



Kuwait commends Oman's response to shooting attack

KUWAIT CITY, July 17, (Agencies): The State of Kuwait praises the measures taken by the competent authorities in the sisterly Sultanate of Oman in the wake of the deadly shooting attack at a mosque in Al-Wadi al-Kabeer area, a statement from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Tuesday.

The State of Kuwait, firmly opposed to all forms of violence, reaffirms support to the Omani authorities in whatever measures they might adopt to protect the security and safety of the Sultanate.

The State of Kuwait expresses sincere condolences to the victims of the tragic incident and wishes those wounded a quick recovery, the statement added.

Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem al-Budaiwi deplored Tuesday, in the strongest terms, al-Wadi al-Kabir neighborhood shooting incident in the Omani capital of Muscat.

He stressed that the GCC member states are fully standing by the Sultanate of Oman, lauding at the same time efforts of the country's security personnel in dealing with the incident.

He expressed his heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims, wishing a rapid recovery to those wounded.

Al-Budaiwi prayed to Allah the Almighty to maintain security and stability in the Sultanate.

Earlier in the day, the Sultanate announced that the shooting led to the killing of a police officer and the three attackers, and the wounding of 28 persons from different nationalities.

The Arab League also condemned the gun incident that took place in the al-Wadi al-Kabeer neighborhood in Oman's capital, Muscat.

In a statement, the Cairo-based League affirmed full solidarity with the Sultanate of Oman in all step and measures taken by the country to maintain its security and stability.

The League expressed its sympathy to the Sultanate, its government and people as well as the families of the victims, wishing a rapid recovery to those wounded.

Several gunmen burst into a Shiite mosque in the Gulf Arab state of Oman and opened fire, killing six people and wounding nearly 30 more, authorities said Tuesday, stunning the peaceful sultanate and making it the country's deadliest such attack in recent memory.

The Islamic State extremist group, through an affiliated news agency, claimed responsibility for the attack in the capital, Muscat, without providing evidence. It marked the first time that the Sunni Muslim extremist group has asserted responsibility for an attack in Oman.

That the Islamic State, which considers Shiites to be heretics, targeted Shiite worshippers on the eve of their holy day is nothing new - the group in January claimed responsibility for an attack in Shiite-majority Iran that killed 84 people.

Most shocking, analysts say, is that the attack happened in Oman, a quiet country on the southeastern edge of the Arabian peninsula with well-trained security forces, a policy of non-intervention and a majority population of Ibadi Muslims, a more liberal offshoot of Islam predating the Sunni-Shiite split.

"It illustrates that ISIS thinks outside of the box and tries to do things that most people think wouldn't be possible, taking advantage of small failures within security architectures of different countries," said Aaron Y. Zelin, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

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Dr. Suhaib Alhamss, the director of the Kuwaiti Hospital in Gaza's southern town of Rafah performs surgery on a patient during his work day on Jan. 11, 2024. (AP)

Gaza doctors living in peril saving lives of Palestinians

BEIRUT, July 17, (AP): Dr. Hassan Hamdan was one of the few trained plastic surgeons in Gaza, a specialist in wound reconstruction. His skills were vitally needed as Israel's military onslaught filled hospitals with patients torn by blasts and shrapnel, so the 65-year-old came out of retirement to help.

Earlier this month, an Israeli airstrike killed him along with his wife, son, two daughters, a daughter-in-law, a son-in-law, six grandchildren and one other person, as his family sheltered in their home in an Israeli-declared "safe zone."

Israel's 9-month-old war with Hamas in Gaza has decimated the territory's medical system. It has not only wreaked physical destruction on hospitals and health facilities, it has devastated Gaza's medical personnel. More than 500 health care workers have been killed since October, according to the U.N.

Among them were many specialists like Hamdan. Dr. Ahmad al-Maqqadma, also a reconstructive surgeon and a former fellow at U.K. Royal College, was found shot to death alongside his mother, a general practitioner, on a street outside Gaza City's Shifa hospital after a two-week raid on the facility by Israeli forces in April.

One of Gaza's most prominent fertility doctors, Omar Fervana, was killed along with his family in a strike on his home in October. The territory's only liver transplant doctor, Hamam Alloh, was killed in a hit on his home in Gaza City.

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Day by Day

FOURTEEN ministers, some of whom lack efficiency, are unlikely to execute the political leadership's vision that meets citizens' demands.

This follows a period of administrative chaos characterized by nepotism, quota-based position distribution, prioritization of personal interests, and widespread corruption, which have weakened the nation over unproductive years.

All this occurred under the guise of the Constitution and laws, which were tailored to serve the narrow interests of certain lawmakers. They have enforced this system and warned against any opposition.

... Tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



KOC tug boats drag the Oriental Phoenix drilling rig to Jazza Strip.

Kuwait Oil Company photo

Kuwait launches hunt for more oil after discovery of new field

Oriental Phoenix drilling rig heads to 'Jazza Strip'

'Realistic plans vital for financial reform'

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: Against the backdrop of the Ministry of Finance's announcement regarding the depletion of the general reserve and its liquidity nearing exhaustion, a chorus of experts and economists has underscored the urgency of accelerating development initiatives, presenting viable alternatives, and optimizing state resources to diversify income sources, reports Al-Rai daily.

Emphasizing the need for expanded public-private partnerships, they advocate for pragmatic solutions within specified timelines.

Former Minister of Trade and Industry, Fahd Al-Sharayan, criticized the current financial landscape for lacking rigorous evaluation and realistic analysis of budgetary figures. He lamented the absence of cohesive plans aligned with budget realities, stating, "There is no plan and no consensus between the numbers presented and the budget's actual needs."

Walid Al-Shariaan, CEO of Mabaneer Company, proposed initial steps to address budgetary imbalances, suggesting a reconsideration of subsidies to target deserving recipients, potentially saving over two billion dinars.

He stressed the imperative of genuine private sector involvement in major development projects, calling for legislative adjustments to facilitate local and foreign investment participation.

Jassem Hassan Zainal, Vice Chairman and CEO of Arzan Financial Group, advocated for a well-defined and actionable plan from the Ministry of Finance, urging expedited project launches through effective public-private collaborations.

He emphasized the importance of adherence to project timelines, suggesting the implementation of a monitoring mechanism to track progress continuously.

Qais Al-Ghanem, a prominent businessman, criticized the Ministry of Finance's reliance on temporary rather than transformative measures to address budget deficits, cautioning against short-term fixes that could burden Kuwaiti consumers in the long run.

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Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya heads the Kuwaiti delegation to the UN Security Council.

KUNA photo

FM calls for 'more just' world order

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya delivered a speech to the UN Security Council session on "multilateral cooperation in the interest of a more just, democratic and sustainable world order" on Tuesday.

He highlighted the need of the international community recommitting itself to the principles and goals of the UN Charter, saying it is the cornerstone of multilateral cooperation in the face of mounting challenges.

The State of Kuwait reiterates the call for reforming the UN Security Council and the entire UN system and backs the efforts aiming to make the UN more effective, impartial, transparent, representative and credible, he stressed.

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Dissatisfied economists propose steps to rectify disparities in budget finance

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: Amid growing dissatisfaction following the general budget presentation by the Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs, Dr. Anwar Al-Mudhaf, economists have proposed a series of measures to address the financial imbalances.

They stressed the need for a clear vision and an action plan with a specific timetable for implementation.

Economists, speaking to Al-Rai daily, expressed their disappointment with the presented figures, citing a lack of vision and alternatives. They emphasized key foundations to address the deficiencies, including creating an enabling environment for youth employment in the private sector and eliminating wasteful spending.

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Deputy Chief of the National Guard, Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, received Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwait Army, Air Vice Marshal Sheikh Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, on Wednesday to mark the issuance of the Amiri decree appointing him as Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army.

National Guard photo

News watch

KUWAIT CITY: Al-Najat charity declared on Wednesday that 22,000 people have benefited from the philanthropic program "absherou belkhair" since kick-off in 2017.

Mohammad Al-Khaldi, the director of aid at the society, said in remarks to KUNA that the segment included citizens, illegal residents and people of various foreign communities, noting the cost of the charities for low-income families reached KD six million (USD 19.6 million).

He indicated that priority was for families in very much need, widows, orphans, limited income people, patients, the divorced and the neglected, adding that the number of families that benefited from the project reached 3,717. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY, July 17, (KUNA): Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) announced Wednesday moving of Oriental Phoenix drilling rig to Jazza Strip in preparation to begin digging new exploratory well (Jazza 1) after success in discovering Noukhatha offshore field.

In a press statement, KOC explained that Jazza Strip, which is located in Kuwait's economic waters, is a promising location as it contains large hydrocarbon resources, indicating that the new exploratory well (Jazza 1) targets the depths of the Cretaceous period.

Jazza Strip is one of the four sectors targeted by the current exploratory phase, during which layers of the Cretaceous and Jurassic periods in Kuwaiti maritime region will be explored.

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19 schools to be refurbished in four 'educational regions'

By Abdul Rahman Al-Shammari
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: As part of the efforts exerted to prepare for the upcoming academic year of 2024/2025 and equip the new schools, the acting Assistant Undersecretary for Financial Affairs Matrouk Al-Mutairi held an inspection tour yesterday morning of the Supply and Warehouses Department in Sabhan. He was accompanied by the Acting Director of the Supply and Warehouses Department Nashmiya Al-Duwaihi.

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Weather

times over coastal areas north-westerly wind, with speeds of 08-40 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

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Kuwait Airport	48	34
Abdaly	49	31
Jahra	49	37
Salmiyah	44	35
Nuwaisib	45	31
Wafra	48	29

Abdullah Al-Salem University welcomes Kuwaiti students, expands admissions

Dr. Al-Obaidi calls for national strategy to enhance medical education

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: Dr. Saud Al-Obaidi, former Dean of the College of Allied Medical Sciences at Kuwait University and member of the Kuwait Society for Quality Education, has emphasized the urgent need for Kuwait to launch a national initiative aimed at attracting local talents to specialize in medical fields, reports Al-Jarida daily.

He highlighted gaps in current educational offerings, particularly in allied medical specialties, which are crucial for bolstering healthcare services across Kuwait.

Dr. Al-Obaidi criticized the Ministry of Higher Education's scholarship plans for often failing to align with market demands, leaving health institutions grappling with shortages in vital technical specialties.

He underscored the rapid advancements in assistant medicine globally and stressed the necessity for Kuwait to modernize its curriculum and job descriptions in healthcare accordingly.



Dr Al-Obaidi

Dr. Al-Obaidi advocated for a comprehensive national strategy to guide students towards pursuing medical specializations that meet the country's needs. He lamented the over saturation of certain medical fields, such as dentistry, due to inconsistent planning, while critical areas remain underserved.

Moreover, he expressed concern over the concentration of medical education solely within Kuwait University's College of Medicine, despite the availability of qualified faculty members and abundant resources.

Dr. Al-Obaidi proposed that private universities be mandated to establish medical colleges, leveraging state support and facilities to meet burgeoning healthcare demands effectively.

Meanwhile, Abdullah Al-Salem University has announced the acceptance of 1,127 Kuwaiti male and female students and children of Kuwaiti women for the academic year 2024-2025, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Dr. Adel Al-Hussainan, acting Chairman of the Founding Board of Directors, approved the names of accepted students following the submission period

for admission applications.

According to a statement, this year's acceptance numbers have doubled compared to the previous year, reflecting increased demand and growth. The university offers programs across three colleges: Engineering and Energy, Computing and Systems, and Business Administration and Entrepreneurship.

The application process continues for non-Kuwaiti applicants until July 18, focusing on those meeting admission criteria specified in the university's guide. Foreign students and non-Kuwaiti residents wishing to study at their own expense can express their interest starting July 22, pending document approval and payment of a registration fee of 15 dinars.

For Kuwaiti students graduating from English schools in August 2024, the university will expedite the admission process upon receipt of original certificates and equivalency verification from the Ministry of Education's Private Education Department within two working days of result announcements.



Photo by Rizk Taufiq

Minister of Health Dr. Al-Awadhi with the Board of Directors of the Physiotherapy Association.

Move to boost physiotherapy profession

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi, engaged in discussions yesterday with the Board of Directors of the Physiotherapy Association to address key issues and demands within the profession.

Hana Al-Khamis, Chairperson of the Association, described the meeting as "fruitful," highlighting productive talks on enhancing and integrating the physiotherapy profession within the national healthcare system.

In the press statement following the meeting, Al-Khamis noted that Minister

Al-Awadhi warmly welcomed the Association's proposals and committed to earnestly considering all demands aimed at advancing the field of physiotherapy.

The discussions focused on developing comprehensive solutions and plans to elevate the profession, while also encouraging greater participation from professionals.

The collaboration aims to bolster the role of physiotherapists in Kuwait's healthcare landscape, reflecting ongoing efforts by Minister Al-Awadhi and the Ministry of Health to strengthen healthcare services and support professionals in the sector.

Shareholders of co-op file complaint

'Emergency plan' to ensure food supply amid regional disruptions

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: In response to the current regional events and circumstances, Al Jarida has learned that the Ministry of Social Affairs, following directives from the Council of Ministers, is developing an emergency plan to secure and provide essential needs for citizens and residents. According to sources from the ministry, this plan involves all necessary preparations and measures by relevant authorities to ensure the availability of basic materials and commodities, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The Ministry of Social Affairs, legally responsible for overseeing the operations, finances, and purchasing policies of cooperative societies – key suppliers of food and commodities in the country – aims to address any potential disruptions in the supply chain. This initiative reflects the ministry's awareness, and that of other government agencies, of the current sensitive situation that could threaten food security. The focus is particularly on securing essential commodities and food supplies.

Key elements of the ministry's plan include the formation of an emergency team dedicated to monitoring the flow of food and commodities. This team will review existing emergency plans from various government agencies to integrate best practices. Additionally, the plan involves con-

sulting experts in cooperative work, particularly those with significant experience during past crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The comprehensive strategy covers all aspects necessary to maintain a stable food supply.

Separately, shareholders of a cooperative society in the Hawalli Governorate have filed a complaint to Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs. This follows the ministry's decision to dismiss certain board members despite an investigation report indicating suspected violations.

The investigation committee's report highlighted issues such as the failure to obtain approval for checks from financial and administrative auditors, non-compliance with cooperative purchasing and financing policies, and the signing of contracts that violate cooperative work regulations. Shareholders expressed their surprise that these members continue to manage the society's funds despite being referred to court, with a session scheduled this month to address the charges. They have urged Minister Al-Huwailah to suspend these members' administrative powers until the case is resolved, to protect the society's funds and reputation.

Total number hits 8,500 till date

CSC to nominate 1,600 citizens for employment on Thursday: official

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: Head of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) Dr. Esam Al-Rubaian announced the nomination of 1,600 citizens for employment on Thursday, which brings the number of candidates nominated for employment this month to 8,500 so far. More nominations are expected later this month. It is the first time in the history of the central employment system that such a number is being nominated within a single month, reports Al-Anba daily.

He explained that the batch of 1,600 candidates will include those of various specializations, including graduates of education, political science, and others.

All registration phases up to the 86th phase have been included in the nominations. Remaining vacancies are mainly in stagnant engineering fields like industrial,

chemical, and petroleum, with some bachelor's and diploma holders opting to wait for new opportunities after declining the current offers.

In response to a question about the expected number of engineers nominated in the chemical, industrial, and petroleum specializations out of the 1,210 waiting engineers, Al-Rubaian replied, "This depends on the ministries' estimated needs that are sent to CSC within ten days after receiving the Ministry of Health's demands."

He concluded his statement by saying the demands sent by CSC to the ministries include engineers in the specializations of environmental safety, adding that the nominations of engineers will coincide with the nominations of assistant engineers who are diploma-holders.

Realty experts call for overhaul of broker regulations amid disputes

Bou Abbas calls for adoption of electronic contracts

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: Despite repeated attempts to resolve ongoing disputes between real estate brokers regarding regulating the work of brokers and protecting the profession from intruders, experts and real estate brokers confirmed that the sector continues to suffer in light of the absence of control over home licenses and the failure to activate and review the laws and regulations of the work of real estate brokers and landlords' agents.

They stressed the importance of overcoming obstacles, easing procedures for licensing real estate brokers and entering transactions, activating electronic contracts for rents and for buying and selling State property (usufruct), and making it mandatory for real estate brokers to obtain a broker identification card to complete buying and selling operations.

Real estate expert Suleiman Al-Dulajian said that disputes between real estate brokers over commissions do not end, calling on the Real Estate Brokers Union to establish a Dispute Resolution Committee and review the laws of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry related to real estate brokers, as the matter has become urgent and necessary for the ease of granting real estate broker licenses.

He stressed the importance of raising the level of trading in the real estate market by starting automated trading, highlighting its pivotal role in solving many problems in this field.

General Manager of Joun Real Estate Company Ahmed Bou Abbas agreed with Al-Dulajian on the importance of developing and activating the automated system, especially with regard to books for monitoring and recording purchase and sale transactions. He called for the adoption of electronic contracts and their application to be mandatory in order to protect the rights of all parties, including the mediator.

In a statement to the newspaper, Bou Abbas emphasized the need to activate electronic rental contracts to protect the landlord and tenant; as well as contracts for the sale and purchase of State properties (usufruct rights) like industrial plots, chalets and others, in coordination with the Ministry of Finance, represented by the Public Authority for Industry (PAI).

He noted as well the importance of electronic contracts for detecting real estate violations and addressing legal impediments to the transfer of real estate. He underscored the need to find a certain general formula for these contracts, as offices develop different formulas, some of which are not compatible with the usufruct right. He added the State must adopt a formula for usufruct contracts within a carefully devised mechanism.

He warned against intruders in the profession who practice without a license or oversight from the relevant authorities like the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Ministry of Justice.

He spotlighted the importance of activating the real estate broker identification card system and imposing penalties on those who do not hold such identification card. He said the Ministry of Justice should not accept any sale or purchase transaction by those who do not hold the real estate broker identification card and commercial license, as buying and selling operations must take place through the broker.

He also stressed the need to stop the issuance of home licenses that contradict the work of the regulatory



KUNA photo

Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors of the KRCS Anwar Al-Hasawi receiving the Representative of the World Food Program to the Gulf Cooperation Council Abdul Majeed Yahya.

WFP chief for GCC affirms Kuwait's humanitarian role

The World Food Programme (WFP) Representative to the GCC Abdel-Majeed Yahya confirmed on Wednesday Kuwait's pioneering role in the field of humanitarian work with its national, regional and global dimensions.

Yahya said in a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) after his meeting with the Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), Anwar Al-Hasawi that Kuwait is making massive efforts in the areas of supporting the WFP's activities.

Kuwait's major role in this field is attested by various individuals, bodies and organizations, he said, praising the influential role of humanitarian contributions and the efforts of the KRCS at all international levels, especially those affected by natural or man-made disasters.

For his part, Al-Hasawi stressed in a similar statement to KUNA the importance of strengthening cooperation and relations with the WFP.

He stated that the relationship establishes a framework to determine the necessary mechanisms to advance the process of bilateral work with the WFP in a step towards serving humanity in many countries and regions that need assistance.

During the meeting, both sides discussed joint work in the future and how to coordinate humanitarian projects for the benefit of local communities in need, especially in the Gaza Strip and countries affected by natural or man-made disasters.

He pointed out that KRCS seeks to expand and strengthen humanitarian cooperation and partnership with regional and international bodies and organizations in order to achieve its goals. (KUNA)

Other Voices

Wealth of nations ... and their helplessness

By Ahmed alsarraf

Two days ago, I wrote an article about the Shiites of Kuwait, which included the following text:

Have the wise Shiite sect members ever wondered: Why do we often find these manifestations, with all their rituals, in the poorest and least educated societies?

The sentence angered some people, including relatives and friends who respect them, and it also caught the attention of tweeters, each of whom had his own reasons and arguments regarding the inaccuracy of what I mentioned!

To all those who objected to my respect, but they did not pay attention to the word "usually," which negates generalization, meaning that these religious rituals may exist in any society, regardless of its wealth, poverty, or degree of education.

Education and wealth are relative matters that do not mean much "most of the time." Possessing wealth or a lot of money, as a result of a valid inheritance, a suspicious deal, an immoral job, or even an honest and serious commercial or industrial job, does not automatically lead the owner of the wealth to become a logical, understanding, cultured, or learned person. Rather, he remains as he is, whether he is educated, ignorant, intelligent, or stupid.

In countries like India, Thailand, and others, we find dozens of physicists, mathematicians, and economists listening to or seeking the blessings of someone who is less knowledgeable and intelligent than them.

But his main advantage, in their view, is that his touch is blessed, his intercession is strong, and his company is mercy, even if his intermediary is a cow. They are happy with what they believe, and this is their human right.



alsarraf

We also find in Kuwait a religious man who is the most famous and richest, followed by millions, and his appearance in any public place causes great confusion and chaos, despite the fact that he said in one of his sermons, on the tongue of one of the great muftis, that he used to distance himself from the people, and sit under a column, and the "jinn" would come to him and ask him questions, and he would answer their questions!

Despite his followers hearing what he said, the degree of their "understanding" did not repel them from him or from his previous and subsequent strange narrations and fatwas!

We say again that the poorest and least educated do not necessarily mean the least money or the least knowledge.

Kuwait, and other sister countries, are full of wealth of all kinds, and have a great ability to create money, and can borrow on the best terms from global markets.

Despite all this, they are classified by all rating agencies, banks and international bodies as third world countries, and their terrible "monetary" wealth did not intercede for them to be removed from that low classification, as wealth does not make an individual a rational, cultured or even educated person.

If we look at countries such as Denmark, Singapore or Finland, which do not have the monetary wealth that Kuwait has, and do not have any natural resources, we find that they are, despite this, classified as the best countries in the world, economically, educationally and in terms of stability.

Their people also occupy the top positions in happiness scales, and their per capita income is twice that of a Kuwaiti citizen, as it is \$55,000 per person in Finland, \$70,000 for a Dane, \$84 for a Singaporean, and \$41,000 for a Kuwaiti only. The source of these figures is the "World Bank"!

□ □ □

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authorities like the Ministry of Commerce (Money Laundering Department). He wondered how to monitor the work of home real estate brokerage practitioners, indicating the real estate broker must have a legal entity and an official headquarters to monitor their performance.

"We call on the ministries of Justice and Finance to adopt a register for the selling prices of various

types of real estate; mentioning the locations, full specifications and circumstances of selling the property. This will serve as the main reference for real estate traders, brokers and surveyors. Obstacles must be removed and procedures should be eased for licensing real estate brokers and entering transactions. They should focus on the real estate sector, considering its pivotal role in

moving the wheels of development forward and revitalizing the economy," he added.

He also touched on the problem of landlords' agents, clarifying these agents have no right to receive commission or brokerage fees. He asserted that only the license and identification card holder has the right to receive commission or brokerage fees.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Don't send them tents, bring them to their mothers' arms'

"MY attention was drawn to a joint statement from numerous public benefit associations appealing to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmed Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah. They requested permission for Gaza teachers, both male and female, and other Palestinians in Kuwait to bring their children, given the inhumane and harsh conditions caused by the ongoing Zionist war of extermination in Gaza," columnist **Iqbal Al-Ahmad**, wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"A brief search led me to Article No. 15 among the general terms and conditions for Palestinians applying for teaching positions in Kuwait for the 2023-2024 academic year.

"This clause, published in 2022 before the Ministry of Education contracted 400 Palestinian teachers across various specializations, states that 'teachers may bring their wives and children after they start work and at their own expense'.

"Here, I will not discuss their significant specializations, extensive experience, or low salaries. Instead, I will focus on the human aspect, particularly their children left behind in Gaza. These teachers have left their children behind, either with close relatives or on their own, in pursuit of a livelihood to support their difficult lives in Gaza.

"Since the events in Gaza began, these teachers have been enduring severe psychological and emotional distress as they witness the tragic scenes of humanity dying and burning.

"The scenes of death, bombing, displacement, homelessness, poverty, loss, and hunger are heartbreaking, especially when children are killed, buried under rubble, or displaced and suffering from extreme poverty and hunger.

"A little girl collects paper and wood to cook for her younger siblings. Another sells what she gathers from the garbage, hoping to earn a little money to buy food for herself and her siblings. A child looks at the camera with eyes full of brokenness, fear, and need, hiding tears of orphanhood, humiliation, and fear, and wishing for death to join the children who went before him. Another walks barefoot, lost, not knowing where to go or whom to turn to.

"These cruel scenes and images are hard to avoid, yet we can only shed tears and search for ways to offer help and assistance. Supporting the oppressed in Gaza is a duty for all of us, especially for the children whose videos and photos depict the tragedies their families endure from a land ravaged by war and displacement.

"I am aware of ongoing appeals since the beginning of the events in Gaza to save the children, particularly the children of these teachers, and reunite them with their families in Kuwait.

"The number of these children is dwindling day by day as their return to their families is delayed, either because they were crushed under rubble, shrouded in worn-out cloths or nylon bags, transferred from one bombed hospital to another, or still alive but miserable and lost, collecting leaves and wood to cook their meager food or selling dry bread crumbs to survive another miserable day.

"These scenes provoke those of us who live far from them. We can only sigh and pray for divine intervention, feeling powerless. However, there is power and strength in the hands of the Ministry of Education and those with decision-making authority in this humanitarian tragedy. It is up to you to honor the conditions signed by these mothers and fathers.

"Gazan mothers came to Kuwait with official contracts allowing them to bring their children 'to join the family' after starting work at their own expense. Today, they are unable to do so. Why?

"I, and everyone with a sense of humanity, hope for a reconsideration of the situation of these teachers due to the brutal genocide practiced by the Zionists in Gaza against their children.

"Many parties have expressed readiness to bear the responsibility and financial burdens for the education and livelihood of these children, including private sector entities, public benefit associations, and prominent Kuwaiti and Palestinian figures.

"They are waiting for the children to be rescued and reunited with their mothers before the number of dead and victims among Gaza's children increases.

"We send tents to shelter the children of Gaza, while their mothers' arms await them in Kuwait."

