

## ARAB TIMES

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MONDAY, JUNE 24, 2024 / ZUL HIJJAH 18, 1445 AH

emergency number 112

NO. 18626

16 PAGES

**150 FILS** 

### **HH Amir hosts Crown Prince**, **Prime Minister, other officials**



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday at Al-Seif Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Later on, His Highness received First Deputy Prime Minister, Defense and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah, as he presented to His Highness the newly appointed Governor of Al-Ahmadi Sheikh Humoud

#### **Opinion**

### HH the Amir ... you promised and delivered; now, the concerns of your people are in front of you

#### By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

WE do not exaggerate if we say that tranquility prevails in the country as the circus has ended. This was followed by the issuance of executive decisions that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah promised in his historic speech.

This is the first time we feel the presence of an operational government. Officials are directly hearing the voice of the people through their meetings with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah in the Ruling Family Diwaniya.

This is based on the directives of His Highness the Amir. It is like we are in front of a popular parliament, which has no intermediaries handling the concerns of the people according to their per-

Previously, demands were ignored due to the deals made by officials and a parliamentarian; let alone the empty voices.

Today, this Amiri step is giving the people a platform to open up about their issues face-to-face with the leadership.

This is why such a meeting must be held periodically. People have a lot of complaints and demands, which were overlooked for many years when something like a

fence separated the people from their leaders. In countries where there

are many restrictions, the citizen becomes hopeless; denouncing his country. No one listens to his voice, making him annoyed with State institutions. We have to say that in

a country with sagacious leaders, all its institutions

are the eyes and ears of the ruler. Some of them operate with a high level of transparency, especially the institutions dealing with nationality and

Al-Jarallah

These institutions must be void of people who abuse their power to suppress others or those who differ in opinion by falsely accusing them of misconduct or even defaming them just to take

These institutions need people, who overlook their personal issues or do not get personal due to the trust bestowed upon them by the authority, in order to ensure that the welfare and wellbeing of

the people are handled professionally. Also, many countries have arbitration offices for the people to present their grievances. People handling these grievances are chosen carefully

and are not known by the masses. The only known thing is that such institutions

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### **KUWAITIS OPT TO RETURN FROM BEIRUT DESPITE CURRENT STABILITY**

#### **Newswatch**

### Kuwait acts on 'tax violations'

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: The Ministry of Finance has taken decisive action against three companies for non-compliance with Kuwait's income tax regulations, highlighting serious issues with their accounting practices, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Following a thorough examination of their financial records and documents, the Ministry sent notifications to these companies emphasizing the necessity of adhering to Kuwait's Income Tax Decree No. 3 of 1995, as amended by Law No. 2 of 2008, and its Executive Regulations, particularly regarding the maintenance of proper accounting books and records.

Sources said the Ministry of Finance esti-

mated the profits of these companies based on available tax returns for previous fiscal years. It was found that some of these companies had failed to maintain the required accounting books and records, as mandated by Kuwaiti tax laws.

Consequently, the Ministry decided to estimate their profits at 30% of their revenues, disregarding the companies' reported operational results. In response to these findings, the Ministry of Finance has initiated steps to enforce Article Eight of the Income Tax Decree, which allows for the imposition of fines of 1% for every thirty days or part thereof in case of delayed payment.

Moreover, Article 24 of the Executive Regulations specifies a sixty-day period from the date of assessment notification within which companies may submit objections to their tax assessments. After this period, objections may not be considered.

The Ministry underscored the urgency of prompt payment in accordance with Kuwait's income tax provisions and alerted the companies to settle their outstanding tax liabilities swiftly. This action aims to ensure compliance with tax regulations and to uphold fiscal discipline in Kuwait's corporate sector.

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Al-Soudani on Saturday inaugurated a new aerial defense operation center and revealed USD 3.8 billion would be earmarked to boost the armament of the national forces.

