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Al-Ghanim voices objection to Deputy PM appointment

Panels elect chairpersons

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: MP Marzouq Al-Ghanim released a press statement at the National Assembly podium after the inaugural session Tuesday.

He disclosed that he requested the floor after the oath taking of the government and lawmakers, but he was not allowed to speak under the pretext that the relevant law prohibits holding discussions prior to the election of the speaker.

He argued his request was not to hold a discussion; citing as an example the dialogues in the sessions held on Dec 25, 1964 and Jan 5, 1965 when it was concluded that lawmakers can record comments on the formation of the government

after the latter's oath taking.

He explained that he wanted to record his objection to the appointment of Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahd as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense as it violates Article 125 of the Constitution, which states: "Whoever is appointed to a ministerial position must meet the conditions stated in Article 82. This article states that a citizen nominated to a ministerial position must have not been convicted of a crime against honor and honesty."

He added the appointment of Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahd also contravenes the ruling of the Constitutional Court on July 16, 2008. He asserted no one and nothing in this world can intimidate him; stressing he will continue to say the truth in the Assembly and if he is prevented from doing so, he will say it on the podium.

Responding to Al-Ghanim, Dean of the College of Law at

Kuwait University Professor Faisal Al-Kandari pointed out that Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahd is qualified for the position and his appointment is 100 percent correct. He said if Al-Ghanim was referring to verdicts of foreign courts against Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahd, he clarified that such verdicts are not recorded in the disclosure of a Kuwaiti citizen.

Meanwhile, MP Badr Al-Mulla has submitted a petition to the Constitutional Court against the results of the recent parliamentary election. He claimed that he should be in eighth place in the Second Constituency, not 10th.

On the other hand, MPs Hassan Jawhar, Mehalhal Al-Mudhaf, Abdullah Al-Mudhaf, Muhammad Al-Sayer and Abdulkareem Al-Kandari have submitted two bills — amendment of Election Law number 35/1962 and establishment of a shareholding company to build residential cities. They

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KUNA photos
Neom and Volocopter companies declared successful test flights for electricity-powered helicopters (eVTOL), 'air TAXI,' for the first time in the kingdom. Saudi Press Agency reported on Wednesday the aircraft had been tested for a week after 18 months of cooperation among Neom, the Directorate General for Civil Aviation and Volocopter, indicating at a broad approach to establish a network for urban air mobility (UAM), free of emissions. The test flights' main goal was to examine how the craft could cope with the kingdom diverse climatic conditions and harmony with unmanned aircraft system traffic management (UTM). Volocopter is a German aircraft manufacturer. The Saudi company Neom, established in 2019, is renowned for executing the gigantic Neom development venture in the kingdom.

Albanians raid Iranian opposition Khalq camp

TIRANA, June 21. (AP): Albanian authorities raided a camp for members of the exiled Iranian opposition group Mujahedeen-e-Khalq to seize 150 computer devices allegedly linked to prohibited political activities, and several people were injured.

Albanian Interior Minister Bledi Cuci and the head of the national police, Muhamet Rrumbullaku, said both police officers and Iranian dissidents were injured during the raid at the Ashraf-3 camp near Manze, a small hill town 30 kilometers (about 20 miles) west of Albania's capital. Representatives of the Mujahedeen group said one person was killed; Albanian authorities disputed that the raid caused the man's death.

The Special Structure Against Corruption and Organized Crime's office has opened investigations into suspected political activities by Mujahedeen members. Cuci and Rrumbullaku referred questions about the nature of the alleged violations to prosecutors, saying police were only carrying out a court order to seize evidence.

The agreement the government signed with the MEK when Albania agreed to shelter Mujahedeen members in 2013 states they are not supposed to engage in any political activity and must abide by the country's laws.

Some 2,500 Iranian exiles who initially were housed in separate locations built the Ashraf-3 camp in 2019. It consists of 127 buildings in an area of 40 hectares (100 acres), which Rrumbullaku said is Albanian territory.

Some camp residents tried to block the police officers who moved in to seize the computer devices housed in 17 buildings, and their leaders did not cooperate, according to Rrumbullaku. Fifteen officers were injured, and 21 Ashraf-3 residents were taken to a hospital with injuries from the pepper spray the officers used to defend themselves.

Cuci, the interior minister, said he was "indignant and offended" by the reception police received.

In an email message to The Associated Press, Shahin Gobadi, the MEK's spokesperson in Paris, said an Iranian man was killed and more than 100 camp residents injured "due to police firing pepper spray." He identified the man who died as Ali Mostashari.

The statement from the Iranian opposition headquarters compared the Albanian police raid with those they saw in Iraq before coming to the Western Balkan country.

Cuci denied police actions resulted in the death of a man in his late 70s, and said authorities were awaiting the results of an autopsy.

"I guarantee that death was not caused from any action of the police forces," he said at a news conference. "We paid all the necessary care not to create any incident with the residents within the camp."

The Mujahedeen-e-Khalq began as a Marxist group opposed to the rule of Iran's then-Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. It supported the 1979 Islamic Revolution but soon had a falling out with Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and turned against his clerical government, carrying out a series of assassinations and bombings in the Islamic Republic.

MEK members later fled into Iraq and backed dictator Saddam Hussein during his eight-year war with Iran in the 1980s, leading many people in Iran to oppose the group. Although now largely based in Albania, the group claims to operate a network inside Iran.

MEK members in Albania have proudly told local journalists how they have hacked or penetrated communication systems of the Tehran government and Iranian institutions.

News watch

GENEVA: The State of Kuwait urged the warring parties in Sudan to restore calm and stability, practice self-restraint, engage in peaceful dialogue, and put the interests of the Sudanese people above all considerations.

Counsellor of Kuwait Mission to the UN Office in Geneva Abdullah Al-Khubaizi highlighted, in a speech on Tuesday to an enhanced interactive dialogue held by the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) on the situation of human rights in Sudan, the linkage between political stability and economic recovery.

Counsellor Al-Khubaizi expressed profound concern over the impacts of the armed conflict on the humanitarian situation in Sudan, saying that the crisis led to increasing waves of internal displacement and exodus into neighboring countries.

"The State of Kuwait reminds the warring parties of the need to respect the provisions of the international humanitarian law and human rights law, and empower to the international aid agencies to deliver assistance to the impoverished people," he added. (KUNA)

BERLIN: A German woman was convicted Wednesday of keeping a Yazidi woman as a slave during her time with the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria, and sentenced to nine years and three months in prison.

The state court in the western city of Koblenz convicted the 37-year-old of crimes against humanity, membership in a foreign terrorist organization and being an accessory to genocide, German news agency dpa reported. Authorities have identified her only as Nadine K. in line with German privacy rules.

The court found that the defendant for three years abused a young Yazidi woman "in her own interests as a household slave." It said that her husband brought the woman to their home and regularly raped her, and that the defendant enabled those assaults and should have intervened.

Prosecutors have said that the defendant traveled to Syria with her husband in 2014 and joined IS. In 2015, the couple moved to the Iraqi town of Mosul, where they allegedly kept the Yazidi woman. (AP)

BERLIN: The daughter of a California-based man sentenced to death in Iran has asked authorities in Germany to open criminal proceedings against members of the Iranian judiciary.

The family of Jamshid Sharmahd, who is a German-Iranian citizen, says he was abducted by Iran while staying in Dubai three years ago. Iranian authorities accused him of planning a 2008 attack on a mosque that killed 14 people and wounded over 200 others. He was sentenced to death earlier this year.

German and European diplomats have condemned the verdict, which comes amid an increase in executions by Iran.

Germany follows the principle of universal jurisdiction, under which authorities can investigate serious crimes committed elsewhere in the world. (AP)



People walk under decorative lights hanging outside a shop for sale at an outdoor market in Istanbul, Turkey, Tuesday, June 20, 2023. (AP)

Israel boosts troops, okays settlement homes

Settlers torch Palestinian homes, cars

DAESH affiliates widespread

Africa new terror hot spot

UNITED NATIONS, June 21, (AP): Counter-terrorism experts have said that Africa is now the world's terrorism hot spot, with half of the victims killed last year in sub-Saharan Africa, though al-Qaeda and Islamic State affiliates remain widespread, persistent and active elsewhere around the globe.

Interpol, the international criminal police agency, also reported during a panel discussion at the U.N. that terrorism linked to extreme right-wing ideology increased an estimated 50-fold over the past decade, particularly in Europe, North America and parts of the Asia-Pacific.

The experts see other trends: Deteriorating global security is making the terrorism threat "more complex and decentralized." Extremists are increasingly using sophisticated technology, and drones and artificial intelligence have opened new ways to plan and carry out attacks.

The United Nations this week is hosting its third high-level conference of heads of counter-terrorism agencies. Tuesday's panel on assessing current and emerging terrorist trends and threats brought together experts from the U.N., Interpol, Russia, the United States

and Qatar, and Google's senior manager for strategic intelligence.

The overall theme for the week is addressing terrorism through reinvigorated international cooperation. U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said during Monday's opening session the key is to unite not only in foiling attacks but also critically to focus on preventing terrorism by tackling poverty, discrimination, poor infrastructure, gross human rights violations and other underlying drivers.

At Tuesday's session, it was Africa that took the spotlight.

"Africa has emerged as the key battleground for terrorism, with a major increase in the number of active groups operating on the continent," U.N. Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiri said, noting that local political, economic and social "fractures," porous borders and "identity-based mobilization" had fueled the emergence of al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group, also known as ISIS.

Several areas of the continent, from Burkina Faso and the Sahel and more broadly to Chad and Sudan, still face the consequences of

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TURMUS AYYA, West Bank, June 21, (Agencies): Hundreds of Israeli settlers stormed into a Palestinian town in the occupied West Bank on Wednesday, setting fire to dozens of cars and homes to avenge the deaths of four Israelis killed by a pair of Palestinian gunmen the previous day, residents said. Palestinians said one man was killed in the violence.

The settler attack came as the Israeli military deployed additional forces across the occupied West Bank, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced plans to build 1,000 new settler homes in response to the deadly shooting.

The moves threatened to further raise tensions after two days of deadly fighting in the West Bank that included a daylong Israeli military raid in a Palestinian militant stronghold and Tuesday's mass shooting.

Meanwhile, the State of Kuwait on Wednesday condemned the attack carried out by the Israeli occupation forces on the city of Jenin in the West Bank where a number of Palestinians had fallen as martyrs and others suffered injuries.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a statement, expressed the State of Kuwait's rejection of the dangerous escalation and recurring attacks that "constitute a continuation of the series of violations perpetrated by the occupation forces against the brotherly Palestinian people and flagrant breach of the international humanitarian law as well as relevant United Nations resolutions."

It renewed the call upon the international community to shoulder the responsibility and act seriously and immediately to stop the continuing attacks, act to provide full civil and legal protection for the brotherly Palestinian people according to the UN charter and rules of the international law.

Palestinian residents and human rights groups have long complained about Israel's inability or refusal to halt settler violence. In Wednesday's rampage, residents in Turmus Ayya said some 400 settlers marched down the town's main road, setting fire to cars, homes and trees.

Mayor Lafi Adecab said some 30 houses and 60 cars were partly or totally burned.

"The attacks intensified in the past hour even after the army came," he said. At least eight Palestinians were hurt during the ensuing clashes, which the army tried to disperse by firing rubber bullets and tear gas.

Palestinian medical officials said one man - identified as 27-year-old Omar Qatin - was killed by army fire and two other people were wounded. Residents said Qatin was a father of two small children and worked as an electrician for the local municipality.

"He was just standing there, innocent, he is such a kind hearted kid. He had no stones, he was totally unarmed, he was at least half a mile (one kilometer) away from the military," said Khamis Jbara, his neighbor. "He works from 6am to 6pm. He is a peaceful man."

Palestinian residents of the town, known for its large number of American citizens, were seething and in shock after the attack.

Streets were littered with broken pots, uprooted trees, charred yard furniture and skeletons of cars. At least one house was completely torched, the living room blackened, the furniture burned to ashes.

"It was terrifying, we just saw mobs of people in the streets, masked, armed," said Mohammed Suleiman, a 56-year-old Palestinian-American who lives in Chicago and was visiting his hometown. He said his brother, who is currently in Chicago, owns one of the burned houses.

Suleiman blamed the Israeli military for failing to de-escalate the situation, saying that the army turned their guns on the Palestinian residents instead of the vandals marching into the town with guns and firebombs, throwing fuel oil and setting alight everything in their path.

As Israel deployed more forces to the area, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he had approved plans to build 1,000 new homes in Eli.

"Our answer to terror is to strike it hard and to build our country," Netanyahu said.

The international community opposes settlements on occupied lands sought by the Palestinians for a future independent state. Netanyahu's far-right government is dominated by settler leaders and supporters.



Smoke rises from the West Bank town of Turmus Ayya, Wednesday, June 21, 2023. Israeli settlers set fire to Palestinian cars and homes after four Israelis were killed by Palestinian gunmen in the northern West Bank on Tuesday. (AP)

Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:13 Asr 15:24
 Sunrise .. 04:49 Maghrib .. 18:50
 Zohr 11:50 Isha 20:23

Local

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:
By Day: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind with speeds of 15-40 km/h with a chance for rising dust over open areas.

Weather

By Night: Hot to rather hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind with speeds of 12-32 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	45	31
Kuwait Airport	45	32

Abdaly	46	28
Jahra	46	32
Salmiyah	40	31
Ahmadi	41	32
Nuwaisib	44	30
Wafra	45	31

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

I'm grateful to leadership for having faith in me: Dr Al-Adwani

Minister pledges to improve and upgrade system of education

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: The Minister of Education Dr. Hamad Al-Adwani extended his deep appreciation and gratitude to the political leadership for the trust in assigning him to take over the portfolio of the Ministry of Education, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a press statement issued after the oath, he affirmed that this trust will remain a medal on his chest, and that he will work hard to continue the process of developing the education system and upgrading its outputs in order to achieve the aspirations of the political leadership and the honorable people of Kuwait, and in a way that strengthens the foundations of the development process of the country, and consolidates its position locally and globally.



Dr. Al-Adwani

Dr. Al-Adwani declared that he will complete what he started in the education file according to a realistic and goal-bound strategy, starting with fighting negative phenomena that distort the educational system.

He stressed that the ministry, through its cooperation with the relevant state institutions and with the support of the loyal educational and administrative employees of the ministry in all its sectors, was able to work on preventing all these non-educational practices, which led to a significant decrease in the cases of students being banned from exams by more than 80 percent compared to the previous years, which will achieve realistic results that reflect the true level of high school outputs this year.

Dr. Al-Adwani reassured all high school students in private and government education that the ministry is continuing to complete the admission plan in various educational institutions, and seats will be provided for all students who meet the admission requirements, based on the principle of fairness and equal opportunities.

He explained that the ministry is working with a single team to implement future priorities and projects at a fast and steady pace in order to contribute to improving education outcomes to be of a world-class level. Final touches are being put to the draft national unified admission test for all secondary schools according to international standards that measure the abilities of high school graduates, and achieve equal opportunities in admission to higher education institutions. It will be fully ready for implementation at the start

of admission in the next academic year of 2024/2025.

The project of the unified electronic portal for application in all higher education institutions is one of the important strategic projects. It involves submitting a single electronic application to enroll in various institutions of higher education. It will ensure there is no overlap and conflict between applications, and that the conditions for admission rules approved by each authority are met. It will then sort seats in a smart electronic manner within seconds through electronic interface and coordination between higher education institutions and relevant third parties. The readiness of the electronic portal will be announced at the beginning of the next academic year to be implemented in September 2024.

He highlighted the ongoing work to prepare a project for creating a national center for all national tests in the country, according to strict standards in quality control, and ensuring operational independence and providing the highest guarantees for the beneficiaries regarding the integrity and transparency of the test and its governance rules.

The minister said, "Among the most prominent files that will also be focused on during the coming period is the file of improving education outputs to suit the needs of the labor market, and achieving quality requirements to raise the level of Kuwait in international higher education indicators, in addition to continuing the electronic transformation plan in the services provided by the ministry to the public, as well as the file for filling leadership and supervisory vacancies in the Ministry and all educational institutions in accordance with regulations and standards to achieve stability and ensure smooth work."

He affirmed that the responsibility entrusted to the ministry in achieving the national goals of education according to the government's work program and a specific timetable, and under the directives of His Highness the Prime Minister, requires moving forward in implementing the education development policy, and to be keen to extend a hand of cooperation and work side by side with all relevant state institutions and public benefit institutions, and members of the legislative authority in order to achieve the clear vision of the wise political leadership in developing educational institutions and upgrading its outputs based on its role in advancing comprehensive and sustainable development in the country.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets the visiting Iranian Foreign Minister Hussain Amir Abdollahian. (KUNA photo)

Kuwait PM receives Iranian Foreign Minister

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah accompanied by Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Wednesday visiting Iranian Foreign Minister Hussain Amir Abdollahian marking his official visit to Kuwait.

During the meeting, both sides discussed the latest regional and

international developments as well as the bilateral relation between Kuwait and Iran.

The Prime Minister Diwan Undersecretary Sheikh Khaled Talal Al-Sabah, Director of the Prime Minister Office Hamad Al-Amer, and Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Asian Affairs Ambassador Sameh Jawhar Hayat attended the meeting. (KUNA)

'Enough medicines, don't worry'

Cancer patients problems overcome: MoH

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: According to reliable health sources in the Ministry of Health, the strategic stock of medicines during the current period is safe and reassuring, and can meet the country's need for several months to come, due to which there is no cause for concern, reports Al-Qabas daily.

They explained that the ministry, after the end of a difficult period during which the country witnessed a shortage of some pharmaceutical items and medical supplies for various reasons including the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on global factories and companies and the continuation of the Russian-Ukrainian war and others, has restored its strategic drug stocks. It has made great strides in securing most types of vital medicines, especially for people with chronic diseases such as cancer for long periods ranging between six and 12 months to ensure that the level of health care for patients is not affected.

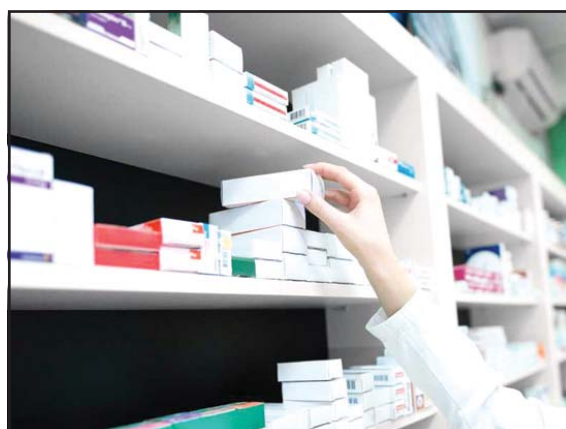
The regulatory authorities finally postponed the approval of a request by the ministry related to the purchase of medicines used to treat specific types of cancer diseases at the Hussein Makki Al-Juma Center for Specialized Surgery at a cost exceeding KD 1.4 million, due to the availability of the same medicines in medical warehouses. They are sufficient for several months, and thus there is no need during the current period to issue approvals for its supply from abroad.

The ministry has finally obtained the approvals of the regulatory authorities regarding direct contracting for the purchase of medicines, solutions and filters for blood purification for dialysis patients in dialysis centers, at a cost of KD 2.3 million, in addition to other medicines used to dissolve clots in public hospitals, at a value of KD 511 thousand, and medicines to treat multiple sclerosis at a cost of KD 1.2 million.

Regarding cancer drugs, the sources pointed out that the regulatory authorities agreed to purchase several drugs "injections / pills" used to treat cancer at the Hussein Makki Center on Friday, at a cost exceeding KD 4.9 million, indicating that the ministry has overcome the problems that were hindering the arrival of some types of drugs intended for cancer patients and other chronic diseases.

The sources concluded that the ministry is in the process of supplying additional medicines to treat patients suffering from high blood pressure in health centers and public hospitals at a cost of KD 754 thousand, in addition to medicines for pulmonary hypertension at KD 302 thousand.

They highlighted the existence of coordination and cooperation between the concerned departments with the medical departments by receiving its periodic requests and determining the necessary priorities from them, so that the implementation of these requests begins according to the budgets established for each of them, while carefully reviewing them, and making sure of the quantities available in medical warehouses either for the medicines to be supplied or other medical supplies.



Checking medicine stock

Other Voices

The 'incompetent' physicians

By Ahmad Al-Sarraf

A few days ago, there was a huge argument over the decision of the Higher Education Ministry to suspend the scholarship for medical sciences students in Egypt and Jordan. Both the educated and the ignorant launched a scathing attack on the decision.

Actually, I am not convinced by their vision. No question, the quality of education in general, and medicine in particular, in our countries is unsatisfactory. Whoever argues against this fact needs to undergo a mental checkup.

Former Egyptian Minister of Health the late Dr Emad Aldeen Radhi said almost 9,000 doctors graduate annually from the colleges of medicine and 8,000 of whom are not capable of practicing medicine. Unfortunately, Radhi died at a hospital in Egypt due to a medical error.

The decision of the Higher Education Ministry is not surprising, as it has been studied since 2018. It was preceded by field tours to the Egyptian and Jordanian universities. The reports concluded that the quality of education there is not good enough.

Furthermore, five years ago, the Ministry of Higher Education reduced the number of accredited universities in Egypt from 30 to seven, and the Jordanian universities from 20 to five. The backward level of education in many countries was tackled in several articles; hence, it is too ridiculous to claim that the decision is surprising.

Former Education and Higher Education ministers like Hamed Al-Azmi, Muhammad Al-Fares, Ali Al-Mudhaf and others contributed to controlling scholarships for students sent to the colleges of Medicine in Egypt and Jordan. Chairman of the National Bureau for

Academic Accreditation and Education Quality Assurance Sabeeh Al-Mekhaizem played an important role on this issue, which must be highlighted.

In a remarkable escalation a couple of days after the announcement of the recent parliamentary election results, 12 newly elected MPs conducted a campaign of interference in the affairs of the executive authority. They called for the cancellation of the decision of the Ministry of Higher Education. Some of these MPs can barely read and write, yet they launched an attack on the ministry and threatened to grill the minister. This threat indicates the ignorance of those who launched it. Checking their biodata, we find that the citizens' health and medicine are not part of their concerns. They only considered the miserable votes that they could lose in case they did not allow the backward education to continue as it is.

Perhaps, I would be tolerant with them if they called for the formation of a committee tasked to study the decision. The superior attitude they adopted makes me believe that the decision is correct, since they are against it. Strangely, these MPs deliberately ignored the facts, while considering the citizens' interests.

In a television interview, Adel Al-Sabeeh - who served as Minister of Health from 1996 to 1998 - said it is mandatory for the ministry to appoint all Kuwaiti graduates from the College of Medicine at Kuwait University or any other accredited university. He pointed out that in case the ministry objected, the concerned graduate could resort to the court, which then rules on his appointment as a physician.

During his tenure, Al-Sabeeh issued two decisions to test the applicants for medical jobs, including the Kuwaitis who graduated from Kuwait University. Nevertheless, invisible hands have been hindering the enforcement of that decision until today.

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Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah talks to the Cuban Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, Jose Sanchez, during a meeting held early on Wednesday. (KUNA photo)

HH Amir invited to G77 Summit

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has been invited by Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel to participate in the G77 Summit, due in the Cuban capital Havana on September 15-16.

The invitation came in a written message, handed to Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah by the Cuban Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, Jose Sanchez, during a meeting held early on Wednesday. (KUNA)

Municipality warns advertisers

'Illegal adverts to be removed'

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: The Director General of Kuwait Municipality Eng. Saud Al-Dabbous stated that the licensing of advertisements for commercial activities, stores, and others is in accordance with the conditions and controls contained in the advertisement regulations. Therefore, if an advertising material violates the advertisement regulations or includes anything that is inconsistent with the Islamic law, public order or morals or contains incorrect information or data, then the license holder will be held legally accountable, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In response to a question submitted by a member of the Municipal Council Eng. Sharifa Al-Shalfan regarding the issuance of advertising licenses, Eng. Al-Dabbous said licensing advertisements for advertisement auction contracts shall be in accordance with the numbers, locations, and conditions stipulated in advertisement auction contracts in different

governorates and highways, as well as the advertisement regulations.

He affirmed that the municipality's role in approving the content of the advertisement is done by checking the advertising material before and after issuing the license to ensure that it conforms to the requirements stipulated in the advertisement regulations, adding that continuous follow-up is carried out on these advertisements.

Eng. Al-Dabbous revealed that unlicensed random advertisements are removed by the company contracting with the municipality through advertisement auctions. However, if the advertisement is licensed, then the removal is also done according to what is stated in the regulation. The municipality will remove all unlicensed advertisements without warning, and also those that violate the conditions after warning the licensee, without any responsibility for the damages that may result from that.

'Declare cash on visit to Egypt'

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: The Embassy of Kuwait in Egypt has advised Kuwaitis, who are planning to travel to Egypt, to declare cash exceeding \$10,000 or the equivalent in other currencies at the Egyptian customs upon arrival and departure, reports Al-Anba daily.

The embassy clarified that travelers are allowed to bring 5,000 Egyptian pounds cash; affirming such an amount is not subject to legal accountability or confiscation.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Intimate co-op between two bodies vital to achieve priorities'

"LAST week, 49 lawmakers presented a document called 'Legislative Map', in which they affirmed their commitment to protect the rights, interests and priorities of the Kuwaiti people. They promised to put all these in the agenda of the sessions, pledging as well to complete a package of laws during the summer period due to their importance and the necessity of approval," columnist Dr Adel Behbehani wrote for *Annahar* daily.

"The document stressed the need for these laws to begin with political reform, housing and housewives. A blessed first step that reflects the enthusiasm, seriousness and ambition of the 2023 Parliament to achieve goals that are in the interest of the country and the citizen.

"However, it is noticeable that the people are not really enthusiastic about the map, because the content is usually repeated at the beginning of each legislative season without achieving the set priorities, except a few due to the continuous governmental-parliamentary clash that destroys the legislature at an early stage.

"Therefore, we expect that the first priority in clarifying the legislative map of this Assembly would be to ensure constructive cooperation between the executive and legislative authorities. They have to avoid collisions between them as much as possible. Without political stability and intimate cooperation between these two authorities, parliamentary priorities cannot be achieved. If the elected representatives are unaware of the weight of their powers compared to the weight of the powers granted to His Highness the Amir as per the Constitution and which he exercises in the Assembly through his ministers, the Assembly will have neither an achievement nor a long life that allows it to work on its priorities.

"If coordination among the representatives of the nation is important, then coordination between the representatives of the nation and the government is more important. We believe that the 2023 Assembly has a golden opportunity ahead of it. If it makes good use of such an opportunity, it will complete its term and it could be re-elected. If it does not make good use of the opportunity and initiates arbitrary use of its right to interrogate, death will come from everywhere.