Also:

"A hobby is a regular activity or interest in any activity that can be practiced mostly during leisure time for pleasure and relaxation. A hobby leads to the acquisition of great skills and knowledge, and it is not intended to achieve reward, but rather to have fun and spend a nice time," columnist **Dr. Hind Al-Shoumer**, wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"Hobbies are varied, including reading, writing, swimming, traveling, taking care of animals, playing some games such as billiards, bowling, boxing, chess, computer games, music, playing musical instruments, dancing, solving puzzles, photography, drawing, volunteer work, cooking, collecting things such as stamps or coins, sewing, and handicrafts.

"Reading expands knowledge and communication skills and improves vocabulary skills. Writing highlights creativity, attention to detail, and the ability to express ideas. Physical activity, such as swimming, strengthens

muscles and prevents diseases. Music eliminates stress and anxiety and keeps sadness away from people. Travel expands perceptions. It adds to a person's culture, especially when learning about the different cultures in the countries he travels to.

"A hobby helps improve physical and mental health and general health, increases social relationships, enables one to meet new people, form friendships, build self-confidence, develop and improve skills, have fun, rest and relax, and relieve stress.

"The hobby develops, especially when there is support from the family and the availability of a suitable place, money and tools. For example, a football player needs training lessons at intervals to become a talented player skilled in his hobby, and a painter needs drawing tools to be creative in it.

"Everyone who has a hobby needs support to develop this hobby that he practices. And he gets creative with it. Anyone who doesn't have a hobby must look for a hobby that he enjoys. For example, someone who wants to practice physical activity can look for a sports club close to home so that he can start practicing the activity he desires.

"Anyone who wants to walk must practice this sport daily to get used to it. Anyone who wants to draw or music must participate in some private lessons to learn that.

"Practicing hobbies is very important for maintaining mental health and renewing energy, and the owner must develop them even in adulthood. These interests may be creative, athletic, or academic, and a person can do them alone or with a group.

"Research has shown that people who practice hobbies are less likely to suffer from stress, bad mood, and depression, as hobbies help to devote special time to oneself, break the routine, develop creative energy, renew activity, and improve the psychological state.

"I call on everyone who does not have a hobby to look for any activity that is suitable for them and their interests so that they do not suffer from diseases and depression, and to live a life free of stress and anxiety."

"Communication among peoples and the potential for reconciliation represents a valuable and impactful model that runs alongside official diplomacy, facilitating positive interactions between nations. This approach is recognized by politicians and stakeholders for its significance and ability to yield favorable outcomes, offering a space for engagement beyond official constraints. The best example for this occurred during the Iraqi invasion, when governments had mobilized popular delegations worldwide to garner both public and governmental support for Kuwait's liberation, effectively articulating the justifications behind their cause," columnist **Major General M. Faisal Al-Jazzaf** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"This role was parallel to the work of the government, and the two roles complemented each other in managing the crisis. They played a significant role in revealing truths that many supporters of Saddam Hussein and his invasion of Kuwait were unaware of. This exemplifies one aspect of soft power in political terms, utilized by many countries and influential or well-known figures with influence within their respective societies.

"We also used this method in the prisoner issue to put pressure on the Iraqi regime at the time.

"Therefore, we hope to activate friendship committees in the next stage to fulfill this crucial role in supporting activists in this field, or via civil society organizations through their extensive networks with counterparts worldwide.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will serve as the primary pillar in supporting and guiding these initiatives to ensure effective communication. This endeavor is intended to benefit Kuwait and uphold its historical reputation among nations globally. It aims to communicate with people to enhance Kuwait's standing and reputation, as it is well-known in all humanitarian, political, and charitable spheres.

"I was recently on a visit to Moscow at the invitation of the Veterans Association, in my capacity as Secretary-General of the World Federation of Veterans. This association is over a hundred years old and is considered one of the most important institutions in Russia. It receives great attention from the Russian presidency.

"I was surprised when the association stated that Kuwait has a great and dear status among the Russian leadership and people, as Kuwait is the first country to recognize the Soviet Union in the 1960s, and they aspire to develop people-to-people relations.

"We hope that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will support this path by encouraging joint initiatives and visits, given Kuwait's distinguished position among countries.

"Second stop is the Sulaibikhat Roundabout, which is also called 'United Nations Roundabout' after its liberation in appreciation of the United Nations' role in liberating Kuwait.

"Anyone who passes through the roundabout witnesses a depressing and neglected view, thus making it not worthy of its name, as it is an important roundabout that connects several roads.

"We ask God to protect Kuwait and its people from all harm under the leadership of His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince (May God protect them).

"May God have mercy on our righteous martyrs."

— **Compiled by PFX Fernandes and Mahmoud Ateyeh**



PM while receiving the minister of defense and the newly-appointed deputy chief of staff of Kuwait's Army.

Defense Minister presents to PM Army's new Deputy Chief of Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 17, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received, at Bayan Palace on Wednesday, First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef

Saud Al-Sabah.

The minister of defense presented, during the session, the newly appointed Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwait Army, Air Vice Marshal Sheikh Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Bedoun accused of cheating citizen of KD 100,000 in car trading project

Judge extends detention of 27 in KD 120m laundering case

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud, Munif Naif**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: For the third time in a row, the detention renewal judge ordered to extend for 15 more days the detention of 27 defendants, including citizens, Arabs and Asians, who are accused of laundering more than KD 120 million.

The prosecution had charged them with money laundering in a case filed by the Financial Investigation Unit and State Security. They were charged with forming a network through which they were able to launder money in excess of KD 120 million within a short period of time, transfer it illegally, and employ it in local banking systems for the purpose of concealing it and hiding its source.

Young man held with drugs: A young man was arrested in Mubarak Al-Kabeer in possession of drugs.

According to a security source, security officers patrolling the area suspected a young man and searched him to find some narcotic substances.

He was arrested and referred with the seized drugs to the Drug Control General Department for necessary legal action.

No casualties in fire incident: Fire broke out in a farm in Abdali without causing any casualties.

According to security sources, when the Control Room of Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) received information about the fire incident, firefighters rushed to the location and immediately extinguished the fire. The fire resulted in only material damage and no casualties.

The sources affirmed that the quick arrival of firefighters to the site prevented the fire from spreading throughout the farm.

Bedoun swindles citizen: A Kuwaiti citizen has filed a complaint accusing an unidentified bedoun of defrauding him in a car trading project, involving a sum of 100,000 dinars, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

He has provided evidence showing that the defendant had received two payments.

According to a security source, the citizen, born in 1986, stated that he transferred 81,500 dinars to the defendant via bank transfer on Oct 3, 2022 and handed over 18,500 dinars in cash at his home on Sept 15, 2022. The Kuwaiti claimed that the funds were intended for buying and selling cars but later discovered it was a fraudulent scheme.

Domestic worker commits suicide: Tuesday morning, an unidentified domestic worker reportedly committed suicide by hanging in her sponsor's home in Al-Adan, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The Ministry of Interior received a report of the worker's death, and upon investigation, it was discovered that she had hanged herself inside her room, using a rope tied from the ceiling to her neck.

The daily added, after the incident was reported to the concerned authority, the public prosecutor and director of the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate rushed to the scene.

In a separate incident, a child under 10 years old was taken to Al-Sabah Hospital and placed in the recovery room after he reported fell in the swimming pool in the Sulaibikhat area.

The pool supervisor was detained pending further investigation into the child's condition.

Dr. Boushehri meets board

Fishermen's union optimistic about resolving thorny issues

By **Abdul Nasser Al-Islami**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 16: The Kuwaiti Fishermen's Union expressed optimism regarding the resolution of fishermen's 'thorny' issues in the near future, within the limits of available resources and applicable laws.

The union noted that Dr. Mahmood Boushehri, Minister of Electricity and Water and responsible official for the Public Authority for Agriculture, met with the Union's Board of Directors, listened to the demands of fishermen and understood their concerns.

In a statement today, the union extended gratitude to Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, Minister of Interior, and the Director General of the Coast Guard for their significant efforts.

The union highlighted receiving Coast Guard approval to fish in territorial waters at the onset of the upcoming shrimp fishing season, following entry permissions obtained through the Ministry of Interior platform.

Additionally, the union appealed to the Ministry of Finance to consider their requests, particularly concerning the reinstatement of previous diesel allocations, as current levels have forced fishing boats to cease operations for approximately half a month. They also called for a reassessment of fish support policies.

Customs introduces state-of-the-art tech at the Shuwaikh Port

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: The General Administration of Customs has announced the launch of a new device for inspecting pallets, now integrated into the current work system at Shuwaikh Port and Land Customs departments, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Previously, these devices were used at the Doha Port and the Air Customs Administration. In a statement, the administration revealed that the new device, produced by Smiths Detection, a leading company in this field, represents the latest advancements in inspection technology.

The device boasts high accuracy to deter smugglers and protect the country from customs smuggling threats.

The administration emphasized that the introduction of these advanced devices is part of its ongoing efforts to streamline customs procedures and incorporate the latest security technologies, aligning with both local and international developments.

8 violating properties cited

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: The Public Relations Department at Kuwait Municipality has launched an inspection campaign targeting investment and commercial residential buildings to check the basements and ensure strict compliance with the municipal regulations, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

According to the department, the supervisory team at the Engineering Audit and Follow-Up Department in the Capital Governorate branch of the Municipality carried out the third field inspection tour in Sharq and Bneid Al-Gar to take the necessary measures regarding encroachments and other violations.



Marine vessels stationed at the boat harbour.

Mol photo

Violators to face legal actions

Coast Guard launches new 'numbering' system for marine vessels identification

KUWAIT CITY, July 17, (KUNA): The Ministry of Interior announced Tuesday, that the General Administration of Coast Guard, represented by the Maritime Transport Department, has updated the official numbering system for marine vessels. Previously, the system included both Arabic numbers and letters; it will now consist solely of numbers.

According to a statement by the General Department of Security Relations and Media, this update aligns with the security institution's strategy to facilitate and develop services provided to the public.

The ministry explained that the new system aids in the organization and classification of marine vessels according to their activity type and license. The system now includes an administrative number followed by the vessel number, and will be applied to new registrations and ownership book renewals.

The update provides the following classifications for the official number of marine vessels:

Fishing (Administrative number: 10); Recreation (Administrative number: 20); Trips (Administrative number: 30); Jet Skis (Administrative number: 40); Government (Administrative number: 50); Commercial (Administrative number: 60); Diving (Administrative number: 70); Marine Works (Administrative number: 80)

For example, the marine plot number 12345 (the unique marine plot number) will now be part of the ownership register, consisting of the administrative number and the marine plot number.

The ministry urges all marine vessel owners to comply with the new law, noting that any violations regarding the use or licensing of marine vessels will result in necessary legal actions.



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Minister Al-Yahya holds crucial talks on regional challenges at UN Forum

Kuwait's FM engages in high-level diplomatic dialogue



Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya meets with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

NEW YORK, July 17, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Al-Yahya, actively engaged in diplomatic discussions during the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development at the UN General Assembly in New York this week. On Tuesday, he met with several counterparts, including Iran's Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ali Bagheri Kani, where they emphasized friendly relations and exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual concern.

Similarly, Minister Al-Yahya held talks with Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, addressing a range of topics from the Ukraine crisis to developments in the Middle East and the humanitarian situation in Gaza. The discussions underscored the ongoing dialogue between Kuwait and Russia on critical international matters.

Additionally, Al-Yahya met with Saudi Arabia's Minister of Economy and Planning, Faisal bin Al-Ibrahim, focusing on strengthening economic cooperation and developmental initiatives. This meeting highlighted the robust ties between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in vital sectors.

Furthermore, Minister Al-Yahya conferred with Lebanon's Foreign Minister, Abdullah Bou-Habib, discussing bilateral relations and current developments in Lebanon, alongside the agenda of the ongoing forum.



Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya and Supervisor of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr. Ali Bagheri Kani.

The High-level Political Forum, organized under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), serves as a platform for global leaders to address sustainable development challenges. The forum, running from July 15 to 17, provided an essential backdrop for these diplomatic exchanges, reinforcing Kuwait's commitment to international cooperation and sustainable development efforts.



Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya meets with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of the Lebanese Republic, Dr. Abdullah Bou-Habib.



Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya with Saudi Minister of Economy Faisal bin Al-Ibrahim.

Education Ministry to fill 300 vacant supervisory positions

Teachers Association urges guideline adherence

By Abdul Rahman Al-Shimmari
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: In response to reports published by Al-Seyassah on the vacancy of approximately 300 leadership and supervisory positions within the Ministry of Education, the Ministry has announced its intention to fill several key roles.

These positions include supervisors and directors for educational regions, educational affairs, public services, human resources, legal research, grievances, and social and psychological services. Eligible employees are encouraged to apply via the Ministry's website.

Sources informed "Al-Seyassah" that interview committees

will be formed to address these vacancies, particularly in educational roles, which are crucial for the stability and success of the upcoming academic year across all three educational stages.

Once these committees are established, applications will be reviewed, and interviews will be conducted, followed by the announcement of results and the issuance of secondment decisions pending Civil Service Commission approval.

The Ministry aims to fill as many vacancies as possible before the new school year begins, with decisions on transfers and external secondments of teaching staff expected by early August.

The Teachers Association highlighted the significant leadership vacuum due to retirements and resignations, noting that over 241 positions remain unfilled. The association praised the Ministry's efforts and Minister Dr. Adel Al-Adwani's commitment to addressing this longstanding issue, calling the initiative a "positive step" toward resolving the leadership shortfall.

The Teachers Association has commended the Ministry of Education's initiative to fill supervisory positions amidst significant vacancies but emphasizes the need for nominations and selections to adhere strictly to approved controls, laws, educational career sequences, and leadership experience levels.

The association cited CSC Resolution No. 9 of 2017, which mandates specific experience requirements for educational leadership roles.

Expressing concern over recent decisions to retire or exclude several leaders, the association pointed out various negative repercussions, including confusion within the ministry and instability in leadership as the new academic year approaches.

The association provided statistics detailing the extent of vacant leadership positions, including undersecretaries, assistant agents, district managers, general supervisors, and educational affairs managers, among others.

Highlighting discrepancies in referral decisions, the association noted that some leaders with shorter tenures were retired or excluded compared to others still in service, raising questions about consistency in criteria application.

In conclusion, the Teachers Association stressed the importance of addressing these issues promptly to ensure effective leadership and operational stability within the Ministry of Education.

PACI showcases GIS at international event

KUWAIT CITY, July 17, (KUNA): The General Authority for Civil Information (PACI) presented its projects related to geographic information systems during the opening presentation of the largest global conference for users of geographic information systems, held in San Diego, the US.

In a statement on Tuesday, the Authority's Acting Director General, Mansour Al-Methen, said that the Authority was chosen for this inaugural presentation after being classified among the best four entities out of more than 350,000 that use geographic information systems worldwide.

Al-Methen pointed to the distinguished experience of the Authority in the field of geographic information systems, especially pioneering projects such as (Kuwait Finder), (Artificial Intelligence Project), (High-resolution imaging project using laser technology), and (Drone photography).

JULY

Room Promotion

Revitalization plans

Council member seeks 'clarity' from nat'l fund

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: Municipal Council member Walid Al-Dagher has raised concerns about neglected buildings in the Al-Ardiya Al-Harfiyya area, directing a query to the executive branch regarding the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises Development's plans for utilizing these properties, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Al-Dagher's inquiry, submitted to address the vision or studies conducted by the National Fund in collaboration with the Public Authority for Industry, stems from a contractual agreement dating back to April 1, 2018.

This agreement stipulates that the National Fund oversees the development of these properties, prompting Al-Dagher to seek clarity on the strategic plans, perceptions, and activities proposed for revitalizing these neglected areas.



Municipal Council member Walid Al-Dagher.

Move aims to bolster service standards

MoH initiates staff rotation across facilities

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: The Ministry of Health recently announced a strategic administrative decision, confirmed by Undersecretary Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, to rotate 485 administrative staff members across primary health care centers, hospitals, health districts, and specialized centers.

This initiative aims to ensure equitable distribution of human resources, foster equal opportunities among employees, and elevate the quality and standard of healthcare services provided nationwide.

This decision follows a thorough assessment of the operational needs of health facilities and regions, conducted by the ministry's human resources redistribution team.

By strategically redistributing staff, the ministry anticipates improved operational efficiency and enhanced utilization of existing human competencies, thereby maximizing the overall benefit to the healthcare system.

The ministry has called upon all employees to actively participate and collaborate in achieving the strategic goals outlined in this initiative, underscoring its commitment to optimizing healthcare delivery and ensuring equitable service provision across all health sectors.



Al-Mutairi

MEW assesses readiness of Al-Mutlaa fresh water station

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: A team from the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy recently conducted an inspection of the Al-Mutlaa fresh water filling station to assess its readiness. The station plays a crucial role in providing water to residents of Al-Mutlaa residential city, which is set to open soon, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During the inspection, the ministry team emphasized the importance of ensuring that the station is fully prepared to receive water tanks promptly.

The ministry team underscored the need for efficient operations to meet the water supply demands of the upcoming residential city.

The inspection and preparations signify the ministry's commitment to ensuring adequate water supply infrastructure for new residential developments, contributing to the welfare and comfort of future residents in Al-Mutlaa.



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Move will improve public safety and environmental protection measures

Kuwait plans sand auctions to strengthen national treasury

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: The Ministry of Public Works has obtained approval from the relevant authorities to launch two auctions for specialized companies to use the sand in the northern and southern parts of the country, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources said the ministry will soon announce the launching of these auctions, as it is currently preparing a draft ministerial decision for the launch; affirming the two auctions will bring new revenues for

the ministry.

Sources disclosed that the ministry aims to encourage construction companies to use the sand in accordance with its strategy to boost the local economy, which reflects its commitment to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources.

Sources cited the positive aspects of the two auctions in terms of supporting the national economy. They stated that the proceeds of the two auctions are expected to fortify the

State treasury; and enhance its capability to invest in vital infrastructure projects, achieve sustainable development and revitalize local industries.

They stressed this is an opportunity for local companies to use sand resources in multiple industries, such as the glass industry and construction, to make them more competitive at the regional and international levels.

Sources added this move will improve public safety and environment

Ministry conducts asphalt quality inspections

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: The Ministry of Public Works announced the withdrawal of 36 samples from asphalt laying sites that are being carried out during the current period on some roads for examination, and the withdrawal

of 10 samples from asphalt factories to reveal their specifications, during last June, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The Ministry said that 346 visits were made to factories, and 91 inspections were completed.

protection measures, indicating that the removal of sand from roads will greatly contribute to ongoing efforts to address the traffic issue, guarantee

environmental safety and reduce accidents caused by the accumulation of sand on the roads.

Sources reiterated that the two

auctions are in line with ministry's vision on boosting the local economy and protecting the environment.

Ahmadi Governor meets with city cooperative society leader

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad recently received in his office at the Ahmadi Governorate head office Chairman of Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City Cooperative Society Khaled Al-Qahtani and members of the Board of Directors Mohammad Khashman Al-Ajmi and Mufreh Zuwayr Al-Subaie, reports Al-

Anba daily.

During the meeting, the governor reviewed the most important needs of those residing in the city. The two sides also discussed ways to expedite the provision of these needs and to overcome obstacles in order to complete the implementation as soon as possible in coordination with the concerned authorities.

'Realistic plans

Continued from Page 1

Sabah Al-Jalawi, Chairman of the Society of Accountants and Auditors, highlighted unclear handling of deficit and subsidy figures by the Ministry of Finance, stressing the necessity of attracting international companies to Kuwait's market through incentivization and supportive legislative frameworks.

These voices collectively underscore a pressing call for strategic reforms and effective partnerships to navigate Kuwait's fiscal challenges and spur sustainable economic growth.

FM calls

Continued from Page 1

Al-Yahya drew attention to the formidable challenges facing the international community, including food insecurity, shortage of energy, climate change, poverty and conflicts which pose threats to international peace and security.

He underscored the roles of major countries in creating fairer and more balanced partnerships with developing countries through technology transfer and development assistance in keeping with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030 Agenda. (KUNA)

See Also Page 4

Kuwait commends

Continued from Page 1

There is no known branch of the Islamic State in Oman, a country that tends to stay out of the sectarian disputes roiling the wider region. But Islamic extremists, including branches of the Islamic State and al-Qaida, have a foothold in neighboring war-torn Yemen.

The Royal Oman Police said the shooting killed five worshippers in the mosque in Muscat's Wadi Kabir neighborhood and one police officer. Omani authorities did not specify the number of gunmen or provide their nationalities but said security forces had killed three attackers.

At least 28 people were wounded in the shooting, Omani police added, among them officers and medics. The mosque was packed with worshippers holding special prayers on the eve of the Shiite mourning festival of Ashura, which marks the 7th century martyrdom of the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) grandson, Hussein (may Allah be pleased with him), at Karbala in modern-day Iraq.

Pakistan identified four of the dead as its citizens.

Analysts described the rare shooting as the latest example that the Islamic State, after losing its territory in Iraq and Syria some five years ago, is seeking to strike farther afield.

"It's part of their reorganization from being a group with most of its actions in Iraq and Syria to using their resources in a global network," Zelin said, citing the deadly attack in March on a Moscow concert hall and other bombings claimed by the group's regional affiliate, Islamic State Khorasan, across Afghanistan and Pakistan. "It makes them more resilient in some ways."

The U.S. Embassy in Muscat issued a security alert, warning citizens to "stay vigilant."

Like other sheikhdoms in the Arabian Gulf, Oman retains tight controls on traditional media. Its state news agencies on Tuesday praised authorities' success in containing the chaos but offered scant information about the state of investigations or the attack itself.

In an interview with the Times of Oman, an English-language daily, an unidentified Pakistani worshipper at the mosque described scenes of fear and mayhem and reported that gunfire - both the attack and subsequent shootout with Omani police - lasted some hour and a half.

Statements of condolence and outrage came from around the region, where Oman plays a sensitive role.

The sultanate maintains friendly relations both with Saudi Arabia, the heartland of traditionalist Sunni Islam, and its regional rival, the Shiite power Iran. The Iranian Foreign Ministry said it stood "in solidarity with Oman against such attempts to sow discord."

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said he was "deeply saddened" by the shooting and offered Pakistan's help in the investigation.

19 schools

Continued from Page 1

In a press statement issued during the tour, Al-Mutairi affirmed the keenness of the Ministry of Education to provide all the necessary requirements in preparation for the new academic year.

He revealed that approximately 19 schools in four educational zones are being furnished, including eight schools in Jahra Educational Zone, four in Ahmadi Educational Zone, three in Farwaniya Educational Zone and four in Capital Educational Zone.

In April, which is the beginning of the fiscal year, the ministry developed an approved plan to equip schools. The distribution of school furniture resumed last Sunday. The requirements for all educational facilities will also be provided within the coming days, including office furniture for the members of the educational and administrative staff, as well as for students and others.

Al-Mutairi indicated that these schools would be named and their budgets determined with the cooperation of the educational zones, adding that liaison officers would be nominated to receive school furniture from the Department of Supplies and Stores, with all preparations being completed within the next two weeks.

He expressed his appreciation and gratitude to all employees of the Supply and Warehouse Department and various other sectors of the Ministry of Education for their combined efforts and cooperation in carrying out the necessary preparations to receive students and teachers for the next academic year.

Kuwait launches

Continued from Page 1

During the current phase, six exploratory wells will be drilled, and based on the promising results of the current phase, the company will conduct a three-dimensional seismic survey of the various marine sectors in Kuwaiti waters in order to obtain more accurate data, so that a better more comprehensive picture is provided prior to commencement of the second phase.

The company is currently developing a plan for the Noukhatha offshore field so that it enters production as quickly as possible and in order to benefit from its huge hydrocarbon resources, read the statement.

This will contribute to strengthening the country's development plan and stimulating economic growth through the added value prompted by addition of maritime region to economic plans, as well as providing new job opportunities for Kuwaiti youth.

Exploration of Noukhatha offshore field is a cornerstone to achieving KOC's 2040 strategy, indicated the statement, as it reflects the company's commitment to discovering hydrocarbon resources hidden in Kuwaiti waters.

This contributes to endorsing the country's position among the largest producers and holders of proven hydrocarbon resources in the world.

These discoveries will be an opportunity to open new markets for exportation and bolstering trade relations with oil importing countries.

KOC further explained that the process of moving the offshore drilling platform, Oriental Phoenix, to its new location was done smoothly and without any injuries or delays thanks to the plan in place and the close cooperation between the teams working in company and various sectors of the country.

The statement took note of the vital role of the Ministry of Defense, represented by Kuwait's Naval Force, in providing the necessary security protection and logistical support during transportation and operations, while the Ministry of Interior ensured safety of all operations, as did the Fire Force.

Dissatisfied

Continued from Page 1

Ali Rashid Al-Badr, former CEO of the General Investment Authority, highlighted the difficulty of reducing government spending due to the fixed nature of salaries and other expenses.

He suggested that achieving this goal requires implementing the Su-

preme Council for Planning's recommendations on public privatization and transferring public service management to the private sector.

Mishari Al-Abduljalil, President of the Economic Society, called for immediate action to direct support only to those who deserve it. He stressed the importance of encouraging Kuwaiti youth to work in the private sector by providing competitive salaries and job security.

Former Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Abdullah Al-Afasy, advocated for restructuring the support system to ensure it reaches those in need, rather than relying on traditional rationalization mechanisms. He warned against the government's tendency to increase government employment, emphasizing the private sector as the real solution.

Dakhil Al-Dakhil, member of the Board of Directors of the Federation of Investment Companies and CEO of Rasameel Investment Company, criticized the Minister of Finance for not introducing new solutions. He questioned how income diversification could be achieved without involving the private sector.

Ibrahim Al-Awadi, President of the Real Estate Union, emphasized the need for realistic and actionable reform plans that involve both the government and private sector.

He called for the creation of new income sources through state investments and fostering an internal economic environment.