The new radar-equipped center has been established as part of a plan to renovate the infrastructure of observing and securing the Iraqi air space and enhancing prompt response to any threats, the prime minister's office said in a statement. It quoted Al-Soudani as saying that the center had been built in coordination with the French defense hardware company, Thales, adding that the government specialized USD 3.8 billion to upgrade the Iraqi forces armament.

The role of the Iraqi security forces is crucial in the near future after the conclusion of the mandate of the international coalition forces, he said. (KUNA)

WASHINGTON: The US Central Command (USCENTCOM) forces successfully destroyed three Iranian-backed Houthi uncrewed surface vessels (USV) in the Red

In a statement, USCENTCOM said on Saturday that it was determined these systems presented an imminent threat to US coalition forces, and merchant vessels in the region, noting that this action was taken to protect freedom of navigation and make international waters safer and more secure.

Separately, Iranian-backed Houthis launched three anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBM) from a Houthi controlled area of **Yemen** into the Gulf of Aden, which caused no injuries or significant damage.

Recent claims about a successful attack by Houthi forces on the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) are categorically false, the statement added. (KUNA)

**DHAKA:** At least nine people died after a microbus and an auto-rickshaw carrying wedding party guests plunged into a canal following the collapse of a dilapidated bridge in Barguna district, some 180 km

south of Bangladesh's capital Dhaka. The accident occurred around 2:00 p.m. local time as the bridge gave way, sending both vehicles into the canal. Kazi Sakhawat Hossain Topu, officer-in-charge of Barguna's local Amtali Police Station, told Xinhua. (Xinhua)

## 1st repatriation flight from Lebanon lands in Kuwait with 226 passengers



Photo by Mohamad Morsi

Kuwaiti returnees from Lebanon receive hugs and a warm welcome upon arrival at Kuwait Airport Terminal 4 on Sunday morning.

#### Returnees laud leadership, govt's swift response

#### By Muhammad Al-Musleh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: Kuwait International Airport welcomed the return of 226 passengers, mostly citizens, on the first flight from Lebanon following warnings and calls to return issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs due to ongoing security developments in the region.

The first Kuwait Airways Boeing 777 plane landed at 3 a.m. at T4 Airport. The flight had departed for Beirut Airport the previous evening, as announced by Kuwait Airways.

Many returning citizens expressed their gratitude to the political leadership and the government for their concern and efforts to ensure their safety. They appreciated the facilities provided from the moment they boarded the plane until their arrival back in Kuwait.

Passengers praised the smooth procedures and comfort provided by Kuwait Airways, as well as the facilitation of departure processes for those wishing to return. They noted that while conditions in Beirut are currently stable, they chose to return home in response to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' advisories, anticipating any potential emergencies.

Meanwhile, thousands of fighters from Iran-backed groups in the Middle East are ready to come to Lebanon to join with the militant Hezbollah group in its battle with Israel if the simmering conflict escalates into a full-blown war, officials with Iran-backed factions and analysts say.

Almost daily exchanges of fire have occurred along Lebanon's frontier with northern Israel

### **Converting basement** to warehouse 'illegal'

KUWAIT CITY, June 23, (KUNA): Kuwait Municipality warned homeowners on Sunday against renting out their house basements as warehouses for storing

Inspection teams have recently noticed several random ads seeking to rent private basements in residential areas at high prices after the Municipality cleared out several commercial basements for violating safety codes, said Municipality Spokesperson Mohammad Sendan in a press statement.

"Many private homeowners are renting out their basements as warehouses for storing food, furniture, and flammable or toxic items to earn extra monthly

**Continued on Page 5** 



Zain honors a Special Education graduate during its annual ceremony celebrating Kuwait's top high school achievers for the academic year 2023-2024. – See Page 2

#### Kuwait steps up anti-terror fight

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: Kuwait has made significant strides both domestically and internationally to combat terrorism and extremism, focusing on cutting

off their sources, reports Al-Jarida daily. This includes the implementation of various legislations, laws, decisions, and regulations aimed at promoting moderation, rejecting violence, and combating

extremist ideologies.