"This Assembly will have the government's work program for the years 2022-2026, which we do not expect to be modified due to its quality. It is an integrated program that is carefully and deeply studied, emphasizing the new government approach that seeks to enhance the future construction of the State, lay down methodological foundations, and take the necessary measures and procedures to achieve the strategic goals of the State. It is centered on the Kuwaiti family as the basic unit of society, promoting economic growth and financial sustainability, and fortifying the pillars of social development and healthcare.

"This program consists of 10 main axes including political reform, governance, digitization, justice, security, health, education and housing. It consists of 30 areas under which 117 initiatives fall, expressing the government's directions, including the legislative tools, bodies responsible for them, timetable for

each program, and other details that cannot be mentioned here. This makes the legislative map a guide in its surroundings.

"The government and Assembly have no choice but to take advantage of this opportunity, adhere to the program, highlight it in the media, and implement it within the specified period. The 2023 Assembly is fortunate that its term coincides with the improvement of the regional and international political climate, which has begun to turn toward peace, little by little. It is a golden opportunity for the Assembly, which must take advantage of it to harmonize with the government in order to accomplish an important stage of the 2035 Kuwait Vision. Oh God, have I reached? Oh God, bear witness."

Also:

"Kuwait and its people are now tired of dissolving assemblies one after the other, for reasons that could have been easily addressed only if calm dialogue replaced clashes, if the members were consulted regarding interrogations, and if from the beginning, the executive and legislative authorities agreed to lay down a framework for cooperation to unify priorities in the interest of the country," columnist Dr **Khaled Mohammad Boudai** wrote for *Al-Qabas* daily.

"Distinguished brothers, the people have bestowed on you the trust that mountains can bear – the trust of caring for the rising generations, preserving Kuwait's honorable families and children, and protecting the wealth and money of its people.

"Therefore, we hope this trust will not be lost in the midst of conflicts and rivalries. We would like to ask: What did Kuwait gain over the past 30 years of conflicts and multiple interrogations, some could be worthy, but many are not? Has corruption declined? Has the State's performance improved? On the contrary, Kuwait declined in the corruption indicators. Unfortunately, governmental performance has declined as well. So, gentlemen, dear ones, we must pause and self-reflect.

"This regression means that the approach was not good. We do not want to blame the legislature only. Without a doubt, there is a shortcoming in governmental performance. In fact, the shortcoming is severe, such that it rendered the State unable to deal with potholes, while completely burying it in the sand for the roads in Subiya. If the State cannot deal with these simple matters, let us not care about the larger issues. The executive authority needs someone to cooperate with it to follow the path of reform and development. It cannot tolerate confrontation in this difficult situation.

"Since we have tried toying the path of confrontation and clashes without achieving anything, why do we not try the method of calm dialogue and positive cooperation? Calmness does not mean abandoning the fight against corruption and call for reform. Calm dialogue could be more effective than confrontation and acrimony. If we turn left and right, we will find that parliaments riddled with clashes and rivalry do not achieve much, just ignorance, backwardness and corruption. Why do we not take lessons from such countries?"

"The two authorities have enormous tasks ahead of them. Tremendous efforts are needed to carry out these tasks. The scarcity of achievements over the past three decades, except some buildings and roads, has been disastrous. Among the most important issues that need to be addressed are the lack of

income sources other than oil, housing, education, employment, Bedouns, demographic structure, environmental pollution and others.

"Naturally, the executive authority is responsible for resolving these issues, but the National Assembly must pay attention to these issues and support the government, especially if addressing these issues entails the ratification of laws. These issues cannot be resolved in a charged and tense atmosphere. Calm and fruitful discussion is needed to solve these problems, instead of keeping them pending as they become complicated whenever the solution is delayed."

□ □ □

"Based on the opinions we have heard so far, the new government consists of men of vision, along with the implementation of the plan to combat corruption, ensure reform, break the stalemate, focus on development and address the long-awaited public demands," columnist **Talal Al-Saeid** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"This is what we hear about the directions of the new government, and these are the names that were agreed upon! Despite our utter conviction that a minister must be judged according to his work, not his name, we saw dissatisfaction among the Kuwaitis after the formation was revealed. There have been reservations about some names that were tried in previous sites, where they failed miserably.

"They were brought in to reconcile with the reform government and the new fight against corruption. This is what we hope for as a people who have suffered from frustration. Kuwait deserves better!"

"His Highness the Prime Minister-designate has the right to choose his ministers or the team he is comfortable with and could cooperate with, in order to break the stalemate and provide the best services. Accountability leads to a vote of no-confidence in the entire government, while the support of the parliamentary majority leads to a vote of confidence."

□ □ □

"In the past, the citizens felt the administrative, economic, agricultural and recreational stagnation, just as the Turks felt the earthquake that hit them. This stagnation had a negative impact on the citizens' daily life," columnist **Mefrah Al-Anzi** wrote for *Al-Anba* daily.

"Unfortunately, there was no clear sign of a breakthrough in the successive crises between the executive and legislative authorities. Perhaps, the reason revolved around the theory of personal gains advanced by some at the expense of public interests. This is based on the principle: 'I exist and everyone perishes.' This is the height of selfishness, devoid of principles, values, religion and honesty.

"Without a doubt, the environment of stagnation will later be an unsuitable environment for the work of these people, unless they change themselves, while the pro-reform will advance in this beautiful and promising political atmosphere.

"In my opinion, the legislative work in summer is compulsory in order to compensate for the time that was lost due to the incompatibility of the two authorities."

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary



Dr Behbehani



Al-Qabas photo

For the first time, the Salmi Desert hosted Kuwait University students on a stargazing trip.

KU students in 'stargazing' trip

A group of Kuwait University students recently participated in a scientific activity with the theme, 'Kuwait Sky', at Salmi Desert where they observed the stars, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The university organized the educational trip in cooperation with the Center for Scientific Advancement Publishing at Kuwait Founda-

tion for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS).

Acting Dean of Student Affairs at the university Dr Dari Al-Huwail described the trip as educational, enjoyable and the first of its kind.

He explained that the objective of the trip is to enrich the students' cultural and scientific knowledge about Astronomy, climate and Me-

teology by exploring many celestial bodies, stars, comets and galaxies.

He stressed that the willingness of students from various colleges to participate in scientific activities contributes to strengthening community partnership between agencies and sectors.

Tire recycling fire tackled

PADA workers stage strike; 'Meet demands'

Youths 'constitute' most of population

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: The Central Statistics Bureau released the population statistics for January 2023, indicating that the youths constitute the majority of the population, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The total population reached 4,793,568 –1,517,076 (32 percent) are Kuwaitis; compared to 3,276,492 non-Kuwaitis (68 percent). A total of 651,000 Kuwaitis are below 19 years old and 473,800 are between 20 to 39 years old. The number of Kuwaitis who are zero to 39 years old reached 1,124,000 (74 percent).

The difference between Kuwaiti males and females is small; as the number of Kuwaiti males reached 744,238 (49 percent) compared to 772,838 females (51 percent).

The number of Kuwaitis below one year old reached 32,771.

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Directive issued: Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Hamad Al-Adwani issued a directive in the interest of students planning to apply for scholarship to study abroad, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The directive aims to give these students enough time to complete the documents required for the scholarship application, such that the registration period for the scholarship program for academic year 2023/2024 has been extended until July 4, 2023.

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Pilgrims on way: The first batch of pilgrims traveled to Madina, Saudi Arabia on board Jazeera Airways recently, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Khaled Ashkanani, representing of a Hajj caravan, disclosed that the first batch consisted of 135 pilgrims who departed from Terminal Five at Kuwait International Airport. He praised the efforts exerted by agencies operating at the airport to ease procedures for the pilgrims

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: A number of employees at the Vocational Rehabilitation Department in the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA) recently organized a sit-in in the authority's headquarters in protest against the alleged failure to address their demands, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The protesters revealed that their demands include nature of work, contagion and hazard allowances; which they have been asking for quite some time now.

They added the authority's officials seem to be satisfied with forwarding letters to the Civil Service Commission (CSC), without any action.

They said about 250 employees were deprived of their right to receive the excellent job performance bonus despite obtaining an excellent rating and meeting the 180 working days condition stipulated in the related court ruling.

Meanwhile, Director of the Legal Affairs Department Mubarak Al-Baddah affirmed that the authority is committed to the decisions of the CSC regarding those working in shifts, stating that the required number of working days for these employees under category A to be eligible for the bonus is 250 consecutive days.

He then confirmed that the authority is coordinating with other concerned authorities to approve the allowances, based on its conviction that the employees deserve these allowances.

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Tire factory on fire: The Public Relations and Media Department at Kuwait Firefighting Force (KFF) said the Central Operations Unit recently received information that fire broke out at the tire recycling factory along Salmi Road, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Four firefighting teams were dispatched to the location measuring 2,000 square meters. They doused the fire before it spread to the rest of the premises.

No injuries were reported and investigations are ongoing to determine the cause of fire.

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Power to be cut: The Kuwait Municipality committee tasked to follow up the issue of bachelors residing in private and model housing areas has unveiled its plan to cut off power in several houses in Salmiya due to the violations uncovered there, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Heavy fines for housing 'singles' in model areas

Beach inspection eyed every week

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Emergency and Rapid Intervention Team Leader and Rapporteur of the committee tasked to reduce the number of bachelors in private and model housing areas at the Kuwait Municipality branch in the Capital Governorate Zaid Al-Enezi revealed that the committee is currently completing procedures to reclaim the rights of the State from real estate property owners and investors who violated the regulations; particularly the growing number of expatriate bachelors residing in these properties, reports Al-Rai daily.

Al-Enezi confirmed in an interview with the daily that the 'real estate mafia' has been obstructing the committee's work. He said the higher leadership is keen on protecting the rights of citizens and the State.

He warned the fine for such violations is exorbitant; hence, the need to correct them before the inspection teams uncover such unscrupulous acts. He urged the real estate property owners and investors to fully abide by the regulations and laws, stressing that the inspection of real estate properties in private and model housing areas will continue. He added the representatives of the committee are imposing penalties on the spot; especially since there have been a lot of violations related to housing for bachelors, tampering energy networks, construction and sewage irregularities.

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Beach raids every week: The Environment Public Authority (EPA), in coordination with the Environment Police, has started the inspection campaigns in beaches every weekend in a bid to stop violations to protect the environment, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The recent inspection campaign at Marina Beach led to the discovery of three violations, while beach-goers were educated about the relevant law and the importance of protect-



KUNA photo

Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Ahmad (right) and Qatar's Dr. Khaled bin Muhammad Al-Attiyah.

Congratulatory call

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received a call Wednesday from Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense Affairs, Dr. Khaled Al-Attiyah, in which he congratulated him on his new ministerial position.

In a press statement,

the Army General Staff Presidency said that Sheikh Ahmad expressed his appreciation for this call, which reflects the depth of the deep-rooted historical relations between the State of Kuwait and the State of Qatar.

During the call, bilateral ties and latest global and regional developments were touched on. (KUNA)

ing marine environment.

Director of the Inspection Department at EPA Nada Al-Dabbashi affirmed that the relevant law criminalizes all forms of encroach-

ment on beaches; warning that anyone who causes environmental pollution will be referred to the Public Prosecution and fined KD5,000.

Iran FM, team to visit Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian will visit Kuwait on Wednesday, heading a big delegation consisting of more than 30 Iranian experts and media personalities, reports Al-Rai daily quoting sources from the diplomatic sector.

Sources confirmed this visit is part of the Gulf tour, which includes Qatar and Oman. Sources disclosed Iranian Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Dr Ali Reza Enayati will be among the delegation members.

In addition, Aballahian confirmed on his Twitter account that the continuation of the comprehensive development of relations with Iran's neighbors is one of the main axes of the Iranian government's balanced foreign policy.

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53rd session of UN Human Rights Council runs until July 14

Kuwait calls for pressuring Israel work with human rights' panels

GENEVA, June 21, (KUNA): Kuwait called on the international community through the UN Human Rights Council to pressure Israeli occupation forces to work with the committees of the council to enter Palestinian lands.

This came in Kuwait's speech in the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian

Territory, including East Jerusalem, dialogue session, which was presented by diplomatic attache Fedha Al-Darweesh, in the 53rd session of the UN Human Rights Council.

She affirmed Kuwait's support to the statements issued by the groups that Kuwait belongs to, praising efforts of the International Commission in preparing this

case despite restrictions and harassment by Israel.

Al-Darweesh stressed Kuwait's strong condemnation to the practices and violations on the Palestinian people and lands by Israeli occupation forces.

The 53rd session of the UN Human Rights Council is set from June 19 to July 14, to discuss various human rights issues.



Kuwait's Diplomatic Attache Fedha Al-Darweesh at the session.

MoSA sets aside KD 1mn for early childhood development initiative

Kuwait prohibits entry of food items from some countries

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: The Ministry of Social Affairs has allocated more than KD1 million for the implementation of the early childhood development initiative, in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), reports Al-Rai daily.

The ministry also allotted KD860,000 for the social safety net to guarantee the distribution of State subsidies to those most in need of assistance. It recently organized the first coordination meeting of the team tasked to prepare and follow up the development plan. Undersecretary Abdulaziz Al-Mutairi presided over the meeting with representatives of the Supreme

Council for Planning and Development in attendance.

This is within the framework of coordination between the ministry's sectors to implement projects included in its development plan for fiscal 2023/2024, as well as discussing its views on the government's work program for fiscals 2023/2024 to 2026/2027.

Reviewed

During the meeting, they reviewed two projects – the construction of the mobile unit for the elderly and completion of automation works included in the development plan for next year.

The ministry aims to implement three initiatives as follows: First: Ensure fairness of the social safety net, such that State

subsidies are given to the most needy among the Kuwaiti people, according to a performance mechanism that guarantees fairness and transparency in the distribution of wealth. This will be implemented in cooperation with the World Bank at a total cost of KD860,000 within five years.

Second: The early childhood development initiative aims to give children the opportunity to have a good quality of growth and care in the early childhood stage through an advanced curricula to ensure they are ready to enter the primary stage. This will be implemented in cooperation with UNICEF at an estimated cost of KD1,075,777.

Improve

Third: Improve and develop the cooperative work environment by amending some decisions, regulating cooperative work, and developing national competencies in this field. It will be implemented by experts in the field of cooperative work.

The implementation period is more two years without any cost for the State budget.

Food items entry prohibited:

Kuwait prohibits the entry of food items of unknown origin or home-made products from Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and some other countries in a bid to prevent the spread of food-related diseases, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting sources from the health sector.

Sources told the daily that the ban, which was imposed after the spread of cholera in the abovementioned countries, remains in effect. Sources affirmed the concerned authorities are closely monitoring the situation and reviewing the decision, especially since some countries have announced not recording any new cholera cases for about two months now.

Sources explained the ban is not just due to the cholera outbreak, but also the repeated discovery of food-related diseases.

Embassy of Mexico

Greetings on advent of 'Eid-al-Adha'

Ambassador of Mexico Mr. Miguel Angel Isidro has the honour to extend his sincere congratulations and best wishes to His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Crown Prince, His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Prime Minister, the Government and people of the State of Kuwait on the occasion of the advent of "Eid-al-Adha" coupled with our best wishes for continued well-being and success, and the friendly people of Kuwait further prosperity, progress and stability.

Ambassador Isidro added: "On this joyful occasion I would like to express our satisfaction with the existing friendly relations between our countries and peoples, and we emphasize that we are making efforts to further strengthen our joint work for the sake of our common



Miguel Ángel Isidro

interests".
Eid Mubarak!
"Wa Kullu Aam Wa Antum Bekhair"

Al-Ghanim voices

Continued from Page 1

suggested that 25 to 50 percent of the proposed company's shares will be allocated for public subscription, six to 24 percent for public institutions that will be specified by the Council of Ministers, and 26 to 49 percent for the contracting company that will submit the lowest bid.

MPs Majed Al-Mutairi, Muhammad Al-Regaib, Muhammad Al-Mahan, Muhammad Al-Hewaila and Muhammad Hayef Al-Mutairi submitted a bill to amend Civil Service Law number 15/1979.

MPs Abdulkareem Al-Kandari, Muhammad Al-Sayer, Abdulaziz Al-Saqaabi, Abdullah Al-Mudhaf and Abdulwahab Al-Essa have proposed the cancellation of the local agent requirement, so the public institutions can sign contracts directly with foreign companies.

In addition, a number of parliamentary committees have elected their chairpersons and rapporteurs. MP Khalid Al-Otaibi was elected chairman of the Interior and Defense Affairs Committee and MP Muhammad Al-Mahan as rapporteur; MP Muhammad Al-Sayer as Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee chairman and MP Osama Al-Shaheen as rapporteur; MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri as Financial and Economic Affairs Committee chairman and MP Abdulwahab Al-Essa as rapporteur; MP Hamad Al-Matar as chairman of the Educational, Culture and Guidance Affairs Committee and MP Abdulhadi Al-Ajmi as rapporteur; MP Adel Al-Damkhi as Budgets and Final Accounts Committee chairman and MP Osama Al-Zaid as rapporteur; MP Mehalhal Al-Mudhaf as Public Funds Protection Committee chairman and MP Hamad Al-Elyan as rapporteur; and MP Muhammad Hayef Al-Mutairi as Values Enhancement Committee chairman and MP Hamad Al-Obaid as rapporteur.

Rapporteur of the Budgets and Final Accounts Committee MP Osama Al-Zaid confirmed that the committee is serious in expediting the completion of its report on the State budget, which must be ratified before the end of the first session of the 17th parliamentary term.

Moreover, Speaker of the Arab Parliament Adel Al-Asoomi sent a cable to Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun to congratulate him on being elected as speaker.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Tuesday cables of congratulations to MPs who won membership of National Assembly committees, wishing them success in serving the dear homeland.

His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent similar cables.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Tuesday a cable of congratulations to MP Mohammad Al-Huwaila on being named, by acclamation, as National Assembly Trustee, wishing him success in serving the dear homeland.

His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to Dr. Al-Tasha.

Africa new

Continued from Page 1

the flow of weapons and foreign fighters from Libya, Khiri said.

Oil-rich Libya plunged into chaos following the NATO-backed uprising that toppled and killed longtime dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. After the Islamic State's self-styled caliphate was defeated in Iraq in 2017, many of its foreign fighters fled to the North African nation.

Col. Gen. Igor Sirotkin, deputy director of Russia's Federal Security Service and head of its National Anti-Terrorism Committee, told the meeting that West Africa, especially the Maghreb and the Sahel, "are becoming the epicenter of the Islamist terrorist threat, with the armed terrorist groups expanding their influence, and we see the danger of ISIS being reincarnated as an African caliphate."

Qatar's special envoy for counter-terrorism, Mutiaq Al-Qahtani, who said half the victims of terrorist acts last year were in sub-Saharan Africa, called for counter-terrorism efforts to focus on the continent.

Justin Hustwit, the coordinator of experts monitoring U.N. sanctions against the Islamic State and al-Qaeda, said the situation in West Africa continues to deteriorate and IS "seems to be trying to position itself as a political actor."

He said IS in the greater Sahara is taking advantage of the lack of counter-terrorism operations, especially in the tri-border area of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, and there are "growing concerns" about IS and al-Qaeda taking advantage of any opportunity in Congo.

Interpol's counter-terrorism director, Gregory Hinds, said al-Qaeda and IS-related groups continue to inspire and carry out attacks in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, North America, Europe "and now across Africa and Asia at alarming pace."

Hinds said the 50-fold increase in terrorism linked to extreme right-wing ideology "is being influenced by global events and global agenda."

Secretary-General Guterres also said "neo-Nazi and white supremacist movements are fast becoming the primary internal security threats in a number of countries."

On the significant deterioration of global security in the last few years, the U.N.'s Khiri said the number of conflicts globally is on the rise again after two decades of consistent decline, and their nature has changed.

"Civil wars that start off locally are more likely to become internationalized, and conflict parties are increasingly fragmented," he said. "Civil wars aggravate grievances and foment regional international instabilities creating a fertile ground for non-state armed groups, including terrorist groups, to proliferate."

On a more positive note, Gregory LoGerfo, the U.S. State Department's deputy coordinator for counter-terrorism, said IS has not only been defeated in Iraq and Syria but its leadership has been "taken out or captured," large-scale attacks have been prevented, and billions have been invested in stabilizing the region.

"But for all of our progress, we're not done yet," he said.

The U.N.'s Hustwit echoed that Daesh's leadership has suffered serious attrition, adding that "the group's resources are depleting, and they are very focused on revenue generation."

Tobias Peyer, Google's senior manager for strategic intelligence who formerly worked for the U.N. Office of Counter-Terrorism, said the company bans content produced by or supporting designated terrorist organizations, and is committed to fighting "the hatred and extremism that leads to terrorist violence."

But he said bad actors, like extremist groups, "continue to become more savvy in evading detection," citing as examples their use of coded communications, complex narratives and conspiracy theories, and their modifications of existing popular computer games.

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Arab Information Ministers conclude 17th meeting

Recommendation naming Kuwait as 'capital of Arab Media for year 2025' approved

RABAT, June 21, (KUNA): The Executive Office of Arab Information Ministers concluded its 17th meeting on Tuesday with the adoption of the recommendations submitted by the Standing Committee for Arab Media, which concluded its work on Monday, and includes 17 items that will be placed on the agenda of the Council of Arab Information Ministers scheduled for Wednesday.



Muhaisen

These recommendations included approving the naming of Kuwait "the capital of Arab media for the year 2025", and thanking the State of Kuwait for its sponsorship and support for the Arab Media Excellence Award in the field of environment and sustainable development.

The recommendations affirmed the adoption of all decisions of the Council of Arab Ministers of Information, especially those related to the Palestin-

ian cause, at the heart of which is the historical, spiritual and legal status of occupied Jerusalem, and work to provide various forms of media support in its victory and highlighting its spiritual and civilized identity.

The meeting also approved the project 'The Observatory and the Integrated Platform' as a mechanism for implementing the Arab media movement plan abroad and agreeing to host Morocco for its headquarters, while calling on it to take executive measures to launch the project no later than the first quarter of 2024.

The meeting stressed the importance of the role of Arab media in confronting the phenomenon of terrorism, adopting the joint Arab media strategy for combating terrorism and its implementation plan, and submitting it to the Council of the League of Arab States at the level of foreign ministers to consider its proposal for ratification at the next Arab summit.

The Executive Office stressed the importance of developing a unified strategy to deal with all international media companies, laying the foundations for a



Part of the participants in the meeting of the Executive Office of the Council of Arab Information Ministers.

KUNA photos

vision for negotiating with these companies, and forming a high-level team of specialists and people with competencies to negotiate with them, in addition to its

emphasis on previous decisions related to the inclusion of media education in the curricula.

Earlier in the day, the work of the Ex-

ecutive Office of the Council of Arab Ministers of Information began with the participation of delegations from Arab countries, including the delegation of the

State of Kuwait, headed by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information, Dr. Nasser Muhaisen, representing the Ministry of Information.

Jahra Nature Reserve TV reportage wins Arab Media Excellence Award

RABAT, June 21, (KUNA): The Jahra Nature Reserve reportage, directed by Mishal Al-Shammari, won Tuesday the Arab Media Excellence Award for best television reportage in the environmental category.

This came on the sidelines of the 53rd session of the Council of Arab Information Ministers, currently held in Rabat.

The winning reportage highlights the importance of the Jahra Nature Reserve in safeguarding biodiversity in Kuwait. The reportage shows Ku-

wait's commitment to preserving the environment and achieving environmental sustainability.

The organizers also honored a number of program presenters, editorial directors, media professionals, writers and experts, including Kuwaiti meteorologist Issa Ramadan for publications, articles and researches in the fields of environment and climate.

Kuwait's delegation to the Arab meeting is headed by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information Nasser Al-Muhaisen.

EU lauds Kuwait's pivotal role in international and regional issues

'Dialogue continues on exempting Kuwaitis from Schengen visas'

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Media Officer of the European Union (EU) for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Luis Bueno praised Kuwait's pivotal role in addressing international and regional issues; and its remarkable efforts in promoting security, peace and conflict resolution, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Bueno made the statement during his recent visit to the EU headquarters in the Belgian capital - Brussels - accompanied by a Gulf media delegation.

He also confirmed the continuation of coordination and dialogue on exempting Kuwaitis from the Schengen visa.

On the emergence of a crisis related to exempting Kuwaitis from the Schengen visa due to the execution of convicts regarded as extrajudicial over the past months, he said: "We have expressed our position on this issue and we have a continuous dialogue with the Kuwaiti authorities. The European position on the death penalty is known, but the difference in opinions and positions does not constitute an obstacle to the path of joint relations. We respect Kuwait's position and its approach on controversial issues."

Solid relationship
Bueno described the bilateral relations between the EU and Kuwait as strong and solid, and spanning many years. He affirmed that the Union supports Kuwait in international forums, citing the period when Kuwait obtained non-permanent membership to the Security Council. He said there was strong cooperation between the EU and Kuwait on many issues and files during this period.

He pointed out that the Union is closely coordinating with Kuwait regarding development files and humanitarian and relief aid for the Palestinian, Syrian and African people; and those affected by humanitarian disasters and global crises. He asserted that the Union is the largest donor of humanitarian and development aid globally.

Stability support
Bueno also indicated that more than 43 percent of development aid comes from the EU, stressing that Kuwait plays a major role in the Gulf region and contributes significantly to supporting and enhancing stability in the region, as seen recently and this is not new for the country.

He added: "Kuwait, with its humanitarian initiatives, actively contributes to supporting and enhancing stability. The High Representative of the European Union is determined to strengthen relations with Kuwait."

Gulf family
Bueno went on to say: "On the international and regional level, Kuwait is part of the Gulf family. We talk with it as friends do, so this difference is not an obstacle to the path of relations."

He also described the relations between the EU and Arab Gulf states as very important for the Europeans, given the existence of common challenges that bring together the two sides in the Gulf region and beyond. He pointed out this is not only linked to the Ukrainian and Syrian crises, but to other issues as well, including climate change, and security and peace in the region. It is considered necessary to ensure sustainable development in the Gulf region in particular, and the Middle East in general, he stressed.

Europe and the Gulf
He cited the continuous consultation between the Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, referring to the agreement between the Union and the Gulf dating back to the 1980s. He added this agreement needs to be updated.

"Updating this agreement was discussed a year ago by a joint declaration between the European Commission and the European Foreign Service, which urged the need to strengthen bilateral relations between the two sides. Consultations between the two sides cover many issues including human rights. We have diplomatic missions in various Arab countries, except the Sultanate of Oman, where an embassy of the Union is scheduled to open in the coming months," he revealed.



The State of Kuwait on Wednesday sent its 16th Air Force aircraft carrying 20 tons of food, clothes and two ambulances to violence-hit Sudan.

KUNA photos

Kuwait dispatches 16th aid plane to Sudan

KUWAIT CITY, June 21, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait on Wednesday sent its 16th Air Force aircraft carrying 20 tons of food, clothes and two ambulances to violence-hit Sudan.