Issam Al-Tawari, Chairman of the Board of Directors at Newbery Communications Company, argued that the Ministry of Finance's presentation lacked logic and conviction. He suggested that the government should first implement its own austerity measures to curb wasteful spending.

Tariq Al-Mutawa, former Board of Directors member of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, stressed the importance of activating laws and combating corruption. He also highlighted the need to rationalize government spending and provide land for warehousing, industrial sectors, and workers' housing.

These economists' proposals underscore the urgency for strategic reforms and effective implementation to address Kuwait's financial challenges.

Gaza doctors

Continued from Page 1

Israeli strikes in November on a northern Gaza hospital killed two doctors working with Doctors Without Borders. They are among six staffers killed from the international charity, which focuses on reconstructive and orthopedic surgeries, physiotherapy and burn care in Gaza.

Israel has detained doctors and medical staff. At least two have died in Israeli detention, allegedly of ill-treatment: the head of Shifa's orthopedics department, Adnan Al-Bursh, and the head of a women's hospital, Iyad al-Rantisi. Israel has not returned either man's body. Hundreds of other medical workers have been displaced or left Gaza altogether.

Along with the personal toll, their deaths rob Gaza's medical system of their skills when they have become crucial.

Since the Hamas attack against Israel on Oct. 7 - which left some 1,200 people dead and 250 kidnapped - Israel's campaign has killed more than 38,000 people in Gaza and wounded more than 88,000, according to local health officials. Malnutrition and disease have become widespread as hundreds of thousands of Palestinians cram into squalid tent camps.

Dr. Adam Hamawy, a former U.S. Army combat plastic surgeon who volunteered in Gaza in May, said Hamdan's death "leaves a significant void that will be hard to fill."

Like many in Gaza, he believes Israel is deliberately destroying the health system, pointing to how Israeli forces have raided hospitals, destroyed medical complexes, fired on medical convoys and hit ambulances. Israel says it is targeting Hamas, which it says uses hospitals as command centers and ambulances for transport. The military has provided limited evidence for its claims.

Twenty-three of Gaza's 36 hospitals are out of service, and the rest are only partially functioning, according to the latest U.N. figures. Only five field hospitals out of nine are operational. And more than 60% of Gaza's primary health facilities have shut down.

Municipal Council advances key economic zone, housing projects

Proposals for commercial enhancement in public libraries under review

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: Munira Al-Amir, head of the Technical Committee in the Municipal Council, announced significant approvals made during their recent meeting, highlighting the council's support for vital initiatives. Among the approvals were key items including the adoption of building requirements and specifications for the Abdali Economic Zone.

Al-Amir emphasized the strategic importance of Abdali, Naem, and Wafra economic zones in diversifying Kuwait's economy beyond oil.

Managed by the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority, Abdali Economic Zone's finalized structural plan and approved build-

ing specifications are expected to accelerate economic activities. The new regulations prioritize flexibility to meet diverse investment needs, allocating 60% of building facades for commercial use along main streets to enhance commercial activities.

Additionally, the committee delineated boundaries for a residential project in southern Khaitan, expanding the area from 2,509,197.59 to 2,584,429.09 square meters.

This adjustment accommodates 228 new plots, increasing the total to 1,448 plots, responding to housing demands and enhancing urban development plans.

Al-Amir underscored the Municipal Council's role in supporting state objectives through strategic planning and specialized assistance, aiming for purposeful development aligned with Kuwait's long-term economic goals.

During a recent session, the Municipal Council, chaired by the Emir, deliberated on several proposals aimed at advancing key developmental initiatives. Notably, discussions included steps to finalize

technical reviews on agenda items critical to citizen welfare and overall national objectives.

Al-Amir highlighted the council's proactive efforts in prioritizing projects that significantly impact citizens, affirming that such initiatives will accelerate developmental strides in alignment with state goals.

Among the approvals, the council endorsed Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali's request for the organization and division of plot No. 172 in Block 9, Funaitees area.

Additionally, a directive was issued to study a proposal aimed at enhancing commercial utilization within public libraries, while another proposal concerning temporary site allocations for the Union of Cooperative Societies was referred back to the executive body for further review.

Al-Amir concluded by emphasizing the Municipal Council and Technical Committee's dedication to promoting projects that serve public interests, underscoring their pivotal role in advancing Kuwait's comprehensive development plans.

Adjustments authorized for electricity stations

Municipality OKs 3 requests of MEW

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: Kuwait Municipality approved three requests from the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy. They are:

1. Allocate a secondary transfer station site with dimensions of 7.5 meters by 12.5 meters and a total area of 93.75 square meters, adjacent to the current main transfer station near Fatima Mosque, and a garden site in Abdullah Al-Salem suburb, Block 3.

2. Allocate a secondary transfer station site with dimensions of 7 meters by 12 meters and a total area of 84 square meters next to the site of Jassim Muhammad Al-Kharafi (Al-Asmai Secondary) Boys' Secondary School in Qortuba Block 4.

3. Allocate a site with dimensions of 7.5 meters by 12.5 meters and a total area of 93.75 square meters within the boundaries of the site of Saqr Shabib Primary School for Boys in Qadisiya Block 5, for building a secondary transformer station with the same dimensions.

In the technical opinion of the three requests approved by the Director General of Kuwait Municipality Saud Al-Dabbous, it was stated, "Obliging the Ministry of Electricity and Water to adhere to the requirements contained in the responses of members of the Subcommittee on Public Facilities and Services at its meeting held on January 9, 2024, and to coordinate with it before implementation." This is for its request for the allocation of a site for a secondary transfer station in Abdullah Al-Salem suburb.

For its request regarding the allocation of a secondary transfer station site in Qortuba, it is obligatory to comply with the requirements contained in the responses of members of the Subcommittee on Public Facilities and Services at its meeting held on January 30, 2024, and coordinate with it before implementation.

Regarding the ministry's request to deduct a site from the boundaries of the Saqr Shabib Primary School site in Qadisiya, the technical opinion of the municipality stipulated that it adhere to the requirements contained in the Ministry of Education's letter issued on May 9, 2024 and coordinate with it during installation and implementation processes.

The technical opinion for the three transactions also stipulated that the concerned departments in the municipality be authorized to move and modify the dimensions of the locations of the stations re-

Ministry, community honor Imam Hussein's martyrdom

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: On the ninth night of Muharram, preachers at the Hussainiyas and councils dedicated to the remembrance of the Prophet's (PBUH) family continued to honor the martyrdom of Imam Hussein bin Ali (may Allah be pleased with them). This commemoration was marked by significant efforts from the Ministry of Interior, the General Administration of Civil Defense, and Medical Emergencies, alongside the full cooperation of those managing the Hussainiyas, reports Al-Anba daily.

During the night, Abdullah Mulla Hadi, the preacher at Ashour Husseinia, emphasized the essential role of religion in people's lives. He argued that no matter one's capabilities or the advancements of modern science, humans cannot do without religion.

Mulla Hadi elaborated on the dual dimensions of a person: the material and the spiritual. The material dimension pertains to the body, which requires necessities such as water, food, and clothing. The spiritual dimension, on the other hand, encompasses the soul, which needs security, calm,



Preacher at Ashour Husseinia

stability, and reassurance. He underscored the vital role of religion in fulfilling these spiritual needs, quoting the Almighty: "Unquestionably, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest."

He also highlighted the prevalence of anxiety and stress in the modern world, conditions that often lead to isolation and, tragically, suicide. Statistics reveal a high number of suicides annually due to psychological stress and anxiety. Mulla Hadi stressed that a soul comforted by the remembrance of God and adherence to religion is shielded from anxiety and stress.



Photo by Samer Shaqair

Photo during the commemoration.

PAI adds 5 new services on Sahel

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: According to the Official Spokesman of the Sahel application Yousef Kazem, the Public Authority of Industry (PAI) has added five new services on the Sahel Business app, reports Al-Shahed daily.

He explained that the new services are allocated for the businessmen and

owners of industrial plots, and are related to contracts and licenses. The new services were introduced online based on the directives of the Minister of Commerce and Industry and State Minister for Communication Affairs Omar Al-Omar and under the supervision of the Acting Chairman of PAI Mohammad Al-Adwani.

quired by the Ministry of Electricity. Their areas should not exceed the specified areas in the event of

conflict with any existing infrastructure services or any regulatory reasons, during the installation.

World News Roundup

Europe

Paris mayor dips into Seine River: After months of anticipation, Paris Mayor **Anne Hidalgo** took a dip in the long-polluted Seine River on Wednesday, fulfilling a promise to show the river was clean enough to host open swimming competitions during the 2024 Olympics - and the opening ceremony on the river nine days away.

Clad in a wetsuit and goggles, Hidalgo plunged into the river near the imposing-looking City Hall, her office, and the Notre Dame Cathedral. Paris 2024 chief Tony Estanguet and the top government official for the Paris region, Marc Guillaume, joined her, along with swimmers from local swimming clubs. "The Seine is exquisite," said Hidalgo from the water. After emerging, she continued to rave, "The water is very, very good. A little cool, but not so bad." She also said today was "a dream" and a "testimony that we have achieved a lot of work," referencing the city's "swimming plan" that was launched in 2015.

They swam down the river for about 100 meters, switching between crawl and breaststroke.

"After twenty years of doing sports in the river, I find it admirable that we are trying to clean it up," said Estanguet, who has three Olympic gold medals in canoeing.

It's part of a broader effort to showcase the river's improved cleanliness ahead of the Summer Games which will kick off July 26 with a lavish open-air ceremony that includes an athletes' parade on boats on the Seine. Daily water quality tests in early June indicated unsafe levels of E. coli bacteria, followed by recent improvements. (AP)



Hidalgo

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S.Europe bakes under temps topping 104 F: The Italian health ministry placed 12 cities under the most severe heat warning Tuesday as a wave of hot air from Africa baked southern Europe and the Balkans and sent temperatures over 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit), with the worst still to come.

Croatia reported the highest-ever temperatures of the Adriatic Sea, with the thermometer reaching nearly 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit) at the southern walled city of Dubrovnik, the country's most popular tourism spot. In Serbia, the state power company reported record consumption Tuesday due to the use of air conditioning.

Municipal authorities in several southern European and Balkan cities took measures to look after elderly people in particular as civil protection crews fielded calls for water-dropping aircraft such as Canadairs to douse wildfires that raged in southern Italy and North Macedonia.

"It's hellishly hot," said Carmen Díaz, a tourist from Madrid who was trying to keep cool with a fan at lunchtime in Rome. "These fans help a little too, but it's really hot."

In Greece, municipalities made air conditioned spaces available to the public. (AP)

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German court convicts businessman: A German court on Wednesday convicted a businessman of delivering electronic components to Russian firms associated with the production of military equipment, and sentenced him to six years and nine months in prison.

The 59-year-old defendant, a German-Russian dual citizen, was convicted of violating export laws. A statement from the Stuttgart state court didn't identify him, in line with German privacy rules. Another dual citizen, a 54-year-old woman who was tried as a co-defendant, was given a suspended sentence of a year and nine months.

The court also ordered the confiscation of about 880,000 euros (\$958,000), a sum corresponding with the proceeds of the sales.

The court said that the main defendant had been trading in electronic components for more than 15 years and ran two companies in the Saarland region of western Germany. It found that, between January 2020 and May 2023, he delivered a total of more than 120,000 components to companies in Russia that are associated with the production of military material and accessories such as drones. (AP)

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Russia holds UN meetings: Russia's foreign minister accused the United States on Tuesday of holding the entire West "at gunpoint" and impeding international cooperation, a claim the US ambassador to the United Nations denounced as "hypocrisy" by a country that invaded neighboring Ukraine.

The finger-pointing came at Russia's showcase event during its presidency of the U.N. Security Council this month, and it chose the topic - "Multilateral cooperation for a more just, democratic and sustainable world order." Russia's top diplomat, Sergey Lavrov, flew in from Moscow to preside.

Just before the meeting, Ukraine's UN Ambassador, Sergiy Kyslytsya, read a statement on behalf of about 50 countries, including the United States, whose ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield was among the several dozen UN envoys surrounding him. (AP)

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Hungary faces more criticism: Some European Union leaders protested on Tuesday what they see as Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's misuse of the bloc's rotating presidency, with many including those in the EU's executive commission boycotting an informal meeting hosted by Hungary in response to Orbán's actions.

Officials are angry that Orbán, a nationalist populist who is seen as having the warmest ties with Russian President Vladimir Putin among EU leaders, made unannounced trips to Moscow and Beijing earlier this month on what he called a "peace mission" aimed at brokering an end to Russia's war in Ukraine.

Orbán said he was seeking the quickest path to peace in Ukraine and portrayed himself as uniquely positioned to communicate with both warring parties. He also met last week with former U.S. President Donald Trump at his Mar-a-Lago compound and expressed confidence that Trump would quickly "solve" the conflict. (AP)

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Swedish police await forensic results: Swedish police said on Wednesday that the two bodies found in a burnt Danish-registered car in the city of Malmö during the weekend haven't been identified yet and they are currently unable to confirm whether the victims are two British citizens reported missing.

"We can neither deny nor confirm it. We cannot comment on age, gender or nationality" of the victims who allegedly were shot at an industrial area in Sweden's third-largest city on Sunday, Kerstin Gossé, Malmö police press spokesperson, told the Swedish news agency TT.

Swedish police are investigating the incident as a double murder and are waiting for the completion of a forensic examination to identify the victims. Britain's Foreign Office has confirmed that two British citizens are missing in Sweden but hasn't officially linked the case to the burnt car. (AP)

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Body found on Tenerife ID'd as British teen: A British teen who was missing for nearly a month on the island of Tenerife likely died from injuries suffered in a fall in rocky terrain, a Spanish court said Tuesday, the day after his body was found.

Jay Slater, 19, was identified through fingerprints after his remains were discovered in a rugged area near his last known location, the Canary Islands, the High Court of Justice said.

Spanish authorities, family members, friends and volunteers spent weeks searching for Slater after he apparently got lost trying to walk from one corner of the island to another.

"I just can't believe this could happen to my beautiful boy," his mother, Debbie Duncan, said. "Our hearts are broken." (AP)

The journey from Masca, a village in the northwest, to where



Britain's King Charles III, wearing the Imperial State Crown and the Robe of State, sits alongside Britain's Queen Camilla, wearing the George IV State Diadem, as he reads the King's Speech from the The Sovereign's Throne in the House of Lords chamber, during the State Opening of Parliament, at the Houses of Parliament, in London on July 17. (AP)

Trumpets, tiaras, tradition on display as King Charles presides over opening of Parliament

King Charles III arrived at Parliament to preside over the State Opening on Wednesday, donning his ceremonial robes and the crown of state to deliver a speech laying out the legislative program of the U.K.'s first left-leaning government in 14 years.

The state opening of Parliament is one of the traditional set pieces of the political year, showcasing through carefully choreographed pageantry Britain's

evolution from an absolute monarchy to a parliamentary democracy where real power is vested in the elected House of Commons.

Here's a brief look at the history of the King's Speech and how it unfolds.

In simple terms, it is a speech that lays out the government's legislative program for the coming year.

The speech is written by the elected government,

currently led by Prime Minister Keir Starmer, and delivered by the king during a joint session of the House of Lords and the House of Commons.

The event is a symbol of the monarch's constitutional role as head of state and is accompanied by centuries of tradition. It is the only routine occasion during which both houses of Parliament and the Crown come together in the same place. (AP)

Politics

NC approves party seeking to put RFK on ballot

Trump feted by ex-rivals in show of unity

MILWAUKEE, July 17, (AP) - Donald Trump was celebrated Tuesday at the Republican National Convention by former rivals who just months ago leveled harsh critiques about him, a show of unity that contrasts with the divisions increasingly ripping through the Democratic Party.

Nikki Haley, the former UN ambassador who was Trump's final challenger in the GOP primary, directly addressed her supporters after taking the stage to a mix of cheers and boos.

"My message to them is simple: You don't have to agree with Trump 100% of the time to vote for him," Haley said.

She was followed by Florida Gov Ron DeSantis, a onetime Trump ally turned primary rival who has worked to rebuild his relationship with the former president since dropping out of the primary.

Sued

"Donald Trump has been demonized. He's been sued. He's been prosecuted. And he nearly lost his life," DeSantis told the crowd. "We cannot let him down. And we cannot let America down."

Such overtures are typical in political conventions, where the purpose is often to bring a party together after bitter primaries. But the Haley and DeSantis appearances were particularly notable given the personal animosity that defined this year's GOP contest - much of that being directed by Trump at Haley and DeSantis.

The displays of unity stood in stark contrast to the dynamic facing Democrats, many of whom are increasingly uncertain that President Joe Biden is the right choice to take on Trump in the November election.

DeSantis was once seen as best positioned to challenge Trump's position at the top of the party. As a presidential candidate, he was slow to criticize Trump directly before eventually accusing him of repeatedly failing to follow through on his promises.

Chaotic

Haley, meanwhile, painted Trump as chaotic and suggested the 78-year-old was too old to serve another term. Unlike DeSantis, she did not immediately endorse Trump after she dropped out, instead waiting a few months to announce he had her vote.

Biden's campaign resurrected Haley's criticisms Tuesday. Austin Weatherford, a spokesperson for the campaign, said in a statement, "Ambassador Haley said it best herself: someone who doesn't respect our military, doesn't know right from wrong, and 'surrounds himself in chaos' can't be president."

Several speakers spotlighted immigration, a key element of former Trump's political brand that helped endear him to the GOP base when he began his first campaign in 2015.

Trump has criticized the unprecedented number of migrants entering the country illegally through the US border with Mexico. The numbers of unauthorized crossings have fallen abruptly after Biden issued a rule suspending many asylum claims at the border.

At rallies and other campaign events, Trump has pointed to examples of migrants who committed heinous crimes and has blamed migration for the trafficking of drugs like fentanyl, even though federal data suggests many people smuggling fentanyl across the

border are US citizens. He has vowed to carry out the largest deportation operation in US history.

Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric has also strayed into talking points not backed by evidence, including unfounded claims that migrants are entering the country to vote in the 2024 election.

Rep Steve Scalise of Louisiana, the House majority leader, made that statement in his remarks, declaring, "Biden and Harris want illegals to vote now that they've opened up the border."

Also:

RALEIGH, NC: North Carolina's election board voted Tuesday to certify a political party that wants to put **Robert F. Kennedy Jr.** on the state's presidential ballot this fall. The panel rejected a similar petition effort by a group backing **Cornel West**, citing questions about how signatures were collected.

After weeks of reviewing the signature drives, the board voted 4-1 to recognize the We The People party that supporters of Kennedy, an author and environmental lawyer, are using as a vehicle for him to run in a handful of states. The election board decision means the party can place Kennedy on statewide ballots.

But the board's Democratic majority voted 3-2 along party lines to block the Justice for All Party of North Carolina from ballots. That group supports West, a professor and progressive activist.

Board staff said We The People and Justice for All each collected enough valid signatures from registered and qualified voters. The 13,865 required are a small fraction of those needed to run as an independent candidate in North Carolina, which Kennedy initially attempted.



Former Ambassador Nikki Haley speaks during the Republican National Convention on July 16, in Milwaukee. (AP)



Courtney



Menendez

America

Menendez guilty of taking bribes: US Sen **Bob Menendez** was convicted of all charges Tuesday in a sweeping corruption trial in which he was accused of accepting bribes of gold and cash from three New Jersey businessmen and acting as an agent for the Egyptian government.

A jury in Manhattan deliberated for parts of three days before finding the Democrat guilty of 16 crimes, including bribery, extortion, honest services fraud, obstruction of justice and conspiracy.

Prosecutor said he abused the power of his office to protect allies from criminal investigations and enrich associates, including his wife, through acts that included meeting with Egyptian intelligence officials and softening his position toward that country as he speeded its access to millions of dollars in US military aid. (AP)

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Lawmaker Courtney dies: Peter Courtney, Oregon's longest-serving lawmaker and a politician who was known for his bipartisanship and skills as a dealmaker, died Tuesday, officials said. He was 81.

Courtney died of complications from cancer at his home in Salem, Gov Tina Kotek said in a statement.

Courtney served 38 years in the Legislature, including stints in the House and Senate. He spent 20 years in the powerful role of Senate president, starting in 2003, and maintained control until he retired in January. (AP)

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'Officers shot, killed man': Ohio police officers in Wisconsin for the Republican National Convention shot and killed a man who was wielding two knives near the convention, Milwaukee's police chief said Tuesday.

Five members of the Columbus, Ohio, police department fired on the man, who had a knife in each hand, refused police commands and charged at an unarmed man

before police fired, Milwaukee Chief Jeffrey Norman said at a news conference. Two knives were recovered from the scene, the chief said.

Police released body camera footage that

showed officers on bikes talking before one of them says, "He's got a knife." (AP)

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Tornadoes pound Midwest: Hundreds



Roberta Metsola celebrates after being re-elected as the president of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France on July 16. Maltese politician Roberta Metsola was re-elected as president of the European Parliament on Tuesday during the first plenary session of the newly elected parliament. (Xinhua)

of people in a southern Illinois town were ordered to evacuate Tuesday as water rolled over the top of a dam, just one perilous result of severe weather that raged through the Midwest overnight with relentless rain and tornadoes and hit the Chicago area especially hard.

Hundreds of thousands of people lost power, and even weather forecasters had to briefly scramble for safety. The National Weather Service cited a tornado in Des Moines, Iowa, one in Chicago and at least four others in the Chicago area as storms rolled through Monday afternoon and into the night. Police responded to calls about utility poles that snapped in two. A woman in Indiana died after a tree fell on a home Monday night. (AP)

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Ex-CIA official charged: A former CIA employee and senior official at the National Security Council has been charged with serving as a secret agent for South Korea's intelligence service, the U.S. Justice Department said.

Sue Mi Terry accepted luxury goods, including fancy handbags, and expensive dinners at sushi restaurants in exchange for advocating South Korean government positions during media appearances, sharing nonpublic information with intelligence officers and facilitating access for South Korean officials to US government officials, according to an indictment filed in federal court in Manhattan. (AP)

Africa

Zuma faces expulsion

At least 72 killed in Congo militia attack

KINSHASA, Congo, July 17, (AP): At least 72 people, including nine soldiers and a soldier's wife, were killed when armed men attacked a village in western Congo, local authorities said, as violence intensifies between rival communities.

Saturday's attack took place in the village of Kinsele, around 100 kilometers (60 miles) east of Kinshasa, the capital. Because of insecurity and poor infrastructure in the region, attacks can take days to be reported.

Kinsele is in the Kwamouth territory, where conflict has raged for two years between the Teke and Yaka communities, leading to hundreds of civilian deaths.

The attackers were with the Mobondo militia, a group presenting itself as defenders of the Yaka people.



Tshisekedi

"The search continues to find other bodies in the bush," David Bisaka, the provincial deputy for the Kwamouth territory, told The Associated Press in a phone interview. He added that the army had "succeeded in routing this militia" for the second time in a week.

The Mobondo militia first tried to attack the village on Friday. Following Saturday's attack, the dead included nine soldiers and the wife of a soldier, head of a nearby village, Stany Liby, told U.N.-funded Radio Okapi.

The conflict over land and customary claims in the Kwamouth territory erupted in June 2022 between so-called "native" and "non-native" communities, according to the advocacy group Human Rights Watch.

Tensions flared between the Teke, historical inhabitants of the region, and farmers from various other ethnic groups including the Yaka, who settled near the Congo River more recently.

Despite a cease-fire in April 2024 in the presence of Congo's President Felix Tshisekedi, clashes between the communities have continued and even intensified in recent weeks.

Congo's defense minister, Guy Kabombo Muadiamvita, on Monday visited Kwango province, where the attacked village is located, to "feel the reality on the ground," the ministry said on social media platform X.

"The province of Kwango is the last security barrier to access the city province of Kinshasa," the ministry said, adding that the minister "promised to spare no effort" against the militia.

Congo's army also struggles to contain more widespread violence in the vast country's east, which has seen decades of fighting between government forces and more than 120 armed groups. Many seek a share of the region's gold and other resources.

Violence in the east has worsened in recent months. Earlier this month, a militia attack on a gold mine in northeastern Congo killed six Chinese miners and two Congolese soldiers.

Also:

CAPE TOWN, South Africa: Former South African President Jacob Zuma was expected to face a disciplinary hearing with the African National Congress party on Wednesday, after campaigning against the organization he once led as head of a new political party in national elections in May.

The hearing could lead to Zuma, 82, being expelled from the ANC, which he joined in the late 1950s when it was a liberation movement fighting against the apartheid system of white minority rule.

Zuma was forced to step down as South African president in 2018 amid allegations of corruption and has been embroiled in a political feud since then with President Cyril Ramaphosa, who replaced him as the leader of the party and the country.

Zuma's split with the ANC was confirmed in December, when he appeared at a press conference and announced he would campaign for the recently-founded MK Party in the May 29 elections. He has been fiercely critical of Ramaphosa, even accusing him of treason at one point.

While Zuma said he would retain his ANC membership despite becoming the leader of the MK Party, the ANC suspended him in January. It said he had attacked the integrity of the party.

It wasn't clear if Zuma would attend Wednesday's hearing at the ANC headquarters in Johannesburg, or if it would be held virtually. MK officials have said he wants to appear in person, while the ANC wants it to be held online.

Zuma has been called a destabilizing figure in Africa's most industrialized country, but his MK Party won 14% of the national vote on May 29 in the first election it has contested, stunning many.

MK's surprising share of the vote was a prime factor in the ANC losing its majority for the first time since the end of apartheid in 1994 in an historic result for South Africa, leading to the formation of an unprecedented multi-party coalition government.

Nairobi, Kenya

NAIROBI, Kenya: Kenyan hurred tear gas canisters on Tuesday to break up protests in Nairobi and several other towns and cities accusing the president of poor governance and demanding his resignation, despite his dismissal of nearly the entire Cabinet last week.

Businesses in Nairobi remained closed for fear of a repeat of the looting that occurred during demonstrations last week, when protesters stormed into Parliament and several were killed by police.

