after, she attends a writing residency and meets Arthur (John Magaro), a fellow writer. And 12 years pass again. The two live in Brooklyn and have been married seven years.

Suddenly, Nora hears from Hae Sung. He’s coming from Seoul and wants to see her. Their meeting in a city park is nothing like the rom-com encounter it could be in another film. Song knows that in real life, there’s often an inability to react quickly or cleverly or even at all, for awhile. The director lets awkward silences stand.

Over the next few days the couple gets to know each other. Not surprisingly, Arthur feels somewhat threatened. Late at night he quietly tells Nora that she dreams in Korean, a language and world he does not know. He wonders if he’s “the guy you leave in the story when your ex comes to take you away.”

And suddenly we’re back at that restaurant bar scene, and now we understand. The three characters try to navigate the unusual circumstances. They discuss what-ifs, and zoom in on a Korean concept of fate, explained by Nora earlier as the connection between two people that has been influenced or determined by connections in past lives — hence the film’s title.

Without giving away the ending, it’s worth noting that Song has drawn much from her own life — down to that bar scene, and a similar visit from a long-ago connection from Korea.

She raises a number of lessons here, but one seems to be that choices, which seem so limitless in our youth, have consequences, even (or most especially) when we’re not noticing. No one choice seems irreversible, perhaps, but eventually they coalesce into a life path.

But the playwright also tells us that versions of one life can co-exist. Nora notes at one point that even if her older New York version is different, the younger Korean version is still real, and still exists on some other plane.

“This is my life, I’m living it with you,” she tells Arthur early on, trying to reassure him (and perhaps herself.) But one of the beauties of this film is how it allows for such an expansive, generous view of what one life can actually be.

“Past Lives,” an A24 release, has been rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America “for some strong language.” Running time: 106 minutes. Three and a half stars out of four.

MPAA definition of PG-13: Parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13. (AP)

LONDON: The British government appointed a new acting chair for the BBC on Friday, five weeks after the resignation of **Richard Sharp**, who was found to have failed to disclose a potential conflict of interest over his role in arranging a loan more than two years ago for then-Prime Minister **Boris Johnson**.

Culture Secretary **Lucy Frazer** appointed **Elan Closs Stephens** to serve as acting chair for 12 months starting June 27 or until a new permanent chairperson is appointed, whichever is sooner. Stephens has been on the governing body of the publicly funded national broadcaster since 2010.

Frazer said Stephens has the unanimous support of the board and will “provide stability” for the BBC.

Stephens said the board, under her leadership, will ensure the BBC is “a vital partner for the U.K. creative industries, maintain trust, and drive change to make the BBC fit for a fast-changing media landscape.”

Her time at the helm may well be a sensitive time for the BBC, as the U.K.’s next general election has to take place by January 2025. The BBC always comes under a bigger spotlight in the run-up to elections as it has to maintain strict impartiality in all matters political.

The date of an election rests in the hands of Prime Minister **Rishi Sunak**. With the Conservative Party trailing the main opposition Labour Party in the opinion polls, there’s a widespread belief Sunak won’t call one until the fall of 2024.

Stephens will replace Sharp, who quit in late April after he was found to have helped arrange a line of credit for Johnson, weeks before he was appointed to the BBC post on the government’s recommendation.

Sharp, a former Goldman Sachs banker and Conservative Party donor, has stayed in the role while a successor was found.

Johnson himself was forced to quit last year after a series of scandals over money, ethics and judgment became too much for his Conservative Party colleagues to bear. (AP)

WASHINGTON: Dutton and Wrenlee are on the rise but they’re no match for champs **Liam**

and **Olivia** as the top baby names in the US last year.

The Social Security Administration released the annual list. The agency tracks baby names in each state based on applications for Social Security cards, with names dating to 1880.

It’s Liam’s sixth straight year as No. 1. Olivia has reigned since the



Johnson



Sharp

name unseated **Emma** four years ago. Emma is No. 2.

Coming in third for girls’ names is Charlotte, followed by **Amelia, Sophia, Isabella, Ava, Mia, Evelyn** and **Luna**. For boys’ names, Liam is followed by **Noah, Oliver, James, Elijah, William, Henry, Lucas, Benjamin** and **Theodore**.

Luna is the only newcomer in the Top 10, booting **Harper**.

The agency has been compiling the list since 1997, often revealing the impact pop culture has on baby naming trends. The smash hit “Yellowstone” has clearly influenced new parents. The neo-Western starring **Kevin Costner** debuted in 2018, with characters

surfacing among baby names ever since.

Dutton moved up the Social Security list to 835, a change of 986 spots from 2021. It’s the last name of the fictional family featured on the series, and it counts Costner’s John Dutton in its ranks. Dutton is the fastest rising name in the Social Security rankings. (AP)

People & Places

Music

Folds sings about life

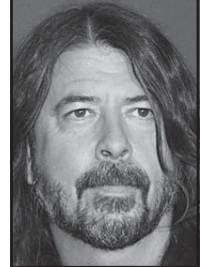
Foo Fighters' album grapples with 'loss'

'But Here We Are,' by Foo Fighters (Roswell/RCA).

There's hardly a greater purpose for music than expression of feelings, and the Foo Fighters have brought quite a collection of them to their latest album.

"But Here We Are" sounds like the most grown-up of the 11 studio records from the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame band, a vintage recipe of relentless guitar riffs, unsettled yet subtly sweet melodies, and the raging, raspy vocals of front man **Dave Grohl**.

Their first release since the sudden death of beloved drummer Taylor Hawkins while on tour last year is essentially the album they needed to make — and probably the one their families, friends and fans needed to hear.



Grohl

Grohl's grappling with loss — the album is dedicated to Hawkins and his mother, Virginia — is painfully palpable and artfully woven throughout the 10 songs. There's no escaping each facet of grief in these characteristically uncomplicated lyrics that are about coping, reflecting and realizing life must go on.

The opening line on the opening track "Rescue Me" delivers the shock and leaves no doubt this is a Foo Fighters record: "It came in a flash, it came out of nowhere, it happened so fast, and then it was over." "Show Me How" features guest vocals from Grohl's 17-year-old daughter, Violet, and is a simple reminder the bond of loved ones is strong enough to overcome a bad day.

There are songs within the song, too. The 10-minute track, "Teacher" sounds like it's channeling Led Zeppelin at times and REM at others as Grohl sings, "Every page turned, it's a lesson learned in time."

The title of the last track, "Rest," starts with a quiet nostalgia before turning dark and dissonant halfway through and then winding down softly in an apparent tribute to Grohl's mom: "I had another dream of us, in the warm Virginia sun, there I will meet you."



"What Matters Most," Ben Folds (New West)

Ben Folds' pop confections are sweet and tart, a recipe that makes him popular with both boomers and college students. He's a master melodist and sly satirist, a sentimental cynic and piano pounder who loves a waltz.

All those sides are evident on "What Matters Most," an engaging 10-song set and Folds' first studio album since 2015.

As usual, his musical approach varies widely, from pingponging synthesizer to lyrical piano, a string section, horns and handclaps, a 7/4 time signature and overdubbed vocals in inventive arrangements that evoke the Beach Boys, the Bee Gees and a barbershop quartet. Hummable hooks are plentiful as Folds sings about "life and doldrums and pain," hilariously swears off motel fings, and makes surrendering to love sound triumphant.

His conversational lyrics lament the state of Western civilization on "But Wait, There's More," and specifically the perils of internet disinformation on "Kristine From the 7th Grade." For those who disagree with his perspective, the CD package includes a photo of Folds seated atop a piano, happily sharing an obscene gesture.

Perhaps the pandemic prompted the song "Back to Anonymous," a shuffle that contemplates the impermanence of celebrity. But "What Matters Most" should have Folds back on the charts.



"Get Behind the Wheel" by Eilen Jewell (Signature Sounds)

The swagger of **Eilen Jewell's** ninth studio album offers no hint it came together after she thought her career might be over amid a succession of personal setbacks.

Instead of calling it quits, Jewell found the inspiration that led to "Get Behind the Wheel," an engaging collection of slightly psychedelic songs that evoke the sprawling landscape of her native Idaho.

The set benefits by stellar electric guitar work from **Jerry Miller**, whose solos shimmer, chime, slash and burn. He plays twangy tag with **Fats Kaplin's** pedal steel on three songs, and teams with co-producer **Will Kimbrough** to create a celebratory twin-guitar squall on the cathartic "Alive."

The accompaniment elevates Jewell's tunes about love at high volume and the cycle of life. "Lethal Love" has a '50s vibe thanks to a rumba beat propelled by drummer **Jason Beek**, and "Outsiders" would fit in a Spaghetti Western. The set also includes imaginative covers of **Van Morrison** ("Could You Would You") and **Jackie DeShannon** ("Breakaway").

Jewell closes with a hazy, cinematic ballad about rebooting. It's titled "The Bitter End," but the album sounds more like a new beginning.

Also:

NEW YORK: Music superstars **Lenny Kravitz**, **Billie Eilish** and **H.E.R.** will team with advocacy nonprofit Global Citizen for a free concert in front of the Eiffel Tower designed to convince world leaders to take further action against climate change.