The aid plane is part of Kuwait's humanitarian initiative "Kuwait is by

Your Side", and was directed by Kuwait's political leadership, aiming at helping the Sudanese people amid their country's tough circumstances due to ongoing fighting there, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Media Chief Khalid Al-Zeid told KUNA.

The Kuwaiti cabinet had decided to dispatch urgent food and medical aid to Sudan under the direction of the country's political leadership in a bid to alleviate the humanitarian hardships of this Arab country's crisis triggered by ongoing fighting between the army and paramilitary forces.



Photo during the press conference held by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to review the 'Global Trends Report 2022'.

'Important and strong partner'

Kuwait still able to maintain title of Global Humanitarian City - UNHCR

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: The representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Kuwait Nisreen Rabian described Kuwait as "an important and strong partner for UNHCR for 32 years", affirming that Kuwait continues to be a humanitarian city, and it is still able to maintain this title of a Global Humanitarian City, reports Aljarida daily.

She issued these statements during a press conference held by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to review the "Global Trends Report 2022", which is issued by the UNHCR in conjunction with World Refugee Day corresponding to June 20th of each year. This year it was held under the slogan "Hope Away From Home" in the presence of media official representing the GCC countries Khaled Kabbara.

Rabian explained that the annual report of UNHCR stated that about 108.5 million people were forced to flee from their original places of residence as of the end of 2022, including 35.5 million refugees who had to seek refuge in other countries, and approximately 62 million displaced people who had to flee from their places

in their country to other places in the same country. This reflects the new crises that have occurred in addition to new unresolved crises.

She said, "When we look at the first six months of 2023, which the report did not cover, we will see that the number increased from 108.5 million to 110 million due to the Sudan crisis."

Regarding the extent of Kuwait's cooperation in the refugee crisis, Rabian said, "It was obvious to everyone that Kuwait was one of the top supporters of the victims of the earthquake that recently struck Turkey and Syria.

Kuwait, with its partnerships within the public and private sectors, is still one of the top countries that are concerned with the refugee crisis and mitigation of refugees' suffering. We thank the government, people, private sectors and charitable institutions."

In this regard, Khaled Kabbara said "UNHCR helps save lives and build a better future for the people who are forced to flee their homes. It works to ensure that everyone enjoys the right to seek asylum and a safe haven to escape violence, persecution, wars or disasters in their homeland."



Follow-up of the health status of the pilgrims.

KUNA photo

MoH announces start of actual operation of Hajj mission clinics

KUWAIT CITY, June 21, (KUNA): The Ministry of Health announced the completion of preparations and equipment at the medical clinics at the headquarters of the Hajj mission in Al-Naseem, and the start of the actual operation of the medical services team to provide health care to Kuwaiti pilgrims.

The head of the medical services team at the Kuwaiti Hajj mission, Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi, said in a press statement today, Wednesday, that the team includes doctors, health inspectors, emergency medical technicians, members of the nursing staff,

pharmacists and administrators.

He pointed out that it also includes the medical staff accompanying the Kuwaiti Hajj campaigns, who provide primary care services to the campaign pilgrims and refer cases to the clinics of the medical services team in Naseem.

Al-Mutairi added that the medical services team is currently distributing medicines allocated to Kuwaiti Hajj campaigns from the mission's headquarters in Al-Naseem, and ambulances have been provided to transport sick cases that need hospital transfer.

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The Conversation

Research suggests ways to counteract 'lenient' tendency

The safer you feel, the less safely you might behave

By Jesus M. de la Garza, Clemson University; E. Scott Geller, Virginia Tech and Sogand Hasanzadeh, Purdue University

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

Interventions designed to keep people safe can have hidden side effects. With an increased perception of safety, some people are more likely to take risks.

For example, some vehicle drivers take more risks when they are buckled up in a shoulder-and-lap belt. Some construction workers step closer to the edge of the roof because they are hooked to a fall-protection rope. Some parents of young children take less care with medicine bottles that are "child-proof" and thus difficult to open.

Techniques designed to reduce harm can promote a false sense of security and increase risky behavior and unintentional injuries.

As civil engineers and applied behavioral scientists, we are interested in ways to improve workplace safety. Our ongoing research suggests that employers need to do more than provide injury-protection devices and mandate safety rules and procedures to follow. Job-site mottos like "safety is our priority" are not enough. Employers need to consider the crucial human dynamic that can counteract their desired injury-prevention effects – and tap into strategies that might get around this safety paradox.

A well-established psychological phenomenon known as risk compensation or risk homeostasis explains this safety paradox. An intervention designed to prevent or reduce unintentional injury decreases one's perception of risk. Then that perception increases the person's risk-taking behavior, especially when taking a risk has a benefit, such as comfort, convenience or getting a job done faster.

Just as thermostats have a set point and activate when the temperature deviates from normal, people maintain a target level of risk by adjusting their

behavior. They balance potential risks and perceived benefits.

For instance, a driver may compensate for safety interventions like a vehicle shoulder-and-lap belt, an energy-absorbing steering column and an airbag by driving faster – trading off personal safety for time saved. The heightened odds of a crash at higher driving speeds don't affect only the driver; they also put other vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists at more risk. An individual's risk compensation can influence the injury-prevention impact of protective devices and safety-related rules and regulations for the population overall.

In our own research, we investigated the risk compensation phenomenon among construction workers using an immersive mixed-virtual reality scenario that simulated a roofing task. We asked participants to install asphalt shingles on a real 27-degree sloped roof within a virtual environment that conveyed the sense of being 20 feet off the ground.

Protection

Then we monitored the workers' actions and physiological responses while they completed roofing tasks under three levels of safety protection.

As expected, more safety interventions created a false sense of invulnerability in participants. Adding guardrails to the roof's edge and providing a fall-arrest system for the roofer provided real protection and rightfully increased a sense of security, which resulted in participants' stepping closer to the edge of the virtual roof, leaning over the edge, and spending more time exposing themselves to the risk of falling. Participants increased their risk-taking behavior by as much as 55%. This study provided empirical evidence that safety devices can implicitly encourage workers to take more risks.

One hypothesis that flows from our research is that educating people about the risk compensation effect could reduce their vulnerability to this phenomenon. Future studies are needed to test this possibility.

A crucial consideration is whether people feel the decision to take precautions is their own.

In studies one of us conducted with a colleague, pizza-delivery drivers demonstrated safer driving overall when they chose to increase particular safe-driving behaviors. For instance, drivers at one store participated in setting a goal to stop completely at intersections at least 80% of the time, while at another store management assigned drivers the 80% complete stopping goal. Drivers from both groups met that goal. But among the drivers who self-selected the target, there was a spillover effect: They increased their use of turn signals and lap-and-shoulder belts.

A study early in the COVID-19 pandemic identified a similar spillover or response generalization effect. People who wore a face mask outdoors where mask wearing was not mandated also maintained a greater interpersonal distance from others than did people without masks.

In this case, as with the delivery drivers, one safe behavior spilled over to another safe behavior – the opposite of risk compensation – when people had the perception of personal choice. We believe perceived choice was the critical human dynamic that influenced people to generalize their safety behavior rather than compensate for the reduction in risk.

Top-down rules and regulations can stifle a perception of choice and actually motivate people to intentionally do things that flout a safety mandate in order to assert their individual freedom or personal choice. People tend to bridle against the feeling of having a freedom taken away and will do what they can to regain it.

"Click It or Ticket" and other management attempts to dictate safety come with disadvantages that might negate any safety gains. Letting people feel they have a say in the matter can decrease the amount of risk compensation they experience and increase a safety spillover effect. (AP)



Current board members, board of directors candidates and US Embassy leadership pose for a group picture to commemorate the annual election night.

The Conversation

New rules to provide rights, protections

Passengers whose flights canceled or delayed to get better treatment in US

By Janet Bednarek
University of Dayton

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

US airline passengers in early 2023 faced the highest rate of flight delays since 2014. That heightened level of delays came shortly after December 2022, when Southwest Airlines experienced an epic meltdown, canceling 71% of its flights.

In response, on May 8, 2023, the Biden administration proposed new rules that would require airlines to compensate passengers whose flights are canceled or significantly delayed because of causes - unlike bad weather - that are under the control of the airlines. Under the new rules, the airlines would need to offer meal vouchers, overnight accommodations and ground transportation to and from a hotel when customers are stranded.

If enacted, those new rules would provide US passengers with rights and protections more in line with those currently afforded passengers in the European Union and Canada.

Rights

As a professor of history who researches American aviation, I'm aware that consumer advocates have pushed for greater passenger rights for airline travelers in the US since at least the early 1970s - when Ralph Nader sued an airline for bumping him from an overbooked flight. For the most part, especially since the Airline Deregulation Act in 1978, such efforts have failed, and airlines have been able to set and enforce their own policies.

Ralph Nader's suit, which unsuccessfully sought to end the practice of overbooking flights, highlighted that there were regulations already in place concerning passengers bumped from flights because of overbooking. Those regulations, however, did not cover passengers whose flights were delayed or canceled.

There was, however, something known as Rule 240. As part of the Civil Aeronautics Board's oversight of US airlines, airlines had to submit information on all aspects of their operations, including their flight delay and cancellation policies. In these required documents, that information was often listed under Rule 240. However, each airline determined its own flight delay and cancellation policies under Rule 240. The airlines were not required to compensate passengers in any particular way, only to state what their policy was.

As US airlines became deregulated in the late 1970s and early 1980s, many, though not all, included the provisions they had previously submitted to the Civil Aeronautics Board in their contracts of carriage - the "fine print" associated with airline tickets. Many contracts of carriage stated that in the case of a delay or cancellation, the airline would book a passenger on its next available flight or

place them on a flight on another airline that would get them to their destination sooner.

Rule 240 or its equivalent under the contract of carriage varies by airline and primarily focuses on rebooking passengers. Some airlines do offer meal vouchers and hotel accommodations, but only when the problem is caused by the airline and not something like weather or a labor strike. Consumer advocates encourage passengers to invoke Rule 240, but airlines will likely provide only what is stated in their contract of carriage.

In recent decades, consumer advocates and even some lawmakers have sought to enshrine more substantial air passenger protections into federal law.

In December 2006, American Airlines held passengers on a plane on the tarmac in Austin, Texas, for eight hours with little food or water. Kate Hanni, a passenger on that flight, lobbied Congress to pass an extensive passenger bill of rights. In response, the Department of Transportation did announce new rules in 2009 that said airlines could not hold domestic flights on the tarmac for more than three hours and must provide access to water and lavatories during such delays.

Reimburse

Those rules were expanded in 2011 to reimburse baggage fees to customers whose bags are lost, increase compensation for passengers bumped from oversold flights, and extend the rule concerning tarmac delays to international flights, with a four-hour limit.

More recently, in November 2021, Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut introduced Senate Bill 3222 to establish an airline passengers' bill of rights. However, it never made it past the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.

US passengers flying within the European Union can experience what it is like when passenger rights are guaranteed under law rather than left to the discretion of airlines.

EU legislation mandates that airlines provide passengers with certain levels of care including flight rebooking, meals, hotel vouchers and, in some instances, cash compensation - which varies depending on the length of the delay and the distance of the flight. All travelers who are flying within the EU, or whose flight arrives to the EU on an EU carrier, or departs from the EU on any carrier, are covered under that legislation.

The Biden administration proposal would bring US airline passenger protections more in line with the EU where such protections are mandated and not at the discretion of the airline. Such an effort, while likely welcomed by passengers, is also likely to meet opposition from the airlines - which have enjoyed a long history of setting their own rules. (AP)

Chamber promotes US-Kuwait ties

AmCham Kuwait holds its annual elections for Board of Directors

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: ABCK AmCham Kuwait held its Annual Board of Directors Election Night, at Waldorf Astoria Hotel, in attendance of 100 AmCham Kuwait Members and Embassy representatives. The election process, which took place in accordance with the association's bylaws, resulted in the appointment of a new set of directors who will oversee the strategy and ways forward for the Chamber.

The event was introduced by Omar Ben Naji, Board Member of AmCham Kuwait, as he thanked the candidates for taking such strong interest in being part of the board, and he also commended the current Board of Directors for the efforts that were put forward by them which has enabled the organization to be active and continue its collaborative efforts with different entities since the past year. Ben Naji then ended his speech by introducing the Charge d'Affaires of the US Embassy, James Holtzner.

Holtzner thanked the chamber and spoke about the success of the Select USA Summit, which saw its largest delegation to date from Kuwait, as several were AmCham Kuwait Members. Holtzner spoke about the success of the trade delegation and the increase of commercial relations between the US and Kuwait. To finalize the Embassy's introduction, each of the Embassy section heads introduced themselves and spoke about what they do at the Embassy and how each of them collaborates with AmCham Kuwait and their members through different scopes in order to continue promoting the bilateral relations between the US and Kuwait, when it comes to defense, education, cultural affairs, tourism, commercial, political updates and the economic landscape which attracts investors bilaterally.

Introduction

As their introduction was finalized, Dr. Arezou Harraf, Vice-Chair of AmCham Kuwait and Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee provided instructions on how to vote, and then introduced each of the candidates of the Board, as each of them during their speech spoke about how each would be contributing to ABCK-AmCham Kuwait.

The running candidates were Mohammad Al-Ali, Managing Director at BRINKS, Omar Amireh, Chief Executive Officer & Head of Corporate Banking at Citibank, Amit Arora, Partner (Tax) of Ernst & Young, Amjad Omran, General Manager at NOV Kuwait S.P.C., Almas Buqam-maz- Founder & Executive Attorney at Almas

International Company, Anwar Almutlaq- VP Kuwait & Country Chair at Shell Kuwait, Fahad Al Obaid, Lawyer at ASAM Legal Consultant, Lawrence William Miller, Contracts Director at The Bridge Company, Mohammed E. Al Muail, CEO at Kuwait Resources House (KRH), Robert Boustani, Chief Executive Officer at KGL CR Kuwait and Gulf Link Transportation Company K.P.S.C. (KGL), Simon Khayat, General Manager at TAG Ltd. Catering & Supporting Services, and Pete Swift as an Individual Member.

Once the speeches were finalized, AmCham Kuwait took the time to recognize the event's sponsors: Platinum sponsors and Champions Eastern United Company and Kuwait & Gulf Link (KGL), Gold sponsor: The Bridge Company, Silver sponsors: Crowne Plaza Al-Thuraya City, and Saudi Arabian Chevron, and Event Travel and Tourism Partner: IFA International Travel and Tourism.

The AmCham Kuwait team held a raffle for participants to finalize the evening. The Raffle prizes include three fruit baskets from Del Monte Fresh, a \$1000 gift voucher for the finest services- NANOTECH- from KAF Group, a voucher for 120 minutes Royal spa treatment named (AMRA rare Diamond Ritual)-Waldorf Astoria Hotel, cheese trays-snacking tables from the U.S. Cheese Guild, as part of the buffet, and the highlight of the evening: Airline tickets to the U.S. and Europe provided by IFA Holidays Kuwait.

To finalize, Members cast their votes into the Ballot Box, and the event was resumed with a buffet dinner, followed by live entertainment from Jamstar.

The election process was conducted in a fair, transparent, and democratic manner to ensure that all members had an equal opportunity to participate and vote. The newly elected board members will work closely with the existing team to implement the strategic vision and operational plans of AMCHAM Kuwait, and to promote trade and investment between the United States and Kuwait.

ABCK-AmCham Kuwait: Is a non-profit organization operating since 1985 and is composed of Fortune 500 corporations, small and medium-sized companies, and prominent business leaders and entrepreneurs, both American and Kuwaiti. ABCK-AmCham Kuwait has functioned as an advocate for American interests in the state of Kuwait. For More Information, please visit our website at www.amchamkuwait.org or follow us on the social media channel @abck1985

electric vehicle maker Rivian to join Tesla charging network

Electric vehicle maker Rivian says it will follow General Motors and Ford and join Tesla's charging network next year.

The startup truck, SUV and delivery van maker says Tuesday that like GM and Ford, it will include ports with Tesla's connector on future Rivian vehicles starting in 2025. It also will offer an adapter for owners of current Rivian EVs.

It is another domino to fall as the auto industry considers switching to Tesla's connector, which it calls the North American Charging Standard. At present, nearly all

automakers other than Tesla use what is called a CCS connector developed with the Society of Automotive Engineers.

Tesla has more direct current fast-charging plugs in the U.S. than any other network, and its stations are in prime locations along freeway travel corridors.

Other automakers also are looking into the switch. Last week, Stellantis CEO Carlos Tavares said his company's U.S. teams are studying the change and will make a decision in a few weeks.

"We right now are evaluating that possi-

bility," Tavares said in a brief interview with The Associated Press. "It can have good things and bad things." He said the good things are being evaluated, and the bad things include dependence on Tesla.

Currently Stellantis, formerly Fiat Chrysler, has no fully electric vehicles on sale in the U.S., but it does sell three plug-in gas-electric hybrids that can go short distances on battery power. The company plans to sell an electric commercial van this year, followed by an electric Ram pickup and other vehicles. (AP)



A 2023 R1T pickup truck is charged in a bay at a Rivian delivery and service center Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2023, in Denver. (AP)

Market Movements

21-06-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts		
UAE	- DFM	+0.21	3,782.23	PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	-1.03	40,229.77
JAPAN	- Nikkei	+0.56	33,575.14	PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	-0.38	6,424.21
SAUDI	- Tadawul	+0.30	11,466.17	EGYPT	- EGX 30	-1.20	17,706.08

Business

Competition is heating up

World Expo '30 sees battling bids from cities in Saudi, Italy, S. Korea

PARIS, June 21, (AP) — Competition is heating up for the right to host the 2030 World Expo, a massive event that can generate revenue, jobs and global attention — if everything goes well.

Rome, the Saudi capital Riyadh, and South Korea's second-biggest city Busan presented their bids at a key meeting Tuesday of the Paris-based International Bureau of Exhibitions. A vote among member countries is expected in November.

Amid criticism in the West of its human rights record, Saudi Arabia seems to be putting on the biggest marketing push.

It financed a "Riyadh 2030" exhibit in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower — a monument built for the 1889 World's Fair — and splashed ads on Paris taxis. Its crown prince Mohammed bin Salman is on a weeklong trip to France where he's meeting with top officials. Italy's premier and South Korea's president, meanwhile, came to Paris in person to push their bids.

The Ukrainian Black Sea port city of Odesa also submitted a bid for 2030 before Russia invaded Ukraine last year. With fighting still raging in Ukraine, Odesa's bid wasn't part of the official presentation Tuesday. Arriving at Tuesday's event, Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni expressed confidence.

"I believe that Rome's winning hand ... is being able to reconcile tradition and innovation," she said.

Rome is pledging to respect the environment and the "idea of cooperating with other nations that we are trying to represent, as well with our foreign policy that is never a 'hit and run' policy," she said, according to news agency Lapresse.

Tourism accounts for 13% of Italy's GDP, so it is a big driver of the national economy. The country hosted Expo 2015 in Milan and is gearing up to host the next Vatican Jubilee in 2025, with re-paving and other road construction to make mobility easier in the traffic-clogged Italian capital.

For Saudi Arabia, hosting the expo would boost the crown prince's push to diversify the kingdom's oil-dominated economy and attract more foreign investment. The kingdom's expo plan includes a massive public transit network, a major park and plan to turn Riyadh into an "open art gallery without walls," said Fahd al-Rasheed, the CEO of the Royal Commission for Riyadh City.

However, challenges remain, like the potential for crude oil prices to remain low. Also, Prince Mohammed remains notorious abroad for the 2018 killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi. U.S. intelligence agencies say the prince likely ordered the killing, though the kingdom has denied that.

South Korea is promising a high-tech expo, including use of AI, 6G, and "smart" airports and seaports. Officials say the event will attract up to 50 million visitors and create 500,000 jobs to Busan, a port city on South Korea's southeast-

ern coast known for its huge harbor, crowded beaches and scenic mountains and Buddhist temples.

President Yoon Suk Yeol said Busan's bid isn't just about economic benefits. "If we host the Expo, that will open a new chapter in our global diplomacy," he said during a meeting with Koreans residing in France ahead of Tuesday's meeting.

From K-pop supergroup BTS and Netflix's global megahit "Squid Game" to Samsung smartphones and Hyundai cars, South Korea is now a cultural and economic powerhouse. But the Asian country still cares about the international recognition that major events can bring to the world's 10th-largest economy.

Ukraine is still holding out hope for Odesa's bid, which would boost the war-battered economy and send a clear message to Moscow of further international isolation. The port city is a key gateway for Ukrainian trade, and the Expo would allow Ukraine to show that it is capable of organizing large international events while it continues to make its case for EU membership.

While past world's fairs introduced such wonders as the light bulb, the X-ray and the Ferris wheel, they also require big investments and can be a big gamble for host cities if they don't bring in as many visitors as expected for geopolitical or other reasons. Osaka is hosting the next World Expo in 2025.

12,368 new jobs created

Dubai's creative economy soars: #1 global ranking in FDI projects

DUBAI, June 21, (Business Wire) — Dubai has firmly established itself as the global leader in attracting Foreign Direct Investment projects within the cultural and creative industries. The emirate's just-announced accomplishment of 451 new projects in 2022 has propelled its position as the world's capital of the creative economy and created 12,368 new jobs.

Results of Foreign Direct Investment in Dubai's Cultural and Creative Industries for the Year 2022

Regarding FDI capital inflows, Dubai's cultural and creative industries substantially increased, reaching AED 7.357 billion in 2022. This surge in the capital inflow has further solidified Dubai's reputation as the frontrunner in the MENA region and placed it 12th globally, a remarkable improvement from the 14th position in 2021.

The Dubai FDI Monitor report, which draws data from the 'FDI Markets' by the Financial Times, underpins Dubai's top-ranking status. The report reveals that Dubai led globally in attracting FDI projects in the cultural and creative industries, maintaining its 6th spot worldwide in job creation through FDI. Greenfield FDI projects, wholly-owned ventures, constituted a significant majority, accounting for 76% of the total FDI projects in Dubai's cultural and creative sectors.

Dubai's unprecedented success in attracting FDI projects can be attrib-

uted to its robust infrastructure, well-established legal framework, and thriving creative and digital ecosystem. These factors have transformed Dubai into an irresistible hub for innovators and investors, offering a fertile ground for launching ambitious projects and leading visionary ideas to become tangible economic ventures.

The US, India, the UK, France, and Switzerland emerged as the key foreign direct investors from the report regarding FDI projects, while the US, India, Switzerland, France and UK topped the list in terms of FDI capital inflows. This strategic alignment with these markets has been fostered through active engagement and targeted missions by Dubai Culture & Arts Authority, showcasing the emirate's unique creative landscape and forging collaborations with entrepreneurs and organisations worldwide.

Dubai's top global ranking in FDI projects is a testament to its unwavering dedication to nurturing the growth of creative industries, reinforcing its standing as an innovative hub for talent and investment. This commitment aligns seamlessly with Dubai's overarching vision of cultivating a diversified, sustainable, and knowledge-based economy. By emphasising creativity, collaboration, and innovation, Dubai has firmly established itself as a global centre for culture, an incubator for creativity, and a thriving hub for talent.

'Dubai International Chamber' expands its presence in Africa

DUBAI, June 21, (Business Wire) — Dubai International Chamber (DIC), one of the three chambers operating under Dubai Chambers, today marked the official inauguration of its new international representative office in Johannesburg. The opening further strengthens Dubai's growing trade links with Africa and is aimed at boosting the level of bilateral investments between Dubai and South Africa.

Dubai International Chamber's new international representative office in South Africa was inaugurated during a special ribbon-cutting ceremony in Johannesburg, in the presence of David Els, Chief Representative - South Africa, Dubai International Chamber; Fatima Yousef Al Suwaidi, Counselor, Dubai Chambers; and Abdulla M. Al-Mohammed, Chief Representative - Southern Africa, Dubai International Chamber. The office will focus on providing comprehensive support to the South African business community and building strong relationships with key public and private sector stakeholders,

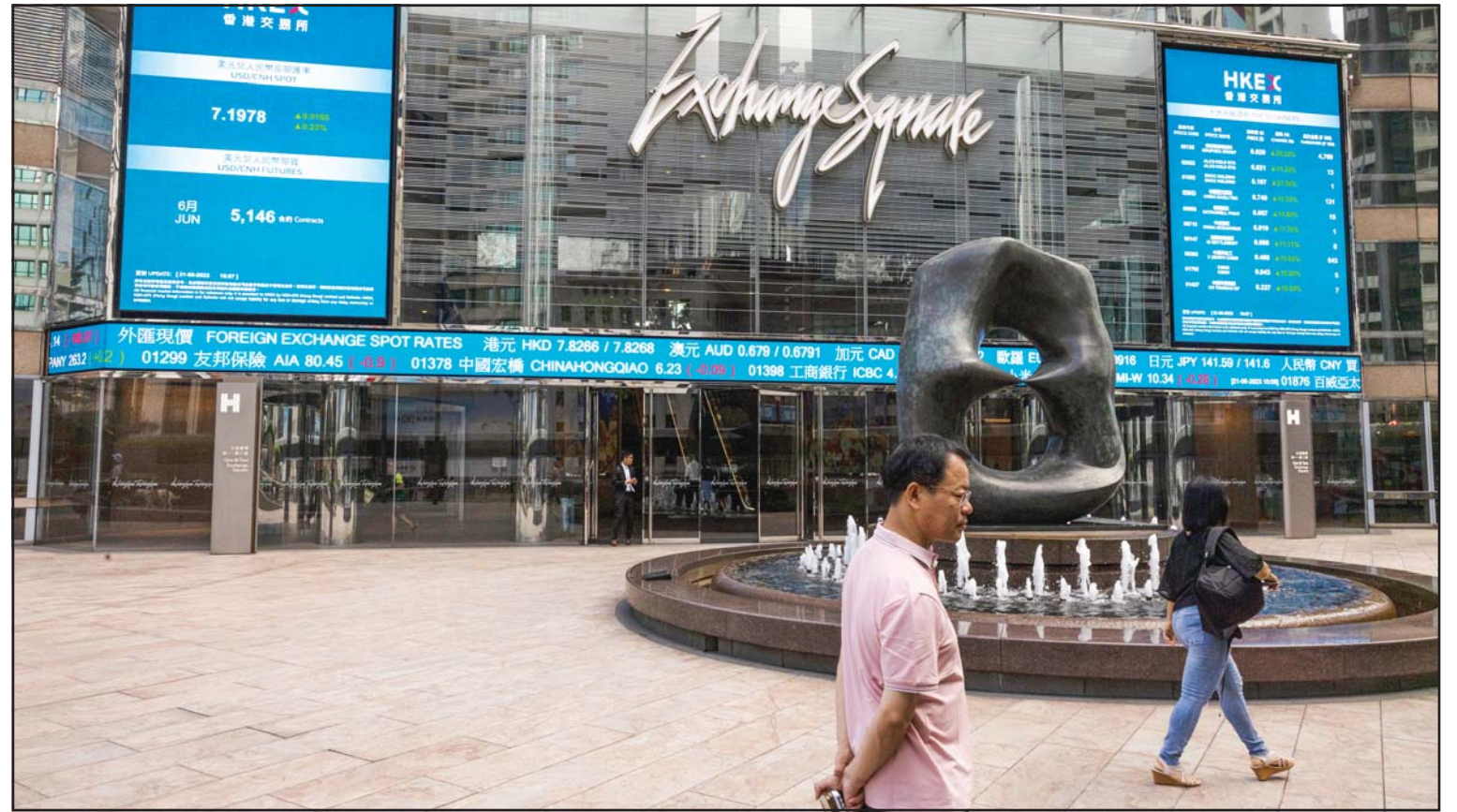
as well as delivering on-ground assistance to South African companies seeking to enter Dubai and expand internationally through the emirate.