Demonstrators blocked major roads including the highway to Namanga on the outskirts of Nairobi, where they lit bonfires on Tuesday morning. Demonstrations were also reported in the towns of Mombasa, Kisumu and Eldoret.

The protests came five days after President William Ruto dismissed all but one Cabinet minister and promised to form a broad-based, lean and efficient government in response to the protesters' demands.

The head of the police, who have been accused of brutality toward the demonstrators, resigned on Friday but protesters remained adamant that they will continue until the president steps down.

Protests began on June 18 calling for the sacking of Cabinet ministers over incompetence, corruption and displays of opulence while ordinary people suffered from a cost-of-living crisis. Protesters stormed parliament on June 25 after legislators passed a finance bill that would raise taxes. Police opened fire, killing several people.

President Ruto said he would not sign the bill after listening to the protesters, but demonstrations continued with calls for him to resign.

Activists who have been urging people to join the protests say they are spontaneous and no group is leading or funding them.



Students clash over quota system at Jahangir Nagar University at Savar outside Dhaka, Bangladesh on July 15. (AP)

Universities in Bangladesh shut doors, authorities raid opposition HQ after protests

Several major universities in Bangladesh shut their doors Wednesday or promised to, after at least six people died in violent campus protests over the allocation of government jobs and police raided the headquarters of the main opposition party.

After two days of clashes, the University Grants

Commission urged all public and private universities to shut until further notice, and about a dozen major public universities said they would, according to officials and media reports.

Among them was Dhaka University, which is at the center of the violence and decided to suspend

classes and close its dormitories indefinitely, a university official told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to media. Wednesday was a public holiday in Bangladesh and the number of closures would become clearer on Thursday. (AP)

Asia

PNG minister to fight charge in Sydney next yr

NKorea landmines could float into Seoul

SEOUL, South Korea, July 17, (Agencies): North Korean landmines could be swept into South Korea by flooding, South Korea's military warned Wednesday, after the North has recently placed tens of thousands of additional deadly explosives along the rivals' heavily fortified border.

North Korea's minelaying is part of construction at the border that's been going on since April, which also includes adding anti-tank barriers and reinforcing roads. South Korea officials believe North Korea aims to boost its frontline security posture and prevent its soldiers and citizens from defecting to South Korea.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff told local reporters that flooding caused by summer rainfall could wash the mines over the border, adding that North Korea might also deliberately float mines downriver as a provocation.

The contents of the briefing were shared with The Associated Press.

Concerns about possible North Korean provocation have deepened after Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, threatened new countermeasures Tuesday against South Korean civilian activists' efforts to drop leaflets over the north by balloon. North Korea has earlier responded by flying trash-carrying balloons toward South Korea, which have not caused major damage.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement that North Korea's military has suffered "many casualties" from about 10 mine explosions and heat exposure during the intense border works.

Also:

SEOUL: A heavy rain watch was issued across South Korea's metropolitan area, which was battered by downpours overnight, the interior ministry said Wednesday.

Heavy rain watches and warnings were issued in the capital Seoul, the western port city of Incheon and many parts of their surrounding Gyeonggi province, according to the Ministry of the Interior and Safety.

BANGKOK, July 17, (AP): Initial autopsy results showed traces of cyanide in the blood of six Vietnamese and American guests at a central Bangkok luxury hotel and one of them is believed to have been poisoned the others over a bad investment, Thai authorities said Wednesday.

The bodies were found Tuesday in the Grand Hyatt Erawan Bangkok, a landmark at a central intersection in the capital busy with malls, government buildings and public transit.

The six had last been seen alive when food was delivered to the room Monday afternoon. The staff saw one woman receive the food, and security footage showed the rest arriving one by one shortly after. There were no other visitors, no one was seen leaving and the door was locked. A maid found them Tuesday afternoon

Over 300 mm of downpour pounded the inter-Korean border city of Paju between midnight and 10 a.m. local time (0100 GMT).

The accumulated precipitation in Yeoncheon and Yangju counties of Gyeonggi province, and Nowon and Seongbuk districts of Seoul ranged from 113.5 mm to 166.5 mm for 10 hours from midnight.

The Korea Meteorological Administration (KMA) sent emergency text messages warning of heavy rain in the greater Seoul area.

The warning message is issued when the precipitation exceeds 50 mm per hour and 90 mm in three hours or when the rainfall surpasses 72 mm per hour.

SYDNEY: Papua New Guinea's sidelined Petroleum Minister Jimmy

when they failed to check out of the room.

Suspect in killings surrenders: The suspect in the killings of two Australians and their Filipina companion at a hotel in a popular resort city south of Manila surrendered and claimed he wanted to retaliate against the hotel for firing him, Philippine officials said Wednesday.

The suspect further said that he randomly barged into the victims' room last week because its window was open, authorities added.

The victims, whose hands and feet were tied, were found sprawled on the floor in a street-level room at the Lake Hotel in Tagaytay city on July 10 in a heinous crime that shattered the tranquility the tourism destination known for a picturesque volcano nestled in a lake, Tagaytay Mayor Abraham Tolentino said.

Maladina will appear in an Australian court in March next year to fight a charge of assaulting a woman during a domestic dispute.

The 58-year-old appeared in the Downing Centre Local Court on Wednesday to have a hearing date set over the assault that allegedly occurred July 6 in an apartment in the expensive Sydney beachside suburb of Bondi. The woman's identity has not been made public for legal reasons.

Magistrate Jennifer Atkinson set a hearing date of March 20, despite defense lawyer Margaret Cunneen requesting an earlier date.

Papua New Guinea Prime Minister James Marape announced July 10 that Energy Minister Thomas Opa had taken over the petroleum portfolio since Maladina stepped down during the court process.



In this photo released by the Royal Thai Police, uneaten meals are left on a table in a room in the Grand Hyatt Erawan Hotel room where six people were found dead from on July 16. Initial autopsy results showed traces of cyanide in the blood of six Vietnamese and American guests at a central Bangkok luxury hotel and one of them is believed to have poisoned the others over a bad investment, Thai authorities said on July 17. (AP)



Rameau



Peña

Lat/Am

El Salvador arrests 3,319 minors: A rights report released Tuesday says the government of El Salvador has arrested 3,319 underage suspects and sentenced 579 to prison terms during the harsh 2 1/2 year-old crackdown on street gangs.

The report by Human Rights Watch says the minors have often been held in "inhumane conditions," and sometimes in the same facilities with adults. The reports said authorities have done little to ensure food, health care and family contact, or protect them from beatings or assault in prison.

Of the 3,319 detained, a total of 841 minors remained in custody as of January, the report said.

Of those convicted, the report claims authorities in many cases coerced the minors into "making false confessions to crimes through a combination of abusive plea deals and sometimes mistreatment or torture." (AP)

'Return body of teenager': Nearly a decade after Guatemalan authorities were told that Mexico had sent the wrong body to a Guatemalan family searching for their missing teenage relative, that unidentified body is still buried in Guatemala and the family's relative is lying in a Mexico City morgue.

The family, which declined to comment through its lawyer, wants 17-year-old Yovanny back, but also wants the body it buried exhumed, identified and returned to their relatives.

Standing in the way appears to be Guatemala's Attorney General's Office.

Their Mexican counterparts requested the exhumation in April, but according to Rosmary Yax, the family's attorney, and the Forensic Commission - a body made up of experts from Mexico's Attorney General's Office, the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team, various civic organizations and relatives of missing migrants - there has been no answer from Guatemala's Attorney General's Office. (AP)

More police arrive in Haiti: An-

other 200 police officers from Kenya arrived Tuesday in Haiti for a UN-backed mission led by the East African country to battle violent gangs that have taken

over parts of the troubled Caribbean country.

The officers arrived nearly a month after the first contingent of 200 landed in

the capital of Port-au-Prince, where gangs control at least 80% of the city.

Last week the United Nations Security Council strongly condemned "the extreme levels of armed violence" in Haiti that are undermining security in the country and the region.

"We are happy to work side-by-side with the Kenyans," Normil Rameau, the new chief of Haiti's National Police, said shortly after they arrived. "In the name of the government, we give them a warm welcome." (AP)

Largest drug seizure in Paraguay: Authorities in Paraguay announced Tuesday the largest cocaine seizure in the country's history, after officials were surprised to find more than 4 tons of the drug stashed inside a shipment of sugar bound for Belgium.

President Santiago Peña told journalists that the record discovery, code-named "Operation Sweetness," added to a string of "very sad episodes" in Paraguay that had transformed the strategically located nation into a key drug trafficking hub in the region.

Peña expressed hope that the seizure, valued at roughly \$240 million, would disrupt the cocaine trade and said police were pursuing those responsible. (AP)



Relatives of passengers killed when Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 was shot down over Ukraine place a wreath as they gather with officials at Australia's Parliament House in Canberra on July 17 to mark the 10th anniversary of the tragedy that claimed 298 lives. (AP)

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts		
SAUDI	- TASI	+77.24	12,157.61	JAPAN	- Nikkei 225	-177.39	41,097.69
DUBAI	- DFMGI	+22.30	4,131.96				
PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	+20.62	6,687.71				
EGYPT	- EGX 30	+511.50	28,340.42				

Business

Earnings per share increase to 11.1 fils

Boubyan Bank increases net profits to KD 50 mln for H1 2024

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: Boubyan Bank has announced KD 61 million in operating profits for the first half of this year as the bank recorded KD 50 million in net profits at a growth rate of 20% compared with last year, while the earnings per share amount to 11.1 fils.

Mr. Adel Al-Majed, Boubyan Bank's Vice-Chairman & Group Chief Executive Officer, commented on the financial results: "All financial indicators of Boubyan during H1, 2024 highlight the strength and robustness of our profitability, assets, liquidity ratios, and operational performance, which led to maintaining a solid financial foundation, coupled with a flexible business model that gives room for growth and for aligning with the requirements of business sectors."

Al-Majed highlighted the most significant financial indicators during H1, where the bank's assets grew to KD 8.9 billion at a growth rate of 11% compared with last year, while the bank's financing portfolio grew by 10% to reach KD 6.7 billion, and operating income grew by 11% to KD 121.4 million, whereas the bank's market share of local financing increased to 11.7%.

He added: "Results of this period are attributed to our strategy of focusing on new markets with promising growth opportunities and positive financing investments with profitability for the bank's investing customers and its shareholders. This is added to focusing on digital innovation and growth of the bank's operational performance, efficient liquidity, and the bank's good reputation, along with the great improvement of our state-of-the-art banking solutions and excelling in innovative offerings that meet the needs of various customer segments."

Group Wealth Management

"With 'Boubyan 2028' strategy, we have activated our group-wide investment management plan to expand our investment solutions and opportunities, and to discover new markets in order to accelerate the attraction of more wealth and manage the same in order to offer the best to our customers with an investment appetite. The 2028 strategy is well-aligned with the bank's mission and its ESG focus," Al-Majed added.

Al-Majed went on to add: "Boubyan's wealth management is not merely about offering investment advice; rather, it is a holistic process and approach that integrates strategic and investment partnerships that ensure full understanding of the investor's financial position as well as the most significant goals, proper planning and management of risks in order to safeguard and grow the wealth."

Subsidiaries

Boubyan Group's subsidiaries continued making significant achievements by diversifying and improving



Adel Al-Majed

Adel Al-Majed:

■ We Maintain Our Profitability, and Continue Capturing Growth Opportunities and Expanding Our Business Locally and Internationally

■ "Boubyan 2028" Strategy Is Aligned with the Bank's Mission and Its ESG Focus

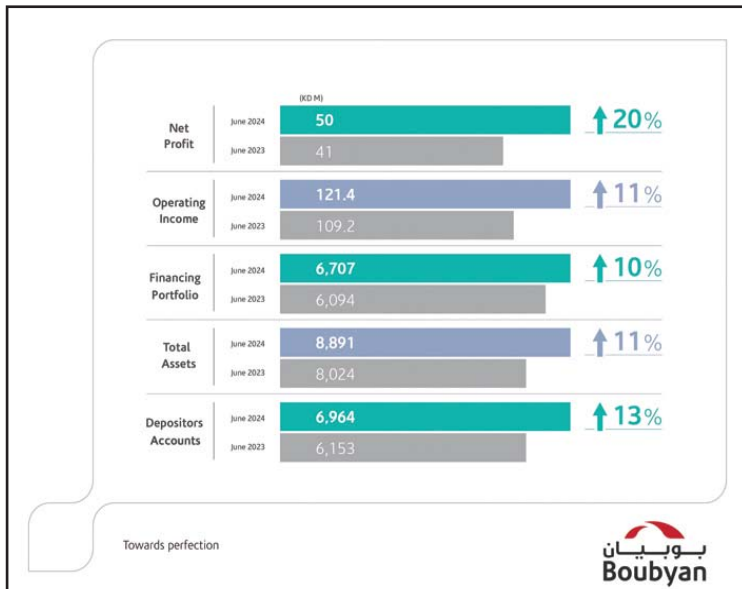
■ Group Wealth Management Plan Activated to Attract and Manage More Investments to Offer Solutions to Investment Customers

their offerings, and targeting all companies in various sectors in order to offer innovative and cutting-edge banking services, while Boubyan continued pursuing its strategy that focuses on local and international expansion.

Furthermore, and as a part of its regional expansion, a subsidiary of BLME was established in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in addition to BLME's headquarters in London and Dubai, in order to increase its customer base and to offer innovative investment solutions.

As an investment arm of Boubyan Group, Boubyan capital continued to strike a balance between long-term goals and short-term needs through offering a group of various financial solutions, and succeeded in increasing its managed assets and customer base, in addition to successfully launching 3 investment funds, thus placing Boubyan Local and GCC Equity Fund in the lead of top investment funds in Kuwait.

Moreover, Boubyan Capital launched its own digital roadmap due to be completed by the end of 2024 with the aim of digitalizing the processes and improving the investment customer experience in order to make



Boubyan Bank financial graph

Boubyan Capital's App the cornerstone of the company's digital and investment roadmap that enables them to manage and monitor their investments anywhere and at any time.

As for Boubyan Takaful Insurance Company, it continued its progress towards sustainable improvement and growth of its business to achieve quality service by innovating and introducing new competitive insurance solutions, and developing a complete group of insurance policies such as the launch of Boubyan Drive Auto Insurance Policy for the first time in Kuwait. The company completed its digital transformation process through Boubyan App, restructured its digital platform features, and updated its applications as per latest programming standards to cope with the digital plan recently introduced by the insurance control unit.

Awards and International Ratings

During H1 of this year, the bank received two awards, namely the "Most Innovative Bank of the Year" and "Best Digital Banking Initiative" by MEED, the internationally renowned publication. This came as a part of its MENA Banking Excellence Awards 2024.

This new achievement highlights the success of the bank's comprehensive program, which is aligned with business approaches and strategies to upgrade the infrastructure for digital transformation, and to boost the performance and the competitiveness, especially after launching several innovative solutions and services guided by an outstanding banking vision, which led to a leap in digital banking.

Furthermore, and in a testimony to its prestigious status in the financial and banking sector locally and internationally, Boubyan Bank has been included in Forbes' annual list for Middle East Top 100 Listed Companies 2024. The bank ranked 64th regionally and 3rd among local banks on the same list, with a market value of \$8 billion and \$27.3 billion in total assets.

The bank was further ranked 3rd locally and 49th regionally in MEED's List for the 100 Largest Listed Companies in MENA for 2024.

Furthermore, the bank's ratings from Moody's, Fitch, and S&P remain stable at "A2", "A", and "A" respectively. As for the ex-government support (or xgs) rating assigned by Fitch, it stood at "BBB". The introduction

Key Financial Indicators - KD Million

Indicator	First Half 2024	First Half 2023	Growth
Net profits	50	41	20%
Operating income	121.4	109.2	11%
Customers' deposits	6,964	6,153	13%
Financing portfolio	6,707	6,094	10%
Assets	8,891	8,024	11%



Boubyan Bank

of such new criteria communicates Fitch's view of the creditworthiness of Boubyan excluding assumptions of extraordinary government support. Boubyan was assigned the second highest rating in Kuwait as per such criteria.

Human Capital Development

Boubyan continued supporting its human resources and recruiting national cadres, and was able to reach the highest percentage of national manpower across the private sector, which now exceeds 81%, and continued its enablement approach for women, who now account for 30% of the bank's employees, with many of them occupying leadership positions.

The bank's human resources proved themselves to be one of the key pillars of the bank's ongoing success, as they embrace and adopt Boubyan's future vision, which greatly contributes to the introduction of innovative and creative ideas and deliverables, while reiterating the bank's commitment to providing all that is necessary to support our human resources' leadership role in a real and sustained manner to have a positive effect on the future job market

and achieve the desired results in terms of increasing our productivity and the profitability rates of the bank.

Highlights:

1st Highlight

Boubyan Bank's CEO - Private, Consumer & Digital Banking, Mr. Abdullah Al-Tuwaijri attended the FinTech Summit in Dubai to speak about the recent transformations and developments in FinTech and the promising growth opportunities.

He further attended the Gulf Creatives Conference 2024, held at the prestigious Harvard Graduate School of Education to discuss the proactive vision and well-studied plans for investment in digital transformation at Boubyan.

2nd Highlight

Boubyan Bank released its 4th Sustainability Report for the year 2023, titled: "Integration into Corporate Strategy" to reflect the bank's initiatives towards adopting proactive practices that effectively contribute to our sustainable ESG approach to build a more inclusive and sustainable future for everybody.

Kuwait's imports drop to 1.3 mln tons amid crisis

Shipping costs soar over 160% due to Red Sea crisis

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: The ongoing crisis in the Red Sea, exacerbated by Houthi attacks on ships passing through, has significantly impacted Kuwait's imports via sea routes.

Recent statistics from the Central Statistical Administration highlight a drastic decline in imports from 6.1 million tons in the first quarter of 2023 to approximately 1.3 million tons by the end of the first quarter of 2024.

This decline underscores serious concerns about future import capabilities and potential price increases, particularly in essential goods like food. Ahmed Al-Khashnam, an economic expert, warns that prolonged disruptions in Red Sea navigation could lead to further declines in imports and inflationary pressures. The current situation, coupled with geopolitical tensions potentially extending to Lebanon, could escalate into a broader regional conflict, exacerbating the challenges faced by maritime shipping and import logistics.

Ibrahim Al-Kandari, from a major food and furniture center, highlights the direct impact on consumer prices, citing significant increases – up to 50% in dairy

New e-services include contract inquiry

PAI introduces new electronic services for business owners

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: In a move aimed at bolstering digital convenience and efficiency, the Public Authority for Industry has rolled out five new electronic services through its Sahel Business application, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This initiative, announced by Yousef Kazim Abbas, the official spokesman for the unified government application for electronic services (Sahel), marks a significant enhancement for business

products and 30-45% in other food items. This price surge is attributed to soaring international shipping costs, which have more than doubled due to the crisis. Al-Kandari emphasizes the need for Kuwait to bolster food security by diversifying food sources and enhancing local agriculture and food industries.

Hussam Mohammed, a shipping expert, outlines the operational challenges faced by Kuwaiti companies, including unprecedented increases in shipping fees and extended delivery times.

Shipping costs for a 27-ton con-

owners, particularly those involved in industrial activities.

Under the directives of Minister of Commerce and Industry, Omar Saud Al-Omar, and Minister of State for Communications Affairs, these new services are part of a strategic effort led by Mohammed Eid Al-Adwani, Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Industry, to streamline processes and elevate user experience within the Sahl Business platform.

tainer have surged from \$2,000-\$2,400 to \$5,000-\$6,750, reflecting a 160-180% rise. The redirection of shipping routes away from the Red Sea through alternative paths via Malaysia and the Indian Ocean to Jebel Ali in the UAE has attempted to mitigate risks but has also led to delays and increased costs.

Given the unpredictable nature of geopolitical tensions impacting maritime trade routes, Mohammed stresses the urgency for Kuwait to diversify its supply chains and strengthen domestic production capabilities.



Al Marzouq and Boshehry with Zain and Global Markets teams.

Enhancing BI with advanced market analytics

Zain extends strategic partnership with Global Markets

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: Zain has announced the extension of its strategic partnership with Global Markets, a leading market research and business intelligence firm in the GCC. This collaboration aims to enhance Zain's business intelligence systems with advanced market analytics, providing comprehensive consultancy services focused on local market trends and research. The enhanced insights will empower Zain to make more informed decisions, thereby strengthening its portfolio of advanced solutions for the local enterprise market.

Commenting on the partnership, Hamad Al Marzouq, Chief Enterprise Business Officer at Zain Kuwait, stated: "We're delighted to extend our successful strategic collaboration with Global Markets to leverage their expertise in market analytics and insights. This will add value to our business intelligence practices, allowing us to gain deeper insights into local market dynamics, customer preferences, and emerging trends. This enables more informed strategic decisions when serving our SME and enterprise customers."

Ali Boshehry, CEO of Global Markets, added: "We're proud of Zain's renewed trust in our services, and we look forward to continuing our development of innovative solutions that meet the growing needs of Zain's customers in Kuwait and across the region. We believe the smart analytics tools we've developed will support Zain's efforts to make sound strategic decisions based on our highly accurate and comprehensive database on the local market, contributing to solidifying its leadership position in the telecom sector." Global Markets has successfully developed analytics



Hamad Al Marzouq and Ali Boshehry announce the partnership.

tools tailored to Zain's specific needs. With over a decade of expertise in market research and business intelligence, the company leverages partnerships with numerous firms across the GCC region to deliver exceptional insights.

Through strategic partnerships with key tech players from local, regional, and international markets, Zain continues to pioneer digital transformation within the public and private sectors. The company offers an extensive portfolio of solutions, including cloud computing, cybersecurity, AI-powered drones, 5G, and other revolutionary technologies, to serve the needs of public and private sector institutions alike. This fosters economic growth and contributes to the nation's developmental goals.

Mixed quarterly performance in GCC equity markets

Foreign investors net buyers with \$3.5 billion in GCC markets

By KAMCO Invest

Foreign investors, including institutional and retail investors, were net buyers on GCC stock markets during Q2-2024 with net buying at USD 3.5 Bn as compared to USD 1.5 Bn in net buying during Q1-2024. The trend remained positive since the start of the year with consecutive buying by foreign investors during the 1H-2024 of the year. The biggest buying was seen in Saudi Arabia with total net buying of USD 3.5 Bn. UAE was next with Abu Dhabi exchange also seeing consecutive buying by foreigners that reached USD 766.6 Mn in Q2-2024. Meanwhile, foreign investors were biggest sellers of Qatari stocks with net sales of USD

430.7 Mn during the quarter as compared to USD 67.1 Mn in net buy trades during the previous quarter. Kuwait was next with net sales of USD 296.0 Mn by foreigners followed by Oman and Dubai exchanges with net sales of USD 44.9 Mn and USD 25.4 Mn, respectively. Data for Bahrain showed net buying at USD 43.3 Mn, the highest level seen in 20 quarters during Q2-2024.

That said, the monthly trend showed Saudi Arabia and UAE witnessed net sell trades by foreign investors during April-2024 followed by net buy trades during the remaining two months. On the other hand, Qatar, Kuwait and Oman exchanges witnessed net sales by foreign investors during the quarter.

Some of the key factors that affected the flow of foreign money in the region included regional market trends, IPOs, geopolitical issues, economic health of the individual countries and crude oil prices. The quarter saw mixed trend in the equity market and skewed towards decliners as four out of seven exchanges reported declines during Q2-2024. The expectations related to global interest rate changes also steered performance in the region. However, the seasonal selling pressure during the Eid Holidays resulted in a decline in the market during Q2-2024. As a result, local investors were net sellers during the month and these shares were grabbed by foreign investors resulting in a broad-based net buy trades by the latter.

UK inflation stays at 2% target in June, leaving possible rate cut on a 'knife edge'

Inflation in the U.K. held steady at the Bank of England's target rate of 2% in the year to June, official figures showed Wednesday, in a development that could be enough for policymakers to cut borrowing costs next month.

The Office for National Statistics said the largest upward contribution to the annualized inflation rate came from restaurants and hotels, with some economists attributing the increases to Taylor Swift's tour of the U.K. The biggest downward contribution came from clothing and foot-

wear, with widespread sales during the month. The flat reading compared to June a year ago was a tad higher than expected. Most economists had anticipated a modest decline to 1.9%.

The last time inflation was at 2% was in July 2021 before prices started to shoot up, first as a result of supply chain issues during the coronavirus pandemic and then because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which pushed up energy costs.

Financial markets think it's going to be a close call as to whether the Bank of

England will reduce its main interest rate from 5.25% on Aug. 1.

Some policymakers are still concerned over the scale of price rises in the crucial services sector and the pace of wage increases, which raise the risks of an inflation rebound if interest rates are cut too soon.

"Today's inflation report will keep the Bank of England's August rate decision on a knife edge," said Luke Bartholomew, deputy chief economist at asset management firm abrdn, formerly Aberdeen Asset

Management. "More fundamentally, the ongoing stickiness of services inflation will leave the Bank wondering how long inflation will stay at the 2% target

The Bank of England, like the U.S. Fed and other central banks, raised interest rates aggressively in late 2021 from near zero to counter the rapid increase in inflation, which hit a peak of above 11% in late 2022.

Higher interest rates - which cool the economy by making it more expensive to borrow - have helped ease inflation,

but they've also weighed on the British economy, which has barely grown since the pandemic rebound.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer has stressed that upping the U.K.'s economic growth will be the driving mission of his Labour government. Later Wednesday, his government will announce its plans for the coming year. Starmer said the measures announced in the King's Speech to Parliament would "take the brakes off Britain" and "create wealth for people up and down the country" by spurring economic growth. (AP)

Prospects for the MENA region were affected by oil production and regional tensions

Global GDP steady as growth outside US & Japan see upside surprise

By KAMCO Invest

In its latest update to the World Economic Outlook, the IMF highlighted better-than-expected economic and trade growth during Q1-2024, especially in Europe and China. However, in terms of future growth, the IMF indicated that rates are expected to remain higher for longer given sticky services inflation that is holding up progress on disinflation. And this is expected to complicate monetary policy decision and outlook from global central banks. Escalating trade tensions, especially between the US and China and the sanctions imposed on several other countries further complicates the future growth story. Nevertheless, the IMF forecasted interest rates to decline during the second half of the year but would be characterized by divergence in the pace of normalization reflecting varied inflation circumstances.