"Power Our Planet: Live in Paris" is set for June 22 to coincide with the Summit for a New Global Financial Pact, a gathering of the world's political and business leaders to help developing nations finance sustainability projects.

Global Citizen CEO **Hugh Evans** says the summit is an opportunity for governments and global banks to collaborate to jump start climate projects stalled by the COVID-19 pandemic. He hopes "Power Our Planet" will encourage leaders to take advantage of that opportunity and provide the \$16.7 billion in outstanding climate financing promised in 2009 to lower-income countries. He is also seeking to advance reforms at the World Bank to make up to \$1 trillion in additional financing available.

"Global leaders and democratically elected governments really only respond to the momentum of their people and summits like this can come and go," Evans told The Associated Press. "If it doesn't achieve its goal, we're going to miss the window this year to make the climate negotiations the success, which is even more important after last year's complete failure in Egypt."

Global Citizen has shown for years, especially with its A-list concerts in New York's Central Park, that it can generate action by having cultural leaders mobilize their supporters. And artists like Kravitz plan to motivate fans to "act today to save tomorrow." (AP)



Erykah Badu arrives at the Valentino ready-to-wear Spring/Summer 2023 fashion collection presented in Paris on Oct. 2, 2022. The four-time Grammy winner released a 42-piece capsule collection with Italian fashion house Marni last month. (AP)

Music

'I am a creator ... a visionary...'

Versatile Badu keeps reinventing

NEW YORK, June 4, (AP): Erykah Badu has unintentionally occupied the role of culture shifter and influencer for 20 plus years, well before it became a trendy, social media descriptor. Her impact has vibrated throughout music and fashion, and the "Green Eyes" songstress sees it clearly.

"I can hear my influence in music. I can see my influence style," explained the four-time Grammy winner. "I hear my words resonated all over the world...So yeah, I can see it."

That cultural cache may be why her collaboration with Italian fashion house Marni has been so anticipated. The Marni x Erykah Badu capsule was released in select US Marni boutiques last month. The 42-piece collection features women's ready-to-wear garments, including dresses, accessories and footwear, accented with handmade leather patchwork, heavy wools, bold sequins and lush velvets. Badu, 52, who is known for her creative and eccentric style, was hands on in all aspects.

"I've worked the same way in every area of my life; on stage I'm doing sound, I'm doing lighting, set design, costume, hair, makeup," said Badu, whose 18-year-old daughter Puma modeled for the campaign. "I'm involved in everything. I am a creator. I am a visionary...we put those things together and came up with something really creative."

Claire Sulmers, CEO of the influential style blog Fashion Bomb Daily, says Badu's versatility has made her a muse for designers.

Trendsetter

"She is a trendsetter, but she's always marched to the beat of her own drum...she can work anything, from a designer you might find at a flea market, to a runway," said Sulmers, who called Badu an icon. "I think that is what can be attributed to her collaborating with brands because a lot of these brands that might have been under the radar or off the radar, now they're like, 'Whoa, there's this beautiful woman who is an amazing artist, who also has an amazing style, and we want to work with her.'"

As Badu enters the fashion industry and launches other business ventures, the singer-songwriter is keeping her feet firmly planted in music with a tour on the horizon. In a wide-ranging video interview with The Associated Press, Badu discussed her businesses

and creativity.

The line between entertainer and philosopher is often blurred when conversing with the "Next Lifetime" artist. When asked what makes her happy, she mentions her diet; when questioned about the creation of her classic records, she brings up the latest theories on the formation of the pyramids.

Her aura has a warm, but intense gravitational pull, and there's a long-running joke that one can't look into her eyes without falling into a trance — a myth Badu embraces. She has embarked through life with a creative fearlessness.

"If I'm a little nervous or afraid, I feel brave because of the confidence," said Badu, who has served as both a birthing and end-of-life doula for the past two decades. "That has always driven my creativity and art. So, it's easy to be a non-conformist, especially when you feel confident that there's no such thing as losing because even those moments are lessons. I take all the information and use them to reinvent myself each day."

Relationship

Badu has helped bring babies into the world for friends, family and even celebrity mothers like singers Summer Walker and Teyana Taylor, stating the relationships happen organically, and she only agrees if she can dedicate the time. There's no website or phone number to request the "Love of My Life" singer's doula services, at least not yet.

"(If) the money gets tight, then we'll see," she joked.

A champion for Black women and free thinking, she's not only in an era of reinvention, but expansion. She's entered the cannabis industry partnering with Cookies, arguably the world's most recognizable legal marijuana brand. Her idea for a line first formed in the early 2000s, but it became a reality about four years ago after researching the budding mainstream industry.

Badu oversaw everything from the marketing to the packaging for her "That Badu" line, which includes pre-rolls packaged to resemble tampons.

"Everything you see from her line is her. She came up with the design. She came up with the concepts," said Berner, founder of Cookies and mentor to Badu on the industry. He said she inspires other women "to get in the (cannabis) game...women love Erykah Badu. They look up to her.

They respect her."

Draped in Afrocentric garb including statuesque headwraps and ank jewelry, Badu teleported into the music scene in 1997 with her debut album, "Baduizm." It earned her a best new artist Grammy nomination and a best R&B album win. A pioneer of the '90s neo-soul movement with contemporaries like Maxwell, D'Angelo and Jill Scott, Badu crafted soulful classics like "On & On," "Tyrone," "Bag Lady,"

Project

"Didn't Cha Know" and "Window Seat." Her last official project was 2015's "But You Caint Use My Phone" mixtape.

"I'm always working on new music. I don't know when I'll put it out, but I'm waiting for the right time," said the 2018 Soul Train Legend honoree. "I like to feel necessary for my real audience. My real audience is trees and wind and rain, air — ancestors and things like that."

Badu says music is the star that her other businesses orbit around.

"Everything is vibration and sound, from the sound of the birds that I've heard since I was a child... (to) the clothes I wear — the clothes in my Marni line all have bells on them," explained the Dallas native, who still resides in the city. "So, if I associate everything with music, it's very easy for me to create...there's a variety of things I listen to throughout the day, from wind chimes in the morning to Brent Faiyaz in the afternoon to Bach — I mean, there's just so many different things. I just love music and frequency. It is my therapy."

One of her most impactful musical contributions didn't come from a hit, but from the lesser-known "Master Teacher Medley" on 2008's "New Amerykah Part One (4th World War)" album. Produced by Shafiq Husayn, that song is largely credited with reintroducing the term "stay woke" — with collaborator Georgia Anne Muldrow chanting those words — to a new generation.

"From the time they started using it for Black Lives Matter (social protests), it was out of my hands because it kind of doesn't really belong to us anymore," said Badu, who describes the phrase as a person's heightened awareness of everything going on around them.



Morgan Wade performs at Railbird Music Festival, June 3, at The Infield at Red Mile in Lexington, Ky. (AP)

Variety

NEW YORK: Cynthia Weil, a Grammy-winning lyricist of notable range and endurance who enjoyed a decades-long partnership with husband **Barry Mann** and helped write "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling," "On Broadway," "Walking in the Rain" and dozens of other hits, has died at age 82.

Weil's daughter, **Dr. Jenn Mann**, said that the songwriter died Thursday at her home in **Beverly Hills, California**, "surrounded by her family." Mann, the couple's only child, declined to cite a specific cause of death.

Cynthia Weil and Barry Mann, married in 1961, were one of popular music's most successful teams, part of a remarkable ensemble recruited by impresarios **Don Kirshner** and **Al Nevins** and based in **Manhattan's** Brill Building neighborhood, a few blocks from Times Square. With such hit-making combinations as **Carole King** and **Gerry Goffin** and **Jeff Barry** and **Ellie Greenwich**, the Brill Building song factory turned out many of the biggest singles of the '60s and beyond.

"I grew up around a lot of music and two incredible, brilliant, creative geniuses," **Jenn Mann** said. "My parents inspired each other to write great songs. My mom always said that when things were good they had each other, and when things weren't as good they had their music."

Weil and Mann were key collaborators with producer **Phil Spector** on songs for the Ronettes ("Walking in the Rain"), the Crystals ("He's Sure the Boy I Love") and other performers, and also provided hits for everyone from **Dolly Parton** to Hanson. "Somewhere Out There," a collaboration with **James Horner** for the soundtrack of "An American Tail," won Grammys in 1987 for best song and best song for a movie or television, and was nominated for an Academy Award and Golden Globe. "Don't Know Much," a **Linda Ronstadt-Aaron Neville** duet they helped write, was a top 5 hit that won a best pop performance Grammy in 1990.

Their most famous song, a work of history overall, was "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling," an anthem of "blue-eyed soul" produced by Spector as if scoring a tragedy and sung with desperate fury by the Righteous Brothers. "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling" topped the charts in 1965 and was covered by numerous other artists. According to Broadcast Music Inc. (BMI), no other song was played more on radio and television in the 20th century.