Mohammad Ali Rashed Lootah, President & CEO of Dubai Chambers, said: "In line with our strategic priorities and the emirate's foreign trade plan, we are anticipating further growth in Dubai's non-oil trade with South Africa and other key African markets, together with increased strategic investments from businesses on both sides."

According to Dubai Customs statistics, non-oil trade between South Africa and Dubai achieved year-on-year growth of 11.5% during 2022 to reach a total of AED22.3 billion. The number of South African companies registered with Dubai Chamber of Commerce stood at 777 by the end of 2022, representing growth of 77% since 2016.

The new office comes as part of the 'Dubai Global' initiative, which was launched last year to establish 50 representative offices for Dubai across five continents by 2030. The opening further consolidates DIC's growing presence in Africa following the launch of offices in Kenya, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Ghana.

Tech stocks drop and sap more momentum from Wall St's rally



Pedestrians pass by the Hong Kong Stock Exchange electronic screen in Hong Kong, Wednesday, June 21, 2023. Shares were mostly lower Wednesday in Asia after Wall Street benchmarks retreated following the S&P 500's rise to its highest level since the spring of last year. (AP)

Asian shares mostly lower, tracking WS retreat

NEW YORK, June 21, (AP) — Tech stocks are falling Wednesday, keeping Wall Street mixed and sapping more momentum from its five-week rally.

The S&P 500 was 0.4% lower in midday trading. It's on pace for a third straight pullback after rallying last week to its highest level in more than a year.

The Nasdaq composite was particularly weak, falling 1.1% as of 11:45 a.m. Eastern time. A slight majority of stocks on Wall Street were rising, however, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 15 points, or less than 0.1%, at 34,069.

Wall Street has been on a tear this year, and the S&P 500 has rallied roughly 14% amid hopes that inflation is coming down quickly enough for the Federal Reserve to stop hiking interest rates soon, which could allow the economy to avoid falling into a long-expected recession. Some analysts say stock prices have run too far, too fast when inflation has remained stubbornly high and the Fed may have to keep rates higher for longer.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell said Wednesday that "the process of getting inflation back down to 2% has a long way to go." He said again that a couple

more rate increases may be on the way, though the speed of the hikes is likely to slow after moving at a furious rate since early last year.

"Given how far we've come, it may make sense to move rates higher but to do so at a more moderate pace," he said in testimony before a House of Representatives committee. He likened it to slowing down from 75 miles per hour on a highway to 50 and then even slower as the destination nears.

Higher rates have already helped cause three high-profile failures in the U.S. banking system. And the industry remains under pressure, even after the federal government acted quickly to provide support.

Smaller and regional banks account for about 50% of U.S. commercial and industrial lending, according to Ann Milette, head of active equity at Allspring Global Investments. And pressure on these banks would make it tougher for smaller and midsize businesses to get loans, which would hurt the economy.

Milette said she's leaning toward the probability of a coming U.S. recession because of how much the Fed has already raised rates in such a short time. She said the recession may not be very deep, but it could still last longer than many predict.

"Inflation is retreating," she said, "but it won't be a smooth decline."

In the bond market, yields rose. The

yield on the 10-year Treasury climbed to 3.77% from 3.72% late Tuesday. It helps set rates for mortgages and other important loans.

The two-year Treasury yield, which moves more on expectations for the Fed, rose to 4.73% from 4.69%.

Higher interest rates drag on all kinds of stocks, bonds and other investments. But high-growth stocks tend to be some of the hardest hit, and several Big Tech stocks were among the heaviest weights on the market.

Nvidia slumped 2.7%, giving back some of its spectacular gains from earlier this year driven by Wall Street's frenzy around the artificial-intelligence industry. The chip maker is still up more than 190% for the year so far after saying AI would result in a tremendous leap in its revenue.

Amazon slipped 0.8% after the Federal Trade Commission accused it of enrolling consumers into its Prime program without their consent and making it difficult to cancel their subscriptions.

FedEx fell 0.7% after it gave a forecast for upcoming earnings that looked low against some analysts' expectations. That was despite reporting stronger profit for the latest quarter than Wall Street forecast.

Europe

In Europe, stock indexes were modestly lower.

The FTSE 100 in London dipped

0.1% after a U.K. report on inflation came in hotter than expected. That raised speculation that the Bank of England will hike interest rates again at its meeting Thursday.

Asia

Shares were mostly lower Wednesday in Asia after Wall Street benchmarks retreated following the S&P 500's rise to its highest level since the spring of last year.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 advanced 0.3% to 33,575.14, while the Hang Seng in Hong Kong sank 2% to 19,217.66. The Shanghai Composite index gave up 1.3% to 3,197.90 and the Kospi in Seoul slipped 0.9% to 2,582.63. In Australia, the S&P/ASX 200 shed 0.6% to 7,314.90. Bangkok's SET lost 0.8% while India's Sensex was up 0.3%.

Oil

In other trading Wednesday, U.S. benchmark crude oil rose 20 cents to \$71.39 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It gave up 74 cents to \$71.19 per barrel on Tuesday.

Brent crude, the international standard, added 16 cents to \$76.06 per barrel.

Currencies

The dollar rose to 142.14 Japanese yen from 141.43 yen. The euro was unchanged at \$1.0922.

EU unveils plan to protect economies from rivals. China is a focus, but is not named in the proposal

BRUSSELS, June 21, (AP) — The European Union unveiled a proposal Tuesday to protect the bloc's economies from risks posed by unreliable suppliers in countries that do not share its values, like China, after the war in Ukraine exposed Europe's dependency on Russia for oil and gas.

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, is trying to develop measures to protect trade and investment, particularly in the tech and communication sectors, that rivals might want to exploit for security or military purposes.

Announcing the proposal, which must be endorsed by EU member countries, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said "the world has become more contested and geopolitical, and there is a limited set of key technologies that

can be used in a different and aggressive way."

"Given the changing nature of the risks, we now need a strategic vision for how we are going to handle these risks," von der Leyen told reporters. She said the EU must be "more assertive" in using the tools that it has to tackle the problem and develop new ones.

The plans are being promoted as "country agnostic" because no target nations are mentioned by name, but they dovetail with the commission's new drive to "de-risk" its relations with China without completely "decoupling" as it relies on the Asian giant to tackle global challenges like climate change.

Von der Leyen said that the capital, expertise and research

of European companies must not be "abused by countries of concern for military applications." She raised, in particular, concerns about the security of 5G and 6G telecoms networks.

The commission considers Chinese firms Huawei and ZTE to be high-risk suppliers. In recent days, it endorsed moves by some of the 27 EU member countries to exclude the two companies from their 5G networks.

The aim of the new plans is to make European economies and supply chains more resilient to threats — to resist problems like energy or inflation hikes produced by the war — while keeping trade flowing. Under the scheme, the EU would work with countries that share its economic security

concerns. "We cannot treat a supply dependency on a systemic rival the same as we would treat that dependency on an ally," commission Executive Vice-President Margrethe Vestager said.

Other risks to be countered include those posed to cybersecurity or to critical infrastructure like pipelines, undersea cables, power generators and transport networks. The threats posed by countries using trade or investment to change EU policies would also be addressed.

The challenge will be to unite EU member states, each of which have their own national policies toward countries like China and Russia, around the plans. EU leaders are expected to discuss the scheme at their June 29-30 summit in Brussels.

Twitter employees sue co

Employees are suing Twitter over tens of millions of dollars in bonuses they say the social media company failed to pay despite promises it would.

The lawsuit filed Tuesday in federal court in San Francisco claims that in the month's leading up to billionaire Elon Musk's acquisition of the company, executives including former finance chief Ned Segal "repeatedly" promised employees that 50% of their 2022 bonuses would be paid.

The lead plaintiff, Mark Schobinger, served as Twitter's senior director of compensation

until last month. Lawyers for the plaintiff are seeking class action status on behalf of current and former Twitter employees.

Shannon Liss-Riordan, an attorney for the plaintiffs, said the bonuses Twitter owes are in the "tens of millions of dollars."

Twitter, which has disbanded its media relations team, did not respond to a message for comment other than with an automated reply.

The company is facing multiple lawsuits from former employees as well as over unpaid rent and other unpaid bills. (AP)

Buffett's firm raises stakes in Japan trading houses

Billionaire Warren Buffett is upping his bet on Japan, announcing this week that Berkshire Hathaway will increase its ownership stake in five major Japanese trading houses.

The first Berkshire Hathaway investment in Itochu Corp., Marubeni Corp., Mitsubishi Corp., Mitsui & Co. and Sumitomo Corp., a 5% stake, was disclosed in 2020 and earlier this year Buffett said that the stake had been increased to 7.4%. Ownership in the companies, Berkshire

said this week, has reached 8.5% excluding shares of treasury stock.

The trading houses are some of Japan's oldest and biggest companies and hold investments in a variety of industries. Their conglomerate business models are somewhat similar to Buffett's own company which owns dozens of companies including BNSF railroad, several major utilities and Geico insurance while also investing more than \$300 billion in stocks.

Buffett's timing is notable. In 2021, after Berkshire Hathaway had taken a stake in the five trading houses, Japan's Nikkei average recorded its highest year-end closing level since the 1980s when the market bubble in Japan was near its peak. Last week, the Nikkei closed over 33,000 for the first time in 33 years and it is up almost 30% over the past 12 months.

Berkshire Hathaway Inc. is based in Omaha, Nebraska. (AP)

'Thrilled to launch the service'

Norse Atlantic marks inaugural service between New York JFK and Rome

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., June 21, (Business Wire): Norse Atlantic Airways, the pioneering low-cost long-haul airline, is thrilled to announce the commencement of its highly anticipated daily flights between New York JFK and Rome. The inaugural flight took off on June 20, 2023.

Passengers seeking an unforgettable journey between these iconic destinations can now experience Norse Atlantic Airways' exceptional service, comfortable cabins, and unparalleled value. With daily flights, travelers will enjoy even more flexibility and convenience when planning their transatlantic trips.

"We are thrilled to launch our inaugural service between Rome and New York JFK, connecting two vibrant cities with deep historical and cultural ties. Our commitment to delivering affordable long-haul travel experiences without compromising on quality is at the core of Norse Atlantic Airways' vision. We look forward to welcoming passengers on board and providing them with exceptional service and value on this exciting new route," said Bjorn Tore Larsen, CEO Norse Atlantic Airways.

Comfortable

The flight from New York JFK departs daily at 12:30 a.m. EDT and lands at Rome Fiumicino Airport at 3:15 p.m. local time the same day. Flights from Rome depart at 6:55 p.m. local time and land in New York at 10:30 p.m. EDT.

Norse Atlantic exclusively operates Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft. The cabin offers passengers a relaxed and comfortable travel experience, with each seat including a personal state-of-the-art entertainment experience. Our Premium cabin offers an industry leading 43" seat pitch and 12" recline, allowing passengers to arrive at their destination feeling refreshed and ready to explore their destination.

Norse Atlantic offers two cabin choices, Economy and Premium. Passengers can choose from a simple range of fares, Light, Classic and Flextra, that

Getvisibility brings its revolutionary AI to Mac endpoint agent

CORK, Ireland, June 21, (PR Newswire): Getvisibility, a leading provider of data classification and data security solutions, is thrilled to announce the launch of its cutting-edge Mac endpoint agent. This innovative product expands the capabilities of data classification and data security visibility to Mac endpoints, empowering organizations with enhanced data security posture management and data protection capabilities.

In a technology breakthrough, Getvisibility is the first classification and data monitoring endpoint tool to fully support the new M1 Apple chip, ensuring compatibility and exceptional performance for Mac users.

Mac laptops and desktops are widely favored by company executives and professionals who handle and manage highly sensitive data on a daily basis. Recognizing the critical need to extend robust data security measures to these devices, Getvisibility has developed a comprehensive suite of tools that provide unrivaled coverage for organizations in need of effective data classification, discovery, and security solutions.

Key features of the Getvisibility Mac endpoint agent include: "We are delighted to introduce our Mac endpoint agent, offering an unpre-

cedented level of data classification and security visibility to Apple M1 chip-based devices," said Mark Brosnan CEO at Getvisibility. "With the increasing use of Mac laptops and desktops by executives and professionals, it is essential to provide organizations with the tools they need to effectively classify, discover, and secure their data. The Getvisibility suite empowers businesses to proactively manage data security, ensuring compliance, mitigating risks, and safeguarding their sensitive information."

The Getvisibility Mac endpoint agent is now available for organizations seeking robust data classification and data security solutions for their Mac devices.

About Getvisibility: Getvisibility is a leading provider of data classification and data security solutions. With its innovative technology, Getvisibility empowers organizations to effectively classify, discover, and secure their data, enabling compliance, mitigating risks, and protecting sensitive information. By leveraging cutting-edge capabilities, Getvisibility is committed to delivering unmatched coverage and excellence in data security.

reflect the way that they want to travel, and which options are important to them. Light fares represent Norse's value option, while Flextra fares include the maximum baggage allowance, two meal services an enhanced airport and onboard experience and increased ticket flexibility.

To book and for more information on Norse Atlantic, please visit www.flynorse.com. Norse Atlantic Airways is an airline that offers affordable fares on long-

haul flights, primarily between Europe and the United States. The company was founded by CEO and major shareholder Bjorn Tore Larsen in March 2021. Norse has a fleet of 15 modern, fuel-efficient and more environmentally friendly Boeing 787 Dreamliners that serve destinations including New York, Los Angeles, Fort Lauderdale, Miami, Orlando, Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Boston, Oslo, London, Berlin, Rome and Paris. The company's first flight took off from Oslo to New York on June 14, 2022.

Allies pledge billions for Ukraine rebuilding at London conference

Big-business investment sought

LONDON, June 21, (AP): Ukraine's allies pledged several billion dollars in non-military aid on Wednesday to rebuild its war-ravaged infrastructure, fight corruption and help pave the country's road to membership in the European Union.

Stressing the vast scale of the task, diplomats and political leaders at the Ukraine Recovery Conference in London urged private-sector companies to invest and revive an economy battered by almost a year and a half of war.

Delegates from more than 60 countries attended the conference, which is both a fundraising forum and a message to Russia that Ukraine's allies are in it for the long haul.

The World Bank has estimated the cost of the reconstruction at more than \$400 billion, a figure rising daily alongside the human toll of Russia's invasion. Politicians from Europe and the U.S. vowed that Russia would one day be made to pay for the destruction - though officials acknowledged that day is some way off.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the U.S. would give more than \$1.3 billion in new aid, including more than \$500 million to restore and improve Ukraine's battered energy grid.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced 50 billion euros (\$55 billion) in support through 2027, while Britain pledged 240 million pounds (\$305 million) in aid and 3 billion pounds (\$3.8 billion) in World Bank loan guarantees for Ukraine.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who addressed delegates by video, said his country needed action, not just pledges.

"We must move from vision to agreements and from agreements to real projects," he said.

Zelenskyy, who is pushing for Ukraine to join NATO and the European Union, urged Western leaders to have the "courage" to acknowledge that his country is already a key part of their economic and defense alliances.

"We are only waiting for the courage of the alliance leaders to recognize this reality, politically," he said.

Von der Leyen said "I have no doubt that Ukraine will be part of our union," but stressed that it must still meet conditions before it can start accession talks, including cutting corruption and reforming the judiciary.

"Despite the war, Ukraine has accelerated its reform agenda with impressive speed and resolve," von der Leyen said. She said such reforms would send "a powerful message" to investors that they will get the "transparency, fairness and the functioning institutions they need to invest in Ukraine."

Blinken also highlighted anti-corruption efforts, saying some of the U.S. money will go toward upgrading ports and border infrastructure and digitizing customs procedures to cut graft.

"The goal is to rebuild a Ukraine that is fit for (the) EU," said German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, whose country will host another recovery conference next year.

Before the conference, Blinken said postwar Ukraine will need "the strong-



Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addresses delegates at the opening session on the first day of the Ukraine Recovery Conference via video, in London, Wednesday, June 21, 2023. Ukraine's allies pledged several billion dollars in non-military aid on Wednesday to rebuild its war-ravaged infrastructure, fight corruption and help pave the country's road to membership in the European Union. (AP)

Monopoly on digital advertising cited

Gannett files suit against Google, Alphabet

Gannett has filed a civil lawsuit against Google and its parent company Alphabet, claiming that they unlawfully hold monopolies in the advertising technology tools that publishers and advertisers use to buy and sell online ad space.

The largest U.S. newspaper publisher by total daily circulation alleges in the suit that Google controls how publishers sell their ad slots and forces them to sell an increasing amount of ad space to Google at lower prices. This in turn results in less revenue for publishers and Google's ad-tech rivals and more money for Google.

In January the Justice Department and eight states filed an antitrust lawsuit against Google, seeking to shatter its alleged monopoly on the entire ecosystem of online advertising as a hurtful burden to advertisers, consumers and even the U.S. government. The suit accused the company of unlawfully monopolizing the way ads are served online by excluding competitors.

The European Union launched an antitrust investigation into Google's digital ad dominance in 2021. And last week EU regulators hit Google with

fresh antitrust charges, saying the only way to satisfy competition concerns about its lucrative digital ad business is by selling off parts of the tech giant's main moneymaker.

The unprecedented decision to push for such a breakup marks a significant escalation by Brussels in its crackdown on Silicon Valley digital giants, and follows a similar move by U.S. authorities seeking to bust Google's alleged monopoly on the online ad



In this July 14, 2010 file photo, the sign for Gannett headquarters is displayed in McLean, Va. Gannett has filed a civil lawsuit against Google and its parent company Alphabet, Tuesday, June 20, 2023. (AP)

Minister Rishi Sunak said BT, Virgin, Philips and Hyundai Engineering are among more than 400 companies from 38 countries that have committed to invest in Ukraine.

Sunak said Ukraine is a "huge investment opportunity" despite the mounting destruction from Russian attacks.

"In fact, the war has only proved how much Ukraine has to offer," Sunak said, citing Ukraine's tech sector, which had its best-ever year in 2022.

"As we've seen in Bakhmut and

ecosystem.

Gannett CEO Mike Reed, in an opinion piece published Tuesday by Gannett-owned USA Today, said that the company is looking to "restore fair competition in a digital advertising marketplace that Google has demolished."

Reed claims that local news outlets are hurting because of unlawful bid-rigging practices used by Google.

"The core of the case and our position is that Google abuses its control over the ad server monopoly to make it increasingly difficult for rival exchanges to run competitive auctions," Reed wrote.

"These claims are simply wrong. Publishers have many options to choose from when it comes to using advertising technology to monetize - in fact, Gannett uses dozens of competing ad services, including Google Ad Manager," Dan Taylor, vice president of Google Ads said in a written statement. "And when publishers choose to use Google tools, they keep the vast majority of revenue. We'll show the court how our advertising products benefit publishers and help them fund their content online."

Mariupol, what Russia cannot take it will seek to destroy," Sunak said. "They want to do the same to Ukraine's economy."

"The scale of the challenge is real, the war brought a 29% fall in Ukraine's GDP last year, but just look at the streets of Kyiv. Despite the threat of attack, people are getting on with their lives -- and getting on with business."

Sunak called for investment in technology and green energy to help build "a financially stronger, technologically advanced Ukraine."

Lawsuit claims

Co's insufficient testing of the Titan put passengers in 'potential danger'

SEATTLE, June 21, (AP): The company whose submersible vanished in the North Atlantic on a tourist dive to the wreck of the Titanic was repeatedly warned that there might be catastrophic safety problems posed by the way it was developed, documents show.

With five people aboard a vessel that if still functioning would have a dwindling amount of oxygen remaining, an expanding international fleet of ships and airplanes is searching for the Titan, operated by OceanGate Expeditions. The undersea exploration company based in Everett, Washington, has been making yearly voyages to the Titan since 2021.

In the first piece of good news since the search began, a Canadian aircraft detected underwater noises, though the vessel has not been found, the U.S. Coast Guard reported early Wednesday.

David Lochridge, OceanGate's director of marine operations, wrote an engineering report in 2018 that said the craft under development needed more testing and that passengers might be endangered when it reached "extreme depths," according to a lawsuit filed that year in U.S. District Court in Seattle.

OceanGate sued Lochridge that year, accusing him of breaching a non-disclosure agreement, and he filed a counterclaim alleging that he was wrongfully fired for raising questions about testing and safety. The case settled on undisclosed terms several months after it was filed.

Lochridge's concerns primarily focused on the company's decision to rely on sensitive acoustic monitoring - cracking or popping sounds made by the hull under pressure - to detect flaws, rather than a scan of the hull. Lochridge said the company told him no equipment existed that could perform such a test on the 5-inch-thick (12.7-centimeter-thick) carbon-fiber hull.

"This was problematic because this type of acoustic analysis would only show when a component is about to fail - often milliseconds before an implosion - and would not detect any existing flaws prior to putting pressure onto the hull," Lochridge's counterclaim said.

Further, the craft was designed to reach depths of 4,000 meters (13,123 feet), where the Titanic rested. But, according to Lochridge, the passenger viewport was only certified for depths of up to 1,300 meters (4,265 feet), and OceanGate would not pay for the man-

ufacturer to build a viewport certified for 4,000 meters.

OceanGate's choices would "subject passengers to potential extreme danger in an experimental submersible," the counterclaim said.

However, the company said in its complaint that Lochridge "is not an engineer and was not hired or asked to perform engineering services on the Titan." He was fired after refusing to accept assurances from OceanGate's lead engineer that the acoustic monitoring and testing protocol was, in fact, better suited to detect any flaws than a scan would be, the complaint said.

OceanGate Chief Executive Stockton Rush defended the approach in a speech to a conference in Seattle last year hosted by the tech news site GeekWire. He described how he had taken a prototype down to 4,000 meters: "It made a lot of noise," he said.

So he brought the vessel back up, and on a second dive it made the same troubling noises, even though it should have been dramatically quieter. The company scrapped that hull, which had been constructed by a marine manufacturer, and built another one with an aerospace supplier, Rush said.

Also in 2018, warnings came from the Marine Technology Society, which describes itself as "a professional group of ocean engineers, technologists, policy-makers, and educators."

In a letter to Stockton Rush, OceanGate's chief executive, the society said it was critical that the company submit its prototype to tests overseen by an expert third party before launching in order to safeguard passengers.

Rush had refused to do so. Rush was piloting the vessel that is now missing.

The letter, reported by the New York Times, said society members were worried that "the current experimental approach adopted by OceanGate could result in negative outcomes (from minor to catastrophic) that would have serious consequences for everyone in the industry."

In a 2019 interview with Smithsonian magazine, Rush complained that the industry's approach was stifling innovation.

"There hasn't been an injury in the commercial sub industry in over 35 years," he said. "It's obscenely safe because they have all these regulations. But it also hasn't innovated or grown - because they have all these regulations."



This photo provided by OceanGate Expeditions shows a submersible vessel named Titan used to visit the wreckage site of the Titanic. In a race against the clock on the high seas, an expanding international armada of ships and airplanes searched Tuesday, June 20, 2023, for the submersible that vanished in the North Atlantic while taking five people down to the wreck of the Titanic. (AP)

AUB congratulates winners of Al-Hassad weekly draw

Ahli United Bank (AUB) congratulates the winners of Al-Hassad weekly draw of Al-Hassad Islamic account, which was held on 21 June at the bank's head office in the presence of a representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The Bank Announced 10 Winners Of KD 1,000 As Follows: Luzviminda G Ali, Jasem M E Al-Buloushi, Samyah Mohammad Ramadhan Boshetri, Taleb Mohammad Abdullah Al-Abdullah, Raed F I Al-Abaid, Leena Falah Marzoug Al-Mutairi, Meshari M A Al-Khudhair, Ali S Gh Sealem, Khaled Bandar Saeed Bin Eid

Al-Mutairi And Zaid Adel Sulaiman Al-Shehab. In its new package, Al-Hassad Islamic Saving Account presents a broader variety of rewards. Customers could now participate in the draw to win a monthly KD 100,000 prize, in addition to 10 weekly prizes of KD 1,000 each. The grand quarterly prize of KD 250,000 in cash for the winner remains the most important aspiration of customers. It is a real chance for them to realize their life dreams. In addition to this attractive package, there will be the annual expected profits on the basis of a Wakala contract that increases

the attractiveness of the Al-Hassad Islamic Saving Account to customers. Al-Hassad Account provides a suite of unique features, including the simplest and easiest savings program and a unique account-opening feature online with all ease with an instant deposit option. To be eligible to participate in the draw, the customer should have a minimum balance of KD 100, whereby the customer has two chances to participate, with up to 30,000 chances per draw, in addition to rewarding annual profits.



Al-Hassad weekly draw

AIDanah account one of most rewarding savings accounts

June 30 deadline to deposit, qualify for KD100,000 prize: Gulf Bank

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Gulf Bank has announced that the last chance to deposit and qualify for the Al-Danah Millionaire prize of KD 100,000 is June 30, 2023 – noting that the winner will be announced on October 12, 2023, in the presence of representatives from both the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and Ernst & Young.



the most rewarding savings accounts in Kuwait, with its periodic draws that award valuable prizes and multiple benefits for account holders. Gulf Bank's AIDanah account offers monthly oppor-

tunities 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 Million, and a grand draw prize that has recently been increased from KD 1.5 Million to KD 2 Million.

To enter the upcoming draws, Gulf Bank customers can open an AIDanah account at any time, and to increase their chances of winning, account holders must either maintain the minimum deposit amount of KD 200 or increase their AIDanah savings. The higher the balance in an account, the more chances are accumulated over time. Opening an AIDanah account is also easi-

er than ever, with customers being able to open their accounts online through Gulf Bank's Online and Mobile Banking services.

Participate

It is noteworthy that September 30, 2023, is the last chance to deposit and participate in the annual grand draw prize of KD 2 Million, which will be held on January 18, 2024, in the presence of representatives from both the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and Ernst & Young.

The AIDanah 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 is the only bank in Kuwait that creates two millionaires annually.

One of the many advantages of the AIDanah account, is being the only account in Kuwait that transfers the customers' chances of winning from the previous year to the next, as part of a program that rewards customers for their loyalty to Gulf Bank.

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

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



Zain and Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs members during launch of Hajj offer 2023.