The IMF upgraded world real GDP forecast by 10 bps for 2025 to 3.3% vs. its expectations in April-2024 and kept the forecast unchanged for 2024 at 3.2%. The upward forecast for next year reflected upward revisions to growth forecast for EM and Developing Economies, Emerging and Developing Asia and China that was partially offset by downward revisions to forecasts for the Saudi Arabia and the MENA regions. The forecast for Advanced Economies remained unchanged at 1.7% for 2024 and 1.8% for 2025, respectively.

Growth forecast for EM and Developing Economies was forecasted at 4.3% for both 2024 and 2025, a smaller



upward revision of 10 bps compared to the April-2024 estimates for both years buoyed by the stronger activity in Asia. The Euro Area witnessed an upward revision of 10 bps to an expected growth of 0.9% in 2024 and the growth was left unchanged at 1.5% for 2025.

Advanced Economies and MENA GDP growth

Growth in the Advanced Economies are projected to remain at 1.7% for 2023 and 2024 while it is expected to accelerate to 1.8% in 2025. According to IMF projections, GDP Growth for the United States was revised downward by 10 bps to 2.6% in 2024 reflecting the slower than expected start to the year. Further Growth is expected to slow to 1.9% in 2025 as the labor market recedes and consumption moderates and fiscal policy begins to tighten gradually by the end of 2025. Growth in the United Kingdom is forecasted to gradually rise from 0.1% in 2023 to 0.7% an upward revision of 20 bps in 2024, then pickup to 1.5% in 2025. Growth in Japan and was revised down by 20 bps to 0.7% for 2024 and is kept unchanged at 1.0% for 2025. The downward revision in 2024 is

mainly due to temporary shortages in supply and a lack of significant private investment during Q1-2024.

For the Asia region, IMF upgraded China's forecast by 40 bps to 5.0% in 2024 and 4.5% in 2025 after 5.2% growth in 2023 attributed largely to an improvement in private consumption and strong exports in the Q1-2024. In 2025, GDP is projected to decelerate over the medium term to 3.3% by 2029, because of headwinds brought up slowing productivity growth. Meanwhile, India's growth was forecasted at 7.0% for 2024 an upward revision of 20 bps compared to the April-2024 estimates buoyed by the stronger prospects for private consumption, especially in rural areas. However, growth in 2025 is retained at 6.5%

Prospects for the MENA region were affected by the oil production and regional tensions. As a result, growth in the MENA region was slashed by 50 bps for 2024 and by 20 bps for 2025 to reach 2.2% and 4.0%, respectively. Growth estimate for Saudi Arabia's was lowered by 90 bps to 1.7% and 130 bps to 4.7% for 2024 and 2025, respectively primarily due to the continuation of the country's oil output

Country/Regions	July-2024 Updated Forecasts				Rev. from April-2024	
	2022	2023	2024e	2025e	2024e	2025e
Real GDP Growth						
World Output	3.5%	3.3%	3.2%	3.3%	0.0%	0.1%
Advanced Economies						
United States	2.6%	1.7%	1.7%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Euro Area	1.9%	2.5%	2.6%	1.9%	-0.1%	0.0%
EM and Developing Economies	3.4%	0.5%	0.9%	1.5%	0.1%	0.0%
EM and Developing Economies						
China	4.1%	4.4%	4.3%	4.3%	0.1%	0.1%
India	3.0%	5.2%	5.0%	4.5%	0.4%	0.4%
MENA	7.0%	8.2%	7.0%	6.5%	0.2%	0.0%
Saudi Arabia	5.4%	1.8%	2.2%	4.0%	-0.5%	-0.2%
Sub-Saharan Africa	7.5%	-0.8%	1.7%	4.7%	-0.9%	-1.3%
	4.0%	3.4%	3.7%	4.1%	-0.1%	0.1%
Trade Volume Growth						
World Trade Volume	2022	2023	2024e	2025e	2024e	2025e
Advanced Economies	5.6%	0.8%	3.1%	3.4%	0.1%	0.1%
EM and Developing Economies	6.2%	0.1%	2.5%	2.8%	0.3%	-0.1%
	4.5%	2.0%	4.2%	4.5%	-0.1%	0.5%
Consumer Prices Change						
Advanced Economies	2022	2023	2024e	2025e	2024e	2025e
EM and Developing Economies	7.3%	4.6%	2.7%	2.1%	0.1%	0.1%
	9.8%	8.3%	8.2%	6.0%	-0.1%	-0.2%

Sources : IMF WEO - July-2024

reductions.

Global Inflation is expected to continue its downwards trend

According to the IMF, Advanced economies are expected to experience slower disinflation in 2024 and 2025, where service inflation is expected to be more persistent, leading to rising commodities costs. The IMF said that as labor markets cool and energy prices fall, headline inflation is forecasted to return to target by the end of 2025. Inflation is expected to remain higher in Emerging market and Developing Economies than in Advanced Economies. Inflation in emerging markets and developing economies is expected

to reach pre-pandemic levels, partially due to lower energy prices.

Global Trade

The IMF expects the Global trade growth to reach 3.1% in 2024 and 3.4% in 2025, with an upward revision of 10 bps from April 2024 predictions, mainly reflecting the trends in global output growth. According to the IMF, global trade growth in 2024-2025 is expected to return to around 3.25 percent annually, in line with global GDP growth. The rise in the Q1-2024 is anticipated to decrease as manufacturing activity continues to show signs of weakness. Despite the significant increase in cross-border trade restric-

tions, which has adversely affected trade between geopolitical entities, it is anticipated that the global trade-to-GDP ratio is expected to maintain its stability in the projected period.

The growth for both Advanced Economies and Emerging market and Developing economies were revised. However, the latter are expected to decline with a downward revision of 10 bps to 4.2% for 2024 followed by an upward revision of 50 bps to 4.5% for 2025. Advanced economies, on the other hand, are expected to come in at 2.5% in 2024 (30 bps above previous forecast) and 2.8% in 2025 (10 bps below the previous forecast).

Issue over hirings

Microsoft faces UK competition probe

LONDON, July 17, (AP) - British regulators opened a preliminary investigation on Tuesday into Microsoft's hiring of an AI startup's key staff over concerns that it could thwart competition in the booming artificial intelligence market.

The Competition and Markets Authority said its review of the hirings from Inflection AI, including its co-founder and CEO Mustafa Suleyman, turned up "sufficient information" to open an investigation.

Microsoft hired Suleyman to head up its consumer artificial intelligence business earlier this year, and brought over several top engineers and researchers. Suleyman co-founded the AI research lab DeepMind, which is now owned by Google, before setting up Inflection and is considered an influential figure in the AI world.

The watchdog has indicated that it was assessing whether the hirings amount to a merger that results in "a substantial lessening of competition" in the U.K.'s AI market, in breach of the country's antitrust rules.

"We are confident that the hiring of talent promotes competition and should not be treated as a merger," Microsoft said in a statement. "We will provide the UK Competition and Markets Authority with the information it needs to complete its inquiries expeditiously."

The British watchdog has until Sept. 11 to decide whether to give its approval or escalate the probe into an in-depth investigation. The authority has the power to reverse deals or impose fixes to address competition concerns.

Authorities on both sides of the Atlantic have become concerned about how the biggest technology companies are gobbling up the talent and products of innovative AI startups without formally acquiring them.

Three members of the U.S. Senate wrote last week to anti-trust enforcers at the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission, urging them to investigate Amazon's deal with San Francisco-based Adept. The deal will result in Adept's CEO and key employees going to Amazon and giving the e-commerce giant a license to Adept's AI systems and datasets.

The senators noted that the FTC is already looking into the Microsoft-Inflection deal and described it as "alarmingly similar to the one between Amazon and Adept, and it effectively eliminated a major competitor to OpenAI."

China charts tech and security-focused development for reviving the economy

Communist Party holding top-level meeting

BANGKOK, July 17, (AP): In a year of major elections that will determine the destinies of many countries, China's ruling Communist Party is holding closed, top-level meetings in Beijing to set strategies for reviving its slowing economy.

State media likened the meetings that end Thursday to reforms started in the late 1970s that opened China's economy to foreign investment and private enterprise. State broadcaster CCTV said the agenda for this year's meetings is to study and endorse "all-around deepening reforms."

Nearly a half-century after the late leader Deng Xiaoping launched China's ascent as a manufacturing powerhouse, the party is doubling down on leader Xi Jinping's blueprint for technology- and national security-focused development. Economists say it's unclear if that will fix the chronic problems dragging on the economy, including a weak job market, massive local government debts and a prolonged slump in the property industry.

Headaches

While those problems are mostly domestic headaches, the health of the world's second-largest economy has an impact way beyond its borders, affecting business activity, financial markets and job opportunities across the globe.

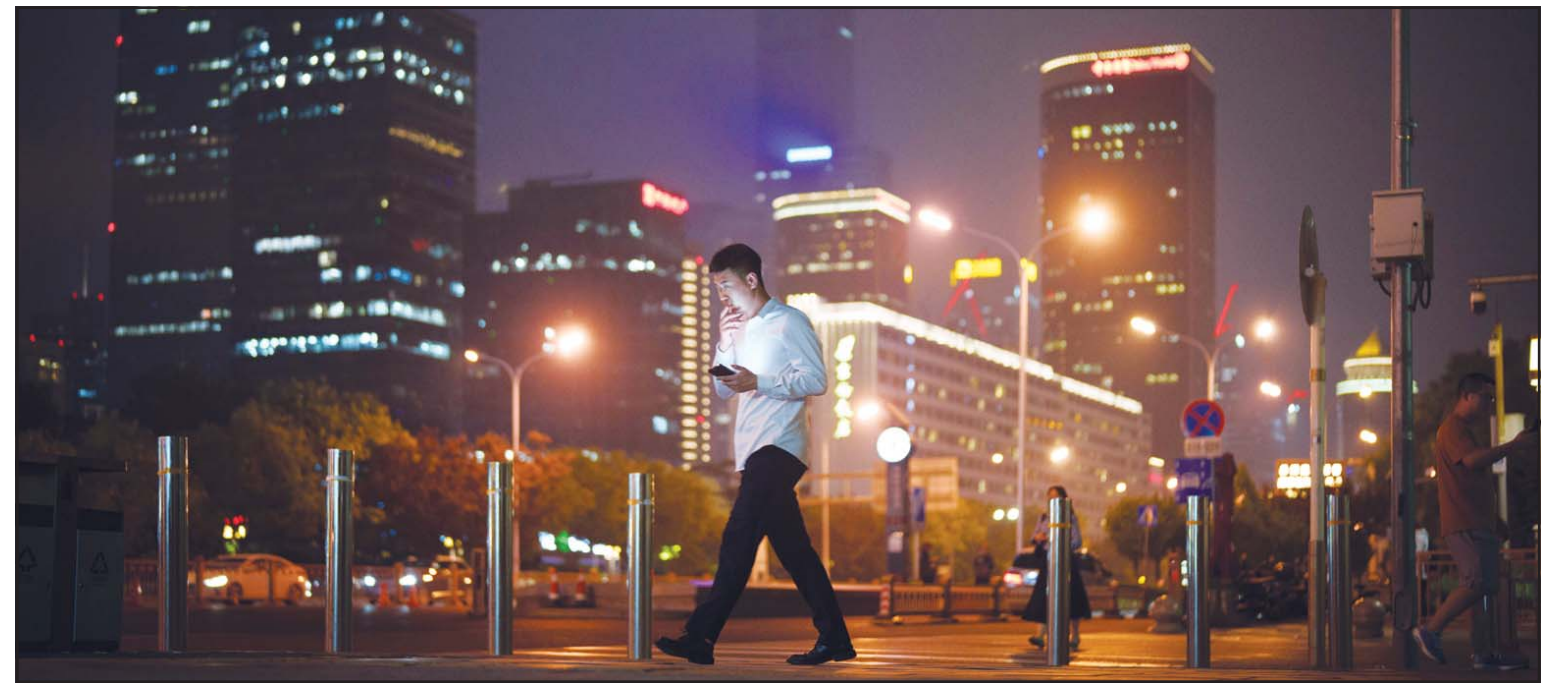
On Monday, the government reported that the economy grew at a 4.7% annual pace in the last quarter, down from 5.3% in January-March. In quarterly terms, it slowed to 0.7% from 1.5%.

Property sales fell nearly 27% for the year through June from a year earlier, and retail sales increased only 2% in June, the lowest level since the coronavirus pandemic.

Despite a cash-for-clunkers program and other initiatives launched this spring to coax people to replace old cars and appliances, vehicle sales sank 6.2% from a year earlier in June while sales of appliances and electronics dropped 7.6%.

Given the vital role housing plays in household wealth, "We expect retail sales will remain weak without fundamental improvement in the property sector," Raymond Yeung and other economists at ANZ Research said in a report.

China's people are keeping a tight rein on spending, wary over job losses, the minimal social safety net, costs for education and other risks. Economists say that without fundamental reforms that allow workers to retain more of the nation's wealth, consumer demand is likely to remain subdued.



A man walks past the Central Business District in Beijing, Monday, July 15, 2024. In a year of major elections setting the course of many countries for years to come, China's ruling Communist Party is holding top-level meetings in Beijing to chart technology- and security-focused development for reviving the economy. The closed-door meetings come at a time of growing pressure to fix chronic problems dragging on growth, including a weak job market, massive local government debts and a prolonged slump in the property market. (AP)

Stats underscore US shoppers' resilience

Retail sales unchanged in June from May

NEW YORK, July 17, (AP) - Shoppers paused their spending in June from May, defying economic forecasts for a pullback and proving their resilience in the face of an uncertain economy.

Retail sales were unchanged in June from May, after being revised upward to a 0.3% increase in May, according to the Commerce Department. Last month, April sales were revised downward - a 0.2% decline, from unchanged. Sales rose 0.6% in March and 0.9% in February. That comes after sales fell 1.1% in January, dragged down in part by inclement weather.

Sales at gas stations and auto dealerships weighed down the figure. Excluding gas prices and auto sales, retail sales rose 0.8%. Sales at gas stations were down 0.3%, while business at auto stores fell 0.2%, as dealerships were disrupted by a multiday outage after cyberattacks on a software supplier.

The snapshot offers only a partial look at consumer spending and doesn't include many services, including travel and hotel lodges. But the lone services category - restaurants - registered an uptick of 0.3%.

Elsewhere, plenty of areas were strong. Online sales rose 1.9%, while clothing and accessories store sales rose 0.6%. Department stores posted a 0.6% increase. Stores selling build-

ADB upgrades growth forecast for developing Asia to 5%

TOKYO, July 17, (KUNA) - The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Wednesday slightly raised its economic forecast for developing Asia this year, as "rising regional exports complement resilient domestic demand."

In its latest edition of Asian Development Outlook, the Manila-based lender revised up its April forecast for Asia's 46 developing economies in 2024 from 4.9 percent to 5.0 percent.

Developing Asia covers 46 economies in Central Asia, East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific, but excludes industrialized countries of Japan, Australia and New Zealand. The growth outlook for 2025 is maintained at 4.9 percent.

"Most of Asia and the Pacific is seeing faster economic growth compared with the second half of last year," ADB Chief

Economist Albert Park said in a statement, according to ADB's Website.

"The region's fundamentals remain strong, but policy makers still need to pay attention to a number of risks that could affect the outlook, from uncertainty related to election outcomes in major economies to interest rate decisions and geopolitical tensions," said Park.

"After a post-pandemic recovery that was driven mainly by domestic demand, exports are rebounding and helping propel the region's economic growth," the ADB said in the report.

However, it pointed out that uncertainty on the US election outcome, elevated geopolitical tensions and trade fragmentation, property market fragility in China, and weather-related events could hurt growth. The ADB kept its gross domestic product (GDP)

growth forecast for China, Asia's biggest economy, at 4.8 percent in 2024 and 4.5 percent in 2025.

"A continued recovery in services consumption and stronger-than-expected exports and industrial activity are supporting the expansion, even as China's struggling property sector has yet to stabilize," the ADB said.

The outlook for India, the region's fastest-growing economy, is also unchanged at 7.0 percent for fiscal year 2024 and 7.2 percent for 2025. India's industrial sector is projected to grow robustly, driven by manufacturing and strong demand in construction, the bank noted.

The ADB also maintained growth projection for Southeast Asia at 4.6 percent this year and 4.7 percent next year "amid solid improvements in both domestic and external demand."

ing materials and garden supplies rose 1.4%.

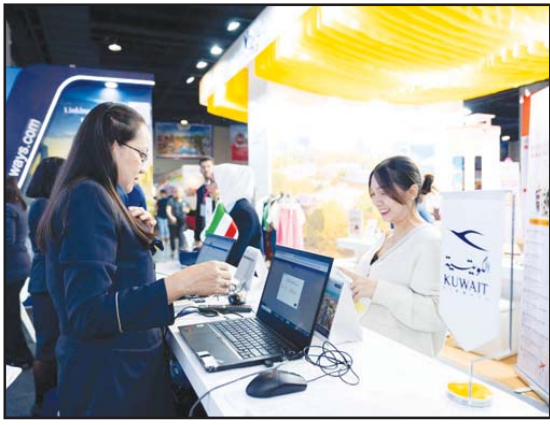
Control retail sales, which excludes food service and drinking places, auto dealers, gas stations, construction material and garden supply stores, and a few other volatile categories, and which goes into the calculation of

nominal gross domestic product, rose a solid 0.9% in the month.

Government retail data isn't adjusted for inflation, which declined 0.1% from May to June, according to the latest government report. High inflation helps to inflate retail sales figures.

"This was a legitimately strong re-

port and inconsistent with a consumer who is on the brink of collapse," Richard de Chazal, a macro analyst at William Blair, wrote in a report. "This spending is being driven by still positive (though moderating) real income growth, from a consumer that is still widely employed."



Kuwait Airways showcases innovations at Travel Madness Expo.

Airline presents fleet and services advancements

Kuwait Airways shines at Travel Madness Expo 2024 in Manila

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: Kuwait Airways participated in the Travel Madness Expo (TME) 2024, which was organized at the SMX Convention Center, Manila, Philippines from 12-14 July, 2024. The exhibition was launched under the title 'Revolutionizing Travel to Create Magical Experiences' with the participation of numerous airlines, tourism, and travel offices around the world, showcasing various

offers and promotions related to the travel and tourism sector.

The Kuwait Airways pavilion witnessed successful participation and attendance during the exhibition providing a platform for the company to showcase its products and services, highlighting its role as a distinguished national carrier in the region with its legacy of notable achievements since 1954 to the visitors and attendees pres-

ent.

Kuwait Airways stated that its participation in this exhibition comes within the framework of its keenness to participate in prominent events and arises from its objectives to be present in exhibitions such as the Travel Madness Expo (TME) which is an important venue that hosts well-known and leading tourism and aviation companies in the world under its platform.

The company added that its participation at this exhibition gives it the opportunity to discuss new partnerships and agreements with companies and to benefit from the latest advancements in the world of aviation and tourism in terms of the latest technology, entertainment systems and advanced services, in addition to examining upcoming projects and future plans related to aviation.

Moreover, Kuwait Airways' participation at this exhibition gives it the opportunity to showcase its services and development which has been achieved in terms of its fleet, including the latest passenger services and customer-centric enhancements which are in pace with the latest international standards of the air transport sector and meets their requirements.

The company concluded by stat-

ing that it is committed to meeting the requirements of its valued customers, interacting with them through all means of communication in general or by participating in local and regional exhibitions and events to highlight the latest services, products, promotions as well as the diverse options and facilities provided to them to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable travel experience.

Al Dirwaza account.

'Convenience and flexibility'

KIB announces winners of Al Dirwaza account's draw

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the winners of the weekly draw held under the Al Dirwaza account's 2024 campaign, which is distinguished by the highest number of winners throughout the year. The third weekly draw based on customers' June deposits recently took place in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as well as representatives from the Bank. The KD 1,000 prize was awarded to Ali Abbas Ali Khalaf, Ghasan Khalifa Abdullah Alwagayan, Mohammad Khaled Abdulrazzaq Albajri, Abduladheem Ahmad Hasan Alhumoud, and Saadi Hadeed Mnahi Alhussaini, whilst the KD 500 prize was awarded to Abdalnaser Mohammad Ahmad Alshatti, Mohamad Fouzi Maklad, Hanan Hassan Abdullah Alhassan, Athar Tawfik Alkalas, Abdulkareem Bader Yaseen Mohammad, Sadeeqah Abdulmohsen Ali Aljassim, and Hatem Alsayed Abu Ajezz Ahmad Alsayed.

It serves to note that Al Dirwaza account is a savings account for individual customers, based on

the Wakala investment principle, launched by KIB as one of its banking products for individuals. The account is currently the best of its kind in the sector, with annual expected profits of up to 2% disbursed on a monthly basis, where the customer gets an expected profit of 2% for the first 3 months from the account opening date and up to 1% expected rate onward. The expected profits are automatically deposited into the customer's account within the first day of the beginning of each month.

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

Japanese-inspired design at INFINITI's Al-Rai showroom

INFINITI Al Babtain in Kuwait recognized as world's largest stand alone showroom

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babtain Co. (AABC), the exclusive dealer for Infiniti cars in Kuwait, is thrilled to announce that its Al-Rai showroom in Kuwait has been recognized as the world's largest stand alone INFINITI showroom.

This prestigious recognition comes with a Certificate of Merit awarded to the project team, led by Mrs. Jihane Bou Hamdan, where the global core Team expressed their profound appreciation and excitement in a heartfelt letter, praising the exceptional commitment, seamless collaboration, and outstanding craftsmanship demonstrated by the team. The successful execution of the Al-Rai showroom project marks a significant milestone in the automotive retail industry, setting a new benchmark for INFINITI's global design standards.

In this occasion, Mrs. Jihane Bou Hamdan, the CTO of Al Babtain Group said "We are incredibly proud of this achievement, which exemplifies our commitment to innovation and excellence in every aspect of our brand. The Al Rai showroom is not just a testament to our vision for the future of automotive retail, but also a symbol of our dedication to providing our customers with an unparalleled experience. Aiming to make this a step towards a full-fledged customer experience excellence"

The Al-Rai showroom showcases INFINITI's new retail architecture, developed by the INFINITI global design team based in Atsugi, Japan. This design blends a clean, minimalist exterior with an open, light-filled interior, drawing inspiration from Japanese design philosophies. It pays homage to the brand's rich heritage while providing a truly immersive experience for customers.

The overarching design embodies the Japanese concept of "Ma," which considers the space between things. Unlike the Western construct of minimalism, Ma embraces empty space in an additive capacity to ensure balance between all elements. The design also mirrors "engawa," a transitional architectural element that creates seamless transitions from outside to inside spaces, blurring the boundaries in between.

The exterior façade features a distinctive 'deep eave' along the roofline that purposefully creates shadow and controls direct sunlight into the showroom. The extensive use of glass fosters harmony be-



Japanese-inspired design.

tween the structures and their surroundings, elegantly integrating with the environment. Interior spaces, where guests spend most of their time interacting with the brand, have been reimagined to evolve INFINITI's signature Total Ownership Experience, delivering an even more seamless and memorable experience.

The new retail architecture considers each detail and the space in between, adhering to the minimalist philosophy of Ma to create a refined and balanced environment. Features include:

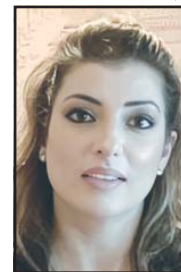
- Extensive use of wood-look finishes throughout to deliver a warm modern ambiance and sense of calm.
- Indirect lighting on the floor and ceiling at the perimeter of the building to draw inspiration from the brand's logo and create a 'vanishing point' when viewed from afar.
- The INFINITI "Kimono fold" pattern, applied as a motif on selected walls and surfaces as a subtle nod

to one of the brand's signature textural details.

• A large semi-translucent mesh screen inspired by a Japanese "Noren" fabric divider, displaying seasonal, nature-inspired content to bring a sense of warmth and interest. Viewed from outside, the screen accentuates the INFINITI logo, creating a welcoming environment for guests.

This showroom's completion is a testament to the dedication, attention to detail, creative problem-solving, and unwavering pursuit of excellence exhibited by the INFINITI Al Babtain team. Their tireless work has not only created a state-of-the-art facility but also set a new standard for the automotive retail landscape.

Customers are welcome to visit the showroom in Al-Rai and enjoy a unique retail experience from Saturday to Thursday from 8:30 am until 10 pm. For more information, please contact customer service at 1804888.



Jihane Bou Hamdan

University enriches student life with vibrant campus activities

AIU offers authentic American education in Kuwait

IMA-Youth Wing to launch 'Save Water, Energy for Today & Save Life for Tomorrow' campaign

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: IMA-Youth Wing is excited to announce the launch of its campaign 'Save Water, Energy for Today and Save Life for Tomorrow' set to begin on July 19, 2024, at Masjid-e-Abu Rafe, Jaleeb Al Shuwaikh, Kuwait, from 1 PM onwards.

The campaign centres on the themes "Eat & Drink, but do not waste" (Quran 7:31) and "You will be accountable for all the Bounties you enjoyed" (Quran 102:08) emphasizing the ethical and spiritual responsibility of every individual towards conserving resources.

The campaign features a series of impactful programs and activities aimed at fostering awareness and practical action:

- Filter Cleaning/Changing: Volunteers will address the need for clean water by cleaning and changing filters in public areas, ensuring the community has access to safe drinking water.
- Stickers Pasting: Awareness stickers will be placed in prominent public locations to remind and encourage individuals to conserve water and energy.
- Awareness Sessions: Educa-



IMA poster.

tional sessions will be conducted at public areas, camps, and beaches, focusing on the importance of conserving water and energy and the practical steps individuals can take.