But when Weil and Mann first played

"You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling" for the Righteous Brothers, the response from singers **Bill Medley** and **Bobby Hatfield** was "dead silence." (AP)



MONTGOMERY, Ala: Alabama now has an official state cookie: The Yellowhammer Cookie.

Gov **Kay Ivey** on Friday signed legislation naming the confection created by a Montgomery fourth-grader as the official



Weil



Mann

state cookie.

Students at Montgomery's Trinity Presbyterian School came up with the idea of a state cookie. Fourth-grader **Mary Claire Cook** submitted the winning recipe, which includes pecans, peanut butter and honey, WSFA-TV reported.

Cook brought a batch of the cookies to Ivey for the bill-signing ceremony.

Alabama has a long list of official state emblems and symbols, including a state vegetable, nut, amphibian and spirit. (AP)

Pollution

Law targets grazing

Nations agree to draft treaty against plastics

PARIS, June 4, (AP): Global negotiators have agreed to craft a draft treaty to end plastic pollution, a preliminary but crucial step toward tackling one of the most lasting sources of human waste.

Environmental advocates cautiously welcomed the outcome of five days of UN talks in Paris on plastic pollution, but expressed concern that the petroleum industry and some governments would water down the eventual treaty. Most plastic is made from fossil fuels.

Delegates at the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for Plastics agreed Friday evening to produce an initial draft before their next meeting in Kenya in November, participants said. The committee is charged with developing the first international, legally binding treaty on plastic pollution, on land and at sea.



Amara

A coalition of "high-ambition" governments led by Norway and Rwanda, along with environmental groups, want to end plastic pollution altogether by 2040 by slashing production and limiting some chemicals used in making plastics.

"Projections suggest that a child born today will see plastic production double by the time they turn 18, but we know that the consequences of increasing plastic production will be disastrous for our health, the planet, and the climate," said Dr. Tadesse Amera, who led the International Pollutants Elimination Network's delegation at the talks. "The stakes are high, but we are optimistic by the growing awareness among delegates of the need for global controls."

Countries with big petroleum industries like the US, China and Saudi Arabia are focusing instead on plastic recycling, and want country-by-country rules instead of across-the-board limits.

Stew Harris, senior director for global plastics policy at the American Chemistry Council, argued for allowing each government to "use the right tools based on their unique circumstances." In a statement to The Associated Press as the talks wrapped up, he said that circularity - or reusing plastics - was "at the forefront of the negotiations as a means to tackle pollution and be more sustainable in producing and consuming plastics. We agree that's the best path."

Waste

Humanity produces more than 430 million tons of plastic annually, two-thirds of which are short-lived products that soon become waste, filling the ocean and, often, working their way into the human food chain, the UN Environment Program said in an April report. Plastic waste produced globally is set to almost triple by 2060, with about half ending up in landfill and under a fifth recycled, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Over 2,000 participants from nearly 200 countries, including governments and observers, took part in this week's talks. Waste pickers and some advocacy groups said they were initially denied access to the talks. Then debates about rules of procedure - including whether decisions would require consensus or just two-thirds approval - dragged out the proceedings, participants said.

But they ultimately agreed to produce a draft treaty by November, which keeps things on track to produce a final version by the target deadline of late 2024. This week's talks were the second of five rounds of meetings due to take place to complete the negotiations.

"Time is running out and it is clear from this week's negotiations that oil-producing countries and the fossil fuel industry will do everything in their power to weaken the treaty and delay the process," said Graham Forbes of Greenpeace USA global plastics campaign. "While some substantive discussions have taken place, there is still a huge amount of work ahead of us."



Hundreds of goats munch on long blades of yellow grass on a hillside next to a sprawling townhouse complex. They were hired to clear vegetation that could fuel wildfires as temperatures rise this summer.

These voracious herbivores are in high demand to devour weeds and shrubs that have proliferated across California after a drought-busting winter of heavy rain and snow.

"It's a huge fuel source. If it was left untamed, it can grow very high. And then when the summer dries everything out, it's perfect fuel for a fire," said Jason Poupolo, parks superintendent for the city of West Sacramento, where goats grazed on a recent afternoon.

Targeted grazing is part of California's strategy to reduce wildfire risk because goats can eat a wide variety of vegetation and graze in steep, rocky terrain that's hard to access. Backers say they're an eco-friendly alternative to chemical herbicides or weed-whacking machines that make noise and pollution.

But new state labor regulations are making it more expensive to provide goat-grazing services, and herding companies say the rules threaten to put them out of business. The changes could raise the monthly salary of herders from about \$3,730 to \$14,000, according to the California Farm Bureau.

Companies typically put about one herder in charge of 400 goats. Many of the herders in California are from Peru and live in employer-provided trailers near grazing sites. Labor advocates say the state should investigate the working and living conditions of goatherders before making changes to the law, especially since the state is funding goat-grazing to reduce wildfire risk.

Wildfire

California is investing heavily in wildfire prevention after the state was ravaged by several years of destructive flames that scorched millions of acres, destroyed thousands of homes and killed dozens of people. Goats have been used to clear fuels around Lake Oroville, along Highway 101, and near the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

"My phone rings off the hook this time of year," said Tim Arrowsmith, owner of Western Grazers, which is providing grazing services to West Sacramento. "The demand has grown year after year after year."

His company, based in the Northern California city of Red Bluff, has about 4,000 goats for hire to clear vegetation for government agencies and private landowners across Northern California. Without a fix to the new regulations, "we will be forced to sell these goats to slaughter and to the auction yards, and we'll be forced out of business and probably file for bankruptcy," Arrowsmith said.

Companies have historically been allowed to pay goat and sheepherders a monthly minimum salary rather than an hourly minimum wage, because their jobs require them to be on-call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. But legislation signed in 2016 also entitles them to overtime pay. It effectively boosted the herders' minimum monthly pay from \$1,955 in 2019 to \$3,730 this year. It's set to hit \$4,381 in 2025, according to the California Department of Industrial Relations.

So far the herding companies, which have sued over the law, have passed along most of the increased labor costs to their customers.

But in January, those labor costs are set to jump sharply again. Goatherders and sheepherders have always followed the same set of labor rules last year. But a state agency has ruled that's no longer allowed, meaning goatherders would be subject to the same labor laws as other farmworkers.

That would mean goatherders would be entitled to ever higher pay - up to \$14,000 a month. Last year a budget trailer bill delayed that pay requirement for one year, but it's set to take affect on Jan. 1 if nothing is done to change the law.



Members of a non-governmental organization display a model of a globe filled with plastic during a demonstration to create awareness on plastic pollution on the eve of World Environment Day in Hyderabad, India, Sunday, June 4. (AP)

Health

Increased health threats from climate change

Japan birth rate hits record low

TOKYO, June 4, (AP): Japan's birth rate declined for a seventh consecutive year in 2022 to a record low of 1.26, the Health Ministry said Friday, adding to a sense of urgency in a country where the government is seen as too slow to take measures to address its rapidly shrinking and aging population.

The average number of children a woman gives birth to in her lifetime fell to 1.26 in 2022 from 1.30 a year earlier, tying the record low from 2005, according to the annual population statistics. The fertility rate is far below the rate of 2.06 -2.07 considered to be needed to maintain a population.

Japan's population of more than 125 million has been declining for 16 years and is projected to fall to 87 million by 2070. A shrinking and aging population has huge implications for the economy and for national security as Japan fortifies its military to counter China's increasingly assertive territorial ambitions.

The number of newborns in Japan also fell 5% to 77,747 babies last year, another new low, the Health Ministry said. The number of deaths jumped 9% to 1.57 million, as the population shrank by 798,214, continuing a 16-year streak of declines.

Wildfire

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has set tackling the declining births as one of his top policy goals and pledged to introduce further drastic measures.

"A last chance for us to reverse the declining births is before the young population is expected to decline drastically in 2030," Kishida told a panel of experts commissioned to compile a package of measures at a meeting Thursday.

The government plans to secure annual funding of about 3.5 trillion yen (\$25.2 billion) over the next three years for a new child care package, which includes child birth and rearing allowances as well as increased subsidies for higher education.

Kishida's government said it would come up with specific measures and secure funding by the end of the year.

Experts say the proposed measures are mostly additional funding for existing ones and don't address underlying problems.

Many younger Japanese have balked at marrying or having families, discouraged by bleak job prospects, corporate cultures that are incompatible with both parents - but especially women - working, and a lack of public tolerance for

New Mexico sues 'forever chemicals' manufacturers amid health concerns

SANTA FE, N.M., June 4, (AP): New Mexico's attorney general and its Environment Department filed suit Thursday against the manufacturers of so-called "forever chemicals," commonly referred to as PFAS, seeking monetary damages to defray the costs of environmental monitoring and cleanups that they say are inevitable.

Attorney General Raúl Torrez said that 21 companies named in the lawsuit have contributed to environmental contamination in New Mexico through their production and distribution of the chemicals, despite knowing for decades that the compounds pose significant risk to human health.

"We have to step forward and try to protect our community ... to hold corporations accountable who have for too long placed their bottom line and placed quarterly profits ahead of the interests of our community, over our natural environment and over public health," Torrez said at a news conference Thursday in Albuquerque.