According to sources from the Ministry of Social Affairs, specifically the Department of Charitable Societies and Foundations, Kuwait has intensified its

**Continued on Page 5** 

since fighters from the Hamascontrolled Gaza Strip staged a bloody assault on southern Israel in early October that set off a war in Gaza.

The situation to the north worsened this month after an Israeli airstrike killed a senior Hezbollah military commander in southern Lebanon. Hezbollah retaliated by firing hundreds of rockets and explosive drones into

northern Israel. Israeli officials have threatened a military offensive in Lebanon if there is no negotiated end to push Hezbollah away from the

Over the past decade, Iranbacked fighters from Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan

**Continued on Page 5** 

## oca

Expected weather for next 24 hrs: By Day: Very hot and relatively humid over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate northerly wind, with speeds

By Night: Hot to rather hot and

Weather relatively humid over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind,

with speeds of 08-30 km/h. Station Max Exp Min Rec **Kuwait City** 

31 Kuwait Airport Abdaly 48 32 Jahra 50 33 Salmiyah 33 Nuwaisib 45 Wafra

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

#### Program dedicated to advancing excellence in healthcare

### AUK unlocks opportunities ... hosts 'The London School of Economics'

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: The Office of Research and Grants (ORG) at the American University of Kuwait (AUK) hosted a workshop titled "The London School of Economics (LSE): The Kuwait Programme Opportunities" at the AUK theater. During the event, representatives from the LSE Kuwait Programme highlighted the various opportunities available to PhD students and early career researchers. Funded by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), this year's program is dedicated to advancing excellence in healthcare.

The workshop delved into academic collaborations and fellowships be-tween LSE and Kuwait, healthcare policy workshops, and research publications. The session was led by Mercedes Masters, the program coordinator at the Kuwait Programme, and Amira Djuric, the communications coordinator at the Kuwait Programme.

At the beginning of the presentation, Masters was welcomed on stage by Dr. Iyad Abu Doush, ORG director and professor of computer science. Masters provided important information about the application process, including key dates and eligibility criteria for candi-

She also discussed papers and blogs related to the Kuwait Programme as well as details pertaining to the publication process. Djuric later informed the audience about the annual conference of the program and policy work-

By hosting such workshops, AUK positions itself at the forefront of research initiatives in Kuwait, reaffirming its reputation as a dynamic hub for academic exchange and innovation in



Group photo of the workshop organizers.

### HH the Amir congratulates Luxembourg on Nat'l Day

KUWAIT CITY, June 23, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable to Grand Duke Henri of Luxembourg on Sunday congratulating him on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished him a long healthy life and further prosperity for Luxembourg.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown

Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable to Grand Duke Henri of Luxembourg, congratulating him on his country's National Day, and wishing him a long healthy life.

Also, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to Grand Duke Henri of Luxembourg on his country's National Day.



HH the Crown Prince receives First Deputy PM, Defense and Interior Minister who presented to him the newly-appointed Governor of Ahmadi (right).

#### **Audiences of HH Crown Prince**

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Sunday at Al-Seif Palace His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

His Highness also received First

Deputy Prime Minister, Defense and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah, as he presented to him the newly appointed Governor of Al-Ahmadi Sheikh Humoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. (KUNA)

#### Other Voices

#### Abdullah Al-Bustani & Columbus

#### By Ahmed alsarraf

IN my last article, I stated that Columbus was Spanish when, in fact, he was Italian by birth and later pledged allegiance to Spain.

Christopher Columbus, credited with the discovery of the Americas half a millennium ago, embarked on his his-

from Spain, sailing westward toward Asia.

Born in 1451 in Genoa, Italy, Columbus began his seafaring career at the age of 14, working aboard merchant ships. By 1473, he



was serving Genoese merchants and gained experience navigating ships involved in extensive maritime commerce. He furthered his education in Portugal, where he learned to read and studied mathematics, astronomy, navigation, and maps and eventually settled in Lisbon, a hub of European maritime activity at the time.