• Twitter Campaign: A social media initiative will be launched to engage the broader community in discussions about conservation and sustainability, leveraging the power of Twitter to spread the message.

• Reel Competition: A cre-

ative competition inviting participants to produce short reels that highlight water and energy conservation. The best entries will receive recognition and prizes.

• Flyers Sharing: Informative flyers will be shared throughout the campaign, providing tips and guidelines on how to save water and energy effectively.

• Short Videos Sharing: Engaging short videos will be shared across social media platforms to raise awareness and encourage community involvement in conservation efforts.

The campaign will conclude with a special program on August 16, 2024, where the achievements and impacts of the campaign will be reviewed, and future initiatives will be presented.

IMA-Youth Wing invites everyone to join this important cause and help make a difference in preserving our precious resources for future generations.

Guest from Ministry of Awqaf, Ministry of Electricity & Water, and Arab delegates will grace the Campaign launching Event.

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: American International University (AIU) is proud to offer students an unparalleled educational experience in Kuwait that blends authentic American opportunities with a diverse range of in-demand majors and specializations. AIU is quickly becoming the top choice for students seeking a world-class education without the need to travel abroad.

At AIU, students receive an authentic American education, ensuring the same high standards and quality found in top universities across the United States. The university boasts a wide array of specialized programs designed to meet the demands of today's job market and its future. These programs equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in their chosen fields.

Dedicated to student success, AIU's Career Services department helps students secure the best internships and job opportunities. A robust network of industry connections and partnerships ensures that AIU students are well-prepared to enter the workforce. As Raheeq, one of AIU's graphic design students, shared, "AIU prepares us for the market with all the necessary training and valuable internships."

Pride in its state-of-the-art facilities sets AIU apart. Modern classrooms, advanced laboratories, and a comprehensive library enhance



Blending American education with local convenience.

the learning experience and provide students with the tools they need to succeed.

Experienced and renowned professionals make up the AIU faculty, bringing a wealth of knowledge and industry experience to the classroom. Their commitment to teaching excellence ensures a rich and engaging educational experience for students.

Beyond academics, AIU cares deeply about student life, offering a vibrant campus experience with various events and activities. Students can participate in Film Festival, Career Fair, National and Liberation Day celebrations, sports

championships, and numerous student clubs and activities. These activities provide opportunities for leadership, collaboration, and personal growth.

Standing out as a premier choice for students seeking an exceptional education, AIU focuses on in-demand majors, comprehensive support services, and a commitment to student success. This environment enables students to thrive academically and professionally.

For more information about AIU and our programs, please visit aiu.edu.kw or contact our admissions office at +965 22262500.

Global streams surge in 2024, Latin music dominates

LOS ANGELES, July 17, (AP): Halfway through the year, a few music trends have become apparent: Global music streams are up, Latin music has become the fastest growing streaming genre in the United States, and physical album variants - multiple releases of the same - are on the rise.

The global music industry surpassed 1 trillion streams at the fastest pace, ever, in a calendar year, Luminate's 2024 Midyear Report has found. The number was reached 10 days faster than in 2023.

Global streams also increased 15.1% with 2.29 trillion on-demand audio streams, up from 1.99 trillion at this point last year.

People everywhere are streaming more music, and in the U.S., Latin music has become the fastest growing streaming genre, up 15.1% from this time last year.

Latin music streaming also leans the most current - 35% of all Latin streams in the U.S. are for albums released in the last 18 months. Compare that to rock music, where 70.5% of streams in the U.S. are from deep catalogs - releases that are 5 years old, or older.

There are no Latin artists featured in the top 10 albums or songs of the year to date, but Bad Bunny, Peso Pluma, Fuera Regida,

Karol G, Rauw Alejandro, Aventura, Carín León are among the top 200 most streamed artists in the US for the first half of 2024.

Last year, Latin music was among the top three fastest growing genres in the US, says Jaime Marconette, Luminate's vice president of music insights and industry relations. The 2024 figures illustrate a continuation in that trend.

"A huge part of that growth was driven by the continued rise of regional Mexican music, which is the largest Latin music subgenre so far this year with more than 13 billion US on-demand audio streams," Marconette told The Associated Press.

Popularity

And while the Puerto Rican artist Bad Bunny remains "the biggest-streaming Latin music artist in the US," he says the three other Latin artists who crossed over 100 million US on-demand audio streams throughout the first half of 2024 are regional Mexican acts: Pluma, Fuerza Regida and Junior H.

It's not just the streaming economy on the rise. Physical variants of albums - multiple releases of the same album, sometimes containing different bonus tracks or featuring a different design - have steadily grown in popularity since 2020.

In 2024, physical album sales increased 3.8% in the US over this time last year, climbing to 24.7 million from 23.8 million, the data and analytics company found in its report.

But it's not just any artist creating more physical variants of their releases. The artists who've had the top 10 bestselling albums so far this year have also had the highest average number of variants. That includes Taylor Swift, Billie Eilish and Beyoncé, as well as K-pop acts like Tomorrow x Together, Ateez and TWICE.

In 2024, the average number of variants for a top 10 bestselling album is 22: seven different vinyl releases, 13 CDs and two cassettes.

For albums in the top 101 - 500 rankings, there's only about five variants per release, and for 501 - 1,000, there's an average of four physical variants.

"We have seen a consistent trend in recent years where albums at the top of the charts employed more and more physical variants in their album release campaigns," says Marconette.

However, "there has also been criticism within the artist and fan communities regarding the environmental impacts of producing so many physical products," he says, suggesting there is "a clear demand for recycled materials and other sustainability initiatives in this space."

Music

Variety

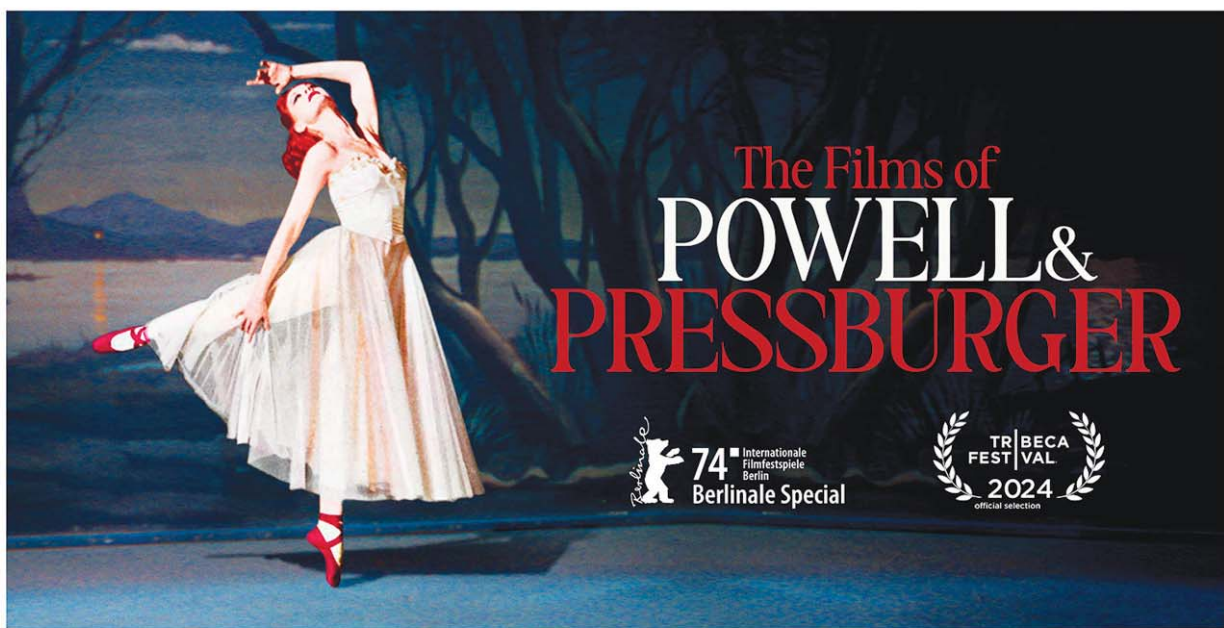
Film

Features

ARABO TIMES

THURSDAY, JULY 18, 2024

PRESENTED & NARRATED by EXECUTIVE PRODUCER **MARTIN SCORSESE**



COHEN MEDIA GROUP, BBC FILM & SCREEN SCOTLAND PRESENT A TEN THOUSAND BG & ICE CREAM FILMS PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH SIKELIA PRODUCTIONS IN ASSOCIATION WITH ALTITUDE FILM ENTERTAINMENT

This image released by Cohen Media Group shows promotional art for the documentary 'Made in England.' (AP)

Ode to Powell, Pressburger

Scorsese celebrates 'cinematic masters'

NEW YORK, July 17, (AP): Martin Scorsese has spent a sizeable portion of his life talking about movies he loves. He's made documentaries about Italian cinema ("My Voyage to Italy"), Hollywood studio films ("A Personal Journey With Martin Scorsese Through American Movies") and individual filmmakers like Elia Kazan and Val Lewton. But when Scorsese talks about the movies of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, it means something different. It's getting very close to something fundamental for him.

In the new documentary "Made in England: The Films of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger," Scorsese recalls watching "The Red Shoes" as a child. He describes it as "one of the origins of my obsession with cinema, itself."

"The Powell-Pressburger films have had a profound effect on the sensibility that I bring to all the work I was able to do," Scorsese says in the documentary. "I was so bewitched by them as a child that they make a big part of my films' subconscious."

Legacy

"Made in England," which rolls out in theaters this month, is a poignant crescendo in one of the great love affairs in movies. The films of Powell and Pressburger, the directing-screenwriting duo known as the Archers, has been an abiding polestar for Scorsese, who befriended Powell late in life. Thelma Schoonmaker, Scorsese's longtime editor, married him, and since his death in 1990 has worked tirelessly to celebrate his legacy.

Together, Schoonmaker and Scorsese have restored eight of the films already, including Technicolor masterworks like "The Red Shoes," "The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp," "Black Narcissus" and "A Matter of Life and Death," along with the beloved black-and-white gem "I Know Where I'm Going!" and, most recently, "The Small Black Room." Once Scorsese and Schoonmaker finish editing their own films, like last year's "Killers of the Flower Moon," Schoonmaker turns to her other life's work.

"I have the best job in the world and I have the best husband in the world. What more could you ask for?" Schoonmaker said in a recent interview by phone. "Working for Marty is just so fantastic. Every film is different, every film is a new challenge. And then we sit and talk about Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger."

As an expression of movie love - of the power of film to transfix you, to change your life, to live alongside you as you grow older - "Made in England" could hardly be more effusive. It's playing as part of a Powell-Pressburger retrospective currently running at the Museum of Modern Art, with stops upcoming in Seattle, Chicago and at the Academy Museum in Los Angeles.

Collaborate

"The word 'love' is right, for all of us," says David Hinton. He directed "Made in England" and first met Powell in for a 1980s British TV documentary on him. He was approached by Schoonmaker, who initiated the film. Hinton quickly realized the zeal of his collaborators.

"Scorsese and Thelma, they want to put in every good moment from every good Powell and Pressburger film," Hinton says, chuckling. "Sequences were flying back and forth across the Atlantic. They didn't want to take credit but a lot of what you see in the finished film is actually their work."

Powell, the British son of a hop farmer, and Pressburger, a Hungarian Jew who had fled the Nazis to Britain, forged their collaboration during WWII. Together, sharing their credits on a single screen, they made 19 features together, many of which remain among the finest films ever made.

Schoonmaker believes she was in love with Powell before she met him. She saw the "The Red Shoes" when she was 12 and "Colonel Blimp" not long after.

"It devastated me, in a good sense," Schoonmaker says. "I had no idea who had made it and no idea that I would later be introduced to the man who made it and marry him."

When Schoonmaker met him, Powell's career had petered out, a downfall exacerbated by the response to his disturbing and now widely celebrated 1960 film "Peeping Tom." When Scorsese in 1974 was given an award by the Edinburgh Film Festival, he asked if Powell would present it to him. But few remembered him. Powell, he learned, was then nearly destitute, living in a cottage in Gloucester.

By the time Scorsese was preparing to make "Raging Bull" (1980), he and Powell had become friends, a relationship that reinvigorating the forgotten filmmaker. Powell later wrote he felt "the blood coursing through his veins again."

At the same time, Scorsese kept sending Schoonmaker home with VHS tapes of the films. He indoctrinated others, too, like Francis Ford Coppola and Robert De Niro. The Powell and Pressburger legacy began to be revived. And a mutual filmmaking friendship blossomed.

Protective

"Michael gave to Marty too," Schoonmaker says, recalling when Scorsese was considering abandoning "GoodFellas" over pressure to trim its drug scenes. "I read him the script and he said, 'Get Marty on the phone.' He said, 'Marty, this is the best script I've read in 20 years. You have to make this movie.' So Marty went back in one more time and got it made. That's due to Michael. He was ferociously protective of Marty's artistic freedom."

A photo from their wedding day appears in "Made in England." Schoonmaker ultimately spent 10 years with Powell before his death. She calls them "the happiest years of my life." "You know, he was an optimist," says Schoonmaker. "He had me put on his gravestone 'Film director and optimist.' And he was. Living with someone who's an optimist is quite extraordinary. He lived every second of every day."

It's hard not to see similarities between the partnerships of Pressburger and Powell and Scorsese and Schoonmaker, who's edited every feature of his since "Raging Bull." One of the most eye-opening sections of "Made in England" is a side-by-side comparison of some of the moments from Powell and Pressburger films that echo in theirs. The ballet performance in "The Red Shoes" influenced how Scorsese shot boxing matches in the ring in "Raging Bull." In the Russian impresario Leremontov (Anton Walbrook) of "The Red Shoes," Scorsese sees a model for Travis Bickle (Robert De Niro). Their movements are eerily similar.

More than particular moments or characters, though, there's also the deeper way that Powell's marriage of imagery and music informs Scorsese's. The hallucinatory 1951 opera "The Tales of Hoffman," which Scorsese - not your average kid - watched obsessively as a 10 year old on TV, he says, "taught me pretty much everything I know about the relation of camera to music." The famous "Layla" montage of "GoodFellas," Schoonmaker says, was informed by the music-timed cuts in the feverish finale of "Black Narcissus."

CHINA: The original production of London's West End musical "Cats" will be staged from Nov. 19 to 24 at the Beijing Performing Arts Centre in the Chinese capital.

The musical, with music by **Andrew Lloyd Webber**, is based on poems by **T. S. Eliot** and debuted in London's West End in 1981. It was first staged in **China** in 2003 and toured **Beijing** for the first time in 2004.

The upcoming 2024 performance will feature a formidable cast, including the original cast members.

The show will be performed as part of this year's international theater festival organized by the National Centre for the Performing Arts. During the festival, Russian musical "Anna Karenina" will be staged during the National Day holiday. (Xinhua)

NEW YORK: Former TV personality **Carlos Watson** was convicted Tuesday in a federal financial conspiracy case about Ozy Media, an ambitious startup that collapsed after another executive impersonated a YouTube executive to hype the company's success.

Watson, 53, had been free on bail but was taken into custody to await sentencing, set for Nov. 18. Brooklyn-based US Attorney **Breon Peace** said the verdict held Watson accountable for "brazen crimes" that were meant to keep cash-strapped Ozy afloat but ultimately sank it.

"The jury found that Watson was a con man who told lie upon lie upon lie to deceive investors into buying stock in his company," Peace said in a statement, adding

that the company "collapsed under the weight of Watson's dishonest schemes."

Peace's office said a jury found Watson guilty of all the charges against him: conspiracy to commit securities fraud, conspiracy to commit wire fraud and aggravated identity theft. Ozy Media also was convicted of the same conspiracy offenses, the only charges the company faced.

Watson and Ozy had pleaded not guilty and denied the allegations. He testified that Ozy's cash squeezes were standard startup speed bumps and that materials given to investors noted that the information wasn't audited and could change - "like 'buyer beware,'" he said.

The defense blamed any misrepresentations on Ozy co-founder and chief operating officer **Samir Rao**, who has pleaded guilty.

Watson and Ozy plan to appeal, lawyers **Ronald Sullivan**, **Janine Gilbert** and **Shannon Frison** said in a statement.

Watson's relatives and supporters left court without commenting, but wearing black shirts emblazoned with, "Whose son is next?"

Watson could face decades in prison, though sentencing guidelines for individual defend-

ants vary. Now-defunct Ozy faces potential financial penalties. (AP)

PORTLAND, Ore.: **Naomi Pomeroy**, an award-winning chef who helped put Portland on the map as a culinary destination, has drowned in an inner tubing accident, authorities said. She was 49 years old.

Pomeroy drowned Saturday evening in the Willamette River near **Corvallis** after the group she was tubing with got caught on an exposed snag in the water, the **Benton County Sheriff's Office** said in a statement. Pomeroy was pulled under the water and trapped by a paddle board leash attached to her, **Captain Chris Duffitt** said. The group had tied their inner tubes and paddle board together.

Authorities said they safely recovered the other two people on the shore and transported them to a boat launch.

The sheriff's office said it is still working to recover Pomeroy's body. It searched the area using sonar, underwater cameras and drones but was unable to find it due to heavy debris.

"I am dedicated to locating Naomi to bring her home to her family and loved ones", Sheriff **Jef Van Arsdall** said in a statement. "I want to thank all involved in the search and recovery mission and support during this difficult time."

The sheriff's office warned people not to attach themselves to a paddle board unless it has a quick release leash, and advised against tying two or more inner tubes together, as doing so means each person should have a life jacket. The **Oregon State Marine Board** noted there has been an "emerging trend" in recent years

of people dying due to the leash on their stand up paddle board, or SUP, getting tangled in brush or other debris in rivers.

"Most ankle leashes used by SUP users are not designed for quick release," **Brian Paulsen**, the agency's boating safety program manager, said in a statement Tuesday. He said quick release leashes, designed for moving water, are worn around the waist.

Pomeroy rose to prominence in the Portland food scene after opening the restaurant **Beast** in 2007. There, diners could enjoy a six-course prix fixe dinner served at communal tables and built around Pomeroy's penchant for butchering whole animals.

The restaurant paved the way for Pomeroy to win a coveted **James Beard** award for best chef in the Northwest in 2014, around the same time Portland was soaring in popularity as a travel destination for its food scene, natural beauty and quirky reputation. The restaurant closed during the coronavirus pandemic, but Pomeroy had just recently opened a new frozen custard shop.

Pomeroy was also known for her appearance on cooking shows, including **Top Chef Masters**, and owned the Portland cocktail bar **Expatriate** with her husband. The bar was closed Monday, KOIN reported, as mourners left flowers and remembrances stacked outside the business.

Heather Wallberg, who owns a restaurant across from **Expatriate** and has worked in the industry for over a decade, told KOIN that Pomeroy "made the Portland food scene what it is today." She said she reached out to **Expatriate** to offer any help they need. (AP)



Pomeroy

Webber

People & Places

Art

Powerful artworks

Palestinian translates Gaza's reality into art

GAZA, July 17. (Agencies): In a small corner of a refugee tent draped in clotheslines of outfits and bags of daily essentials, Palestinian artist **Basel al-Maqousi** sits hunched over a big sketchbook, quickly putting on page one after another displaced family gathering beneath their shelter tent.

The strokes are bold, leaving a sharp black-and-white contrast between a bleak forest of tents in the war-ravaged Gaza city of Deir al-Balah, and fresh Palestinian faces up front.

The protagonists seem to wear a calm, even decisive, expression, leaving outsiders no more hints to decipher, as though they refused to surrender a solemn moment of reunion to another Israeli attack, which could shatter the sheer facade of peace at any minute.

These captivating artworks not only capture a sense of "death reprieve" brought by the protracted Israeli bloodshed to millions of Gazans but also carry the traumatic memories of 45-year-old al-Maqousi, also a father of five.

The artist told Xinhua he still could not believe the beautiful central Gaza city had been destroyed, and he, like other Palestinians in the territory, had lost his home and a normal life.

"For ten months in a row, we (Palestinians) were forced to be in a race with the death all the time because of the ongoing Israeli attacks ... we were displaced multiple times just to find safe places. However, we found nothing," he said.

"Every time we were forced to displace," the artist recalled, "I lost some of my human emotions and faith in life getting back on track someday. My personality has changed by the mental pressure we are suffering from."

Hopelessness

Before the war, al-Maqousi used to paint for the beauty and nature in Gaza. But the war made him increasingly alert and nervous, sometimes unable to control his reactions. This upset those around him.

To rein back and to relieve the internal pressure, he resorted to painting. The anger, fears, hopelessness, and dire reality in Gaza were thus translated into artworks.

Day by day, al-Maqousi started to see beautiful moments could still exist in a time of hardship and tried to deliver the feeling of normality and hope as he drew children playing at the beach while others gathered to get their lunch on the sand.

"The smiles of children had encouraged me to pick up the hope once again ... After drawing dozens of such paintings, I felt that I regained my positive energy," he said.

In a bid to help others traumatized by the war, al-Maqousi then launched a drawing workshop for displaced children from scratch and managed to overcome a severe shortage of drawing boards, paints, and even a suitable place.

"I was surprised when I saw the children draw beautiful paintings; some drew beautiful houses with their families, others drew Palestinian flags, while the third group preferred to draw the Palestinian flag," al-Maqousi said as he flashed a smile.

He added, "I felt that we (Palestinians) have the full energy to continue our life even if we lost everything now, and we will rebuild our life once the current war ends."

Israel has been launching a large-scale offensive against Hamas in the Gaza Strip to retaliate against a Hamas rampage through the southern Israeli border on Oct. 7, 2023, during which about 1,200 people were killed and more than 200 were taken hostage.

By Monday, the Palestinian death toll from ongoing Israeli attacks on Gaza has risen to 38,664, according to the Gaza-based health authorities.

Also:

WELLINGTON, New Zealand: They were billed as artworks by **Pablo Picasso**, paintings so valuable that an Australian art museum's decision to display them in an exhibition restricted to women visitors provoked a gender discrimination lawsuit. The paintings again prompted international headlines when the gallery re-hung them in a women's restroom to sidestep a legal ruling that said men could not be barred from viewing them.

But the artworks at the center of the uproar were not really by Picasso or the other famed artists billed as their creators, it emerged this week when the curator of the women-only exhibition admitted she had painted them herself.

Kirsha Kaechele wrote on the blog of Tasmania's Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) on Wednesday that she was revealing herself as the works' creator after receiving questions from a reporter and the Picasso Administration in France about their authenticity.

But they had been displayed for more than three years before their provenance was questioned, she said, even though she had accidentally hung one of the fake paintings upside down.

"I imagined that a Picasso scholar, or maybe just a Picasso fan, or maybe just someone who googles things, would visit the Ladies Lounge and see that the painting was upside down and expose me on social media," Kaechele wrote. But no one did.

The saga began when Kaechele created a women-only area at MONA in 2020 for visitors to "revel in the pure company of women" and as a statement on their exclusion from male-dominated spaces throughout history.

The so-called Ladies Lounge offered high tea, massages and champagne served by male butlers, and was open to anyone who identified as a woman. Outlandish and absurd title cards were displayed alongside the fake paintings, antiques and jewelry that was "quite obviously new and in some cases plastic," she added.

The lounge had to display "the most important artworks in the world," Kaechele wrote this week, in order for men "to feel as excluded as possible."

It worked. MONA - famous in Australia for its strange and subversive exhibitions and events - was ordered by the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal in March to stop refusing men entry to the Ladies Lounge after a complaint from a male gallery patron who was upset at being barred from the space during a 2023 visit.

"The participation by visitors in the process of being permitted or refused entry is part of the artwork itself," tribunal Deputy President **Richard Grueber** wrote in his decision, which found the exhibition was discriminatory.

Grueber ruled that the man had suffered a disadvantage, in part because the artworks in the Ladies Lounge were so valuable. Kaechele had described them to the hearing as "a carefully curated selection of paintings by the world's leading artists, including two paintings that spectacularly demonstrate Picasso's genius."



Al-Maqousi



This image released by Apple TV+ shows Lisa Kudrow in a scene from the series 'Time Bandits.' (AP)

Television

Kudrow's show gives modern twist on Monty Python

'Time Bandits' show revives cult film

LOS ANGELES, July 17. (AP): Adapting a cult-classic film into a television series is a daunting task, but for Lisa Kudrow and her collaborators on "Time Bandits," that challenge just meant there was more room for exploration.

"The series version of a film means you're gonna expand and really go into some more details about that world, and that's what I was excited about," Kudrow said in a recent interview with The Associated Press. "It was really fun."

"Time Bandits," an Apple TV+ series that begins streaming July 24, is based on the 1981 film of the same name directed by Monty Python's Terry Gilliam and co-written by him and frequent collaborator Michael Palin. Both the film and the series follow a ragtag band of time-traveling thieves, led by Kudrow as Penelope, who join forces with their newest recruit - an 11-year-old history buff named Kevin - as they journey through time on a quest to save the boy's parents from evil forces.

While the series stays loyal to several key details and bits from the source material, Taika Waititi and Jemaine Clement, who created the series with Iain Morris, said it was important to them that the show didn't feel like an imitation of the film.

"We had to be different as not to just be thieving or tracing over what they had," Clement said.

In the biggest departure from the original film, the bandits are not played by actors with dwarfism - a move that the duo said was swiftly criticized by the dwarfism community when the casting was announced early in the

show's development. Abbie Purvis, the granddaughter of original film actor Jack Purvis, took to TikTok to condemn the casting choice, saying "for a generation that is so big on talking about inclusivity and diversity and making sure that everyone's heard, this whole casting choice just seems absurd."

Waititi said he and his co-writers initially wrote the script with some of the main cast as people with dwarfism but he doesn't think the film "should be defined because of the presence of little people in it."

They ultimately went with different actors. Clement said the creative team wrestled with the casting decision, referencing "two big sides of this debate": "Whether it's right to stereotype little people as magical creatures, and then also whether, by not doing that, you're cutting out jobs for smaller actors."