PFAS, which stands for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, have been linked to cancer and other health problems in humans. They

are called "forever chemicals" because they don't degrade in the environment and remain in the bloodstream.

New Mexico environmental regulators say they are concerned about forever chemicals seeping into aquifers in a state where 80% of residents rely on underground water for household consumption.

"These companies had knowledge that these chemicals cause harm and they still chose profit over people," state Environment Secretary James Kenney said.

In recent months, states from Rhode Island to California have filed similar lawsuits against major chemical manufacturers including 3M and Dupont on accusations of covering up harm caused to the environment and public health by forever chemicals.

In March, the Environmental Protection Agency proposed the first federal limits on forever chemicals in drinking water, limiting them to the lowest level that tests can detect. Kenney said that New Mexico previously petitioned the EPA to treat PFAS as hazardous.

small children. Many couples also hesitate to have children due to rising costs.

Japan is the world's third-biggest economy but living costs are high, wage increases have been slow and about 40% of Japanese are part-time or contract workers. Critics say the government has lagged in making society more inclusive for children, women and minorities.

Under the conservative governing party, which supports traditional family values and gender roles, women who are unmarried or without children tend to be less respected, and marriage is a prerequisite for having children.

So far, government efforts to encourage people to have more babies have had a limited impact despite subsidies for pregnancies, births and childcare.

Also:

BERLIN: Germany's disease control agency warned Thursday that rising

temperatures due to global warming will increase the likelihood of heat stroke, vector-borne illnesses and other health risks in the country.

The Robert Koch Institute said lung diseases from forest fires and agricultural dust may become a growing problem, as will skin cancer due to increased ultraviolet radiation as Germany experiences longer periods of cloud-free weather.

In the first of the institute's three reports on the impact of climate change in Germany, published in the Journal of Health Monitoring, the authors noted the recent arrival in the country of Hyalomma ticks - capable of carrying bacteria responsible for typhus - as an example of newly emerging disease threats.

The ticks, as well as Asian tiger mosquitoes that can spread dengue, yellow fever and Zika virus, are migrating to new regions that were previously too cold for the species.



The Estrela de FURA ruby ring is displayed at Sotheby's, Thursday, June 1, in New York. At \$5.22 carats, Estrela de FURA will highlight Sotheby's Magnificent Jewels auction in June of 2023. (AP)



Harvati



Karkanas

Discovery

Post-mortem exam on whales: Two dead humpback whales were spotted floating in the waters off New York this week, officials said, part of a troubling rise in whale deaths in the region.

Necropsies were being performed to determine what killed the two whales that were first seen last week, one off eastern Long Island and one in Raritan Bay between New Jersey and the New York City borough of Staten Island.

The Long Island whale was spotted about five miles (eight kilometers) off Wainscott, New York, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration fisheries spokesperson Andrea Gomez said.

Southampton town police reported that the whale had floated into Shinnecock Bay. Police and staffers from NOAA and the Atlantic Marine Conservation Society worked to secure the animal to the beach front and then drag it onto the shore where the necropsy could be performed, Sgt. Eric Sickles said.

Also the Atlantic Marine Conservation Society received a report of a dead humpback whale in Raritan Bay, Gomez said.

The whale was towed to shore so that a post-mortem examination could be performed by the Marine Mammal Stranding Center, she said.

The two humpback deaths are part of a spate of whale fatalities in the region. More than 30 dead whales have washed ashore along the East Coast so far this year, many of them in New Jersey and New York.

NOAA officials held a briefing in January to try to address claims by opponents of wind farms that the whale deaths might be linked to the offshore wind industry.

The officials said there was no evidence implicating wind farm development in the deaths of any of the whales that had been examined by scientists.



Stone tools discovered: Deep in an open coal mine in southern Greece, researchers have discovered the antiquities-rich country's oldest archaeological site, which dates to 700,000 years ago and is associated with modern humans' hominin ancestors.

The find announced would drag the dawn of Greek archaeology back by as much as a quarter of a million years, although older hominin sites have been discovered elsewhere in Europe. The oldest, in Spain, dates to more than a million years ago.

The Greek site was one of five investigated in the Megalopolis area during a five-year project involving an international team of experts, a Culture Ministry statement said.

It was found to contain rough stone

tools from the Lower Palaeolithic period - about 3.3 million to 300,000 years ago - and the remains of an extinct species of giant deer, elephants, hippopotamus, rhinoceros and a macaque monkey.

The project was directed by Panagiotis Karkanas of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Eleni Panagopoulou from the Greek Culture Minis-



This aerial photo shows a house flooded due to heavy rain in Toyokawa, Aichi prefecture, central Japan Saturday, June 3. Heavy rains intensified by Tropical Storm Mawar fell on Japan's main archipelago Friday, halting trains and triggering floods and mudslides in central and western regions where residents were urged to use caution or evacuate. (AP)

try and Katerina Harvati, a professor of paleoanthropology at the University of Tübingen in Germany.

The artifacts are "simple tools, like sharp stone flakes, belonging to the Lower Paleolithic stone tool industry," the co-directors said in comments e-mailed to The Associated Press.

They said it's possible the items were produced by Homo antecessor, the hominin species dating from that period in other parts of Europe. Homo antecessor is believed to have been the last common ancestor of modern humans and their extinct Neanderthal cousins, who diverged about 800,000 years ago.

"However, we will not be able to be sure until hominin fossil remains are recovered," the project director said. "The site is the oldest currently known hominin presence in Greece, and it pushes back the known archaeological record in the country by up to 250,000 years."

The tools, which were likely used for butchering animals and processing wood or other plant matter, were made about 700,000 years ago, though the researchers said they were awaiting further analyses to refine the dating.

"We are very excited to be able to report this finding, which demonstrates the great importance of our region for understanding hominin migrations to Europe and for human evolution in general," the three co-directors said. (AP)



Carisse Brown, right, and Sarah Liegmann, of Germany, trade blows during the fourth round of a featherweight boxing bout in Detroit. (AP)

Claressa wins an 'easy' decision over Maricela

DETROIT, June 4, (AP): Claressa Shields successfully defended her undisputed middleweight title with a lopsided unanimous decision over Maricela Cornejo on Saturday night in the first boxing card at Little Caesars Arena.

Shields (14-0, 2 KOs) won with a score of 100-89 on one card and 100-90 on the other two.

"You saw the best of me tonight," she said. "The only thing I could have done better than I did tonight was get a knockout, and I think I would have knocked a lot of girls out with the punches I landed. Maricela is smart and she's tough."

Shields has won two Olympic gold medals and professional titles at super welterweight (154 pounds), middleweight (160 pounds) and super middleweight (168 pounds).

BOXING

Cornejo (16-6) hasn't beaten an opponent with a winning record in more than four years. She opened her statement by thanking Shields.

"You've created a movement in women's boxing, and you really are the GWOAT (Greatest Woman of All Time)," she said. "After fighting you, I'm ready to go back to 154 pounds or even 147." Cornejo gave Shields some trouble in the early rounds with a solid jab and movement away from Shields' right hand. However, she couldn't generate enough power to keep the champion from coming forward.

Shields opened a cut over Cornejo's right eye in the fifth round and hurt her with a series of combinations in the seventh. A straight right sent Cornejo into the ropes, but the round ended before Shields could finish her.

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Allgaier settles for second

Custer grabs 1st Series win of season

PORTLAND, Ore., June 4, (AP): Cole Custer pulled into the lead after a late caution for his first NASCAR Xfinity Series win this season on the road course at Portland International Raceway.

Custer earned his 11th overall victory on the series in the No. 00 Haas Automation Ford, besting Justin Allgaier by .142 seconds on Saturday. Custer pulled ahead on the overtime restart after a caution for debris on the track with three laps to go.

Allgaier led for most of the third stage after winning last week's rain-delayed race in Charlotte in the No. 7 Brandt Chevrolet.

Saturday's 75-lap race on the 12-turn road course north of downtown Portland was run under a clear sky in temperatures hovering near 80.

It was the second year the Xfinity Series - a step below the NASCAR Cup - has come to Portland. Last year A.J. Allmendinger won in frequent downpours, crossing the finish line 2.879 seconds in front of Myatt Snider.

Now full-time on NASCAR's Cup series, Allmendinger did not return to defend his title on the 1.97-mile course north of downtown Portland.

Sheldon Creed won the pole in the No. 2 Whelen Chevrolet with a lap of

95.694 mph in qualifying on Saturday morning. It was his first career Xfinity series pole. Creed was knocked out of last year's race in the final stage after a multicar crash at Turn 1.

Custer also qualified for the front row with a lap of 95.398 mph, but was sent to the back at the start because of adjustments.

Sammy Smith had to pit after the first lap because his No. 18 Toyota got stuck in second gear. Chandler Smith spun out on the first lap after contact with Connor Mosack and had to pit early. There was no caution. The first caution came out on the 18th lap when Stefan Parsons' No. 07 Chevrolet had engine failure.