Certified Hajj campaigns

Zain offers free roaming to customers performing Hajj

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Zain announces a new collaboration with the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs to present its annual complimentary roaming promotion for the Hajj season, offering its top roaming plan for FREE to all postpaid and prepaid customers who are registered in Kuwait's certified Hajj campaigns. With this initiative, the company keeps pilgrims in touch with their loved ones at no cost by enjoying internet and voice calls at Hajj locations in Saudi Arabia.



Excellent service

Zain Kuwait's Roaming and Wholesale Department Manager Mohammed Al Sayer, and the company's Corporate Relations Department Manager Hamad Al Musaibeh, recently visited the office of the Assistant Undersecretary of Media and External Relations at the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Mohammed Nasser Al Mutairi to discuss this collaboration. Zain presents this initiative every year to keep customers who travel to the Sacred House connected to each other and to their loved ones for free during Hajj season.

Offers

Zain now offers FREE roaming internet and voice calls to all customers who are registered in Kuwait's official and certified Hajj campaigns when they subscribe to the postpaid or prepaid Roaming PLUS plan (originally at KD 13 weekly).

The plan includes 30 local minutes, 30 minutes to Kuwait, and 30 SMS messages per week, in addition to 3 GBs of daily internet (fair usage policy applies daily after exceeding 3 GB, after which speed is reduced until end of day). The limited time offer starts from 22 June and continues until 5 July and is only valid at Hajj rituals locations.

Zain continuously offers services that are tailored to match its customers' expectations and needs during their travels, and to keep them connected to their loved ones and businesses with more convenience and around the clock, especially during the most cherished occasions and seasons like Hajj.

KFH offers Eidiyah at branches and KFH Go

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) offers customers Eidiyah (monetary gift) in all denominations: KD 1/-, KD 5/-, KD 10/- and KD 20/- at all branches all over Kuwait until the last working day preceding the Eid holiday.

KFH stresses keenness to interact with society on all occasions and festivals that always bring it closer to customers. On the coming blessed occasion, the Bank wanted offers Eidiyah in different banknotes.

The Bank is continuing its excellent customer service strategy according to the best quality standards and competitive advantages that affirm its leadership in innovating and launching state-of-the-art banking services in tandem with the latest technological advancements in the banking industry.

For that purpose, on June 25 to 27, KFH offers Eidiyah in KD 5/-, KD 10/- and KD 20/- through KFH Go smart branches and ATMs on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha. KFH ensures this service is available to all customers across different areas and around the clock. KFH Go branches are in Shuwaikh KFH Auto Showroom, Airport branch, Al-Salam Co-Op, Jabriya Co-Op, Ishbiliya Co-Op, Mangaf Co-Op, Abu Fatira Co-Op, Jahra Co-Op, and Sabah Al-Ahmad Co-Op.

It is worth noting that KFH offers its service to customers 24/7 on KFHonline, KFH.com, XTM interactive devices and KFH Airport branch.

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced that new customers wishing to have their payroll transferred to a KIB salary account can now enjoy a wide range of comprehensive benefits. Leading these benefits is the ease of applying for a salary account online in no time through KIB's website.

The dedicated KIB salary account is specially designed for customers whose monthly salaries amount to KD 400 or more. Among the account's multiple benefits is that it allows customers to apply for consumer financing of up to KD 25,000 or housing financing of up to KD 70,000, with a grace period that extends to 12 months, meaning that customers can pay their first installment after a full year of receiving the financing amount. It serves to note that the salary account financing facility is subject to the Bank's financing terms and conditions.

Commenting on the KIB salary account, Musab Al-Shalan, Deputy General Manager of the Retail Banking Department at KIB, said: "As a 'Bank for Life', it is core to our success that we continue to offer our customers an outstanding and unprecedented banking experience. We also strive to remain a trusted and reliable financial partner for our customers by constantly innovating solutions that address their daily needs and surpass their expectations. Our salary account echoes these efforts in the form of exclusive benefits and an integrated suite of services. The account's special features are designed to elevate our customers' banking experience and allow KIB to maintain its leading position as one of the best service providers in the domestic banking sector."

Releases

Upon setting up a KIB salary account, customers can benefit from multiple financing services, including consumer financing, medical financing, educational financing, and fifth-chapter financing, in addition to financing services for furniture, electronics, computer accessories, and other gadgets. The salary account also enables customers to apply for financing for marine equipment, heavy equipment and spare parts, as well as the top brands' latest releases in the car and vehicle world.

KIB's salary account customers can enjoy multiple other benefits that include but are not exclusive to receiving a free-of-charge debit card that they can use in over a million ATMs worldwide, including KNet and point-of-sale (POS), in addition to enjoying fixed cashback of up to 5% and loyalty points with every transfer and upon completion of any banking transaction. They are also eligible to request a chequebook or apply for credit and charge cards. These features are not limited to one perk upon sal-



KIB Salary Account campaign

Multiple financing services

KIB presents a range of benefits for its salary account customers



Johair Marafi and Surajit Banerjee with Michel Lizzo and Ashish Pal

Innovative feature

ABK introduces first youth prepaid card in collaboration with Mastercard & ISIC

KUWAIT CITY, June 21: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait has exclusively partnered with the International Student Identity Card (ISIC) and Mastercard to introduce the new ISIC Youth prepaid card for students. The launch of this card coincides with the upcoming high school graduations where it will be a valuable addition to students' higher education journey.

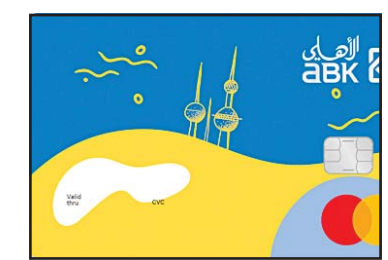
Established in 1953, ISIC serves as the sole internationally recognized proof of student status, officially endorsed by UNESCO. The ISIC card unlocks a range of exclusive benefits designed to enhance student life.

What sets the ABK ISIC Youth card apart is that it not only serves as a prepaid card, but also doubles as a student ID for accessing university campuses. This innovative feature comes as a significant relief to students who carry multiple cards on a daily basis while traveling between classes and institutions.

According to Johair Marafi, Acting General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, "We are delighted to introduce the ABK ISIC Youth card which offers students a range of benefits that make their lives easier and more affordable. As a bank, we are committed to providing youth with innovative products and services that cater to their specific needs. As such, the ABK ISIC Youth card demonstrates our ongoing efforts to deliver an unparalleled customer experience for students."

Michal Lezo, Managing Director of ISIC Middle East, commented, "We are delighted to announce our partnership with ABK which enables Kuwaiti students to enjoy the advantages of the ISIC card whenever traveling or in Kuwait."

ing services, the Bank also provides a wide range of benefits that reinforce its commitment to offering its customers a comprehensive and unique banking experience that answers to their needs and contributes to their success in realizing their aspirations. Kuwait International Bank (KIB) is a bank that operates according to the Islamic Shari'ah, based in the State of Kuwait. Incorporated in 1973, and originally known as Kuwait Real Estate Bank, KIB made the transition to



ABK ISIC Youth Card

delighted to announce our partnership with ABK which enables Kuwaiti students to enjoy the advantages of the ISIC card whenever traveling or in Kuwait."

Provides

The ABK ISIC Youth card provides students with access to special ISIC benefits, such as access to over 150,000 discounts across 130 countries. Furthermore, by using their ABK ISIC Youth card during their travels, students can explore the world without being too concerned about their budget with special flight offers on Emirates Airline as well as hotel accommodation with booking.com.

To top it all, the ABK ISIC Youth card provides students with a contactless payment option, ensuring both secure and convenient transactions. The prepaid card offers a safer alternative to carrying cash around and is simple to recharge at any ABK branch or via Online Banking. Students can therefore carry out all necessary transactions without risking the possibility of losing

cash in the event of theft or misplacement.

Marafi concluded, "The introduction of the ABK ISIC Youth card endeavors to simplify students' lives. By partnering with ISIC, we are providing access to a global network of benefits, ensuring that they have the support and convenience they need, both at home and overseas. Simply put, the ABK ISIC Youth card is a testament to our ongoing commitment to provide innovative solutions that meet the ever-evolving needs of youth."

ABK will start inviting youth to avail and apply for the ABK ISIC Youth card effective 9 July 2023 through the Bank's branch network and official website.

Since its establishment in 1967, ABK has progressed to becoming one of the leading Kuwaiti banks in the region, known for offering a simpler banking experience. The Bank offers personal, corporate, and private banking which includes a wide array of products and services. ABK also provides a broad range of local, regional, and global investment solutions and services through its subsidiary, ABK Capital. Enjoying equal stability and strength, the Bank also offers the convenience of banking across the region, servicing other markets in Egypt and the UAE.

For more information about ABK, please follow the Bank's Instagram account @abk_kuwait, visit eahl.com, contact Ahalan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit any of the Bank's branches across Kuwait.

its current Islamic operating model in 2007. In 2018, KIB embarked on a new phase of its journey full of innovation and development. As part of its new strategic direction, the Bank focuses on offering a next-level customer experience under the slogan: "Bank for Life".

Through a network of branches spread across the State of Kuwait, KIB offers a broad range of banking products and services, as well as innovative digital banking solutions in line with international best standards.

French medtech gathers 4.5m euros from Capital Grand Est, MACSF

BrainTale to develop solutions for diagnosis of neurological diseases

STRASBOURG, France, June 21: BrainTale, a French medtech deciphering white matter to enable better brain care, has announced it has gathered 4.5 million euros from Capital Grand Est and MACSF, as well as business angels, to accelerate its development in Europe and the United States. With this fundraising, BrainTale aims to provide physicians and pharmaceutical companies with innovative solutions to improve the diagnosis, monitoring and prediction of neurological diseases and disorders, in particular Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and traumatic brain injury.

Founded in 2018 and supported from the outset by LallianSe, the life sciences integrator, BrainTale has developed and commercialized an accessible, reliable and clinically validated brain measurement digital platform solution for drug developers and physicians - neurologists, neuroradiologists and intensivists. Today, the company has gathered 4.5 million from Capital Grand Est, MACSF, business angels and healthcare professionals, supplemented by a Deeptech plan from Bpifrance Grand Est. With its first customers in Europe including hospitals (Paris Region Greater Hospitals, Hôpitaux Universitaires de Strasbourg) and biotech (Minorix), as well as partners in the United States (Massachusetts General Hospital - Harvard), BrainTale aims an accelerating its expansion on both sides of the Atlantic.

Long underestimated in neuroscience, white matter, which represents 60% of the human brain, plays a key role in its proper functioning, development, and aging, whether normal or pathological. The vast majority of brain diseases - such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, adrenoleukodystrophy or the consequences of coma - are linked to primary or secondary alterations in white matter. Of note, a prediction score of recovery in comatose patients derived from white matter measurements enables physicians to significantly improve the daily care of these patients. A medical frontier that had never been explored before.

Improves

To explore this new continent of the brain, BrainTale is developing a measurement solution that improves diagnosis, monitoring and prediction with a non-invasive, pain-free, efficient and clinically validated approach. Co-founded by Professors Louis Puybasset (Intensivist, Paris Region Greater Hospitals, Paris), Damien Galanaud (Neuroradiologist, Paris Region Greater Hospitals, Paris), Lionel Velly (Intensivist, Hôpital de la Timone, Marseille Hospitals, Marseille), Didier Cassereau (Research Professor, ESPCI), Vincent Perlbarg (Engineer and PhD in Medical Physics), and LallianSe, the life sciences integrator BrainTale today employs a dozen people who develop these innovative, patented and proprietary solutions, based on international perspective, multicentric clinical development by teams of physicians, notably from the Paris Region Greater Hospitals.

BrainTale-care is a software medical device available in SaaS (Software as a Service) mode to any physician or drug development player based on diffusion MRI (magnetic resonance imaging). The modular platform enables the identification of white matter alterations and can provide individualized prediction scores.

The platform aims to actively contribute to the development of new drugs by drug development companies: BrainTale's proprietary biomarkers are developed to correlate with traditional clinical scores and can make a significant distinction between active and placebo arms, improving clinical trials and supporting treatment efficacy demonstration. The potential of BrainTale biomarkers has already been demonstrated in some demyelinating diseases such as adrenoleukodystrophy (ALD). The availability of BrainTale's solu-

tion also enables real life understanding and observation supporting market access and paving the way for the companion biomarker principle in neurosciences.

"After 15 years of academic research and 5 years of investment, the solutions developed by BrainTale are finally available to patients and my colleagues. Responding to the unmet medical need that has been the driving force behind this ambitious project since its inception is one of the major challenges of the coming years, and BrainTale's development is perfectly in line with this dynamic," comments Prof. Louis Puybasset, chairman of the scientific advisory board and co-founder of BrainTale.

"LallianSe's unflinching support and the confidence shown in us by our investors now enable us to move up a gear. Our team will be able to accelerate our innovative developments to make BrainTale biomarkers a reference for the benefit of patients suffering from neurological disorders," adds Vincent Perlbarg, president, scientific director and co-founder of BrainTale.

Step

"This fundraising is a decisive step for BrainTale, and enables us to look forward with ambition to our next development milestones. The commitment of Capital Grand Est and MACSF by our side reinforces our strategy to establish BrainTale's brain measurement as a reference, in particular to enable drug developers to accelerate the development of new therapies in a more agile and efficient way, bringing a new dynamic in neurosciences," explains Julie Rachline, president of LallianSe, and CEO of BrainTale.

"We are delighted to be able to support BrainTale in this acceleration phase alongside MACSF and an experienced and talented management team. BrainTale offers a disruptive product that combines digital health with cutting-edge fundamental research, key ingredients for success," affirms Virginie Miath, investment director at Capital Grand Est.

"We are proud to include BrainTale in our portfolio of e-health start-ups. This investment is perfectly in line with MACSF's strategy of helping to improve the world of healthcare. BrainTale improves the practice of healthcare professionals and the quality of care by improving the prediction of neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases. This round of financing will enable BrainTale to enter a new phase in its development," states Sébastien Couvet, head of the MACSF Group's e-health portfolio.

BrainTale is an innovative medtech company deciphering white matter to enable better brain care with clinically validated prognostic solutions. With non-invasive, sensitive and reliable measurements of white matter microstructure alterations, BrainTale offers a digital biomarkers platform to support clinical decision-making. BrainTale enables the identification of patients at risk, early diagnosis and monitoring of disease progression and the effectiveness of treatments in neurology, in particular for demyelinating diseases, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and neurodegenerative diseases. Based on more than 15 years of research and development, BrainTale's products are developed to meet the medical needs and expectations of healthcare professionals for the benefit of patients.

Since its inception in 2018, the company has implemented a comprehensive quality management system and is now ISO 13485:2016 certified, with a suite of products available on the European market under the European Medical Device Regulation (MDR).

Pioneer and initiator of the life sciences integrator concept, LallianSe transforms innovations into economic successes through the co-construction and execution of compelling investment theses.

Takeda, Hutchmed Fresco-2 study published in The Lancet

Fruquintinib shows improvement in overall survival for metastatic CRC

OSAKA, Japan, June 21: Takeda (TSE:4502/NYSE:TAK) and HUTCHMED (China) Limited (Nasdaq/AIM:HCM, HKEX:13) (HUTCHMED) have announced that results of the Phase 3 FRESKO2 study evaluating fruquintinib in patients with previously treated metastatic colorectal cancer (CRC) were published in The Lancet.

The publication provides details of the FRESKO-2 study results as of June 24, 2022. Summary results from this cut-off date were presented on September 12, 2022, at the European Society for Medical Oncology Congress 2022 (ESMO22).

Fruquintinib is a highly selective and potent inhibitor of vascular endothelial growth factor receptors (VEGFR) -1, -2 and -3. FRESKO-2 is a global Phase 3 multi-regional clinical trial (MRCT) conducted in the US, Europe, Japan and Australia investigating fruquintinib plus best supportive care (BSC) vs placebo plus BSC in patients with previously treated metastatic CRC. The FRESKO-2 study met its primary and key secondary endpoints, demonstrating that treatment with fruquintinib resulted in a statistically significant and clinically meaningful improvement in overall survival (OS) and progression-free survival (PFS), respectively. The safety profile of fruquintinib in FRESKO-2 was consistent with previously reported fruquintinib studies.

FRESKO-2 was a key study supporting regulatory submissions to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and to the European Medicines Agency (EMA) for fruquintinib for the treatment of previously treated metastatic CRC. The FDA granted Priority Review to the New Drug Application (NDA) in May of 2023 and the EMA validated the Marketing Authorization Application (MAA) for review in June of 2023. An NDA to the Japan Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency (PMDA) is also planned in 2023.

In March 2023, HUTCHMED and Takeda closed an exclusive license agreement to further the global development, commercialization and manufacture of fruquintinib outside of China.

Diagnosed

CRC is a cancer that starts in either the colon or rectum. According to the International Agency for Research on Cancer, CRC is the third most prevalent cancer worldwide, associated with more than 935,000 deaths in 2020.1 In the US, it is estimated that 153,000 patients will be diagnosed with CRC and 53,000 deaths from the disease will occur in 2023.2 In Europe, CRC was the second most common cancer in 2020, with approximately 520,000 new cases and 245,000 deaths. In Japan, CRC was the most common cancer, with an estimated 148,000 new cases and 60,000 deaths in 2020.1 Although early-stage CRC can be surgically resected, metastatic CRC remains an area of high unmet need with poor outcomes and limited treatment options. Some patients with metastatic CRC may benefit from personalized therapeutic strategies based on molecular characteristics; however, most patients have tumors that do not harbor actionable mutations.

Fruquintinib is a highly selective and potent oral inhibitor of VEGFR -1, -2 and -3. VEGFR inhibitors play a pivotal role in blocking tumor angiogenesis. Fruquintinib was designed to improve kinase selectivity with the in-

'Psoriatic disease is more than skin deep'

'Nina' highlights major impact of psoriasis on patient's well-being

BARCELONA, Spain, June 21: Psoriasis is a chronic dermatological disease that not only affects the skin but also their mental and social wellbeing. The disease has an impact on all aspects of daily lives and almost 77% of people living with psoriatic disease believe that it negatively affects their daily activities, causing a heavy physical, emotional and social burden that affects their mental health and wellbeing. Despite its high prevalence - approximately 1.52% of the UK population (1.01 million people estimated)5 and 3% of the population in Europe4,5 - there is still a significant lack of knowledge about the challenges faced by patients suffering from this disease. To raise awareness of these challenges, Almirall has launched Nina, an inspiring 3-episode series about the life of an enigmatic fashion designer suffering from psoriasis that shows a journey from darkness and depression to self-confidence and light.



Nina UK trailer

Received

Nina narrates the story of a reserved and introverted designer portrayed by Spanish actress Alba Ribas (Cable Girls, Netflix). One day, during a photo shoot, she meets Marco, a self-confident, transparent, and optimistic model, who approaches her and discovers her secret. The pressure of her environment, her psoriasis, her obsessions and her unavoidable attraction to Marco begin to overwhelm her. The guidance of her dermatologist and the unconditional support of her father, played by the Spanish actor Lluís Marco (Hospital Central) will help Nina to open her heart and mind to a new life.

Through this life story, Almirall aims to focus on the impact on the wellbeing

of patients with psoriasis and to send a positive message to people suffering from the disease by showing that, despite the harsh effect of psoriasis on people's daily lives, the spirit of self-improvement and scientific advances are key to improving their wellbeing. Furthermore, by raising awareness of the effects of psoriasis, the company aims to improve understanding the impact of the disease and break down the stigma that society has about it, thus contributing to improved wellbeing for people living with the condition.

The series has been developed with the support of the IFPA (International Federation of Psoriatic Disease Associations) and Acción Psoriasis association and with the collaboration of Dr. Eva Vilarrasa, dermatologist at the Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau in Barcelona, who has provided medical advice. The series was directed by Dani Torres, director of films such as La vida secreta de las palabras and Por nada.

"Psoriatic disease is more than skin deep. People living with psoriatic disease cope with more than physical symptoms. Beyond pain and itching,

social stigma, isolation, stress over the unpredictable future, and the financial burden of missing work and paying for treatment all weigh on people living with this condition and their loved ones. Recent research shows us that by taking into account the multifaceted impact of psoriatic disease and addressing it from the inside out, we can support everyone affected by psoriatic disease to thrive," asserts Frida Dunger Johansson, IFPA's Executive Director.

"The impact of psoriasis goes beyond the visible severity of the skin lesions; it is a disease that disrupts all aspects of the daily lives of the people who live with it and their immediate environment. Through Nina we want to give visibility to the symptoms that often go unnoticed by the society at large but have a huge impact on the quality of life of patients. Our aim is to transform patients' lives by offering a comprehensive approach that not only takes into account physical symptoms, but also those closely associated with wellbeing and mental health", states Volker Koscielny, MD, Almirall's Chief Medical Officer.

in China in partnership with Eli Lilly and Company.

Investigated

The safety and efficacy of fruquintinib for the following investigational uses have not been established and there is no guarantee that it will receive health authority approval or become commercially available in any country for the uses being investigated.

The FRESKO-2 study is a multi-regional clinical trial conducted in the US, Europe, Japan and Australia investigating fruquintinib plus BSC vs placebo plus BSC in patients with previously treated metastatic CRC (NCT04322539). The study met its primary and key secondary endpoints, demonstrating that treatment with fruquintinib resulted in a statistically significant and clinically meaningful improvement in OS and PFS, respectively. Results from the study were presented at ESMO in September 2022 and subsequently published in The Lancet.

The median OS was 7.4 months for the 461 patients treated with fruquintinib compared with 4.8 months for the 230 patients in the placebo group (hazard ratio ["HR"] 0.66; 95% confidence

interval ["CI"] 0.55-0.80; p<0.001). The median PFS was 3.7 months for patients treated with fruquintinib compared with 1.8 months for patients in the placebo group (HR 0.32; 95% CI 0.27-0.39; p<0.001). The disease control rate (DCR) was 56% in the fruquintinib group compared with 16% for patients in the placebo group (95% CI, 32.8-46.0; p<0.001). Median duration of follow-up was approximately 11 months for patients in both groups.

The safety profile of fruquintinib in FRESKO-2 was consistent with previously reported fruquintinib studies. Grade 3 or higher adverse events occurred in 63% (286/456) of patients who received fruquintinib plus BSC, compared to 50% (116/230) of patients who received placebo plus BSC. Grade 3 or higher adverse events that occurred in ≥ 5% of patients who received fruquintinib were hypertension (14% vs 1% in the placebo group), asthenia (8% vs 4% in the placebo group) and hand-foot syndrome (6% vs 0% in the placebo group). Adverse events leading to discontinuation occurred in 20% of patients who received fruquintinib, compared to 21% of patients who received placebo.

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Estefan gets loud, Riley swings and Lynne rocks at Hall induction

NEW YORK, June 21. (AP) Gloria Estefan sang a medley of her hits, Post Malone sang one of his forgotten gems, Teddy Riley swayed to New Jack Swing and Jeff Lynne rocked out to "Mr. Blue Sky" at the Songwriters Hall of Fame induction ceremony recently.

The gala at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in New York City celebrated a diverse group of songwriters, with Broadway represented by lyricist Tim Rice, pop from Glen Ballard and a Nashville twang from Liz Rose. Each inductee spoke about how important music was to them growing up and how it connected them to the past and future.

"To those fans that have found in my music what I found in the music of the life-changing songwriters that nourished my soul throughout my life, I thank you for that privilege," said Estefan, the first Hispanic woman to be inducted. "And I can assure you that it is just as magical from the other side of the song."

Lynne, of the prog-rock Electric Light Orchestra, who worked with the Travelling Wilburys and Tom Petty, was the first to be honored, with guitarist Joe Walsh introducing his friend as a "a one-man Renaissance artist" and playing ELO's "Don't Bring Me Down."

Lynne recalled a day in 1977 when he was in a Swiss chalet trying to write his next album but for weeks it had been dark and misty. Then he woke to the sun shining and blue sky. He soon wrote 14 songs, one of which was "Mr. Blue Sky," which he performed.

Rose recalled being a single, working mom with three children who

turned to songwriting in her late 30s. She co-wrote many songs with Taylor Swift beginning when the singer-songwriter was 14, including "You Belong with Me," "Teardrops on My Guitar" and "White Horse." Rose doesn't sing or play an instrument and thanked all the artists.

"The cool thing about songwriting is that you get to hang out with your friends and you get to have therapy and you get to cry and drink wine and eat Cheez-Its," Rose said. "I just love to dig in and just see that song come out at the end of the session. There's just nothing like it."

Broadway star Heather Headley introduced Rice and sang "I Don't Know How to Love Him" from "Jesus Christ Superstar," the musical he wrote with Andrew Lloyd Webber. Rice, who is already in the hall, was honored with the Johnny Mercer Award, the highest honor bestowed by the event.

Myles Frost, another Broadway star from the Michael Jackson musical "MJ," helped introduce Ballard, who helped write and produce Alanis Morissette's monster 1995 album "Jagged Little Pill" and was involved in the recording and writing of several Jackson albums, including "Thriller," "Bad" and "Dangerous."

"The journey of a songwriter is quixotic and occasionally exotic. Never a straight line, but always serpentine," Ballard said. "I've been writing songs from age 4, not for money but because I had to."

Doug E. Fresh and Keith Sweat inducted Riley, the singer, songwriter and producer credited with creating New Jack Swing, which

fuses hip-hop, R&B, dance and pop, and its top anthems such as Bobby Brown's "My Prerogative." The trio did a medley of hits that included "I Want Her," "No Diggity" and "Rump Shaker."

Producer Louis Bell introduced Malone, having met him when he was 19 in a recording studio: "Not only is he one of the most talented people I've ever had the pleasure of sharing a room with, more importantly he's also one of the purest, most beautiful souls I've ever met."

Malone, 27, received the Hal David Starlight Award, given to "gifted young songwriters who are making a significant impact in the music industry."

Malone thanked his baby and his fiancée, removed his suit jacket, picked up an acoustic guitar and played "Feeling Whitney," a deep cut from first album "Stoney," with the lyrics: "To each their own and find peace in knowin'/Ain't always broken, but here's to hopin'."

"I'm sorry that I played a song that nobody knows," he said to laughter. The last performer of the night was Estefan, who is credited for popularizing Latin rhythms with such crossover smashes as "Rhythm Is Gonna Get You" and "Let's Get Loud." "Music has saved my life," she said. Joined by her husband, Emilio, and 11-year-old grandson, Sasha, Estefan ended the night with a medley of songs that got people on their feet: "Reach," "Words Get in the Way," "Anything for You," "Can't Stay Away from You," "Don't Wanna Lose You," "Let's Get Loud" and "Rhythm Gonna Get You."

Music

Variety



This image released by Focus Features shows writer-director Wes Anderson on the set of 'Asteroid City.' (AP)

Film

'Asteroid City' is most multigenerational film

Anderson's films are thrilling education

NEW YORK, June 21. (AP) When Tony Revolori, then a 17-year-old with little Hollywood experience, was beginning to shoot Wes Anderson's "The Grand Budapest Hotel," Jason Schwartzman took him aside to give some advice.