Performance

Following the casting announcement, Clement said they "reacted to those complaints and added parts for some smaller actors," saying that should the series be renewed for a second season, those roles would be more prominently featured.

Waititi and Clement both appear in the series themselves in recurring roles. The duo is known for their work on "What We Do in the Shadows" - a movie and FX series - and Waititi has also directed and appeared in major films, including "Jojo Rabbit" and two "Thor" movies.

The child actor who holds the show together as Kevin is Kal-El Tuck, who had appeared in a handful of short

films before he was cast as the series' leading character. He said he didn't want the original film as he didn't want it to color his performance.

"I wanted to be my Kevin, not one else's Kevin," Tuck said. "I wanted to be my way of doing Kevin."

Kudrow praised her young co-star, calling him a "giving actor" and noting that many of the quips and much of the banter among the bandits were improvised. The "Friends" alum also said she was initially nervous to work on the project.

"I was, of course, scared, like 'Uh oh, they'll think they made a mistake,' because you can't help it, you have that insecurity, and 'Do I have the right tone for this?' and all of that, but it was just fun," Kudrow said, noting that she felt like she was "playing" while on set.

While it does stray from the beloved film, "Time Bandits" brings the story to a new generation and strives to honor the original's humor and heart.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Kerry Washington's comedy "UnPrisoned" returns for a second season Wednesday on Hulu. She plays Paige, a single mom raising a teenage son who is thrown a curveball when her dad (played by **Delroy Lindo**) moves in after he's released from prison. Paige works as a therapist but has personal issues of her own to work through, including fears of abandonment. The series was created by writer **Terry McMillan**, who tapped into her own experience growing up in the foster care system because her own father was incarcerated.



John Stamos, (right), and wife Caitlin McHugh attend the Hulu original series premiere of 'UnPrisoned' Season 2 at the Midnight Theater on Tuesday, July 16, in New York. (AP)



Willens



Tate

Variety

NEW YORK: Kathy Willens, a pathbreaking photojournalist who helped cement women's place behind the lens everywhere from the Super Bowl to war-torn Somalia during her nearly 45-year career at The Associated Press, died Tuesday. She was 74.

Willens died at her Brooklyn home of ovarian cancer, diagnosed shortly after her 2021 retirement, her nephew **Ben Willens** said.

A giving colleague but fierce competitor who brooked no interference between her and a picture, Willens was among the AP's first female staff photographers. She went on to shoot more than 90,000 images - of presidents and **Pope John Paul II**, protests and war, sports triumphs and human tragedy.

"A stroll through her archive is a stroll through history," said former AP Director of Photography **J. David Ake**, who edited many of Willens' pictures over the last two decades of her career. It could be a challenging task, given her penchant for shooting a lot of frames. (AP)

BUCHAREST, Romania: The internet influencer **Andrew Tate** and his brother **Tristan** will no longer be allowed to leave Romania as they await trial on charges of human trafficking, rape and forming a criminal gang to sexually exploit women, following a new court ruling Tuesday.

The earlier court ruled July 5 that the 37-year-old Andrew Tate, a social media personality known for expressing misogynistic views online, and his brother Tristan, 36, could leave Romania as long as they remained within the 27-member European Union.

But on Tuesday the Bucharest Court of Appeal ruled in favor of prosecutors who challenged that decision.

The brothers' spokesperson, **Mateea Petrescu**, said the decision is final and that the pair cannot leave Romania. (AP)

NEW YORK: The comedy rock duo Tena-cious D - made up of **Jack Black** and **Kyle Gass** - has canceled the rest of their tour after Gass' remarks about the assassination attempt on **Donald Trump**.

While onstage at a concert in **Sydney** on Sunday, Gass was presented with a birthday cake and asked to "make a wish" by Black. Gass responded, "Don't miss Trump next

time," an apparent reference to the rally shooting a day before that left the former president with an injured ear. The video of Gass was widely circulated on social media.

"I was blindsided by what was said at the show on Sunday. I would never condone hate speech or encourage political violence in any form," Black said in a Tuesday statement on Instagram. "After much reflection, I no longer feel it is appropriate to continue the Tena-cious D tour, and all future creative plans are on hold. I am grateful to the fans for their support and understanding." (AP)

NEW YORK: Country singer **Ingrid Andress** has gone viral for her widely panned performance of the national anthem at the 2024 MLB Home Run Derby at the Globe Life Field in Arlington, Texas.

On Monday night, the four-time Grammy nominee belted an a cappella version of "The Star-Spangled Banner," an incredibly challenging song to sing. Clips of her less-than-popular rendition have since made the rounds on social media.

Andress, 32, began her career as a Nashville songwriter, penning songs for performers across genres, including **Bebe Rexha's** "Girl in the Mirror," Halestorm's "Conflicted," and the critically acclaimed "Boys," which became an international hit for British singer **Charli XCX**. (AP)



Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band perform during a concert at Strawberry Arena in Stockholm, Sweden, on Monday, July 15. (AP)

New non-invasive test is promising advancement in medical technology

Urine test offers convenient alternative to cervical cancer smear tests

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: The development of a new urine-based test for cervical cancer screening, pioneered by researchers at Waseda University in Japan, represents a promising advancement in medical technology, reports Al-Qabas daily.

This innovative approach aims to replace traditional smear tests with a non-invasive method that detects high-risk proteins associated with the cancer-causing human papillomavirus (HPV).

This new test offers a non-surgical and accurate alternative to traditional methods. By detecting specific oncoproteins linked to HPV, particularly the E7 protein from HPV 16, the test can identify precancerous lesions more effectively.

This could potentially encourage more women to undergo screening,

addressing concerns such as embarrassment or lack of time that often deter women from traditional cervical cancer tests.

A significant advantage of this urine test is its convenience for home use. Women can collect samples at their convenience, eliminating the need for clinic visits. This feature is expected to improve screening uptake rates, which have declined in recent years due to various reasons including logistical challenges.

Research findings indicate promising effectiveness levels. For example, the test showed 80% accuracy in detecting low-grade cervical abnormalities and for intermediate-grade abnormalities, its accuracy was 71%.

However, its effectiveness dropped to 38% for high-grade ab-

normalities, suggesting room for improvement in detecting advanced stages of the disease.

The study aligns with previous research from the University of Manchester, underscoring that urine tests can match cervical smears in sensitivity for detecting HPV. This aligns with women's preferences, as many find providing a urine sample less invasive and more comfortable than traditional cervical smears.

While initial results are promising, further trials are necessary to validate the test's reliability across larger and more diverse populations. If successful, this technology could revolutionize cervical cancer screening globally, offering a more accessible and effective method for early detection and prevention.

Breakthrough in disease diagnosis

Versatile AI model transforms 'cancer image' interpretation



myeloMATCH precision medicine clinical trial leverages next-day genomic testing to quickly match patients with appropriate trials across North America. (Business Wire)

BEIJING, July 17, (Xinhua): A Chinese team has developed the country's first versatile artificial intelligence (AI) model that is adept at analyzing a diverse range of pathological images. This advanced model is capable of examining more than 20 human organs, including the lungs, breast and liver.

This large language model (LLM) known as PathOrchestra represents a breakthrough in AI-assisted disease diagnosis, heralding a transformative shift from a singular model dedicated to a specific cancer to a versatile one capable of addressing a multitude of them.

The researchers from Air Force Medical University (AFMU), Tsinghua University and SenseTime leveraged China's largest domestic dataset comprising nearly 300,000 whole-slide digital pathology images, which equates to an impressive 300 terabytes of data.

Harnessing self-supervised learning, the model "cross-learned" to analyze over 20 different organs and has accomplished a slew of clinical tasks, including pan-cancer classification, lesion identification and detection, multi-cancer subtype differentiation and biomarker assessment.

Application

The diversity in pathological images poses a formidable challenge for AI applications, and this complexity has earned it the title of the "jewel in the crown" in the realm of image processing, said Wang Zhe, a professor from the Basic Medical Science Academy under the AFMU.

PathOrchestra has achieved an accuracy rate exceeding 95 percent in nearly 50 clinical tasks, including lymphoma subtype diagnosis and bladder cancer screening, according to an AFMU news release on Tuesday.

This advancement can substantially reduce the workload of pathologists, and notably increased the efficiency of reviewing medical images, said the researchers.

PathOrchestra stands as an example among the burgeoning landscape of large models in China, representing the country's rapid and vibrant growth in the field of AI.

Of the more than 1,300 AI LLMs globally, 36 percent are from China, the second-largest proportion after the United States, according to a white paper on the global digital economy released recently by the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology at the Global Digital Economy Conference 2024.

Nutrition label empowers consumers

Expert explains science, politics behind complex legacy of Nutrition Facts label

By Xaq Frohlich, Auburn University

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

The Nutrition Facts label, that black and white information box found on nearly every packaged food product in the US since 1994, has recently become an icon for consumer transparency.

From Apple's "Privacy Nutrition Labels" that disclose how smartphone apps handle user data, to a "Garment Facts" label that standardizes ethical disclosures on clothing, policy advocates across industries invoke "Nutrition Facts" as a model for empowering consumers and enabling socially responsible markets. They argue that intuitive information fixes could solve a wide range of market-driven social ills.

Yet this familiar, everyday product label actually has a complicated legacy.

I study food regulation and diet culture and became interested in the Nutrition Facts label while researching the history of Food and Drug Administration policies on food standards and labeling. In 1990, Congress passed the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act, mandating nutrition labels on all packaged foods to help address growing concerns about rising rates of chronic illnesses linked to unhealthy diets. The FDA introduced its "Nutrition Facts" panel in 1993 as a public health tool that empowered consumers to make healthier choices.

The most obvious purpose of the Nutrition Facts label is for consumers to learn the nutritional properties of a food. In practice, however, this label has done much more than simply inform shoppers. It also encodes a wide range of political and technical compromises about how to translate food into nutrients that meet the diverse needs of the American public.

The daily value, or DV, percentages on the label don't all come from the same source. This is a reflection of differing public health targets for the label.

Recommended values for micronutrients like vitamins are based on Recommended Dietary Allowances, or RDAs, from the National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine. Vitamin RDAs were developed out of historical concerns with undernourishment and meeting minimum needs.

Daily value percentages for macronutrients - carbs, fats and proteins - are based on US Department of Agricul-

ture Dietary Guidelines. DVs for macronutrients registered a new concern about overeating and a focus on "negative nutrition" encouraging maximum intake levels.

DVs reflect two fundamentally different causes for concern. The numbers for micronutrients represent a floor: the basic minimum vitamin needs a child should meet to avoid malnutrition. The numbers for macronutrients, on the other hand, are a ceiling: a target maximum limit that adults should avoid surpassing if they want to prevent future health problems caused by eating too much high sodium or fatty food.

The FDA almost used 2,350 calories as the baseline for calculating daily values, because it was the recommended population-adjusted average caloric need for Americans ages four and older. But after pushback from health groups concerned the higher baseline would encourage overconsumption, the FDA settled on 2,000 calories.

FDA officials felt this figure was less likely to be "misconstrued as an individualized goal since a round number has less implied specificity." This means 2,000 calories is not actually a target for most American consumers reading the label. Instead, it is an example of the public health preoccupation with collective risk - what one scientist called "treating sick populations not sick individuals."

Accuracy

By choosing a round number that was easy to do math with, and a calorie count below the average American's, FDA officials were favoring practicality and utility over accuracy and objectivity. Advocating for the lower 2,000 calorie baseline, they reasoned, would offset Americans' tendency to overeat and do more good than harm for the population overall.

According to the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990, serving sizes should reflect "an amount customarily used."

In practice, this involves routine negotiations between the FDA, U.S. Department of Agriculture - which also sets serving sizes for dietary guidance tools like the MyPlate - and food manufacturers. Each conducts research on consumer expectations and food consumption data, taking into consideration how a food is prepared and "typically eaten."

Serving sizes are also determined by product packaging. For example, a soda can is generally considered a

single-serving container and therefore just one serving, regardless of how many fluid ounces it contains.

The label was almost called "Nutrition Values" or "Nutrition Guide" to highlight that Daily Values were recommendations. Then FDA Deputy Commissioner Mike Taylor proposed "Nutrition Facts" to sound more legally neutral and scientifically objective.

The new design - a staid, black Helvetica text against a white background, using indented subgroups and hairlines for readability - and the authoritative boldface title helped establish "Nutrition Facts" as an easily recognized government brand.

This led to imitators in other policy arenas: first "Drug Facts" for over-the-counter medicines, then consumer protection initiatives in various tech industries, such as Federal Communications Commission "Broadband Facts" and "AI Nutrition Facts."

The Nutrition Facts panel has remained largely consistent since the 1990s, despite some updates like adding lines for trans fats in 2002 and for added sugars in 2016 to reflect evolving public health priorities.

Establishing the Nutrition Facts label required building an entirely new technical infrastructure for nutrition information. Translating the diverse American diet into a consistent set of standardized nutrients necessitated new measures, testing procedures and standard references.

A key player in developing that technical infrastructure was the Association of Official Analytical Chemists. In the early 1990s, an AOAC Task Force developed a food triangle matrix dividing foods into categories based on their proportions of carbs, fats and protein. The intention was to determine appropriate ways to measure nutritional properties like the amount of calories or sugars, as the food's physical properties would affect how well each test worked.

Today, public-private collaborations have taken this translation of foods into simplified nutrient profiles further by making nutrition facts plug-and-play. The USDA FoodData Central provides a comprehensive database of nutrient profiles for individual ingredients that manufacturers use to calculate Nutrition Facts for new packaged foods. This database also powers many diet and nutrition apps.

The analytic tools developed for the Nutrition Facts label helped create the basic information infrastructure for today's digital diet platforms. (AP)

New era in precision medicine

Next-gen sequencing boosts AML, MDS treatment options

WALTHAM, Mass., July 17, (AP): To help accelerate research into new treatments for Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML) and Myelodysplastic Syndrome (MDS), Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc., the world leader in serving science, is partnering with the National Cancer Institute (NCI) - part of the National Institutes of Health - on the myeloMATCH (Molecular Analysis for Therapy Choice) precision medicine umbrella trial.

By testing patients' bone marrow and blood for certain genetic biomarkers using Thermo Fisher's next-generation sequencing (NGS) technology, clinical sites can more quickly match patients with an appropriate clinical trial that tests a treatment designed to target specific mutations present in the samples.

AML is an aggressive cancer of the bone marrow and blood and is one of the most common types of leukemia. Because it can advance quickly with a five-year survival rate of only 30-40% for people under age 60, rapid detection and effective treatment are essential to improve patient outcomes.

Further, clinical practice guidelines note the importance of rapid genetic analysis to identify biomarkers that

may help match patients with optimal treatments based on their unique cancer profile.

"myeloMATCH breaks new ground in many ways, not least by assembling a portfolio of sub-studies to treat patients with specific subtypes of AML and MDS through all stages of their treatment journey," said Dr. Harry P. Erba, chair of the Southwest Oncology Group (SWOG) Leukemia Committee and co-chair of the myeloMATCH Senior Science Council. "Many more treatment options are available for people with AML and MDS than just 5-10 years ago, and many more targeted therapies are being developed. However, to choose the best treatment option for our patients requires knowledge of the genetic changes that underlie the disease, which vary between patients. This information is needed quickly in order to begin effective therapy for very aggressive cancers. Our partnership with Thermo Fisher allows us to obtain the required genomic profiling rapidly and begin therapies specific for each subtype of the disease. Through this personalized approach to treatment, we believe we will increase the number of people who are leukemia survivors."

Hand, foot, mouth disease cases soar in Japan

TOKYO, July 17, (Xinhua): The number of hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) cases in Japan is increasing at a record pace, reaching the highest levels seen in the past decade, data from the country's National Institute of Infectious Diseases (NIID) showed.

According to the latest NIID report, 35,960 cases were reported from about 3,000 monitoring medical institutions nationwide during the week leading up to July 7.

An average of 11.46 cases per medical institution was reported dur-

ing the reporting week, remaining above the warning level of five cases per institution in 38 prefectures.

During the reported period, the central Japanese prefecture of Mie recorded the highest number of cases per institution at 25.98, followed by Saitama with 18.8.

HFMD, a viral infection causing blister-like rashes on the hands, feet, and inside the mouth, primarily affects children under the age of five, who account for about 90 percent of cases.

Symptoms include fever, loss of

appetite, feeling unwell, skin rashes and sore throat. Mouth sores and ulcers on the tongue, gums and the inside of the cheeks can also indicate HFMD infection.

Japan's health ministry is urging increased hygiene measures to curb the spread of the disease.

A health ministry official advised the public to wash hands with soap and avoid sharing towels, adding that alcohol-based disinfectants are less effective against HFMD, which typically spreads during the summer.

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New talents emerge in skateboarding

Japan, US face formidable challenges ahead of Paris Games



Las Vegas Aces guard Tiffany Hayes (15) drives to the basket against Chicago Sky center Kamilla Cardoso (10) during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Las Vegas. (AP)

Carter scores 34 & Reese records another double-double as Chicago beats Las Vegas

Ionescu leads short-handed Liberty to 82-74 win over Sun

LAS VEGAS, July 17, (AP): Chennedy Carter scored 34 points, Angel Reese had 13 points and 10 rebounds for her 16th double-double in the last 17 games, and the Chicago Aces 93-85 on Tuesday night.

Chicago led 42-21 at the midway point of the second quarter and held the advantage until Megan Gustafson made a 3-pointer from the corner with 8:16 remaining in the fourth to give the Aces their first lead of the game at 72-71.

Carter put Chicago ahead for good, 80-79, on a basket while being fouled with 3:23 left. She missed the free throw, but Chicago grabbed the offensive rebound and Carter made another shot for a three-point lead. Carter also scored on Chicago's next two possessions to make it 86-81.

Reese secured her double-double with 1:32 left in the fourth when she elevated to grab a rebound and put up a shot before landing on the floor for an 88-81 lead. The Sky made 5 of 6 free throws down the stretch to seal it.

BASKETBALL

Carter was 14 of 24 from the field and 6 of 7 from the free-throw line to come within one point of tying a career high, set during her rookie season in 2020. Marina Mabrey added 15 points for Chicago (10-14).

A'ja Wilson had 28 points, 14 rebounds, five blocks and three steals for her sixth straight game this season with at least 20 points and 10 rebounds for Las Vegas (16-8). Wilson moved into third in franchise history for career steals. Tiffany Hayes added 19 points off the bench and Jackie Young scored 11 of her 17 points in the second quarter.

Liberty 82, Sun 74

In New York, Sabrina Ionescu scored 30 points and the short-handed New York Liberty beat the Connecticut Sun.

It was the last game before the month-long Olympic break for both teams.

The game was tied heading into the fourth quarter before Ionescu hit a 3-pointer to start the final period and give New York (21-4) back the lead it had held for the entire game. That sparked a 10-3 run which gave the Liberty a 73-66 lead midway through the period.

"Ten more minutes, we have to buckle down and play harder," Ionescu

S. Korea to send 4-member team

China's six-strong squad eyes success

BEIJING, July 17, (Xinhua): All six taekwondo athletes who are set to represent China at the Paris Olympics are newcomers. Despite a lack of Olympic experience, the younger generation of Chinese taekwondo practitioners aim to rebound from a flop three years ago in Tokyo.

Taekwondo was reintroduced as a full medal event at the 2000 Sydney Games, featuring competitions for both men and women. China has won at least one gold medal in taekwondo at each edition of the Games except Tokyo 2020, though there has been a rise in young Chinese stars over the past three years.

Leading the charge is Luo Zongshi, currently world No. 1 in the women's

57kg category, who has clinched a host of international titles. Liang Yushuai, who competes in the men's 68kg, claimed the 63kg gold at the 2022 World Taekwondo Championships in Guadalajara, Mexico.

Joining them are Song Zhaoxiang, Song Jie and Zhou Zeqi, who all secured victories at the Hangzhou Asian Games. Guo Qing, competing in the women's 49kg, is ranked high in the Olympic standings.

Since London 2012, taekwondo has seen a diversification of medal winners, with traditional powerhouses like South Korea and China facing stiff competition. Athletes from Vietnam, Afghanistan, Jordan and Gabon have all made Olympic history by winning

medals in the sport.

The 2024 Paris Olympics will see a significant change in the taekwondo scoring system. Bouts will now be decided in a best-of-three format, with scores resetting at the start of each two-minute round. Athletes must win two out of the three rounds to secure victory, adding intensity and suspense to the competition.

South Korea will send a four-member team to Paris, including Tokyo Olympic silver medalist Lee Da-bin. Despite not winning a gold medal in Tokyo, South Korea, the top nation in taekwondo medal standings, is determined to win at least one gold in Paris.

Thailand's Panipak Wongpatanakit, the favorite in the women's 49kg category, is poised to defend her

Olympic title. Celebrating her 27th birthday during the Games, Wongpatanakit remains the top-ranked athlete in her division.

Britain, the leading European nation in Olympic taekwondo medals, will field four athletes, including Jade Jones, double Olympic gold medalist in the women's 57kg category. The Welsh star, making her fourth Olympic appearance, aims to capture her third gold medal.

Hosts France will rely on Althea Laurin, a bronze medalist in the women's +67kg at the last Olympics, to secure their first gold in the Olympic taekwondo event. Another French hopeful is Magda Wiet-Henin, a world champion in the women's 67kg category.

said of the conversation heading into the fourth. "Play our best basketball for 10 more minutes and lock in. (Kennedy Burke) got huge steals for us."

Connecticut (18-6) twice got within four, but both times Jonquel Jones answered with baskets against her former team. The Sun could get no closer.

Burke finished with nine points and four steals.

Brianna Jones scored 17 points to lead Connecticut. Alyssa Thomas fin-

ished with 16 points, eight rebounds and five assists for the Sun, but didn't play in the fourth quarter.

Connecticut coach Stephanie White said after the game it was intentional to get Thomas some rest before the Olympics.

Storm 89, Sparks 83

In Los Angeles, Jewell Loyd had 30 points and seven assists. Nneka Ogwumike added 23 points, 10 rebounds and

six steals against her former team, and the Seattle Storm beat the Los Angeles Sparks.

Seattle (17-8), which played a game on the road for the first time since June 19, closed the first half of the season by winning eight of 10 games.

Loyd and Ogwumike combined to score 20 of Seattle's 25 fourth-quarter points.

Ogwumike, who played her first game in Los Angeles since signing

with the Storm as a free agent in February, made a driving layup with 2:20 left in the fourth to move past Lisa Leslie for 12th on the WNBA career scoring list.

Loyd finished 8 of 18 from the field and 11 of 16 from the free-throw line to reach the 30-point mark for the fourth time this season.

Mercury 96, Mystics 87

In Washington, Brittney Griner had 23 points and seven rebounds, Kahleah Copper scored 10 of her 22 points in the fourth quarter and the Phoenix Mercury beat the Washington Mystics. Copper scored six straight points in the fourth and Natasha Cloud capped the 8-0 run for an 82-72 lead with 5:09 left.

Washington guard Ariel Atkins stole it from Diana Taurasi and raced the other way for a layup while being fouled. Atkins completed the three-point play with 2:43 left to get within 87-83 following an 8-0 run. But Phoenix made a shot on its next three possessions, capped by Sophie Cunningham's 3-pointer for a 94-85 lead.

Phoenix sealed it when Taurasi blocked a Myisha Hines-Allen shot and Copper converted a fast-break layup at the other end for a 96-87 lead with 22.6 left.

Taurasi finished with 18 points and Cloud had 12 points, nine rebounds and 10 assist for Phoenix (13-12). Cunningham added 11 points off the bench.



Serbia's Nikola Jokic, left, drives to the basket as Australia's Will Magnay tries to block him during an exhibition basketball match between Australia and Serbia at the USA Basketball Showcase, ahead of the 2024 Paris Olympics basketball tournament, in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. (AP)

BEIJING, July 17, (Xinhua): As skateboarding talents around the world are set to gather in the upcoming Paris Olympics, it will be a challenging feat for both Japanese and American riders to claim victories despite their dominance in the past few years.

Japan's Sakura Yosozumi, the 22-year-old reigning women's world park champion, secured a place at Paris and placed third in the World Skateboarding Ranking (WSR) after the Olympic Qualification Series (OQS) in Budapest, while her compatriot Kokona Hiraki topped the ranking.

The women's street is also a stage for Japanese skateboarders to show their talents. Although Tokyo Olympic gold medalist Momiji Nishiya will miss out on Paris, Coco Yoshizawa, Liz Akama and Funa Nakayama form a strong Japan team.

Australia's Arisa Trew and Britain's Sky Brown look ready to challenge the Japanese skaters.

Trew claimed the gold in Olympic qualifiers in both Shanghai and Budapest, propelling her to the second place in WSR. She is also the first female skater to successfully land a 900.

After the Tokyo Olympics, Brown beat Yosozumi to become the champion at the 2022 Park World Championships in Sharjah, before taking silver at the Budapest Olympic qualifier at 16 years old.

OLYMPICS

As the youngest participant in the Chinese delegation and the only Chinese in women's park, Zheng Haohao, will celebrate her 12th birthday on the day of the Paris Olympics closing ceremony, August 11. Having trained for fewer than four years, she is looking to enjoy the Games together with teammates Cui Chenxi, Zeng Wenhui and Zhu Yuanling.

As the first Chinese to appear in Olympic skateboarding and reach the final, Zeng finished 6th in Tokyo. Cui claimed gold at the 2023 Hangzhou Asian Games and finished 8th at the Street World Championships in Japan, demonstrating the potential to reach new heights in Olympics.

The men's street will see fierce competition between the Japanese and American favorite Jagger Eaton.

Yuto Horigome, Tokyo Olympic champion, only finished 17th in the OQS Shanghai, but bounced back to clinch gold in Budapest, securing his spot in Paris.

After faltering at his home Olympic Games three years ago, Sora Shirai is hungry for redemption in Paris, and last December claimed the World Championship title.

Eaton stands out as the most formidable challenger for the Japanese team, achieving a remarkable feat by clinching the gold medal in the street and bronze medal in the park on the same day at the OQS Shanghai.