Then Daniel Hemric's No. 11 Chevrolet caught on fire under caution. After repairs were made on his car, Hemric returned to the track to help him prepare for next week's road course race at Sonoma.

CAR RACING

John Hunter Nemechek, the points leader going into the race, took over the lead out of the caution, but Creed overcame him on the last corner to win the first stage. It was his second stage win of the year.

Judge stars as Yankees bounce back against Dodgers in interleague series

Red Sox split day-night doubleheader vs Rays

LOS ANGELES, June 4, (AP): Aaron Judge hit his 19th homer and made an outstanding catch in the corner in right, and Gerrit Cole stayed unbeaten with six innings of four-hit ball before leaving early in the New York Yankees' 6-3 victory over the Los Angeles Dodgers on Saturday.

Jake Bauers hit two two-run homers for the Yankees, who rebounded from an 8-4 loss Friday night in the opener of the high-profile interleague series.

Cole (7-0) was sharp back in his native Southern California, striking out five with two walks and only allowing a run on David Peralta's bloop RBI single. But the Yankees pulled Cole after a season-low 80 pitches, apparently due to cramping.

Clayton Kershaw pitched the ninth for his sixth save.

Michael Grove (0-2) yielded four runs over five innings for the Dodgers.

Red Sox 8, Rays 5, game 1

Rays 4, Red Sox 2, game 2

In Boston, Harold Ramirez hit a tiebreaking two-run double in the ninth inning and Jose Siri made a diving catch for the final out, helping Tampa Bay to a split of the day-night doubleheader.

Ramirez collected five hits on the day and drove in four runs for the major league-leading Rays (41-19), who won for just the third time in seven games.

In the opener, Justin Turner's three-run double highlighted Boston's six-run sixth inning that carried the Red Sox to an 8-5 victory. Corey Kluber (3-6) got the win, and Kenley Jansen pitched the ninth for his 12th save.

The nightcap was tied at 2 when Francisco Mejia and Yandy Diaz opened the ninth with consecutive singles against Jansen (1-3). Mejia and Diaz advanced on Brandon Lowe's fly to right and scored on Ramirez's liner into the gap in right-center.

Calvin Faucher (1-1) worked a scoreless inning for the victory, and Jason Adam got the three outs for his eighth save. Siri closed it out with his diving grab on Jarren Duran's bloop with two runners on.

Wander Franco had three hits for Tampa Bay in the first game. Jalen Beeks (2-3) got the loss.

White Sox 2, Tigers 1, 10 innings

In Chicago, Yoán Moncada scampered home on a 10th-inning wild pitch that knocked down umpire Cory Blaser, sending the White Sox to the victory.

All three runs in the game were scored on wild pitches. The White Sox had the bases loaded with two out when José Cisneró (2-1) threw a first-pitch fastball to Tim Anderson that hit Blaser right in the face mask.

Andrew Benintendi had two hits for the White Sox, who have won three of four. Reynaldo López (1-4) threw a scoreless 10th.

Zack McKinstry tripled and scored for the Tigers.

Rangers 16, Mariners 6

In Arlington, Marcus Semien, Leody Taveras, Nathaniel Lowe and Mitch Garver homered, and Texas won for the fourth time in five games.

Semien had four hits, scored four times and drove in three runs. He extended his career-best hitting streak to 22 games, longest in the majors this season.

Corey Seager had three hits and three RBIs as the Rangers scored at least 10 runs in a majors-leading 15th game. Josh Sborz (2-2) got the win.

Ty France had three hits for Seattle, and Teoscar Hernández had two hits and two RBIs. Bryan Woo (0-1) was charged with six runs and seven hits in two innings in his big league debut.

Braves 5, Diamondbacks 2

In Phoenix, Ronald Acuña Jr. hit a 464-foot home run, Spencer



Milwaukee Brewers second baseman Andruw Monasterio (14) tags out Cincinnati Reds' Will Benson, left, in the sixth inning of a baseball game in Cincinnati. (AP)

Strider struck out seven in six effective innings and Atlanta ended Arizona's six-game winning streak.

Marcell Ozuna and Eddie Rosario had run-scoring singles against Rhyne Nelson (2-4) to help the Braves go up 3-0 through five innings. Atlanta scored another run on a double play in the sixth inning and Acuña followed by hitting his 12th homer onto the concourse behind the seats in left-center.

Strider (6-2) allowed two runs on three hits with four walks. Raisel Iglesias worked around a single in the ninth for his sixth save in seven chances.

Padres 6, Cubs 0

In San Diego, Yu Darvish struck out nine in seven dominant innings, Fernando Tatis Jr. homered twice and San Diego beat Chicago.

Darvish (4-4) had a masterful bounce-back game after a bad outing May 28 when he gave up seven runs in 2 2/3 innings in a 10-7 loss at the New York Yankees. Against the Cubs, Darvish was in complete command and kept the hitters off-balance all night, giving up just two singles - Chicago's only hits of the game - and one walk.

Cubs starter Drew Smyly (5-3) took the loss, lasting 5 2/3 innings, giving up three runs and seven hits.

Blue Jays 2, Mets 1

In New York, Vladimir Guerrero Jr. hit an RBI double in the ninth inning, leading Toronto to the victory.

Guerrero's big hit came three pitches after Blue Jays manager John Schneider was ejected for arguing balls and strikes. Umpire Charlie Ramos called the first pitch of Guerrero's at-bat, which appeared to land low and out of the strike zone, a strike. Schneider shouted at Ramos from the dugout and was tossed before coming out and arguing at the plate.

Mets closer David Robertson (2-1) got ahead of Guerrero 1-2 before the Blue Jays star doubled down the left-field line to score George Springer, who singled with one out and stole second base.

Nate Pearson (2-0) got the win, and Erik Swanson earned his first save.

Astros 9, Angels 6

In Houston, Alex Bregman hit a grand slam and Chas McCormick homered to help Houston to its third consecutive victory.

The Astros broke it open with a five-run fourth, capped by Bregman's eighth homer. Martín Maldonado, Mauricio Dubón and Jeremy Peña loaded the bases on three straight singles before Yordan Alvarez had an RBI infield hit to end Angels starter Patrick Sandoval's day.

Bregman, who also walked a career-high-tying four times, greeted Jacob Webb with his fifth career grand slam. The homer extended

Bregman's hitting streak to 10 games.

Houston's Cristian Javier (7-1) pitched six innings of one-run ball. Shohei Ohtani had four hits and Hunter Renfroe homered for the Angels. Sandoval (3-5) was tagged for six runs in 3 1/3 innings.

Guardians 4, Twins 2

In Minneapolis, Will Brennan hit the first homer allowed this season by Sonny Gray in the seventh inning and Logan Allen pitched six strong innings for Cleveland.

Brennan drove in three runs and Andrés Giménez and Gabriel Arias each reached base three times in front of him. Steven Kwan added a solo homer in the ninth for Cleveland, which had lost three of four.

Allen (3-2) allowed a leadoff homer to Jorge Polanco in the first and then settled in, giving up seven hits and two runs. Emmanuel Clase got three outs for his MLB-leading 18th save.

Gray (4-1) gave up a season-high 10 hits in 6 2/3 innings. He tied a season high with three runs

BASEBALL

allowed.

Pirates 4, Cardinals 3

In Pittsburgh, Ke'Bryan Hayes homered for the second straight game, leading Pittsburgh to its fourth consecutive victory.

Connor Joe hit a tiebreaking two-run double for the Pirates in the sixth. Carlos Santana added a run-scoring single.

Pittsburgh's bullpen held firm after an hour rain-delay ended starter Luis Ortiz's day early. Dauri Moreta (3-1) struck out Willson Contreras with two on to end the top of the sixth. David Bednar worked the ninth for his 12th save.

Contreras hit his sixth homer of the season off Ortiz in the second. Nolan Gorman hit a two-run shot in the eighth to bring the Cardinals within one. Jordan Montgomery (2-7) got the loss.



New York Yankees starting pitcher Gerrit Cole (45) throws during the first inning of a baseball game against the Los Angeles Dodgers in Los Angeles. (AP)

Brewers 10, Reds 8

In Cincinnati, Blake Perkins hit a grand slam for his first career homer and drove in five runs, helping the Brewers top the Reds.

William Contreras also went deep in Milwaukee's third win in four games. Colin Rea (3-3) pitched five innings of three-run ball for the NL Central leaders, and Devin Williams earned his 10th save.

Brewers first baseman Jon Singleton went 1 for 4 and scored a run in his first major league game since 2015 with Houston.

Jonathan India drove in three runs for Cincinnati, and rookie Matt McLain finished with two hits and scored three times.

The Reds have dropped three in a row since a five-game win streak. They had 11 hits, 10 walks and nine steals, but were unable to overcome another shaky start by Graham Ashcraft (3-4).

Phillies 4, Nationals 2

In Washington, J.T. Realmuto hit a tiebreaking homer in the sixth inning, and the Phillies snapped a five-game losing streak.

Realmuto, Bryce Harper and Josh Harrison each had two hits for Philadelphia. Dylan Covey (1-1) worked two innings for the win, and Craig Kimbrel pitched the ninth for his eighth save.