No one knew better than Schwartzman what Revolori, who was starring alongside Ralph Fiennes, was in for. Schwartzman was by then a regular member of Anderson's troupe, but he was also 17 when he first broke through as Max Fischer in Anderson's "Rushmore."

"He looked at me and he said, 'None of this is going to make sense until you've actually gone through it,'" Revolori recalls. "Your life is going to change in no way and every way. But as long as you keep the people around you, you're good."

Much has been made of Anderson's recurring regulars, like Bill Murray, Adrien Brody and Owen Wilson. But for many young actors, Anderson's film sets have been their first real brush with moviemaking - or, at least, Anderson's elegant style of it.

Since "Rushmore" introduced Schwartzman, Anderson's films have been nurturing, if surreal, environments for young performers and a singular rite of passage. Anderson's productions are atypically communal, with nightly feasts among cast and crew, and a spirit that can resemble summer camp. For young actors, it can be a thrilling education.

"This is one of the most powerful learning experiences I've ever had," says Grace Edwards, one of the newcomers of Anderson's latest, "Asteroid City."

Part of the joy of "Asteroid City" is seeing successive generations of Anderson actors, including Schwartzman, Revolori and a new crop of young faces, assemble like homegrown players on a team of all-stars. For Schwartzman, it brings back memories of his "Rushmore" audition - his first glimpse at Anderson's way of treating young actors. On his way out, Anderson asked his opinion about a wardrobe item.

"While I was answering it, I was thinking: Why does this feel so bizarre?" says Schwartzman. "I realized because no adult other than my family had, at that age, asked me a question and really listened to the answer. I was being related to by a person who was 27. He was an adult, but not."

In the years since, the young actors who have come through Anderson's films - often in prominent roles - have had similar encounters. Jake Ryan was just seven

when he played a younger brother in 2012's "Moonrise Kingdom."

"I don't remember much, but I remember feeling at home there," says Ryan, now 19. "It felt very cozy."

"Asteroid City," which opens nationwide Friday, may be Anderson's most multigenerational film yet. The story features frames within frames, but the heart of the movie concerns a fictional 1955 Southwest town where a widowed war photographer named Augie Steenbeck (Schwartzman) arrives with his bright son Woodrow (Ryan, in his third Anderson movie) and three younger daughters.

A visit with their grandfather (Tom Hanks) awaits, but first there's a stargazer convention to commemorate a meteorite impact. The gathering has also lured a renowned movie star (Scarlett Johansson) and her intelligent daughter (Grace Edwards).

Complex

The pains, regrets and melancholies of the adult characters mingle with the fresher but no less complex experiences of the teenagers getting a taste of love, death and fellowship for the first time.

In Anderson's films, younger characters tend to be just as adult, if not more so, than the grown-ups. Gene Hackman's Royal Tenenbaum or George Clooney's Fantastic Mr. Fox are far from paragons of maturity. "Moonrise Kingdom" starred Kara Hayward and Jared Gilman as a pair of 12-year-old runaway romantics who sway to Françoise Hardy's "Les Temps de l'Amour." Revolori's "lobby boy" Zero played sidekick to Finennes' concierge, M. Gustave.

In "Rushmore," Schwartzman's Max and Bill Murray's Herman Blume are decades apart but equal rivals in love and revenge. At the beginning of shooting, Schwartzman asked Anderson why his character looked up to Murray's.

"And he says, 'Well, I don't think he looks up to him. I think he sees eye-to-eye with him,'" remembers Schwartzman. "That's the funny thing about these movies. They're not for kids, but they are, in a weird way. It's like they're for kids when they grow up."

When Edwards, 18, was auditioning for "Asteroid City," Anderson had her first read from "Moonrise Kingdom" - both the part of 12-year-old Suzy and her mother, played by Frances McDormand. Once she landed the role, Anderson handed her books about Hol-

lywood in the 1950s to read and films to watch.

"I watched some Jodie Foster films because he figured the character was very sensible and very much a Jodie Foster-like personality," Edwards says. "He wanted me to get a strong sense of what she was like on screen."

Revolori describes Anderson as almost "a pseudo father." After "Grand Budapest" came out, they continued to regularly email. Revolori depended on Anderson's advice in navigating his career.

"I think he enjoys working with young performers and discovering someone that he sees talent in and giving them an opportunity. I sure as hell am very, very thankful for it. It obviously kind of made my career there," Revolori says, chuckling.

"Somebody like Tony - and exactly the same with Jake and Grace - they are wildly prepared," says Anderson himself. "But they also have young minds. The brain tissue is younger. They can remember everything. So their knowledge of the script is so ready and enhanced. They tend to be interesting just as animals. We've never seen them before. They're new, young people and they're still forming themselves."

Anderson's young actors don't always know what he's seen in them. But his young protagonists are invariably clever, precocious kids that are in some ways stand-ins for the director, who grew up a brainy child of divorce with a Super 8 camera in hand.

"One thing that really stuck out was he said Woodrow - and the other stargazers, for that matter - are very intelligent," Ryan says. "But it's that intelligence that makes them sort of outsiders from their would-be peers. There's a sense of loneliness in all five of them. And after meeting each other, there's a sense of: 'Wow, everyone's like me. This is how it's supposed to be.'"

More often than not, the actors Anderson casts are likewise full of passions and curiosities, and able to recite dialogue at a good clip. Edwards envisions acting in movies like the European films she and Anderson would discuss.

"Going home after was strange," says Edwards, who lives in Bismarck, North Dakota. "I have no right to compare it to a soldier coming home from the front but there is a similar aspect."

Revolori, now 27, has been reluctant to turn mentor, even though he's remained in the company, returning in "The French Dispatch" and "Asteroid City."

BELLINGHAM, Wash: The alleged gunman who fired into a crowd killing two people at a Washington state music festival Saturday was stationed at a US Army base in Western Washington, law enforcement officials said Tuesday.

James M. Kelly, 26, of Joint Base Lewis-McChord was booked into the Grant County Jail Tuesday on investigation of two counts of murder, two counts of assault and one count of domestic violence assault, Grant County Sheriff **Joe Kriete** said in a Facebook post. Law enforcement officers shot him Saturday and he was being treated at a hospital until Tuesday, the sheriff said.

The shooting killed two people and wounded two others in an area where people were camping for the Beyond Wonderland electronic dance music festival at the Gorge Amphitheatre.

The two people killed were Seattle residents **Brandy Escamilla**, 29, and **Josilyn Ruiz**, 26, Grant County Coroner **Craig Morrison** said Tuesday. Escamilla died of a gunshot wound to the head, and Ruiz died from a gunshot wound to her torso, Morrison said. The two were engaged to be married, according to a fundraising campaign by family members.

Lily Luksich, 20, of **Mill Creek**, Washington, and 31-year-old **Andrew Cuadra** of **Eugene, Oregon**, were shot and wounded, according to the sheriff.

A private security officer responding to the report of shots fired was struck by a bullet that deflected off her eyeglasses, causing bruising and lacerations, the sheriff said. The sheriff's office said it received a report of a shooting around 8:20 p.m. Saturday at the camping area at the amphitheater near the small city of George, 149 miles (240 kilometers) east of Seattle. The shooting happened several hundred yards from the music festival.

Joint Base Lewis-McChord Lt Col Mike Burns told KXLY-TV in a statement Tuesday that the command is aware of the allegations against Kelly.

"We take all allegations seriously and are fully cooperating with the appropriate authorities," his statement said.

Burns said Kelly is a joint fire support specialist assigned to the 75th Ranger Regiment at the military base. It wasn't immedi-

ately known if Kelly has a lawyer to comment on his behalf.

The North Central Washington Special Investigation Unit is investigating the shooting of Kelly by law enforcement officers. The names of the officer or officers who fired at Kelly haven't been released. (AP)



Kriete



Griffin

BURLINGTON, Vt: A former CNN television producer who had pleaded guilty to luring a 9-year-old girl into illegal acts was sentenced Tuesday to more than 19 years in prison and an additional 15 years of supervised release during a US District Court hearing in Vermont.

John Griffin of Stamford, Connecticut, pleaded guilty in federal court in December to using interstate commerce to entice and coerce the girl to engage in activity at his Vermont ski house.

As part of the 2022 plea deal, the government dropped two remaining counts of enticement of a minor against Griffin, then 45 year old.

Griffin had initially pleaded not guilty in 2021. He has been ordered to pay restitution to the victims.

According to the plea deal, Griffin met a woman on a website during the summer of 2020 and persuaded the woman to bring her daughter to his Ludlow, Vermont, ski home for activity. (AP)

People & Places

Stage

'Like Water' epic story

Tale of magic, spice hits NY ballet stage

NEW YORK, June 21, (AP): How do you choreograph a scene of mass food poisoning? A young woman in a seductive frenzy? Or a couple whose passion is so intense, they literally catch fire?

These were just a few of the storytelling challenges awaiting choreographer **Christopher Wheeldon** - for decades one of the most inventive minds in ballet and more recently on Broadway, too - as he adapted the hugely popular 1989 novel "Like Water for Chocolate." It gets a splashy New York premiere this week at American Ballet Theatre.

Wheeldon is no stranger to storytelling challenges, either in ballet, where he adapted Shakespeare's vexing "The Winter's Tale," or in theater, where he's won two Tonys, the latest for choreographing the hit "MJ: The Musical," about Michael Jackson.



Wheeldon

But Laura Esquivel's sweeping tale of food, magic, lust and forbidden passion set in early 20th-century Mexico, which also inspired a hit movie, posed a different issue: How do you convey such a layered, hefty, multi-character story, spanning two decades, without words?

Wheeldon laughingly rejects the word "hefty," preferring "meaty" or better yet, "epic." "It's both epic and intimate, you know?" he said in a recent interview. "It's about a family, but the scale of the emotions within this family and then of course the time over which the story's told - then you start adding the magical realism, and it's an epic story."

But, he adds, "My aim is always to try to find stories that are dynamic and exciting and theatrical and not get too worried about the practicalities ... Can we manage it? Can we take the audience on a journey that they're going to come out of feeling they've connected with these characters and been transported to a different world?"

Character

The production arrives at the Metropolitan Opera House on Thursday to open ABT's summer season, after earlier versions at London's Royal Ballet, which co-produced, and in March during an ABT stint at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts in Costa Mesa, California. It's safe to say ABT has a lot riding on the production, and we don't just mean when one character gallops off on horseback in the above-mentioned seductive frenzy.

The company hopes to attract fans of the book or film who might not be regular balletgoers. It's presenting two full weeks of the ballet - double what beloved hits "Swan Lake" and "Romeo and Juliet" are getting.

But while most everybody knows the story of Juliet and her Romeo - and the basics about those swans, too - audiences who haven't read Esquivel's novel, and perhaps even those who have, may need a primer. Hence the very detailed program notes. Wheeldon says he's seen audience members "furiously reading their programs at intermission" - which he says is a good thing.

"It's OK to need a synopsis," he says. "I know it's widely said that if you're making a narrative ballet, it should be clear and you shouldn't need your notes. That's true up to a point. There needs to be enough for the audience to hold onto and to be able to understand the relationships - but not necessarily catch every single nuance. This is a complex (story) and that's what makes it dynamic and exciting."

Esquivel's novel, which has been translated into more than 30 languages, centers on Tita, daughter of the harsh Mama Elena and unfortunate victim of a family tradition that the youngest daughter may never marry, but rather must care for her mother until death. This dooms the great love of her life, with Pedro, who marries Tita's sister just to be near her. Tita pours her grief into her cooking, which yields unexpected magical results.

The passion at points is steamy for a ballet, and ABT's website includes the equivalent of a PG-13 movie advisory.

The opening night cast stars Cassandra Trenary and Herman Cornejo, who also opened in Costa Mesa. The pair have been continuing to rehearse and refine in New York, along with the rest of the ensemble.

A recent weekday rehearsal at ABT's studios found the two going over some intricate pas de deux, or duets - navigating tricky lifts, smoothing over trouble spots, figuring out pacing. They launched into gravity-defying poses, then smiled and high-fived each other when a moment worked well. It was a striking example of how dancers continue to develop their roles even as they perform them.

Effective

"We're just deepening it each time we come back to it," said Trenary, a fast-rising ABT star who became a principal dancer in 2020. "The difference might be our moods that day, or our experiences, or just how life has shifted."

Added Cornejo, the dashing Argentine who's been a principal for 20 years: "We're finding more layers. Each day it's something different." And both dancers noted that Wheeldon had given them an effective mental map to navigate the rich storyline.

Wheeldon is a busy man these days. Four days after he took the stage in Costa Mesa for a curtain call with his dancers, he was on the Broadway stage of "MJ," congratulating departing star Myles Frost. That show begins a national tour in August and a London transfer next March.

The choreographer has just turned 50, but was barely out of his teens when, in the early '90s, he began his love affair with "Like Water for Chocolate." He had just moved to New York from his native Britain to dance with New York City Ballet. On what he calls "a homesick Sunday afternoon," he caught the movie at a theater near Lincoln Center, and was enchanted.

Years later, he approached Esquivel when an opportunity came up at the Royal Ballet, where he serves as Artistic Associate, to make a new story ballet. The author said: "Let's talk." He traveled to Mexico to meet her, along with set designer Bob Crowley and composer Joby Talbot.

Wheeldon says his recent alternating work on Broadway and the dance stage has benefited him in both directions.

"As I'm learning how to dive deeper into character development, and emotional highs and lows of scenes, I take that to my work with dancers," he said. "Certainly with 'Like Water for Chocolate,' we approached the rehearsals as much as actors as dancers, and I know the ABT dancers have really enjoyed that process."

And Wheeldon hopes he can help broaden the audience for dance at a time when theaters are still struggling to catch up to pre-pandemic attendance.



Designer Pharrell Williams accepts applause at the conclusion of the Louis Vuitton Menswear Spring/Summer 2024 fashion collection presented in Paris, Tuesday, June 20. (AP)

Fashion

Louis Vuitton premieres singer's debut collection

Pharrell fuses entertainment, fashion

PARIS, June 21, (AP): Unveiling a new chapter in its illustrious history, Louis Vuitton made an indelible mark on Paris Fashion Week's men's shows as they premiered the debut collection by the acclaimed musician-turned-designer, Pharrell Williams. Appointed in February to fill the immense shoes left by the tragic departure of the late Virgil Abloh, Williams unveiled his design prowess to the fashion world with a show that exuded confidence and creativity.

The breathtaking venue for this sartorial spectacle was none other than Paris's iconic Pont Neuf. The historic bridge, typically resplendent with time-worn stone, was transformed into a golden runway - a dramatic stage set against the backdrop of the shimmering Seine, under the starlit Parisian sky.

The event drew a constellation of stars in their own right, forming a stellar audience that encompassed icons of music, sports and entertainment. Among the guests lining the gilded cobblestones were music royalty Beyoncé and Jay-Z, NBA superstar LeBron James, and global pop phenomenon Rihanna. Each added their own unique sparkle to the glitz and glamour of the occasion.

Williams' first show proved to be an ambitious endeavor, interweaving the luxury and sophistication of high fashion with the pulsating energy and broad appeal of pop culture and entertainment. This was more than just a runway presentation; it was an immersive experience that captured the imagination of those fortunate enough to witness it firsthand.

The grand finale was a spectacular concert by Jay-Z. The electrifying performance brought the crowd to its feet, their excitement reaching a crescendo as Pharrell himself took to the stage to join his longtime collaborator.

Here are some highlights of spring-summer 2024 shows:

As the sunlight filled the storied halls of Louis Vuitton's headquarters, Pharrell Williams stepped into his new role as the fashion house's menswear

designer. His appointment symbolizes more than a career shift. It represents a daring move by the luxury brand to entrust this position to a music artist and cultural influencer, not a classically trained designer. But for Pharrell, he doesn't feel the pressure to prove himself - he was chosen for this role.

"I didn't feel any of that because if I was competing for it and people kept telling me, no don't do it, I may have felt that way. But the difference is, I was chosen," said Pharrell to a select group of reporters, including the AP. This sense of being chosen by the universe, or by Louis Vuitton, carries a sense of destiny for him. "So like when you're chosen, you just kind of ride the wave," he said.

But stepping into the designer role isn't just about fulfilling his personal destiny. Williams also feels that he's carrying on the legacy of the late Virgil Abloh, the first black Artistic Director at Louis Vuitton and a personal friend. "My appointment is a tribute," said Williams, who sees his work as a continuation of the journey Abloh began.

Influence

The influence of Black culture, and the struggles the community has faced, is a strong driving force for Pharrell. He reflected on the unique flavor of American Black culture and its widespread appeal. "I think it's something in the sauce," he said. "And people like it when they try it."

Williams emphasized the hard-earned global recognition of this cultural "sauce," exemplified in the influence of figures like LeBron James, Jay-Z, Beyoncé, Prince, and Basquiat. "A lot of people lost their lives and suffered through the experiences to get us to these positions," he noted, underscoring the painful history that fuels his desire to honor his community through his work at Louis Vuitton.

Pharrell's love for life, the moment, and opportunities, imbue his approach to design. "LV is for Louis Vuitton, but it's also 'lover'," he mused. His interpretation of the Louis Vuitton initials signifies his intention to pour

love and appreciation into his work, carrying the legacy of Black culture forward in a space where it has been historically underrepresented.

Williams already has exciting plans in motion, including a collaboration with Black American artist Henry Taylor, featuring Black faces lined up like the iconic Louis Vuitton monogram. He also revealed a campaign featuring Rihanna, another influential Black artist. "It's not lost on me that I'm afforded this opportunity to tell these stories," he said.

Despite his lack of a traditional design background, Pharrell Williams is stepping confidently into his new role at Louis Vuitton. Chosen by the brand and feeling no pressure to prove himself, he sees this opportunity as a chance to honor Black culture, carry on Virgil Abloh's legacy, and share his love for life through design. His journey is one to watch, as he navigates the fashion world with his unique "sauce," paying tribute to his roots and making his mark in high fashion.

The pulse of Paris was set alight as music icon Pharrell Williams unveiled a debut fusing streetwear aesthetics into the French maison's traditional lineage. The fashion show epitomized high-voltage energy, reverberating through the audience and culminating in a standing ovation for Williams.

The world-renowned musician, known for his genre-blurring creativity, masterfully orchestrated an event that transcended the typical realm of a runway show. The roster of attendees read like a who's who of the entertainment industry, underscoring the hotly anticipated occasion. Notably present were Beyoncé, new brand ambassador Zendaya, and Rihanna, whose arrival in sync with the show's climax was nothing short of theatrical.

Jay-Z's live performance heightened the spectacle, electrifying audiences with concert-like energy. The event venue - on Paris's oldest bridge draped in a gold Damier pattern - was a symbolic nod to the brand's longstanding tradition, hinting at key elements in Williams' debut collection.



Jennifer Lawrence attends the premiere for 'No Hard Feelings' at AMC Lincoln Square on Tuesday, June 20, in New York. (AP)



Hammer



Chambers

Variety

LOS ANGELES: Armie Hammer has reached a divorce agreement with his wife, Elizabeth Chambers, nearly three years after she filed to end their marriage.

Hammer's attorney filed documents in Los Angeles Superior Court on Tuesday informing a judge that the actor and Chambers have come to terms over child custody, child support, spousal support and division of assets. A judge will need to sign off on the proposed agreement and declare the two divorced.

The settlement comes weeks after LA County prosecutors declined to charge Hammer in an investigation stemming from a woman's allegation that he sexually assaulted her in 2017. They cited a lack of evidence to prove their case beyond a reasonable doubt.

Hammer said on Instagram that after a long public silence that "I look forward to beginning what will be a long, difficult process of putting my life back together now that my name has been cleared."

Allegations of sexual violence from women early in 2021 derailed Hammer's career, and he has not worked in Hollywood since.

Hammer and Chambers separated, and she filed for divorce, in 2020.

The 36-year-old actor is best known for his starring roles in 2017's "Call Me by Your Name" and 2013's "The Lone Ranger." (AP)

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif.: A weekend search for long-missing actor Julian Sands on Southern California's massive Mount Baldy was unsuccessful, authorities said.

Sands was reported missing in January after setting out to hike on Mount Baldy, which rises more than 10,000 feet (3,048 meters) east of Los Angeles and was pounded by severe storms during winter.

The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department said the latest search was conducted Saturday by more than 80 search-and-rescue volunteers and deputies, two helicopters and drone crews.

Search teams were flown into remote areas and drones were used to search areas inaccessible to ground crews, the department said in a statement.

"Despite the recent warmer weather, portions of the mountain remain inaccessible due to extreme alpine conditions," the department said. "Multiple areas include steep terrain and ravines, which still have 10-plus feet (3 meters) of ice and snow." The department said it has conducted

eight searches for Sands since January, and there have been eight other unrelated search-and-rescue operations in the Mount Baldy area. (AP)

SAVANNAH, Ga.: The rapper Quando Rondo has been jailed after being indicted on drug and gang charges in his hometown of Savannah.

The 24-year-old rapper, whose given

name is Tyquan Terrel Bowman, was behind bars in the Chatham County jail Tuesday. According to court records, he has a bond hearing scheduled Friday.

Bowman and 18 others were indicted by a grand jury Wednesday. The indictment charged Bowman with four counts, including being a manager of an illegal street gang known as "Rollin' 60's." Other charges say Bowman conspired with others to distribute marijuana and to buy pills of the opioid hydrocodone. Bowman's attorney, Joshua Pine, declined to make an immediate comment when reached by phone Tuesday. (AP)

BUCHAREST, Romania: Divisive social media personality Andrew Tate and his brother, Tristan, have been charged with rape, human trafficking and forming a criminal gang to exploit women, prosecutors in Romania said Tuesday.

Romania's anti-organized crime agency, DIICOT, said prosecutors filed the charges against the brothers, who are both British-US dual citizens, along with two Romanian women in a court in the capital Bucharest.

In a statement, the agency said the four defendants formed a criminal group in 2021 "in order to commit the crime of human trafficking" in Romania as well as the United States and Britain. It alleged that seven female victims were misled and transported to Romania, where they were sexually exploited and subjected to physical violence by the gang. (AP)



Honoree Gloria Estefan, (left), and grandson Sasha Estefan perform at the 52nd annual Songwriters Hall of Fame induction and awards ceremony at the New York Marriott Marquis Hotel Thursday, June 15, in New York. (AP)

Health

Massive theft

Ethiopians go hungry as US, UN pause aid

NAIROBI, Kenya, June 21, (AP): An Orthodox Christian priest, Tesfa Kiros Meresfa begs door-to-door for food along with countless others recovering from a two-year war in northern Ethiopia that starved his people. To his dismay, urgently needed grain and oil have disappeared again for millions caught in a standoff between Ethiopia's government, the United States and United Nations over what US officials say may be the biggest theft of food aid on record.

"I have no words to describe our suffering," Tesfa said. As the US and UN demand that Ethiopia's government yield its control over the vast aid delivery system supporting one-sixth of the country's population, they have taken the dramatic step of suspending their food aid to Africa's second-most populous nation until they can be sure it won't be stolen by Ethiopian officials and fighters.



Tulu

Almost three months have passed since the aid suspension in parts of the country, and reports are emerging of the first deaths from starvation during the pause. At the earliest, aid to the northern Tigray region will return in July, the US and UN say, and to the rest of the country at some point after that when reforms in aid distribution allow.

In interviews with The Associated Press, which first reported the massive theft of food aid, officials with US and UN aid agencies, humanitarian organizations and diplomats offered new findings on the countrywide diversion of aid to military units and markets. That included allegations that some senior Ethiopian officials were extensively involved.

The discovery in March of enough stolen food aid to feed 134,000 people for a month in a single Tigray town is just a glimpse of the scale of the theft that the US, Ethiopia's largest humanitarian donor, is trying to grasp. The food meant for needy families was found instead for sale in markets or stacked at commercial flour mills, still marked with the US flag.

Implications

The implications for the US are global. Proving it can detect and stop the theft of aid paid for by US taxpayers is vital at a time when the Biden administration is fighting to maintain public support for aid to corruption-plagued Ukraine.

At a private meeting last week in Ethiopia, US aid officials told international partners that this could be the largest-ever diversion of food aid in any country, aid workers said. In an interview with the AP, a senior official with the US Agency for International Development said the exact amount of food aid stolen may never be known.

Donated medical supplies also were stolen, according to a Western diplomat and UN official who, like others, spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

With USAID giving Ethiopia's government \$1.8 billion in humanitarian assistance since 2022, a delay in providing food aid causes widespread pain. Millions of people went hungry during the war while food stocks were looted, burned and withheld by combatants, and UN investigators have warned of possible starvation-linked war crimes.

Now the hunger is being traced to corruption. Preliminary findings released this month by Tigray regional authorities said they have tracked the theft of more than 7,000 metric tons of donated wheat - or 15 million pounds - in their region, taken by federal and regional authorities and others. The findings did not specify the time period. Other regions have yet to report amounts.

Ethiopia's government dismisses as harmful "propaganda" the suggestion that it bears primary responsibility for the disappearance of aid in Tigray and other regions, but it has agreed to a joint investigation with the US while the UN's World Food Program carries out a separate probe.

The way that Western aid officials "distance themselves from the accusations by linking the alleged problem only to government institutions and procedures is absolutely unacceptable and very contrary to the reality on the ground," government spokesman Legesse Tulu told reporters earlier this month. He and other government spokespeople did not immediately respond to messages from the AP.

Aid workers say humanitarian agencies have long tolerated a degree of corruption by government officials. Provision of aid in Ethiopia has been heavily politicized for decades, including during the devastating famine of the 1980s, when the then-communist regime blocked assistance to areas controlled by rebel groups.

The senior USAID official told the AP that the latest theft of US and UN food aid included the manipulation of beneficiary lists that the Ethiopian government has insisted on controlling, looting by Ethiopian government and Tigray forces and forces from neighboring Eritrea, and the diversion of massive amounts of donated wheat to commercial flour mills in at least 63 sites.

A former Tigray official said government workers often inflate beneficiary numbers and take the extra grain for themselves, a practice that two officials with international organizations working in Ethiopia called widespread elsewhere in the country.

Numerous officials accused WFP of simply dropping off rations in the middle of towns, where much of the aid was looted by forces from Eritrea.

Donations

There were also signs that people whom the USAID official described only as "market actors" were forcing hungry families to surrender food aid they received - something that WFP suspects as well.

In Ethiopia, which has a history of deadly hunger, "zero" of the 6 million people in Tigray received food aid in May after the pause in donations by the US and UN, according to a UN memo seen by the AP. That's unprecedented, it said.

With 20 million people across Ethiopia dependent on such aid, plus more than 800,000 refugees from Somalia and elsewhere, independent humanitarian groups warn that even a quick resolution to the dispute could see many people starve to death.

In the UN food agency's first extensive public comments, the WFP regional director for East Africa, Michael Dunford, acknowledged possible "shortcomings" in its monitoring of aid distribution.