Due to the rule that each team is limited to a maximum of three athletes per gender in each discipline, Eaton has selected to focus on the street event.

The US team possesses strength in the men's park, but winning a medal will not be easy.

Ranked first in the world, America's Tate Carew will face a challenge from Tokyo Olympic champion Keegan Palmer of Australia. Carew emerged victorious over Palmer at the OQS Shanghai, while Palmer claimed the title in Budapest.

Lozano fired as Mexico's coach

MEXICO CITY, July 17, (AP): Jaime Lozano has been fired as head coach two weeks after Mexico's first-round exit at the Copa América.

The Mexican Football Federation on Tuesday said Lozano declined its offer to stay and work as an assistant to the next coach for two years and potentially take over again after the 2026 World Cup.

"This was one of the toughest decision I have to make," Lozano said on his official social media accounts. "It is a matter of principles and it's because of the change of direction from the original project."

SOCCER

Javier Aguirre, who is a close friend of the Mexican federation commissioner Juan Carlos Rodríguez, is considered the main candidate for the job.

Aguirre, who coached Mexico at the 2002 and 2010 World Cups, had earlier declined a position to help Lozano from afar.

The federation said the new coach could be confirmed as early as the first week of August.

Lozano guided Mexico's Under-23 team to a bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics and was appointed as interim coach of the national team in May of last year to replace Diego Cocca. After winning the Gold Cup, Lozano's appointment became permanent in August of 2023.

"Jimmy" Lozano won just 10 out of the 21 games he was in charge. At Copa América, Mexico edged Jamaica, lost to Venezuela and tied with Ecuador to be eliminated out of Group B.

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Kenyan javelin star Yego eyes Olympics swan song in Paris

NAIROBI, July 17, (Xinhua): At 35, Kenyan javelin star Julius Yego is on his last run of a career that saw him shoot to global fame at the 2015 World Championships held at the iconic Bird's Nest Stadium in the Chinese capital of Beijing.

Yego, then 24, had learned his craft on social media platform YouTube and stunned the world with a monster throw of 92.72 meters to win gold, cementing his place in history as the first African global champion in the field event.

That mark still stands as the African record nine years later.

A year later, another huge throw of 88.24 meters was enough to win him Olympic silver at the Rio 2016 Summer Games in Brazil, but he was forced to retire from competition after his second effort with a bad knee injury.

Since then, Yego has struggled to replicate his form as one of the world's top javelin throwers, but that has not stopped him from winning a record five African titles, the latest this year when he threw 81.74 m for

gold in Accra, Ghana, on March 22.

Although the mark was not enough to earn a direct qualification for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, Yego nonetheless is fine-tuning his final preparations in the French southern city of Miramas, having earned his slot for the Summer Games as a continental champion.

Having failed to progress from the second round qualifier at the last Olympics in Tokyo and the preliminary round in last year's World Championships in Budapest, Yego is, however, keen on making what will be his last Sum-

mer Games a memorable swan song.

Speaking earlier this week after landing in the southern French city of Miramas, which is Team Kenya's official pre-Olympic camp, Yego is once again plotting to overcome the odds and land what would be a stunning return to the podium.

"The place is really nice; it has everything for training, especially javelin. It's the best place before the Olympics," Yego said in a recent interview shared by Team Kenya media.

Change Name

I, MOHAMMED MUSTUFA ABDUL MAJEED holder of Passport No. S4695338 do hereby change my name to MOHAMMED (as Given name) MUSTAFA (as Surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name MOHAMMED MUSTAFA and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents

French soccer federation pledges to file a complaint with FIFA over 'racist and discriminatory remarks'

Chelsea begin disciplinary action after Fernandez's involvement in chants

LONDON, July 17, (AP) — Chelsea has begun disciplinary action after midfielder Enzo Fernandez was involved in a video where members of Argentina's Copa America-winning squad appeared to sing about French players with African heritage.

FIFA also said it was also looking into the incident after the French soccer federation pledged to file a complaint with the sport's world governing body over "racist and discriminatory remarks."

Fernandez said he was "truly sorry" and Chelsea said discriminatory behaviour was "completely unacceptable."

"We are proud to be a diverse, inclusive club where people from all cultures, communities and identities feel welcome," the Premier League

club said in a statement Wednesday. "We acknowledge and appreciate our player's public apology and will use this as an opportunity to educate."

"The Club has instigated an internal disciplinary procedure."

Argentina beat Colombia 1-0 on Sunday at Miami Gardens, Florida. Afterwards a video posted on Instagram appeared to show Fernandez and Argentina players chanting about France's team as they celebrated.

The same chants - by some Argentina fans - emerged before the team beat France in the World Cup final in 2022.

The derogatory chants single out France players of African heritage, from several countries, and holding a French passport.

Fernandez apologized for "get-

ting caught up in the euphoria of our Copa America celebrations."

"That video, that moment, those words, do not reflect my beliefs or my character," he said on Instagram. "I am truly sorry."

Fernandez became the most expensive player in British soccer history after joining Chelsea from

SOCCER

Benfica for 106.7 million pounds (\$131.4 million) in 2023.

Chelsea's response comes after one of Fernandez's clubmates, France defender Wesley Fofana, posted the video on his social media accounts Tuesday and called it "uninhibited racism."

Fofana has family ties to Ivory

Coast and is among several French players who are Black in the Chelsea first-team squad.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino has said soccer and its 211 national federations must have a zero tolerance approach to racism and in May committed to relaunching a task force to monitor incidents.

"FIFA is aware of a video circulating on social media and the incident is being looked into," the governing body said Wednesday. "FIFA strongly condemns any form of discrimination by anyone including players, fans and officials."

It is unclear what jurisdiction FIFA has over the incident on a team bus after a tournament, but the governing body likely could act if the Argentina federation's handling of the case is considered unsatisfactory.



Colombia's Luis Diaz (right), and Argentina's Enzo Fernandez battle for the ball during the Copa America final soccer match in Miami Gardens, Fla. (AP)

Nadal & Murray could be bidding adieu to tennis at Paris Olympics



In this file photo, Spain's Rafael Nadal plays a shot against Germany's Alexander Zverev during their first-round match of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris. (AP)

Djokovic looking to fill one gap on otherwise-impeccable resume

PARIS, July 17, (AP) — All the way back when he first discussed the likelihood that 2024 would be his final season as a professional tennis player, Rafael Nadal made sure to refer to the Paris Olympics as "one of the important competitions I would like to be at."

If, indeed, this is his last hurrah, and if, indeed, he does make it to the Summer Games a little more than a year after hip surgery - neither of which is an absolute certainty - it would be fitting that the site of the French Open is also the site of this goodbye.

No event, at least in this sport, defines an athlete's legacy the way the

OLYMPICS

clay-court Grand Slam tournament does for Nadal. And the opposite is true, too, which is why there is a statue of the 38-year-old Spaniard at Roland Garros, the site of a record 14 of his 22 major trophies and where the Olympic tennis matches begin on July 27.

Nadal skipped Wimbledon in order to avoid going from clay to grass and back to clay at the Paris Games, where he has been planning to team in doubles with Carlos Alcaraz, the 21-year-old coming off back-to-back major titles at Roland Garros and the All England Club.

And even though the idea that Nadal could add to his gold medals - in singles at Beijing in 2008, and in doubles with Marc López at Rio de Janeiro in 2016 - seems far-fetched, just the sight of him back in Paris will mean a lot to him and his fans.

"My body has been a jungle for two years. You don't know what to expect," said Nadal, who has been able to play only 16 matches since the start of last year, going 8-8, including a first-round loss at the French Open this May. "I wake up one day and I (felt like I had) a snake biting me. Another day, a tiger."

Messi ruled out of Inter Miami's next two games

MIAMI, July 17, (Xinhua) — Lionel Messi will miss at least the next two matches for Inter Miami as he recovers from an ankle sprain, head coach Gerardo Martino said on Tuesday.

Inter Miami will host Toronto FC on Wednesday before another home clash against Chicago next Saturday in Major League Soccer (MLS).

"He [Messi] has a sprain, obviously, and now we have to undertake exams and wait for the results," Martino told reporters.

The Argentina captain sustained the injury during the Albiceleste's 1-0 victory over Colombia on Sunday in the Copa America final.

The 37-year-old tried to continue before eventually limping off in the 64th minute of the clash at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens.

"He played on for a while, but there came a point when he couldn't go on," Martino said, adding that he did not blame Argentina manager Lionel Scaloni for leaving Messi on the pitch when he was clearly injured.

SOCCER

"When these things happen in finals, it is very difficult to take a player off the pitch because no one wants to leave such an important match," he said.

Inter Miami are currently second in the 15-team MLS Eastern Conference standings, a point behind leaders Cincinnati.

Another popular, and successful, figure in men's tennis whose body has let him down lately, Andy Murray of Britain, says this Olympics will mark his adieu.

The 37-year-old Murray, a three-time Slam champion, is the only athlete with two singles golds in the sport - from London in 2012 and Rio four years later. After having hip replacement surgery in 2019, and various other injuries more recently, he withdrew from singles at Wimbledon because he needed a procedure to remove a cyst from his spine last month.

"It's great that they'll be at the Olympics one last time. Any chance to see those guys on a court again should be celebrated," U.S. coach

Bob Bryan said. "They're both working through tough times with injuries, but they're showing that resilience and that will to fight and be on the court."

While Murray and Nadal both own golds, the best of the best in tennis do not always leave an Olympics with the top prizes.

Novak Djokovic of Serbia, for example, will be trying to fill that one gap on his otherwise-impeccable resume, which includes 24 Grand Slam trophies and more weeks at No. 1 in the rankings than anyone.

Also eyeing a first gold will be such stars of the sport as Iga Swiatek of Poland, who has won the French Open four of the past five years, and Coco Gauff of the United States, the

reigning U.S. Open champion and runner-up to Swiatek at Roland Garros in 2022.

She missed out on the Tokyo Olympics three years ago because she tested positive for COVID-19 right before she was supposed to travel to Japan.

"I've been trying to put myself in the mindset of just enjoying the experiences," Gauff said, "because you're only going to have your first Olympics once."

As a sport with plenty of prizes on offer nearly every week, and four Grand Slam events per year, tennis does not place the same emphasis on the Olympics as sports such as athletics, gymnastics and swimming do. So some of the most accomplished and high-ranked athletes will be skipping Paris.

That includes Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus, a two-time Australian Open champion who is No. 3 in the world, two-time Wimbledon runner-up Ons Jabeur of Tunisia, and Americans such as Ben Shelton and Frances Tiafoe, who were semifinalists in recent years at the U.S. Open. The year's last Slam starts less than a month after the Olympics end.

"You've got to look big picture. U.S. Open is right there. It's going to be super hot this summer. I just kind of want to be there, practicing in that. And I care way more about the Open and being as prepared for the Open as possible," Tiafoe said. "That was kind of it."

McIlroy gets the message

Tiger Woods says even champions 'miss' putts

TROON, Scotland, July 17, (AP) — Rory McIlroy insists he wasn't ghosting Tiger Woods.

Woods was one of the big-name stars who texted McIlroy after the Northern Irishman's late collapse at the U.S. Open last month.

"Full disclosure, I changed my number two days after the U.S. Open, so I didn't get it until he told me about it today," McIlroy said Tuesday ahead of the British Open at Royal Troon. "I was like, 'Oh, thanks very much.' So I blanked Tiger Woods, which is probably not a good thing."

Michael Jordan and Rafael Nadal had also sent supportive messages after McIlroy missed two short putts - at No. 16 and No. 18 - at Pinehurst No. 2 to set up Bryson DeChambeau's victory.

Jordan and Nadal hit send right away - Woods waited a week. By that time, McIlroy was in full cleanse mode, visiting New York City to be anonymous for a bit and changing his

GOLF

mobile phone number to avoid pesky journalists inquiring about his decade-long drought in majors.

"From the time I left Pinehurst to the time I walked through my front door on Sunday night," he said, "I probably got about 10 or 15 text messages from media members, and I was like, 'It's probably time to get a new number.' Create a bit of space."

The 35-year-old McIlroy got reacquainted with links conditions last weekend at the Scottish Open with one eye on the Ayrshire coast. Troon last hosted the Open in 2016.

McIlroy had highlighted it out of Pinehurst without congratulating DeChambeau in person, but they chatted Monday.

"He said congrats," DeChambeau said Tuesday. "So everything's great there. He's a fierce competitor. I know he's going to give the fans, give everybody as much as he can this week. I'm going to be doing the same. We're going to be competing. Hopefully it will be another good battle."

McIlroy, a four-time major champion, won the claret jug at Royal Liverpool in 2014 and then the PGA Championship at Valhalla a month later. But no majors since then.

McIlroy played a practice round Tuesday morning with Northern Irish compatriots Darren Clarke - the 2011 Open champion at Royal St. George's - and 21-year-old Tom McKibbin.

Last time at Troon was a frustrat-

ing Open for McIlroy. Like in 2016, he's expecting plenty of crosswinds. The greens are slow but "I don't like to tinker too much with the putter," he said.

Walking with Luke Donald on Tuesday morning, McIlroy picked the brain of Europe's Ryder Cup captain on putting here.

"He always said he liked to focus on the tempo of his stroke and really, if anything, make it a little shorter and a little brisker on greens like this," McIlroy said. "So that's something that - you know, the strike and maybe just think a little bit more about the tempo of the stroke, two good things this week." Even though McIlroy never saw the text, Woods' message resonated Tuesday.

"I've missed plenty of putts. I've missed plenty of shots. Just like Jordan ... You see all the game-winning shots, but also he's missed a ton of game-winning shots too," Woods said. "The thing is you still take the game-winning shot, and I still want the last putt."

McIlroy tees off Thursday with Ryder Cup teammate Tyrrell Hatton and Max Homa - who was a Ryder Cup bright spot for the Americans - at 10:09 a.m. local time (0909 GMT). Defending champion Brian Harman is in the group just ahead of them.

After feeling like "one of the herd" in New York, McIlroy knows his game is still at an elite level. In the five-year stretch from 2015 to 2020, he said he was never that close to winning another major.

"So I'd much rather have these close calls. It means that I'm getting closer."



Tiger Woods of the United States on the 15th green during a practice round ahead of the British Open Golf Championships at Royal Troon golf club in Troon, Scotland. (AP)

Perino joins Al-Fahaheel after Cesar's departure

By Hassan Musa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: Al-Fahaheel Club has signed Brazilian professional Calixto Perino to replace his compatriot Julio Cesar, who recently transferred to the Bahraini League.

Perino joined the team yesterday at their training camp in Egypt. The 31-year-old began his career with Brazilian club Horizonte in 2013 and has since played for ten different Brazilian clubs. In 2022, he settled with the Iraqi club Naft Al-Janoub,

SOCCER

where he played for two seasons.

Known for his strong physical presence, Perino excels in central defense, standing 190 cm tall. He is noted for his strength and aerial ability.

The club's administrative staff confirmed that Perino has joined the team's camp in Alexandria and will participate in friendly matches, starting today against Smouha of Alexandria.

In related news, Portuguese-Guinean midfielder Boubacar Djalo has also joined the team's training camp in Alexandria, ar-



Brazilian defender Calixto Perino.

riving from the Finnish team Lahti.

The team began training at the Egypt camp in preparation for the new season.

Meanwhile, Al-Qadisiya's new professional, Brazilian defender Igor Rossi, is set to join the team's training in Egypt tomorrow.

Rossi, 35, is the fifth foreign player to join the "Yellow" squad, alongside Moroccan Mahdi Barahma, Nigerian Daniel Gebula, Libyan Mohamed Sula, and Moroccan Ismail Khafi.

Rossi brings a wealth of experience from his professional stints with Scottish club Hearts, Portuguese club Maritimo, Saudi club Al-Faisaly, and UAE's Kalba Union.



In this file photo, Andy Murray of Great Britain poses with his gold and silver medals in tennis at the All England Lawn Tennis Club in Wimbledon, London at the 2012 Summer Olympics. (AP)



A Kuwaiti player attempts to score against Iran.

Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

Saudi Arabia lock horns with Japan as Korea play Bahrain

Kuwait begin main round of Asian Youth Handball Championship against Jordan

Carapaz outpaces Yates to 'claim' victory on stage 17

Pogacar puts pressure on Vingegaard in battle for yellow jersey

PARIS, July 17, (Agencies): Richard Carapaz outpaced Simon Yates to claim victory on stage 17 of the Tour de France at Super-Devoluy, while race leader Tadej Pogacar applied pressure on Jonas Vingegaard in the battle for the yellow jersey.

Carapaz surged ahead of Yates on the Col du Noyer, the second-to-last climb of the 178km stage from Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux, extending his lead to 37 seconds by the finish line.

CYCLING

While the breakaway celebrated a rare success in this Tour, Pogacar intensified the general classification contest several minutes behind. He launched an attack near the summit of the Noyer, immediately challenging Vingegaard. Although Vingegaard and Remco Evenepoel caught up with Pogacar on the descent, Vingegaard couldn't respond to Evenepoel's attack on the final climb.

Evenepoel managed to trim 12 seconds off Vingegaard's second-place advantage but lost two seconds to Pogacar at the finish line.

Despite small time gaps, Pogacar demonstrated his dominance with only four stages remaining. The Slovenian holds a lead of three minutes and 11 seconds over the defending champion,



Ecuador's Richard Carapaz celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win the seventeenth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 177.8 kilometers (110.5 miles) with start in Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux and finish in Superdevoluy, France. (AP)

with Evenepoel trailing by five minutes and nine seconds in third place.

"It was a good day, a bit of a test before the final climb," remarked Pogacar in his usual composed manner. "I'm happy with the two seconds gained over Jonas."

Pogacar and Carapaz both made decisive moves on the steep gradients

of the Noyer. Vingegaard struggled visibly, showing signs of weakness that Pogacar had exploited earlier in the Pyrenees. Evenepoel's aggressive push on the final ascent forced Vingegaard to defend his position, allowing Pogacar to strategically stay close before surging ahead in the closing meters.

Stage 17 had initially been earmarked for a breakaway, with Carapaz and Yates making their decisive move midway through the stage on the slopes of the Noyer.

Three-time world time trial champion Ellen van Dijk of the Netherlands will compete in the race against the clock at the Paris Olympics, six weeks

after fracturing her ankle during a training camp in Spain and requiring surgery.

The Dutch Cycling Federation announced Wednesday that van Dijk would be ready for the Summer Games in just over a week, the culmination of a remarkable recovery that began with van Dijk riding in a cast.

Arabia. In the consolation round, Qatar will face China, and Hong Kong will compete against Chinese Taipei.

In the main round draw, Kuwait is placed in Group 1 alongside Bahrain, Jordan, and South Korea. Group 2 consists of Saudi Arabia, Iran, Oman, and Japan.

The Kuwaiti will play Bahrain next Saturday and conclude the group matches against South Korea the following day.

The tournament system stipulates that the top two teams from each of the four preliminary groups advance to the main round, which is divided into two groups of four teams each. The top two teams from each group will qualify for the semi-finals, securing a place in the 2025 World Youth Cup finals.

In the preliminary round,

HANDBALL

Kuwait defeated China 28-24 but lost to Iran 23-25, advancing to the main round alongside the Iranian team.

The youth handball team prepared for the Asian Championship with an external camp in Slovenia, where it played eight trial matches. These included two matches against Montenegro, two against Saudi Arabia, and one each against Slovenia, Austria, a Chinese team, and Croatia.

The team delegation in the Asian Championship is led by the Secretary of the Kuwait Handball Association, Qayed Al-Adwani. The team includes Board of Directors member Mubarak Al-Daihani, national teams director Faisal Siwan, youth team director Abdulaziz Al-Zaabi, administrator Khaled Al-Gharib, coach Saeed Hegazy and his assistant Muhammad Masoudan, goalkeeper coach Marwan Maqayez, therapist Mahdi Al-Bakoush, and technical analyst Ayman Al-Sheikh, along with 20 players.

Al-Mutairi thanks PAS for support in finalizing deal with Argentine

Olmo coy about future

KFA races to finalize visa for new coach Juan Antonio Pizzi

Madrid extend Modric contract

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: The Kuwait Football Association has initiated the visa application process for the new head coach of the national team, Argentine Juan Antonio Pizzi. The Federation officially announced his appointment two days ago, succeeding Portuguese coach Rui Pinto, to lead the "Blue" in the third round of the 2026 World Cup qualifiers.

The Association is working swiftly to finalize the visas for Pizzi and his assistant technical staff, which includes assistant coach Nicolas Pizzi, fitness coaches Alejandro Ricino and Matias Ricino, goalkeeper coaches Hernan Castiano and Ignacio Lovri, technical performance analyst Thomas Alfonso, and analyst and translator Anas Al-Makhtoum.

SOCCER

Upon Pizzi's arrival, the Football Association will meet with him to establish a mechanism and schedule for the team's training and camp, which is set to begin on August 24 or 25 and will continue until the match against Jordan on September 5. The camp location is yet to be determined.

Acting President of the Kuwait Football Association, Hayef Al-Mutairi, announced the contract with Pizzi and his assistant staff. Al-Mutairi stated that after extensive consideration of several candidates, the Board of Directors and the Technical Committee chose Pizzi due to his vast experience. Pizzi previously coached the Saudi national team in the 2018 World Cup, led the Bahrain national team, and won the 2016 Copa America title with the Chilean national team.

Al-Mutairi expressed his hope that Pizzi would succeed in his mission and lead Kuwait to achieve positive results in the upcoming period. He assured that

Kuwait junior volleyball team to train in Turkey 'ahead' of Asian Championship

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: The Kuwait junior volleyball team will depart for Istanbul, Turkey, to conduct a 10-day training camp in preparation for the 15th U-18 Asian Championship scheduled to take place in Manama, Bahrain, from July 26 to August 5. The team is set to play three to four test matches in Turkey.

The delegation is led by Nayef Al-Failakawi, a member of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Volleyball Association, and includes Abdullah Al-Rayes Adria, national coach Khaled Al-Mutairi, his assistant Meshal Al-Sabti, Egyptian physiotherapist Ahmed Fouad, and 12 players: Walid Al-Shammari, Ahmed Al-Sarhid, Salem Al-Shammari, Saad Al-Failakawi, Abdullah Al-Ali, Nasser Al-Sanea, Bandar Al-Ahmad, Salem Khadada, Muhammad Al-Dhababi, Mishari Al-Mutouteh,



Coach Khaled Al-Mutairi

Muhammad Al-Dukhi, and Muhammad Al-Huwaidi.

The team will compete in Group Four of the Asian Championship, facing India, South Korea, and Pakistan. Group One includes Bahrain, Australia, Hong Kong,

and Thailand; Group Two features Japan, China Taipei, Saudi Arabia, and Kazakhstan; while Group Three comprises Iran, China, Lebanon, and the Philippines.

Coach Khaled Al-Mutairi acknowledged the difficulty of its group in Asia, expressing hope for a strong performance and a high

VOLLEYBALL

ranking despite the tough competition. He noted that the team recently participated in the Arab Championship in Jordan, finishing fifth. Local training for the team began on May 27, focusing on enhancing physical fitness alongside technical and tactical skills after the end of the students' examination period.

Al-Mutairi highlighted that most of the current team members are participating in an official foreign tournament for the first time, with the exceptions of Nasser Al-Sanea and Muhammad Al-Dukhi.

the Association would adequately prepare the team and complete the preparation journey to meet its ambitions.

The Association President also thanked the Public Authority for Sports for its support in finalizing the contract procedures with Coach Juan Pizzi.

Pizzi will lead the team in the crucial third round of the 2026 World Cup qualifiers. Kuwait begins its campaign against Jordan in Amman on September 5 and will host the Iraq team on September 10 for the second round.

Kuwait is in the second group of qualifiers alongside South Korea, Iraq, Jordan, Oman, and Palestine.



Kuwait new coach Argentina's Juan Pizzi.

MADRID, July 17, (Xinhua): Real Madrid midfielder Luka Modric has signed a new one-year contract with the club to extend his stay with them until the end of June 2025.

The deal ends any doubts over whether the 38-year-old Croatia international would continue at the club, after his midfield companion Toni Kroos decided to retire at the end of the season.

It also means that the player, who arrived at Real Madrid from Tottenham in the summer of 2012, will have spent 13 seasons at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

"Real Madrid and Luka Modric have agreed to extend the contract of our captain, who will be linked to the club until 30 June 2025."

"Modric arrived at Real Madrid in 2012, and in his 12 seasons representing our shirt he has become a Real Madrid and world football legend," informs the Real Madrid website, adding the midfielder has won "26 titles with Real Madrid, the most titles in the history of our club." Modric has made 534 first team appearances for Real Madrid and scored 39 goals, and although last season saw him used increasingly as a substitute, only playing 90 minutes four times in La Liga, his ability on the ball is still vital at moments when Real Madrid need to maintain possession.

Spain international Dani Olmo is being coy about his future after his impressive performance in helping his country win the European Championship in Germany.

The 26-year-old scored three goals in the tournament and was included in the ideal-starting 11 after his impressive displays in an attacking midfield role and that has started rumors about where he could play his football next season.

Although Olmo began his career in the Barcelona and Espanyol youth systems, he has never



Luka Modric watches Carlos Alcaraz of Spain play Daniil Medvedev of Russia during their semifinal match at the Wimbledon tennis championships in London. (AP)

played top-flight football in his homeland, playing first for Croatian side, Dinamo Zagreb, before joining German outfit, RB Leipzig in 2020.

When asked about his plans in the Spanish sporting press on Wednesday, Olmo did not give much away.

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"There are various options and the people who look after my affairs know what I want," said the striker, who added that it was "time to rest" after the European Championship.

However, he also made it clear that if he did move, then he wanted to go "to a place where I am valued and the most important thing for me is to win, because I am very ambitious." Although he has been linked with Barcelona and Atletico Madrid, Olmo also pointed out that "we have won titles at Leipzig and the club knows how ambitious I am." "It's always nice to be linked with big clubs," concluded the forward.