Realmuto doubled and scored in the second before homering into the Phillies bullpen in left-center leading off the sixth.

Washington starter MacKenzie Gore (3-4) went six innings and gave up three runs and nine hits.

Marlins 12, Athletics 1

In Miami, Luis Arraez had a career-high five hits and five RBIs, sending Miami to the win.

The majors' leading hitter, Arraez hit three doubles and two singles to raise his average to .390.

Arraez also became the first player in franchise history with five hits and five RBIs in a game.

Joey Wendle doubled twice and singled for the Marlins, who finished with 14 hits. Rookie Eury Pérez (3-1) threw five scoreless innings, and George Soriano got nine outs for his first major league save.

The A's dropped to a major league-worst 12-48 and lost their 13th straight on the road.

Oakland starter Luis Medina (0-5) gave up six runs and six hits in two-plus innings.

Rockies 6, Royals 4

In Kansas City, Elehuris Montero hit a two-run triple in Colorado's five-run first inning.

Matt Carasiti (1-0) earned the win with 2 1/3 scoreless innings in relief of starter Austin Gomber. Justin Lawrence recorded four outs for his second save.

Royals starter Daniel Lynch (0-1) was charged with five runs, three earned, and six hits in five in-

MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, June 4, (AP): Results and standings from the MLB games on Saturday.

Boston	8	Tampa Bay 1st game	5
Chicago W. Sox	2	Detroit 10th	1
Toronto	2	NY Mets	1
Colorado	6	Kansas City	4
Texas	16	Seattle	6
Miami	12	Oakland	1
Houston	9	LA Angels	6
Tampa Bay	4	Boston 2nd game	2
Cleveland	4	Minnesota	2
NY Yankees	6	LA Dodgers	3
San Francisco	4	Baltimore	0
Philadelphia	4	Washington	2
Pittsburgh	4	St. Louis	3
Milwaukee	10	Cincinnati	8
San Diego	6	Chicago Cubs	0
Atlanta	5	Arizona	2

American League		National League		
W	L	Pct	GB	
Tampa Bay	41	19	.683	-
Baltimore	36	22	.621	4
New York	35	25	.583	6
Toronto	32	27	.542	8-1/2
Boston	30	28	.517	10

Central Division		West Division		
W	L	Pct	GB	
Minnesota	31	28	.525	-
Detroit	26	30	.464	3-1/2
Cleveland	26	32	.448	4-1/2
Chicago	25	35	.417	6-1/2
Kansas City	17	41	.293	13-1/2

National League		East Division		
W	L	Pct	GB	
Atlanta	34	24	.586	-
Miami	31	28	.525	3-1/2
New York	30	29	.508	4-1/2
Philadelphia	26	32	.448	8
Washington	25	33	.431	9

Central Division		West Division		
W	L	Pct	GB	
Milwaukee	41	27	.602	-
Pittsburgh	30	27	.526	-1/2
Cincinnati	26	32	.448	5
Chicago	25	32	.439	5-1/2
St. Louis	25	34	.424	6-1/2

National League		East Division		
W	L	Pct	GB	
Arizona	35	24	.593	-
Los Angeles	35	24	.593	-
San Francisco	29	29	.500	5-1/2
San Diego	27	31	.466	7-1/2
Colorado	26	34	.433	9-1/2

nings. Nick Pratto homered for Kansas City. Bobby Witt Jr. had three singles, but he also committed a first-inning error that led to two unearned runs.

The Royals have lost 14 of 19.

Giants 4, Orioles 0

In San Francisco, Alex Cobb struck out seven over 7 2/3 scoreless innings to bounce back from his worst outing of the season. Wilmer Flores hit a two-run single and also doubled, and San Francisco topped Baltimore.

J.D. Davis added an RBI single in the decisive third inning against Orioles right-hander Kyle Bradish (2-2) and pinch-hitter Austin Slater gave the Giants another run-scoring single in the sixth.

Cobb (5-2) was coming off a loss May 28 at Minnesota in which he was tagged for seven runs on seven hits in four innings and walked four. He is now 8-2 over 14 career outings against the Orioles.

Djokovic reaches 17th French Open quarterfinals

Two unseeded women advance

PARIS, June 4, (AP): Novak Djokovic broke a tie with rival Rafael Nadal by reaching the French Open quarterfinals for the record 17th time, never truly in trouble during a 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 victory over Juan Pablo Varillas on Sunday.

Djokovic is closing on bettering Nadal in a more prestigious category: Grand Slam singles championships. Both currently sit at 22. For Djokovic, that total includes two at Roland Garros, in 2016 and 2021, and he can become the first man to own at least three trophies from each major tournament.

Nadal is a 14-time champion in Paris but is missing this time because of a hip injury; he had arthroscopic surgery Friday night.

Against the 94th-ranked Varillas, who had never won a Slam match until this event and then took three in a row in five sets, Djokovic was, not surprisingly, at his dominant best at Court Philippe Chatrier on a warm, sunny day.

TENNIS

The 36-year-old from Serbia finished with more than twice as many winners, 35-15, and fewer unforced errors. He went 15 for 17 on trips to the net. He put in 80% of his first serves. He converted 6 of 12 break points while dropping his serve only once.

All in all, a no-drama showing in under two hours from Djokovic, who hasn't ceded a set yet through four matches. He's had his less-than-amiable back-and-forths with some spectators over the past week in Paris, but when this one ended, Djokovic gestured as though to hug everyone as he heard some chants of his two-syllable nickname, "No-le!"

In his 55th career major quarterfinal - Roger Federer, who retired with 58, is the only man to reach more - and 14th in a row at Roland Garros, the No. 3-seeded Djokovic will face No. 11 Karen Khachanov on Tuesday.

Khachanov, who is 1-8 against Djokovic, made it this far at a Slam for the fifth time by defeating Lorenzo Sonego 1-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7), 6-1.

Two unseeded women moved into quarterfinals and will play each other next: Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, the 2021 runner-up at Roland Garros, and Karolina Muchova.

Pavlyuchenkova, who missed last year's tournament as part of a lengthy absence with a knee injury, got past a third consecutive seeded opponent, No. 28 Elise Mertens, by a 3-6, 7-6 (3), 6-3 score.

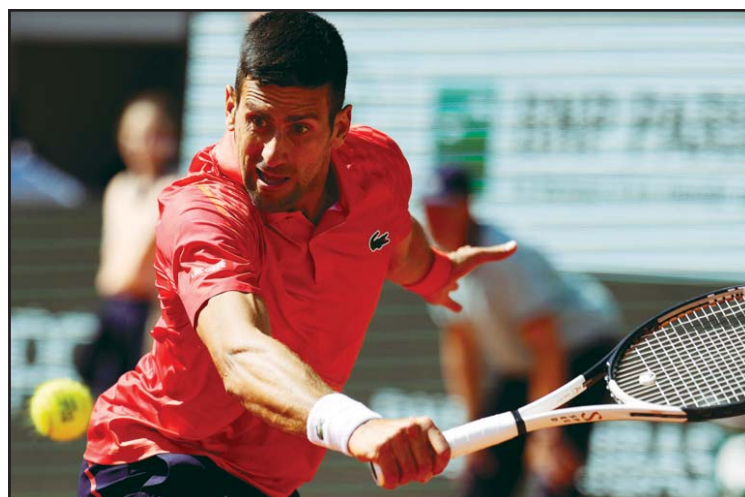
Muchova was a 6-4, 6-4 winner against Elina Avanesyan, who lost in qualifying but got into the main draw when another player withdrew.

French Open doubles player Miyu Kato and her partner were forced to forfeit a match when Kato accidentally hit a ball girl in the neck with a ball after a point on Sunday.

In the second set on Court 14 at Roland Garros, Kato took a swing with her racket and the ball flew toward the ball



PSG players celebrate their title after the French League One soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Clermont at the Parc des Princes in Paris, France. (AP)



Serbia's Novak Djokovic plays a shot against Peru's Juan Pablo Varillas during their fourth round match of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris. (AP)

kid, who was not looking in the player's direction while heading off the court.

At first, chair umpire Alexandre Juge only issued a warning to Kato. But after tournament referee Remy

Azemar and Grand Slam supervisor Wayne McEwen went to Court 14 to look into what happened, Kato and her partner, Aldila Sutjiadi of Indonesia, were disqualified.

Messi bids farewell to Paris amid boos

Mbappe wins record 5th French golden boot as Rennes 'clinch' EL spot; Auxerre relegated

PARIS, June 4, (AP): Paris Saint-Germain striker Kylian Mbappe won a record fifth straight French golden boot while Rennes clinched a Europa League spot and Auxerre was relegated.

Mbappe's goal in a 3-2 loss to Clermont finished his league tally on 29 and made him the top scorer for the fifth time, tied with French great Jean-Pierre Papin and retired Argentine strikers Carlos Bianchi and Delio Onnis.

French champion PSG and second-placed Lens qualified for the group stage of the Champions League next season and third-placed Marseille earned a spot in the third qualifying round of the lu-

crative European competition.