"We accept that we could have done better," he told the AP this week. But until now, Dunford said, "it's been very much the Ethiopian government that was managing" the process.

For USAID's part, the senior agency official cited a range of reasons that US officials missed the extent of the aid theft for so long. The war blocked the agency's ground access to the Tigray region for 20 months. Elsewhere in the country, COVID restrictions and security concerns limited USAID's oversight, the official said.

Some Republican and Democratic lawmakers said the rare countrywide suspension of aid showed USAID is taking the theft of US aid with appropriate seriousness. Asked if he was concerned about USAID oversight, a senior Democrat, Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware, said, "I'm concerned about the ways in which the Ethiopian military and government may have systematically diverted food that was meant for hungry Ethiopians."

US and UN officials said they were working to limit - or end - Ethiopian government officials' role in the aid system. "We're taking back all the control over the commodities," Dunford said. "The entire supply chain, from the time that we receive the food in the country to the time it's in the hands of the beneficiaries." Plans include third-party distribution, real-time third-party monitoring and biometric registration of beneficiaries, he said.



People perform yoga in a park early morning as they mark International Day of Yoga in New Delhi, India, Wednesday, June 21. Yoga, an ancient discipline first practiced by Hindu sages, is now one of India's most successful cultural exports after Bollywood and has become a piece of India's diplomacy. (AP)



Cancer patient Brady Nelson participates in the Chicago White Sox's Ultimate Wish program and throws out a ceremonial first pitch before a baseball game between the White Sox and the Texas Rangers Monday, June 19, in Chicago. (AP)



Bieri



Guterres

Discovery

UN members adopt treaty: Members of the United Nations adopted the first-ever treaty to protect marine life in the high seas on Monday, with the UN's chief hailing the historic agreement as giving the ocean "a fighting chance."

Delegates from the 193 member nations burst into applause and then stood up in a sustained standing ovation when Singapore's ambassador on ocean issues, Rena Lee, who presided over the negotiations, banged her gavel after hearing no objections to the treaty's approval.

The treaty to protect biodiversity in waters outside national boundaries, known as the high seas, covering nearly half of earth's surface, had been under discussion for more than 20 years as efforts to reach an agreement had repeatedly stalled. But in March delegates to an intergovernmental conference established by the UN General Assembly in December 2017 agreed on a treaty.

The new treaty is under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, which came into force in 1994, before marine biodiversity was a well-established concept. It will be opened for signatures on Sept. 20, during the annual meeting of world leaders at the General Assembly, and it will take effect once it is ratified by 60 countries.

The treaty will create a new body to manage conservation of ocean life and establish marine protected areas in the high seas. It also establishes ground rules for conducting environmental impact assessments for commercial activities in the oceans.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told delegates that the adoption of the treaty comes at a critical time, with the oceans under threat on many fronts.

Climate change is disrupting weather patterns and ocean currents, raising sea temperatures, "and altering marine ecosystems and the species living there," he said, and marine biodiversity "is under attack from overfishing, over-exploitation and ocean acidification."

"Over one-third of fish stocks are being harvested at unsustainable levels," the UN chief said. "And we are polluting our coastal waters with chemicals, plastics and human waste."

Guterres said the treaty is vital to address these threats and he urged all countries to spare no efforts to ensure that it is signed and ratified as soon as possible, stressing that "this is critical to addressing the threats facing the ocean." (AP)

Glaciers succumb to warming: A majority of Swiss citizens on Sunday voted in favor of a bill aimed at introducing new climate measures to sharply curb the rich Alpine nation's greenhouse gas emissions,

The Conversation

On Int'l Yoga Day: intangible cultural heritage of humanity

Lessons from the first American yogi

By Jeremy David Engels Penn State

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

International Yoga Day, dedicated to celebrating yoga as part of the "intangible cultural heritage of humanity," has proved controversial since its inception in 2015.

To celebrate the day on June 21, yoga gatherings are held in many parts of the world, but there are also devoted yogis who refuse to participate, saying the holiday is designed to covertly promote a right-wing Hindu fundamentalist agenda.

Some also protest the crass commercialism of the holiday and contemporary yoga culture more generally.

I am a scholar who studies communication, yoga and meditation, and I mark this day each year by taking the opportunity to learn more about the long and complex global history of yoga. A 19th-century thinker I often study on this day is Henry David Thoreau.

Thoreau was member of the cadre of 19th-century American essayists, poets and social activists known as the Transcendentalists. The Transcendentalists were famous, in their time, for their interest in Indian and other forms of non-Western thought.

As I explain in my recent book "The Ethics of Oneness: Emerson, Whitman, and the Bhagavad-Gita," the Transcendentalists were active participants in a cultural conversation that struggled to understand how philosophies of yoga might apply to an individualistic nation like the United States.

From 1845 to 1847, Thoreau spent two years living in a cabin he built at Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts. While living off the land and working on his first book, he also spent significant time contemplating yoga philosophy. In fact, when he returned from the woods, he reported to an admirer: "To some extent, and at rare intervals, even I am a yogin."

According to the religious studies

scholar Richard Davis, "Thoreau was likely the first American to entertain seriously the possibility of identifying himself as a yogi."

Thoreau did not practice asana or the physical postures of yoga, as millions of people do today, but he was a serious student of yoga philosophy. Contemporary students of yoga might find Thoreau's thoughts on the philosophy of yoga, and in particular karma yoga, the yoga of selfless action, worthy of consideration.

Thoreau approached the Bhagavad-Gita, a central episode in the ancient Indian epic Mahabharata, as a book of philosophy and ethics that addressed deep and abiding questions about how to live a good life.

Devotion

The Mahabharata describes a devastating conflict over succession. The Bhagavad-Gita begins when, right on the cusp of war, the greatest warrior of the age, Arjuna, throws down his weapons on the battlefield, refusing to fight his own relations. His charioteer Krishna, who eventually reveals himself to be God, attempts to convince Arjuna to fight by teaching him three types of yoga: bhakti yoga, the yoga of devotion; jnana yoga, the yoga of sacred knowledge; and karma yoga, the yoga of selfless action. It was the last concept that preoccupied Thoreau.

According to Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita, practicing karma yoga entails acting without consideration for the personal benefits, or "fruits," of an action. It means doing one's duty steadfastly, without fear or shame or remorse. It also means letting go of concern for the consequences of one's actions on others or the natural world.

Krishna contends that Arjuna's duty is determined for him by his membership in the warrior caste. Arjuna's practice of karma yoga means embracing his duty to fight for the good of the kingdom, though to do this he will have to kill his friends and family. Embrace his duty, Krishna concludes, and there is no need to panic. Thoreau borrowed fellow Tran-

scendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson's copy of the Bhagavad-Gita - the 1785 Charles Wilkins translation - and reported reading it each morning during his time living at Walden Pond.

Thoreau admired the Bhagavad-Gita. However, he pronounced Krishna's central argument about karma yoga "unconvincing." Thoreau writes: "Kreeshna's argument, it must be allowed, is defective. No sufficient reason is given why Arjoon should fight. Arjoon may be convinced, but the reader is not."

Krishna asserts that it is Arjuna's duty to fight, but Thoreau concludes that "the duty of which he speaks is an arbitrary one." By arbitrary, he means it is based on a model of society designed to benefit some people at the expense of others.

Thoreau models a way of reading yoga philosophy that is concerned, first and foremost, with its practical utility for the time and place we live.

Inspired by Thoreau, whenever I encounter a presentation of yoga, I ask: Is this yoga serving the creation and maintenance of the type of world I want to live in, a world that I honestly consider to be good?

In this spirit, Thoreau challenges individuals to question arguments about duty, like the one Krishna makes in the Bhagavad-Gita, by asking whose interests such arguments serve - and to consider what duty actually means to us.

Yoga is ancient, but it is not timeless. As scholars have shown, there is no one "authentic" yoga, because there are, and have always been, many ways to practice yoga, both in India and abroad. Yoga is a practice of global and religious diversity - there are Hindu, Buddhist and Jain yogas, as well as yogas that are "spiritual but not religious" and also atheistic.

And that is what the United Nations calls on us to celebrate: yoga as part of humanity's global heritage. In celebrating this heritage, it is worthwhile to heed a lesson from the first American yogi and continue asking questions. (AP)

projections indicated.

Projections by the GFS Bern Institute based on near-complete counting and released by public broadcaster SRF showed that 58.3% of voters were in favor of the bill. The margin of error was plus or minus 2 percentage points, SRF reported.

Exact results are expected later in the day.

The referendum was sparked by a campaign by scientists and environmentalists to save Switzerland's iconic glaciers, which are melting away at an alarming rate.

Campaigners initially proposed even



An Ethiopian woman argues with others over the allocation of yellow split peas after it was distributed by the Relief Society of Tigray in the town of Agula, in the Tigray region of northern Ethiopia, on May 8, 2021. In 2023 urgently needed grain and oil have disappeared again for millions caught in a standoff between Ethiopia's government, the United States and United Nations over what US officials say may be the biggest theft of food aid on record. (AP)

more ambitious measures but later backed a government plan that requires Switzerland to achieve "net zero" emissions by 2050. It also sets aside more than 3 billion Swiss francs (\$3.357 billion) to help wean companies and homeowners off fossil fuels.

The nationalist Swiss People's Party, which demanded the popular vote, had claimed that the proposed measures would cause electricity prices to rise.

Backers of the plan argued that Switzerland will be hard-hit by global warming and is already seeing the effects of rising temperatures on its famous glaciers.

"The supporters have reason to rejoice," Urs Bieri of the GFS Bern Institute told SRF. "But by no means everyone is in favor of the law. The argument with the costs has brought many 'no' votes."

Greenpeace Switzerland welcomed the first results of the referendum.

"This victory means that at least the goal of achieving net zero emissions will be anchored in law. That gives better security for planning ahead and allows our country to take the path toward an exit from fossil fuels," said Georg Klingler, an expert on climate and energy at Greenpeace Switzerland.

"The result of the vote shows that the citizens of our country are committed to the aim of limiting global warming to 1.5 Celsius in order to preserve as much as possible our glaciers, our water reserves, our agriculture and our prosperity. I am very relieved to see that the lies disseminated by the opposite camp during the campaign did not sow the seed of doubt in people," he added. (AP)

SPORTS

Alcaraz finds some late inspiration to win 1st match at Queen's Club

Vekic upsets Rybakina at Berlin Open

BERLIN, June 21, (AP) Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina's preparations for the grass-court Grand Slam hit a snag Wednesday when she lost to Donna Vekic 6-7 (1), 6-3, 6-4 in the second round of the Berlin Open.

Vekic faced only two break points and saved them both. It was Rybakina's second match, after beating qualifier Polina Kudermotova on Tuesday, since withdrawing ahead of her third-round match at the French Open when a virus left her with breathing difficulties.

"I stayed in the moment. I was just trying to play the next point, the next game," Vekic said. "I was like 'Just stay with her. The chances will come.'"

Vekic's next opponent will be Elina Avanesyan, who lost in qualifying but then got a main-draw spot as a lucky after another player withdrew.

Caroline Garcia will play either former Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitová or Nadia Podoroska in the quarterfinals after the third-seeded Frenchwoman beat qualifier Jaimee Fourlis 6-3, 6-2.

"The best practice is to play matches so obviously I feel more confident in my movement," Garcia said of adapting to grass after clay tournaments. "Today, I had a good time on Center Court. I really enjoyed it."

Maria Sakkari beat Alizé Cornet 6-4, 6-2 in the first round after a health issue affected her French opponent. Cornet was trailing 4-1 in the first set when she complained of feeling unwell and had her blood pressure checked before continuing.

Sakkari will next face Aliaksandra Sasnovich, who upset Victoria Azarenka 6-4, 6-4 in a match that had been suspended overnight.

Carlos Alcaraz's first grass-court match outside Wimbledon proved to be a tricky one.

Playing for the first time at the Queen's Club Championships, the top-seeded Alcaraz came from a set down to win 4-6, 7-5, 7-6 (3) against lucky loser Arthur Rinderknech - a No. 83-ranked Frenchman who only found out he was playing following the withdrawal of Arthur Fils a couple of hours before the match.

"It has been a really tough match," Alcaraz said. "It was really difficult for me at the beginning to adapt my tennis, my game, to the grass."

Alcaraz faced difficulties in dealing with the tall Rinderknech's big serve and net coverage in what was the No. 2-ranked Spaniard's seventh career match on grass, and first away from the All England Club.

Alcaraz rallied from going down a break early in the third set and dominated the tiebreaker, which started with an epic point that saw Alcaraz tumble to the ground after racing to the net to hit a cross-court winner.

The fourth point, which put Alcaraz 3-1 ahead, was also memorable because of his outrageous lob on the run that landed on Rinderknech's baseline and set up another forehand winner. Alcaraz then converted his third match point.

TENNIS

"For me, it's tough playing here but I enjoy playing on grass and it's a tournament I really wanted to play," Alcaraz said.

It was Alcaraz's first match since losing to Novak Djokovic in the French Open semifinals, after which he went to Spanish party island Ibiza.

Earlier at the Wimbledon warmup tournament, second-seeded Holger Rune of Norway beat big-serving American Maxime Cressy 7-6 (4), 7-6 (3) for his first grass-court ATP win, after losing three in the first round last year - including at Wimbledon.



Denmark's Holger Rune in action against Maxime Cressy of the U.S. during the Men's Singles Lucky Loser Qualifying match on day two of the 2023 'cinch Championships' at The Queen's Club in London. (AP)

MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, June 21, (AP) Results and standings from the MLB games on Tuesday.

Kansas City	1	Detroit	0	LA Dodgers	2	LA Angels	0
Toronto	2	Miami	0	Atlanta	4	Philadelphia	2
NY Yankees	3	Seattle	1	Chicago Cubs	4	Pittsburgh	0
Baltimore	8	Tampa Bay	6	St. Louis	9	Washington	3
Cleveland	3	Oakland 10 in	2	Cincinnati	8	Colorado	6
Boston	10	Minnesota	4	Milwaukee	7	Arizona	5
Houston	4	NY Mets	2	San Francisco	4	San Diego	3
Chicago W. Sox	7	Texas	6				

American League				East Division				Central Division				West Division							
W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB				
Tampa Bay	51	25	.671	—	Atlanta	47	26	.644	—	Minnesota	36	38	.486	—	Texas	45	28	.616	—
Baltimore	45	27	.625	4	Miami	42	32	.568	5-1/2	Cleveland	34	38	.472	1	Los Angeles	41	34	.547	5
New York	40	33	.548	9-1/2	Philadelphia	38	35	.521	9	Detroit	31	41	.431	4	Houston	40	34	.541	5-1/2
Toronto	40	35	.533	10-1/2	New York	34	39	.466	13	Chicago	32	43	.427	4-1/2	Seattle	35	36	.493	9
Boston	39	35	.527	11	Washington	27	45	.375	19-1/2	St. Louis	31	43	.419	8	Oakland	19	56	.253	27

Series drew nearly 119,000 fans to London Stadium

MLB views UK as a gateway to European growth, with eyes on Paris and Germany

LONDON, June 21, (AP) London seems like a no-brainer for a European road trip. Paris is all but assured next. Why not throw in Germany and the Netherlands? Major League Baseball has big plans for Europe, starting with an English reintroduction to the sport this weekend when the St. Louis Cardinals and Chicago Cubs play a two-game series in London.

The New York Yankees and Boston Red Sox featured in London four years ago, smashing six home runs in a European debut for MLB that was higher scoring - the Yankees won 17-13 - than the NFL's first one in London in 2007, when the New York Giants beat the Miami Dolphins 13-10.

Though the coronavirus pandemic threw a curveball - the Cards-Cubs series was slated for 2020 - the success of the World Baseball Classic has provided a boost. Britain won a game at the tournament for the first time and found a star in Seattle Mariners prospect Harry Ford, who was born in Atlanta but has parents from the U.K.

"The U.K. has really been identified for us, London in

particular, as the jumping off point for us to get into Europe," Chris Marinak, MLB's chief operations and strategy officer, told The Associated Press. "We feel like we proved that out in 2019. By coming back and having a really strong showing ... we're going to have the opportunity to really make some headway for growth both in the U.K. and throughout Europe."

BASEBALL

Britain is MLB's biggest market in Europe in terms of broadcast revenue, merchandise sales and subscribers to digital products, though it trails the likes of Mexico, Japan, South Korea, China and Australia.

Audience research company GWT's data showed that interest in baseball among British sports fans increased from 4% in 2019 to 5.9% last year, the league said. It added that MLB Europe's social media channels since the 2019 series have more than tripled their followers to 452,000.

The New York-Boston series, a two-game set that drew nearly 119,000 fans

to London Stadium, was a driver in the BBC signing a deal last fall to begin broadcasting a handful of games, including the London series, each season. MLB's lead broadcaster in the U.K., the pay-TV service BT Sport, last year renewed its agreement to broadcast 15 games per season.

"We feel like the U.K. offers us a good model for growth in the Europe market," Marinak said.

MLB's first regular-season game outside of the United States - including Puerto Rico - and Canada was in 1996 when the New York Mets and San Diego Padres played a three-game series in Monterrey, Mexico. The league has also staged games in Tokyo and Australia. Earlier this season, Mexico City hosted a two-game series between the Padres and San Francisco Giants.

The Yankees are lobbying to play in Paris in 2025. The league hasn't announced the City of Light just yet, but Marinak noted: "We see a lot of engagement in France." The players' association signed off on MLB holding a game in Paris in 2025 as part of last year's collective bargaining agreement.

London is locked in for a series next year and another in 2026.

The Netherlands - bolstered by baseball's popularity in Aruba and Curacao - and Italy boast the best national teams in Europe, though the Czech Republic is improving. Germany - which has become the NFL's leading market in Europe - has a big U.S. military presence and has produced several big leaguers, including Minnesota's Max Kepler.

"We've really focused on looking into Europe as once a year, maybe max twice a year ... just because it's such an effort to get over there, and it doesn't really fit into the normal cadence of the major league schedule, but we really do think it's important to bring live game content to the market," Marinak said.

"We want to hit our priority markets but we may rotate around to a Germany in the long run or if there's a facility in the Netherlands that we could potentially look at, France we've talked about, the UK," he continued. "But for the medium term we're really focused on the UK as our primary vehicle."

A suitable venue is the tricky part. Olympic-style, multi-use stadiums are possibilities, like Stade de France. Baseball was a demonstration sport at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin's Olympiastadion. Renovating the Sydney Cricket Ground for the Australia series in 2014 "was sort of a complicated endeavor," Marinak said.

Hicks drives in 4 runs, Orioles hold off AL East-leading Rays



Chicago White Sox's Elvis Andrus (right), scores against Texas Rangers catcher Jonah Heim during the eighth inning of a baseball game in Chicago. (AP)

Reds extend winning streak to 10

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla., June 21, (AP): Aaron Hicks homered and had four RBIs as the Baltimore Orioles beat the Tampa Bay Rays 8-6 after nearly blowing a seven-run lead Tuesday night in a matchup of the top two teams in the AL East.

Anthony Santander and Ryan O'Hearn also went deep, and Kyle Bradish (3-3) gave up two runs and four hits over five innings for the Orioles, who moved within four games of the first-place Rays. Félix Bautista, the fifth Baltimore reliever, got four outs to earn his 20th save on his 28th birthday.

Francisco Mejia had an RBI double off Bradish during a two-run fifth before Manuel Margot drove in two with a pinch-hit single in a four-run sixth against three Baltimore relievers as the Rays got within 7-6.

Tampa Bay dropped to 31-8 at home and has lost three straight overall. The Rays entered as the only team in the majors without a three-game skid this year.

Reds 8, Rockies 6

In Cincinnati, TJ Friedl had a three-run homer on a four-hit night, rookie Elly De La Cruz added a solo shot and Cincinnati extended its winning streak to 10 games while handing Colorado its seventh straight loss.

BASEBALL

Will Benson hit a solo homer in the sixth, helping the NL Central-leading Reds to their longest winning streak since 2012, when they also won 10 straight. De La Cruz had three hits as fans chanted "Elly! Elly!"

Giants 4, Padres 3

In San Francisco, Joc Pederson hit a tying home run in the eighth inning and drew the winning walk in the ninth against San Diego's Josh Hader as San Francisco won its ninth straight.

Luis Matos drew a one-out walk off Nick Martinez (3-3). Patrick Bailey followed with a single to left. Hader replaced Martinez and walked pinch-hitter Casey Schmitt after being called for a pitch-clock violation. Hader struck out David Villar before Pederson drew a seven-pitch walk.

Dodgers 2, Angels 0

In Anaheim, Miguel Rojas doubled and scored on Michael Busch's high-bouncing single in the eighth after Clayton Kershaw and Reid Detmers duelled through seven scoreless innings, and the Dodgers beat the Angels in the Freeway Series opener.

Will Smith added an RBI single in the eighth for the Dodgers, who snapped their three-game skid.

Four innings after the Angels' Brandon Drury was ruled out at the plate on a call overturned by video review, Busch's chopper off Chris Devenski (3-2) inexplicably leaped high over new Angels first baseman Kevin Padlo.

Yankees 3, Mariners 1

In New York, Gerrit Cole stared down José Caballero and waggled a finger at Seattle's dugout 15 times after striking out the side in the seventh inning as New York snapped a four-game skid.

Cole's finger-waggling was a pointed response to repeated steps-outs by Caballero. The Yankees' ace got Caballero swinging on a full-count fastball in the seventh.

Cole (8-1) allowed one run and four hits in 7 1/3 innings with eight strikeouts and a walk. He is 4-0 with a 1.87 ERA following a Yankees loss this season, and New York is 7-0 in those starts.

Astros 4, Mets 2

In Houston, Alex Bregman hit a two-run homer and Framber Valdez threw eight strong innings to out-pitch former teammate Justin Verlander as Houston beat New York to snap a five-game skid.

Valdez (7-5) didn't allow a baserunner until the sixth and held the Mets scoreless until the eighth. His 2.27 ERA ranks second in the majors. Ryan Pressly pitched a scoreless ninth for his 13th save.

Braves 4, Phillies 2

In Philadelphia, Spencer Strider struck out nine over six innings in his first start in Philadelphia since last year's postseason implosion, and Austin Riley and Matt Olson homered for Atlanta.

Strider (8-2) nimbly pitched out of jams until the fifth and helped the Braves win their seventh straight. Raisel Iglesias gave up a run in the ninth but struck out Kyle Schwarber with the tying run on base to pick up his 10th save.

Blue Jays 2, Marlins 0

In Miami, Ernie Clement and George Springer hit consecutive RBI singles in the eighth inning and Toronto beat Miami.

Yusei Kikuchi allowed two hits

and struck out six in six innings to help Toronto even the series after falling 11-0 in the opener Monday night. The Blue Jays ended a 19-inning scoreless streak in the eighth against Tanner Scott (4-2).

Red Sox 10, Twins 4

In Minneapolis, Christian Arroyo had a career-high five hits and drove in four runs, Kutter Crawford (2-3) pitched five scoreless innings and Boston beat Minnesota for its sixth straight win.

Adam Duvall and Arroyo hit solo homers in the fourth to start the scoring, and Masataka Yoshida added a two-run shot in the eighth. Arroyo also hit a three-run double as part of a five-run seventh for Boston.

White Sox 7, Rangers 6

In Chicago, Zach Remillard singled in Elvis Andrus with the go-ahead run on a play that was overturned by video review, and Chicago rallied with three runs in the eighth inning to beat Texas.

The White Sox overcame five RBIs by Corey Seager, including a two-run double in the top of the eighth that put Texas ahead 6-4.

Andrus tied it with a single off Grant Anderson (1-1) that plated two runs with two outs. Remillard followed with a line drive to left field, and Andrus was initially called out at the plate by umpire D.J. Reyburn on Travis Jankowski's throw. Rangers manager Bruce Bochy was ejected after the call was overturned.

Guardians 3, Athletics 2, 10 innings

In Cleveland, Andrés Giménez's single in the 10th brought home José Ramírez from third base and Cleveland handed Oakland its sixth



Atlanta Braves' Ronald Acuna Jr. hits a run-scoring single against Philadelphia Phillies pitcher Jeff Hoffman during the seventh inning of a baseball game, Tuesday, June 20, 2023, in Philadelphia. (AP)

straight loss.

With the bases loaded and none out, Giménez dropped his single off Trevor May (2-4) just inside the right-field line for Cleveland's fourth walk-off win this season.

The Guardians were blanked for six innings before tying it in the seventh on Amed Rosario's RBI single and Ramírez's run-scoring double.

Cubs 4, Pirates 0

In Pittsburgh, Marcus Stroman allowed five hits over seven innings as Chicago handed Pittsburgh its eighth straight loss.

Stroman (9-4) struck out five, walked one and never let the Pirates get to third base while winning his seventh straight start. He needed just 97 pitches to get 21 outs, dropping his ERA to 2.28, tops in the National League.

Tucker Barnhart hit his first home run of the season for the Cubs. Mike Tauchman homered for the second time in three games as Chicago won for the seventh time in eight games.

Tigers 1, Royals 0

In Detroit, Daniel Lynch allowed one hit over seven innings for his first major league win in almost 11 months and Kansas City beat Detroit.

Kansas City had lost 12 of 13. Matt Beaty, making his first start for the Royals, drove in the only run with a sixth-inning double off Tigers starter Michael Lorenzen (2-5).

Javier Báez doubled with one out in the ninth for Detroit, but Scott Barlow retired the next two hitters for his eighth save, completing the two-hitter.

Brewers 7, Diamondbacks 5

In Milwaukee, William Contreras hit a go-ahead, two-run double in the seventh inning and Milwaukee rallied from a 4-0 deficit to beat Arizona.

Jesse Winker hit his first homer of the season for the Brewers. Hoby Milner, Bryse Wilson (2-0), Joel Payamps and Devin Williams combined for 3 2/3 innings of shutout relief. Williams worked around a one-out walk in the ninth to earn his 13th save in 14 opportunities.

Cardinals 9, Nationals 3

In Washington, Dylan Carlson homered twice, Willson Contreras went 3-for-4 with two doubles to break out of a slump, and St. Louis beat skidding Washington for its fourth straight win.

Paul DeJong also homered (for the Cardinals). Jordan Montgomery (4-7) matched a season high by pitching seven innings, allowing one run on four hits with six strikeouts.

Thomas secures 5th career triple-double, Sun beat Storm

Howard scores 23 as Wings snap 3-game losing streak

ARLINGTON, Texas, June 21, (AP): Natasha Howard scored 23 points, Arike Ogunbowale added 21 and the Dallas Wings beat the Atlanta Dream 85-73 on Tuesday night to end a three-game losing streak.

Dallas went ahead 63-38 in the third quarter after scoring 11 straight points. Atlanta missed its first six field goals of the period, but rallied in the fourth behind rookie Taylor Mikesell, who scored seven points in four minutes to get the Dream within 80-67 with 4:07 left.

Dallas made five of its next six free throws to secure an 85-69 and seal the game.