Rennes edged Brest 2-1 with first-half goals from Benjamin Bourigeaud to leapfrog Lille into fourth place.

Lille booked a playoff spot for the Europa Conference League af-

ter drawing with Troyes 1-1. Bafode Diakite opened the scoring for Lille in the second half and Troyes winger Rony Lopes equalized.

Monaco was third in the previous two seasons but missed out on European football after losing to Toulouse 2-1 to finish sixth. Toulouse

substitute Rhys Healey scored the winner in stoppage time. After 34 rounds, Monaco had a five-point lead over Lille and was eight points clear of Rennes. But Monaco collapsed during the run-in with just one point from the last four games.

"Everybody's disappointed," Monaco coach Philippe Clement told Canal Plus television. "In the last few weeks, the results and the level were not good enough. In the end, I know that everybody looks at the coach."

SOCCER

PSG finished only one point clear of Lens after the home loss to Clermont, which also marked Lionel Messi's farewell match for the club. Messi was booed before kickoff.

PSG led 2-0 after a header from the departing Sergio Ramos and a penalty from Mbappe. Mbappe celebrated by holding up a shirt with Sergio Rico's name on it. Rico, the PSG backup goalkeeper, was seriously injured after getting hit by a loose horse in Spain last Sunday.

Clermont leveled before half-time with goals from Johan Gattien and Mehdi Zeffane. Grejhn Kyei scored the winner by converting a cross in the 63rd.

"We really needed to pay a tribute to Sergio," Mbappe told Canal Plus television. "I think we are all affected. It's a situation which is extremely grave. That was on our mind the whole week. We will pray, we will send a maximum of positive vibes so that he can get out of that situation as quickly as possible."

Cameroon forward Ignatius Gango helped former powerhouse Nantes stay up by netting the lone goal in a 1-0 win over Angers.

Nantes snapped a 14-game winless streak in the league to leapfrog Auxerre into 16th place.

Auxerre lost to Lens 3-1 and will be demoted to the second division alongside Angers, Ajaccio and Troyes. Four teams are relegated because the league will shrink from 20 clubs to 18 next season. Lens midfielder Alexis Claude-Maurice scored twice before Belgium international Lois Openda sealed the win.

Elsewhere, Clement Vidal scored in Ajaccio's 1-0 win over Marseille.

Lyon striker Alexandre Lacazette failed to find the net in a 3-1 loss at Nice, finishing with 27 goals as the second best scorer.

"It's flattering to be not that far from Kylian," Lacazette said. "I congratulate him for his season. And I'm happy because very few people thought that I was able of doing that on my return to Lyon."

Montpellier beat Reims 3-1. Reims striker Folarin Balogun scored a consolation to raise his tally to 21 in his breakthrough season. Born in New York, Balogun played for England at youth level but opted to play for the United States at senior level in May.

Also Lorient beat Strasbourg 2-1.

Disgruntled supporters want answers

Uncertainty over sale of Man U affects coach planning

LONDON, June 4, (AP): Deep in the bowels of Wembley Stadium, Manchester United co-owner Avram Glazer strode past a group of reporters seeking an update - in fact, just any news - about the potential sale of the storied English club.

"Why are you not speaking to the fans?" came one shout.

Silence. United's disgruntled supporters want answers.

So, surely, does Erik ten Hag. Speaking after his team's 2-1 loss to Manchester City in the FA Cup final, the United manager was relatively calm about his plans for this summer while the Glazer family weighs up whether to sell the club or remain in place by selling a minority stake or take up other funding options.

Qatari banker Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Al Thani and British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe have made declared bids for what could end up being the biggest ever sale of a sports team, with the price possibly reaching up to \$6 billion.

So, Ten Hag was asked, does he have two plans for the offseason: one if a sale goes through and one if it doesn't? "I have only one plan, that is to improve this club and improve this team," Ten Hag said. "I will fight for this. I will talk to the club about what we have to do for that, but also I have to work with my staff, with my players, to be better next season." Pushed on how the sale affects his planning for next season, Ten Hag said: "At this moment, I don't want to discuss that. It's about finalizing the season. We have to be quiet, analyze the season... set the right conclusions and take action." This season has shown the amount of work needed for United, indeed any team, to catch up to City.

While the win at Wembley on Saturday turned out to be narrow, there was a clear gulf between the teams in the first all-Manchester cup final, with only a contentious penalty and a late rally keeping United in touch with its dominant rival.

In the league, City - backed by the wealth of Abu Dhabi's ruling family - won the title for the fifth time in six

years and was 14 points ahead of third-place United.

With Pep Guardiola contracted to stay on for one more season, United and the rest of the league might just have to wait and hope City's fortunes dip once the Spanish coach leaves.

There's no doubt, however, that United is on the right track under Ten Hag, who has led the team to two domestic cup finals - winning the League Cup in February - and back into the Champions League.

That didn't appear likely early in the season when United was losing 4-0 at Brentford and 6-3 at City.

"It's not about (closing) the gap in the summer, or getting players in," the Dutchman said. "We've been working all season, day by day, to develop the team, progress the team and I'm very proud from where we came from the start of this season."

SOCCER

"Remember Brentford, but also the Etihad. Now we showed today that our home win (United beat City 2-1 in January) was not a coincidence and today again maybe on another day we could have won this game." Ten Hag spoke of "huge decisions" and "major actions" at United in the offseason. He might have been talking about himself and his coaching staff, and not just the Glazers.

David De Gea won the Golden Glove award for the most clean sheets (17) in the Premier League, but that cannot hide the Spanish goalkeeper's deficiencies that are holding United back. Aside from some glaring shot-stopping errors - like that blunder at West Ham last month - he clearly doesn't have the technical ability with his feet to play in Ten Hag's preferred style. That was also showcased against City, when he botched some clearances either side of letting a weak shot from Ilkay Gundogan get past him for what proved to be the winning goal in the 51st minute. Ten Hag refused to single out De Gea for being at fault but spoke in ominous terms when asked about the goalkeeper.



Celtic's Callum McGregor lifts the trophy and celebrates with his team mates following victory in the Scottish Cup final against Inverness Caledonian Thistle, at Hampden Park, in Glasgow, Scotland. (AP)

Celtic clinch domestic treble

Celtic clinched the domestic treble after beating Inverness Caledonian Thistle 3-1 in the Scottish Cup final at Hampden Park.

It was the eighth time Celtic has completed the clean sweep of league, League Cup and Scottish Cup, a major record.

Kyogo Furuhashi struck for the 34th time this season in the 38th minute of an otherwise nondescript first half to undo the good early work of Billy Dodds' rank outsider.

The Championship outfit, which had not played a competitive game for a month, fell further behind when Celtic halftime substitute Liel Abada slid in a second in the 65th.

Inverness substitute Dan MacKay pulled a goal back

with five minutes remaining, only for Portuguese winger Jota to restore Celtic's two-goal advantage as the game slipped into six minutes of added time.

The final was played against a backdrop of mounting speculation around Tottenham's interest in Celtic manager Ange Postecoglou. He wouldn't be drawn by questions about him possibly leaving.

"Because I think I deserve to enjoy this moment just like everyone else. I worked really hard for this moment," Postecoglou told the BBC.

"There will be a time to come for those kinds of questions but for now, we've grasped a small chunk of history for ourselves and I'm not going to pass that by being sidetracked." (AP)

Benzema will not return to Madrid next season

MADRID, June 4, (AP): Karim Benzema will not stay with Real Madrid next season, the club said Sunday.

Real Madrid said it reached an agreement with the French striker to "bring his brilliant and unforgettable time as a player at our club to a close."

Madrid said Benzema "has represented the values" of Madrid and "has earned the right to decide his future."

The announcement comes amid reports that Benzema will play in Saudi Arabia.

"Real Madrid would like to show our gratitude and affection to a player who is already one of our greatest legends," the club said. "Fans all over the world alike have enjoyed his magical and unique football, which has made him one of the great icons of our club

and one of the great legends of world football."

The 35-year-old Benzema had been with Madrid since 2009, playing 14 seasons with the club. He helped Madrid win 25 titles, a record for any player with the Spanish powerhouse.

Among his titles were five Champions Leagues, five Club World Cups and four Spanish leagues.



Karolina Muchova of the Czech Republic plays a shot against Russia's Elina Avanesyan during their fourth round match of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris. Muchova defeated Avanesyan, 6-4, 6-3. (AP) — See Page 15

Sports

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RB Leipzig players celebrate after winning the trophy in the German soccer cup, DFB Pokal, final match between RB Leipzig and Eintracht Frankfurt at Olympiastadion in Berlin, Germany. (AP)

Stuttgart take 3-goal lead into 2nd leg of Bundesliga playoff at Hamburg

Nkunku shines as Leipzig edge Frankfurt to retain German Cup

BERLIN, June 4, (AP) — Leipzig retained the German Cup with a 2-0 win over Eintracht Frankfurt in the final thanks to a deflected goal and an assist from Christopher Nkunku.

There were few clear chances for either team as they seemed wary of allowing their opponents space to counter.

It took a stroke of fortune for Nkunku to score in the 71st minute as the French forward's shot from the edge of the penalty area bounced off two different Frankfurt

defenders, leaving goalkeeper Kevin Trapp with no chance. Nkunku, who marked the goal with is expected to leave Leipzig for Chelsea at the end of the season.

Dominiq Szoboszlai made sure of the win in the 85th when the Frankfurt defense crowded Nkunku, who passed for the unmarked Szoboszlai to fire a shot past Trapp.

Leipzig's second cup title came after beating Freiburg on penalties last year, and the fourth time in five years that the club backed by drinks giant Red Bull was in the cup final. Frankfurt last won the cup in 2018.

Frankfurt fans heavily outnumbered Leipzig supporters at the Olympiastadion and jeered as Leipzig received the trophy from German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

Leipzig's win means Bayer Leverkusen, which placed sixth in the league, qualifies for the Europa League again after reaching the semifinals this season. Frankfurt, which won the Europa League last season, would have qualified with a cup final win but has to settle for the third-tier Europa Conference League instead. Leipzig was already assured of a Champions League spot.

SOCCER

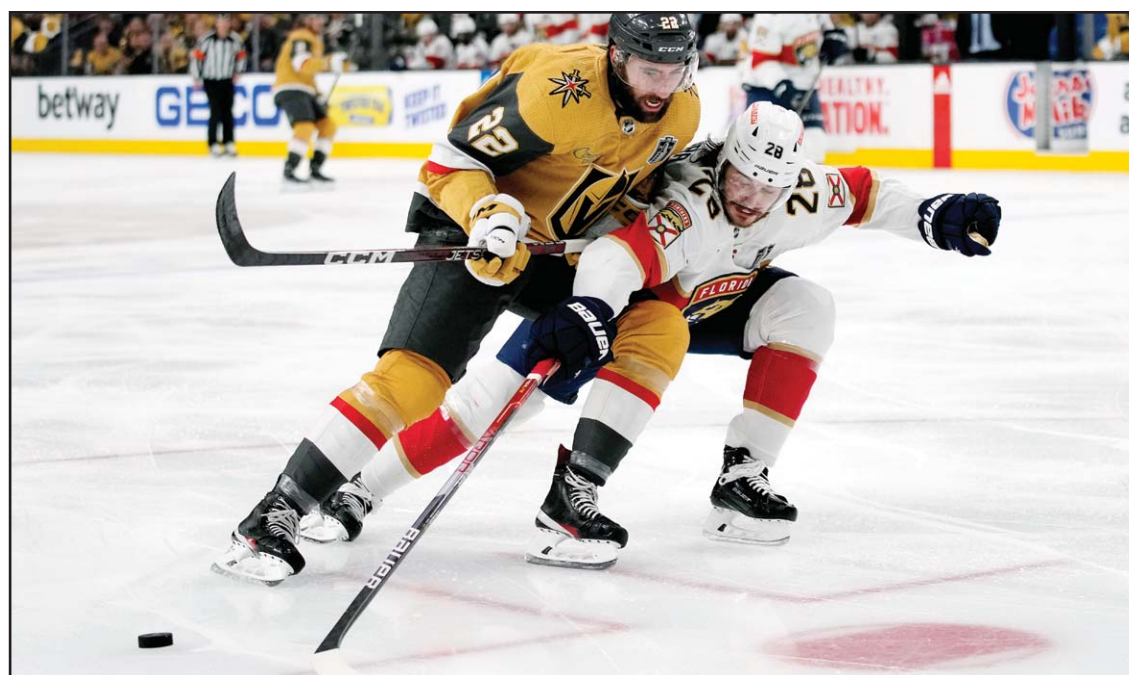
After a minute's silence to remember a 15-year-old soccer player who died following a brawl at a youth tournament last week, both teams had chances to score early on.

Leipzig's Timo Werner fired a shot straight at Trapp, and Frankfurt striker Randal Kolo Muani blasted a shot into the side netting, after which the final settled into a defense-first game with both teams wary of the others' strengths in transition.

Stuttgart has a handy 3-0 lead from the first leg of its Bundesliga promotion-relegation playoff against Hamburger SV but the second leg is being played in Hamburg's 57,000-capacity stadium in front of a passionate crowd. If Stuttgart can hold off an unlikely Hamburg comeback, it will secure top-division status for a fourth successive season. Hamburg played every season since the Bundesliga's foundation until relegation to the second division in 2018 and hasn't been back since

Golden Knights draw first blood in Stanley Cup Final

Hill makes best save of playoffs



Vegas Golden Knights right wing Michael Amadio (22) and Florida Panthers defenseman Josh Mahura (28) battle for control during the second period of Game 1 of the NHL hockey Stanley Cup Finals in Las Vegas. (AP)

LAS VEGAS, June 4, (AP) — Back in the Stanley Cup Final for the first time in five years and trailing the Florida Panthers less than 10 minutes into Game 1, the Vegas Golden Knights sent a very clear message.

"We were ready," Jonathan Marchessault said.

Ready and relentless. Vegas rallied from an early deficit, got the go-ahead goal from Zach Whitecloud with just over 13 minutes left and arguably the best save of the playoffs from Adin Hill and beat Florida 5-2 Saturday night to take the lead in the best-of-seven series.

ICE HOCKEY

"We kept our composure, and it was good," said Marchessault, one of six original Knights players left from the start of the franchise in 2017 who scored the tying goal in the first period. "We just wanted to play the right way and be disciplined, and tonight we were able to be the better team." Whitecloud put Vegas ahead, a crucial penalty kill followed and captain Mark Stone scored an insurance goal that was reviewed for a high stick and confirmed. Reilly Smith sealed it with an empty-netter to make the score look more lopsided than the game.

The combination of that offense and Hill's 33 saves put Vegas up after a feisty opener between Sun Belt teams who wasted little time getting acquainted with big hits during play and plenty of post-whistle pushing and shoving.

"It's exactly what we expected," said Vegas defenseman Shea Theodore, who scored his first goal of the playoffs and ended a 27-game drought dating to March 7. "That's how they wanted to play. We were just trying not to play into it." That stuff is just beginning. Game 2 is Monday in Las Vegas.

Before the Panthers even get a chance to respond, they ratcheted up the physical play late after falling behind by two. A handful of penalties resulting from a fracas with 4:24 remaining left the Florida bench well short.



Israel's Tay Abed (front), and Brazil's Marlon Gomes battle for the ball during a FIFA U-20 World Cup quarterfinal soccer match at the Bicentenario stadium in San Juan, Argentina. (AP)

Brazil eliminated, Italy reach semis

BUENOS AIRES, June 4, (AP) — Israel shocked favorite Brazil 3-2 and advanced to the semifinals of the Under-20 World Cup in San Juan on Saturday.

The tense encounter featured extra-time goals and two penalty shots wasted by Israel, which will face Uruguay or the United States in the semifinals.

SOCCER

Italy also reached the last four in the tournament in Argentina with a 3-1 win against Colombia.

After a scoreless first half, Marcos Leonardo netted first for Brazil and Israel equalized with a header by Anan Khalaili four minutes later. Matheus Nascimento made it 2-1 for Brazil in the first minute of extra time, but Hamza Shibi scored Israel's second two minutes later from close range.

Dor David Turgeman scored the winner in injury time of the first half of extra time after dribbling past two Brazilian defenders in the penalty box.

Israel squandered two penalty kicks in the second half of extra time, which drew out the drama to fulltime.

Hamilton equals best finish of the season

Max wins Spanish GP for 40th career victory

MONTMELO, Spain, June 4, (AP) — Max Verstappen of Red Bull won the Spanish Grand Prix from pole position



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands leads during the Spanish Formula One Grand Prix at the Barcelona Catalunya racetrack in Montmelo, Spain. (AP)

on Sunday to strengthen his hold on the Formula One championship.

The two-time defending champion was never challenged on the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya after beating Carlos Sainz's Ferrari to the first turn.

Lewis Hamilton crossed the finish line second in his Mercedes to equal his best finish of the season. Fellow Mercedes driver George Russell completed the podium.

MOTOR RACING

Verstappen has won five of seven races this season.

His 40th career win, including his third in Barcelona, leaves Verstappen one win behind the late Ayrton Senna's total of 41. He also seems well on course to matching Senna's three world titles. Verstappen set a Red Bull record with 39

wins last weekend at Monaco, breaking Sebastian Vettel's record of 38.

Verstappen's Red Bull teammate Sergio Pérez, who finished fourth, has won the other two races this year.

The Dutchman grew his lead over Pérez to 55 points.

"It is a big pleasure to drive a car like this and it showed on a day like this," Verstappen said. "Hopefully we can keep it up throughout the year."

Sainz had to settle for fifth after being passed by the Mercedes cars and Pérez's Red Bull.

Home favorite Fernando Alonso disappointed the legion of Spanish fans by finishing a season-worst seventh place, right behind teammate Lance Stroll.

As expected given the superior speed of the Red Bull, the 66-lap race was largely decided in the 595-meter run from the starting line to Turn One.