Kalani Brown had 11 points, 14 rebounds and two blocks for Dallas (5-6), which plays the first of back-to-back games at Los Angeles on Friday. Satou Sabally scored 10 points on 2-of-11 shooting and Teaira McCowan had nine points and 11 rebounds in her first game since the season opener.

Ogunbowale, who was coming off a career-high 41 points on Saturday, scored 16 points in the first half and Howard added 10 to help Dallas build a 43-32 lead. Howard finished with 20-plus points for the fourth time this season.

Cheyenne Parker and Rhyne Howard each scored 15 points for Atlanta (5-

6), which had its three-game winning streak snapped.

Ogunbowale was ejected with 1:42 left in the fourth quarter after receiving two technical fouls while on the bench. Ogunbowale signed an autograph for a fan while heading to the locker room.

Sun 85, Storm 79

In Seattle, DeWanna Bonner scored 20 points to move into 10th on the WNBA scoring list, Alyssa Thomas secured her fifth career triple-double and the Connecticut Sun beat the Seattle Storm 85-79.

Thomas tied Candace Parker and Sabrina Ionescu for the most career regular-season triple-doubles with

three. Thomas scored with 1:26 left in the third quarter to reach the mark, before finishing with 13 points, 15 rebounds and 12 assists. Thomas also had three steals. Bonner passed Syl-

BASKETBALL

via Fowles to move into the top 10 in league history. She trails Katie Smith by 36 points for ninth.

All five starters for Connecticut (10-3) scored in double figures. Natisha Hiedeman had 17 points, Brianna Jones added 13 and Tiffany Hayes scored 12.

Jones was helped off the court with about a minute left with an apparent leg injury.

Connecticut scored the opening 12 points of the second quarter for a 34-25 lead. Thomas had seven points, nine rebounds and eight assists at the break.

Jewell Loyd, who scored 39 points in a 109-103 victory over Dallas on Saturday, scored 33 points for Seattle (3-8). Ezi Magbegor had 13 points and 11 rebounds.

Loyd made five 3-pointers in the first half and scored 22 points to help Seattle take a 48-45 lead at halftime. Loyd finished 8 of 20 from the field, including 6 of 15 from 3-point range, and 11 of 12

at the free-throw line.

Lynx 67, Sparks 61

Los Angeles, Napheesa Collier had 26 points and 14 rebounds, Bridget Carleton added 14 points and the Minnesota Lynx beat the Los Angeles Sparks 67-61. Minnesota (4-8) won its third game in nine days against Los Angeles, with the two previous wins coming by five-points apiece.

Collier sank a jumper from the free-throw line, following an offensive rebound, to give Minnesota a 64-61 lead with 1:26 left. Neither team would score again until Collier's free throw with 8.7 seconds left for a four-point lead.

Australia win Ashes classic



Australia captain Pat Cummins celebrates after beating England during day five of the first Ashes Test cricket match, at Edgbaston, Birmingham, England. (AP)

Cummins finishes off 2-wicket win over England in 1st Test

BIRMINGHAM, England, June 21, (AP): Pat Cummins threw off his helmet, tossed away his bat and wheeled away in celebration after playing a captain's innings to help Australia win an Ashes classic.

England's "Bazball" cricket revolution got a lesson from Down Under in a series-opening test that went down to the wire on the fifth and final day.

Chasing 281 at a raucous Edgbaston, the Australians reached the target inside the final hour for a two-wicket victory after opener Usman Khawaja hit a patient 65 and Cummins finished the job with an unbeaten 44 containing two sixes and four fours.

"Both teams spoke a lot about playing your own style," Cummins said about triumphing over England's high-stakes attacking approach under Ben Stokes. "And that's the beauty of this series. Two contrasting styles, playing to our strengths and that made for great entertainment."

Cummins shared a match-winning ninth-wicket partnership of 55 with tailender Nathan Lyon (16 not out), hitting the winning boundary against Ollie Robinson - Harry Brook failed to stop the ball at the rope - as Australia reached 282-8. It disappointed the majority of a loud home crowd that sensed another memorable victory at the Birmingham ground after England's two-run win in the second Ashes test in 2005.

CRICKET

"We are, of course, absolutely devastated," Stokes said. "The lads are in pieces up there. But if that's (the tight match) not attracting people to the game we love, then I don't know what will."

Jubilant and possibly surprised Australian fans at the stadium chanted "Aussie, Aussie, Aussie" after their team's remarkable win.

Khawaja, who hit his first test century in England in the first innings, faced 197 deliveries as he anchored most of Australia's successful run chase on a rain-reduced day before Stokes entered the bowling attack and picked up a vital wicket. Khawaja was taking the game away from England with Australia at 209-6, but Stokes' fiery delivery was hit onto his stumps by the batter.

Khawaja was voted player of the match and said "it was an unbelievable game."

"I watched Edgbaston 2005 on TV as a kid, I stayed up late," Khawaja said. "I was there when Stokes played that unbelievable innings at Headingley in the last Ashes (in England in 2019) but this has definitely got to be one of my favorite test matches I've ever played in."

Australia won the World Test

Steelers sign Nick to 1-year deal, release Miller

PITTSBURGH, June 21, (AP): The Pittsburgh Steelers signed linebacker Nick Kwiatkoski to a one-year deal on Tuesday following a tryout with his hometown team.

Kwiatkoski, a Pittsburgh-area native, is a seven-year NFL veteran. He spent four seasons with the Chicago Bears (2016-19) before moving on to the Las Vegas Raiders (2020-21) and Atlanta Falcons (2022).

Kwiatkoski has appeared in 89 games, with 53 starts, most of them with the Bears. His best season came in 2020 with the Raiders, when he collected a career-best

FOOTBALL

81 tackles with a sack and an interception in 12 games. Kwiatkoski was used primarily on special teams last season in Atlanta.

The Steelers are looking for depth at inside linebacker behind likely starters Cole Holcomb and Elandon Roberts, both of whom arrived in free agency. The move is a homecoming in more ways than one for Kwiatkoski, who starred at West Virginia from 2011-15, starting 36 games over his final three seasons.

Championship final against India in London last week, but seemed to be behind the game for most of the Ashes series opener against England.

Eight wickets down with all the recognized batters out, Australia was still chasing the win - with very good reason as it turned out - and Cummins smashed Joe Root, who was bowling spin while Moeen Ali was nursing a blistered spinning finger, for two sixes in the 83rd over.

England had delayed taking the new ball at 227-7 and it worked perfectly as

Pittsburgh also signed long snapper Rex Sunahara on Tuesday and released wide receiver Anthony Miller.



The Los Angeles Rams have re-signed running back Sony Michel, a member of their Super Bowl championship team. The Rams announced their reunion Tuesday with Michel, a two-time Super Bowl winner and five-year NFL veteran.

Michel rushed for 845 yards and four touchdowns while also catching 21 passes during the 2021-22 season for the Rams, who acquired him from New England in a preseason trade. He added 78 yards rushing in the post-season as Los Angeles won the Super Bowl at its own SoFi Stadium in February 2022.

Michel spent the ensuing offseason with the Dolphins before Miami cut him last August. He then signed with the Los Angeles Chargers and rushed for 106 yards as a backup to Austin Ekeler.

Michel spent his first three NFL seasons with the Patriots, and he rushed for a career-high 931 yards as a rookie on New England's 2018-19 championship team. He rushed for six postseason touchdowns as a rookie, including the only touchdown in the Pats' 13-3 Super Bowl victory over the Rams.

Root claimed Alex Carey (20) to make the score 227-8 with Australia still needing 54 runs.

Lyon joined Cummins at the crease and didn't leave it, although he was dropped by a flying Stokes at backward square leg in what could have been another twist.

England must win the five-match series to retake the urn from Australia. The tourists take the bragging rights into the second test at Lord's but both teams achieved their aim of making the series opener a showpiece for

cricket's longest format as it fights to keep players and TV viewers from focusing on franchise games.

The morning session was lost to rain and players took an early lunch before Australia resumed batting on 107-3, still needing 174 runs for victory.

They were contained early on by veteran pace bowlers Jimmy Anderson and Broad, who had claimed the wickets of top-ranked Marnus Labuschagne and Steve Smith late on Friday to help set up a final-day thriller.

Despite losing in "Bazball" style, attack-minded England has shown almost anything can now happen in test cricket under Stokes' captaincy.

His early declaration - on the first day, no less - with England at 393-8 drew grudging admiration from Australian fans for its audacity but in retrospect the decision lost England vital runs, particularly as Root was still out there.

"I'm a captain who saw it as an opportunity to pounce on Australia," Stokes said after the game. "The way in which we played and took Australia on actually allowed us to be able to do that. If we didn't declare, would we have got that excitement like we did at the end?"

Bringing on part-timer Brook early on the second day to bowl at Smith drew gasps and left Australia batters not knowing what to expect next from Stokes. Brook had previously remarked his gentle medium-pace was only employed "if the other boys are knackered."

As well as the batting heroics, Lyon moved closer to joining the exclusive 500-wicket club in tests after retaining match figures of 8-229 when England finished its second innings 273 all out. Root reverse-ramped his way to 46 after his 118 not out in the first innings.

Off-spinner Lyon, who has taken 495 wickets, expressed genuine sympathy for England's spinning spearhead Ali, who came out of test retirement but struggled with a blistered spinning finger after bowling 33 overs for 2-147 in Australia's first innings of 386.

Best prospect since LeBron

With Victor a player like few others, there's no debate at top of this draft

NEW YORK, June 21, (AP): Victor Wembanyama's towering shadow has hung over this NBA draft for months, blocking much of what is usually part of the process.

There has been no debate about who the San Antonio Spurs should take with the No. 1 pick Thursday night, no discussion of which player might be a better fit, no real attempts to raise any red flags about the presumed selection.

When a player like Wembanyama comes along - and maybe none ever has - there's no real reason to drum up any drama. The Spurs are not going to pass up someone who is listed at 7-foot-4 but has the skills of a player much smaller.

The 19-year-old from France has been called the best prospect since LeBron James came out of high school 20 years ago, perhaps with some physical gifts that even the NBA's career scoring leader didn't possess.

Expectations from the outside world are sky-high. Wembanyama insists that won't bother him.

"I have such high expectations for myself and I'm so determined that the expectations of others are nothing

BASKETBALL

compared to what I place on myself," Wembanyama said in an interview aired Wednesday on ABC's "Good Morning America."

He arrived Monday in the New York area, surprised that some fans were waiting for him when he landed at Newark Liberty International Airport. On Tuesday, there was his first subway ride - even hopping a turnstile as he exited, though the police who were flanking him didn't complain - and a trip to Yankee Stadium to throw out the ceremonial first pitch; it was well out of the strike zone. Nobody seemed to mind.

He has been a big kid in a grown-up world. He signs autographs with a smile, pokes fun at himself, doesn't mind that everyone tends to stare at someone of his height.

"Crazy," he said of that first subway ride, with New Yorkers all around him.

Let the craziness begin. The draft is Thursday night. Commissioner Adam Silver will call his name, shake his hand, and before too long Wembanyama will be on a plane for San Antonio to start the first chapter of his NBA life.

"Wembanyama is built for the modern game," said analyst Jay Bilas, who has been part of ESPN's coverage for every draft since James topped the 2003 one. "We've never seen anything quite like him on a basketball floor."

The modern NBA game requires big men to be comfortable playing away from the basket, able to handle the ball and defend opponents on the perimeter. It's a league where 7-footer Nikola Jokic just guided the Denver Nuggets to their first championship by becoming the first player to lead the postsea-

son in total points, rebounds and assists, where first-team All-Defensive team centers Jaren Jackson Jr. and Brook Lopez block shots on one end and shoot 3-pointers on the other.

Wembanyama can seemingly do all that. He was the MVP and Defensive Player of the Year in the French league, leading the league in scoring, rebounding and blocks. The almost-unbelievable highlights of some of those plays, a slam or a swat when he seemed too far away to pull it off even with his enormous wingspan, had basketball fans and even future opponents on both sides of the Atlantic buzzing throughout the season.

He will go to a San Antonio team that won five titles after selecting Tim Duncan the last time it had the No. 1 pick in 1997. Duncan is a Hall of Famer and one of the best power forwards in NBA history, and maybe it's too much to ask Wembanyama to become quite like that.

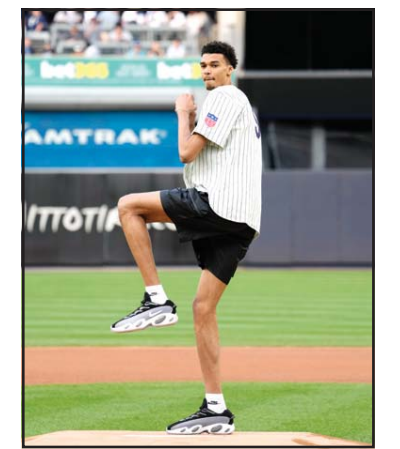
But he's the best of the bunch this year, and maybe of the last 20 years.

Charlotte is expected to decide between Alabama forward Brandon Miller and G League Ignite guard Scoot Henderson with No. 2, with Portland perhaps taking the other at No. 3. The Rockets and Pistons round out the top five.

Those teams have been recent regulars near the top of the draft and should add another good young player to give new coaches like Udoka in Houston and Monty Williams in Detroit. But those clubs shared the best odds with the Spurs of winning the No. 1 pick in last month's draft lottery, so there was disappointment to wipe away before thinking ahead.

That's because, while every draft has good players, very few will ever offer the chance to draft one like Wembanyama.

Just ask someone who would know. "Everybody's been a unicorn over the last few years, but he's more like an alien," James said last fall. "No one has ever seen anyone as tall as he is but as fluid and as graceful as he is out on the floor."



Victor Wembanyama, a projected first-round NBA draft pick, throws the ceremonial first pitch before a baseball game between the New York Yankees and the Seattle Mariners in New York. (AP)

As draft & free agency loom, Pat 'eyes' remain on the main thing

MIAMI, June 21, (AP): Pat Riley sometimes finds himself waking up in the middle of the night these days, turning on the television because he's unable to sleep.

This is when the president of the Miami Heat watches Garfield cartoons.

Turns out, his young grandson Connor is a big fan of the lasagna-loving cynical orange cartoon cat, so Riley - like many doting grandfathers probably would - has become a bit of a Garfield fan as well.

"Connor's going to love hearing this," Riley said.

Here's the part that Heat fans might love hearing: It's in these moments where Riley's mind is racing with thoughts about how close Miami came to a championship this season - and what needs to happen to get it done next season.

Riley held his annual end-of-season review Tuesday, reflecting on a year like few others and insisting that if there is a way to get better this summer, the Heat will do it. Miami nearly missed the playoffs and had to rally in the play-in tournament just to make the postseason, then made its way to the finals as the No. 8 seed in the Eastern Conference.

"Another championship team, that's my goal," Riley said. "I have no other plans other than to do that."

Retirement was not discussed during Riley's 35-minute session with reporters; he's shown no signs of slowing down and there's been no talk of any exit strategies for the 78-year-

old who has been part of nine NBA championships - three in Miami.

The Heat were involved in the trade talks over the weekend that ultimately resulted in Bradley Beal waiving his no-trade clause to go from Washington to Phoenix, a deal that's still awaiting final approvals from all sides and the NBA. And if Portland's Damian Lillard decides he wants a trade, it's a poorly kept secret that Miami would be more than willing to talk to the perennial All-Star and gauge his interest in joining the Heat.

Riley, by league rule, cannot talk about players under contract else-

BASKETBALL

where. But his approach every summer is to find the player or players who can bring Miami closer to a title. That won't change this summer, and he doesn't think the current roster has to be decimated to make change happen either.

"We're not going to take a wrecking ball to this thing," Riley said, channeling the lyrics of his friend Bruce Springsteen, whom he quotes often. "Good times come, good times come. Hard times come, hard times come. We're not going to take a wrecking ball to a good team that had some real adversity this year. We had a good team, probably a great team. We wouldn't have as gotten as far as we have, and there's no caveat in any of that, if you weren't a great team."



Colombia's Jhon Lucumi leaps to head the ball over Germany's Ilkay Gundogan during an international friendly soccer match between Germany and Colombia at Veltins-Arena in Gelsenkirchen, Germany. (AP)

Sports

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Kuwait bag six medals at Special Olympics



Salman Shehab celebrates on the podium with officials after the awarding ceremony.

Shehab snatches two gold

BERLIN, June 21, (KUNA): Kuwaiti athletes won three gold and three silver medals in biking, weightlifting and equestrian contests as part of competitions of the Special Olympics Summer Games held in Berlin.

OLYMPICS

Speaking to KUNA, Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Kuwaiti Special Olympics Hana Al-Zawawi said this big achievement came due to intensive training and cooperation of technical and administrative teams with the Kuwaiti athletes to raise the country's status at international arenas.

The second day of the competition witnessed a noticeable progress of the

Kuwaiti team amid a strong competition from other participating teams, she said, noting that all Kuwaiti athletes have high fitness, which enabled them to offer brilliant performance.

Salman Shehab snatched two gold and two silver medals in weightlifting, Manar Al-Alawi won one gold in cycling, while Basma Al-Bosaili has silver in equestrianism, Al-Zawawi said.

Meanwhile, Shehab stressed, in a similar statement to KUNA, keenness of the trainer on preparing him for competition that enabled him to win four medals.

Athlete Al-Alawi dedicated this achievement to Kuwait and its wise leadership as well as all Kuwaitis.

For her part, Al-Bosaili said she could get the silver medal despite heavy rains during the contest.

Kuwait's total medals in the competition have risen so far to seven in the first and second days.

Earlier, Kuwaiti athletes Hajar Al-Rashidi and Rawan Al-Balhan won the bronze in the Bocce doubles competition.

Kante joins Benzema at Al-Ittihad on 3-year deal

LONDON, June 21, (AP): N'Golo Kante won pretty much everything in European soccer. Now he's trying his luck in the lucrative Saudi league, where he'll have another France superstar for company.

Kante completed his widely expected move to Saudi champion Al-Ittihad on a three-year deal Wednesday after six years at Chelsea, with his new club opening its doors to the 32-year-old midfielder with a series of tweets containing the hashtag "WelcomeBox2Box" - referring to his hard-running style of play.



Kante

One of Kante's biggest fans is already at Al-Ittihad - Karim Benzema, the reigning world player of the year and a former teammate with France's national team. He moved there this month.

"One time I told you you are the best player box-to-box in the world," said Benzema, in a video he sent apparently while sitting in a private plane. "Now I'm happy to play with you again. And of course, at the best team in Saudi. See you in Jeddah."

Kante - all smiles, as ever - sent a reply.

"Thank you Karim - nice to see you again," he said. "Thank you for your words. I am very pleased to play with you, with the best player in the world. And I'm very excited to play with the Tigers."

Kante will reportedly earn more than \$100 million across the length of the deal at a team coached by former Tottenham and Wolverhampton manager Nuno Espirito Santo. It recently won the Saudi league ahead of Cristiano Ronaldo's Al-Nassr.

Kante, who won the World Cup with France in 2018, the Champions League with Chelsea in 2021 and has been one of the best players in the

Premier League in recent years as a back-to-back champion with Leicester (2016) and Chelsea (2017), has struggled with injuries over the past two seasons.

That hasn't put off Al-Ittihad from apparently spending big on Kante, a few weeks after bringing in Benzema following the expiry of his contract at Real Madrid.

"It is part of the club's efforts to establish itself as a top choice for world-class players in the Saudi Professional League," Al-Ittihad said.

SOCCER

The big names - albeit players nearing the end of their careers - are being enticed to the Saudi league, where spending is being fueled by a move by the kingdom's sovereign wealth Public Investment Fund to take a majority ownership stake in four of the country's top clubs, including Al-Ittihad and Al-Nassr. The move is part of a nationalization project that encourages public sector organizations to invest in sports, with soccer teams a priority under the initiative backed by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Another of those four teams, Al-Hilal, tried to buy Lionel Messi but Argentina's World Cup winner decided to join Inter Miami in the United States.

A slew of leading players are being linked with moves to Saudi Arabia in this European offseason, including Manchester City winger Riyad Mahrez, Chelsea goalkeeper Edouard Mendy and Wolverhampton midfielder Ruben Neves.

Another was Tottenham winger Son Heung-min, who was reportedly a target of Al-Ittihad but is not ready to move to Saudi Arabia.

"Money is not the most important thing to me right now," Son told reporters on Tuesday after South Korea drew 1-1 with El Salvador in an international friendly in Daejeon.

Ronaldo scores late winner in record game for Portugal

BERLIN, June 21, (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo became the first men's player to make 200 international appearances and celebrated the milestone by scoring the winning goal in the 89th minute as Portugal beat Iceland 1-0 in European Championship qualifying.

The 38-year-old Ronaldo was honored by Guinness World Records before kickoff for reaching 200 games for Portugal almost 20 years after he made his debut. And he was celebrating at the end, too, after being on hand to score the later winner from close range and keep Portugal on track for Euro 2024 qualification with its fourth win from four games in Group J.

Erling Haaland scored twice in Norway's 3-1 win at home over Cyprus, as did Romelu Lukaku in Belgium's 3-0 victory over Estonia.

But another star forward - Robert Lewandowski - was left disappointed as his Poland team squandered a two-goal lead to lose 3-2 away to Moldova. Euro 2024 host Germany lost 2-0 to Colombia in a friendly game.

Group J
Ronaldo padded his record for international goals as well, by netting his 123rd for Portugal - making it another memorable night for the former Real Madrid and Manchester United star.

"So happy. It's that kind of moment that you never expect to do it, 200 caps. For me it's an unbelievable achievement," Ronaldo told UEFA's website. "Of course, to score the winning goal, it's even more special."

Ronaldo's teammates Rafael Leão and Bruno Fernandes had looked more likely to provide an opening in Reykjavik, until Iceland midfielder Willum Willumsson was sent off with 10 minutes of normal time remaining for a second yellow card.

Ronaldo had missed several chances and was booked for diving in the 83rd, before he finally got the winner when Goncalo Inacio headed the ball down for the forward to score from close range. Even then there was an anxious wait for a VAR check before Ronaldo could celebrate in his own distinctive style.

Also, Luxembourg upset Bosnia and Herzegovina 2-0 away thanks to goals from Danel Sinani and Yvandro Borges Sanchez, while Slovakia beat Liechtenstein 1-0.

Group A
Despite Haaland's goals for Norway, Scotland stayed top of Group A with a 2-0 win over Georgia in a game that was suspended for about 1 hour, 40 minutes because of heavy rain and a waterlogged field.

Callum McGregor gave hosts an early lead before play was suspended. Scott McTominay made it 2-0 early in the second half despite lots of water still on the field.

It was Scotland's fourth win from four games and it lifted the team four points above Georgia.

Norway is third with four points from four games, while Spain is a point further back after playing just two. Spain won the Nations League on Sunday.

Group E
Lewandowski scored but couldn't prevent Poland slumping to a loss in Moldova, its second in three games.

Albania earned a 3-1 away win over the Faeroe Islands to stay second in the group, one point behind the Czech Republic after three games played.

Poland dropped to second last in the



Silver medalist Basma Al-Bosaili (center) with officials.

KUNA photos

Haaland scores twice as Norway top Cyprus in Euro qualifying



Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo (center), controls the ball challenged by Iceland's Sverrir Ingi Ingason (left), and Iceland's Guolaugur Victor Pálsson during the Euro 2024 group J qualifying soccer match between Iceland and Portugal in Reykjavik, Iceland. (AP)

Kuwait defeat Nepal in SAFF Champ'ship

NEW DELHI, June 21, (KUNA): Kuwait National football team defeated Nepal in a score of 3-1 on Wednesday in the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Championship.

The Championship kicked off today in the Sree Kanteerava Stadium in Bangalore city in south India.

Ibrahim Khalid, Shabaib Al-Khalidi, Muhammed Dahham netted first, second and third goals respectively for Kuwait against Nepal.

Eight teams are participating in the SAFF Championship and Kuwait, Nepal, India and Pakistan are

drawn in Group A, while Lebanon, Maldives, Bhutan and Bangladesh are drawn in Group B.

In the second round of the group, Kuwait will take on Pakistan on Saturday, meanwhile India will face Nepal.

In Group B, Lebanon will take on Bangladesh while Maldives will lock horn with Bhutan in the first round of match scheduled for Thursday.

In the second round of Group B matches, Bhutan will take on Lebanon and Bangladesh will meet Maldives on Sunday.

group with three points.

Group F
Lukaku scored twice in the space of

three minutes to lead Belgium to a 3-0 win in Estonia.

Lukaku broke the deadlock with a



Sweden's Dejan Kulusevski (left), duels for the ball with Austria's David Alaba during the Euro 2024 Group F qualifying soccer match between Austria and Sweden at the Ernst Happel Stadion in Vienna, Austria. (AP)

flick after an uneventful first half-hour and doubled Belgium's lead with another clinical finish for his 75th goal in 108 internationals.

Johan Bakayoko marked his first start for Belgium by adding the third goal in the 90th minute.

Christoph Baumgartner scored twice for Austria to defeat Sweden 2-0 in the other group game.

Austria leads the group with 10 points from three games, three points ahead of Belgium.

Group G
Hungary defeated Lithuania 2-0 and Bulgaria drew with Serbia 1-1.

It left Hungary top of the group on seven points, ahead of Serbia on goal difference.

Perhaps the only positive Germany can draw from its national soccer team's deepening crisis is that the 2024 European Championship is still a year away.

Even if few believe it anymore, Germany coach Hansi Flick insists that is enough time to turn things around before hosting the tournament.

Flick struggled to justify his conviction late Tuesday after the latest disappointing performance - a 2-0 loss to Colombia that saw his team whistled off at halftime and again at the end.

"With the results, what can I say?" Flick said. "The arguments are not on our side."

Some fans even held up signs saying "Flick out," showing who they believe deserves blame for Germany's ever-lengthening slump.

Flick had said before kickoff that it was imperative to get a win against Colombia after the 1-0 loss in Poland and 3-3 draw with Ukraine the previous week.

SOCCER

"We need successful results to take the next steps, otherwise it will be difficult," Flick said.

It's proving difficult. Germany has qualified as host of Euro 2024, meaning it won't face any competitive games before the tournament. It's reliant on friendlies to build up confidence, but the lackluster results are having the opposite effect.

Without naming names, national team sporting director Rudi Völler questioned the quality of the players and suggested some will be dropped before next year's tournament.

"There were some involved today who we won't see again in September," Völler said, referring to Germany's next friendlies against Japan and France. "Everyone got involved, that's not in question. But in the end, you have to say it's definitely a question of quality."

Germany is not short of good players. Jamal Musiala and Florian Grill are two of the best young players in Europe, Antonio Rüdiger plays for Real Madrid, İlkay Gündoğan just helped Manchester City win the Champions League for the first time, and Joshua Kimmich, Leon Goretzka and Leroy Sané are all used to playing at the highest level for Bayern Munich.

But AC Milan defender Malick Thiaw was the only Germany player to emerge with any credit this week after making his debut against Poland and keeping his starting place against Colombia.