Columbus's ambition to find a westward route to the Indies intensified due to various factors, including insights gleaned from geographical maps produced by his brother, accounts of Portuguese voyages, and discoveries of artifacts near Atlantic islands.

Relying on the latest scientific knowledge, including the work of Italian Paolo Toscanelli (1397-1492) and German Martin Behaim (1459-1507), who specialized in mathematics and astronomy, Columbus conceived his plan to reach East Asia by sailing west.

In 1484, Columbus proposed his ex-

pedition to King John II of Portugal, who declined to sponsor it. Turning to the Catholic monarchs of Spain, Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand, Columbus faced years of setbacks before securing their support on April 17, 1492.

Their backing was contingent upon Columbus's commitment to commercial objectives, namely discovering a shorter and less costly sea route to access the lucrative markets of China and Japan.

Setting sail from Spain on August 3, 1492, with three ships, Columbus traversed the Atlantic Ocean and reached the Caribbean islands two months later.

His second voyage in 1498 led to the discovery of the North American continent. Subsequently, Columbus faced imprisonment on allegations of mistreating indigenous peoples before embarking on his final voyage in 1502, during which he discovered numerous new islands.

Although Columbus died under the misconception that he had reached the Indies, it was the Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci who later realized that the vast lands discovered constituted a new continent, not Asia. Consequently, the "New World" was named "America" in honor of Vespucci on Martin Waldseemüller's 1507 map.

Columbus returned to Spain from his final voyage in 1504, aged 53 and in failing health. He spent his remaining years in melancholy and mental distress, passing away in 1506 in Valladolid, Spain, and was laid to rest in the Carthusian monastery of Santa María de las Cuevas in Seville.

The story recounted in "People are Races" by Lebanese writer Salam Al-Rassi regarding an exhibition in Chicago in 1893 honoring Columbus's memory lacks verifiable evidence, but it remains a poignant tale worth sharing.

The anecdote describes how, on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of America's discovery, poets were commissioned to compose verses in various languages to adorn the base of Columbus's statue. Among these verses were purportedly lines by Lebanese poet Abdullah Al-Bustani, expressing a sentiment of honoring Columbus's endurance and sacrifice.

While the authenticity of this narrative cannot be confirmed through available research, its poetic resonance endures.

It serves as a reminder of the power of storytelling and the enduring allure of crafted narratives, even when historical accuracy may be elusive. As the saying goes, "the most beautiful poetry is often the most fictitious," highlighting the ability of art to transcend factual constraints and evoke profound emotions.

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## Realty owners take advantage of flaws in officials supervision

'Unauthorized constructions affect power, water networks'

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: The Mangaf fire incident has starkly exposed the widespread issue of building violations in Kuwait's investment and private sectors. It has been revealed that real estate owners took advantage of loopholes in supervision by authorities such as the municipality and the Ministry of Electricity and Water, reports Al-Jarida daily.

They constructed unauthorized studio apartments within buildings, often without proper approvals, thereby overloading the electrical network and exacerbating the country's current summer crisis with increased power demands.

During a tour of Farwaniya and Hawalli Governorates, it was observed that these violations commonly involved converting building entrances into makeshift studio apartments consisting of a single room with bathroom and kitchen facilities.

These unauthorized constructions not only strained state services but were also aimed at maximizing rental income from these makeshift units, typically found in buildings of up to nine floors.

Following the Mangaf fire, concerns were raised about the ineffectiveness of supervisory authorities in preventing such violations.

Sources from the electricity sector emphasized the critical importance of maintaining infrastructure integrity, stating that unauthorized constructions put undue pressure on the electrical and water networks, secondary electricity stations, sewage systems, and parking facilities.

This situation was exacerbated by the rapid increase in unregulated population density around investment buildings across various gov-

In response to these issues, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef issued instructions to address these violations promptly.

This directive led to ongoing campaigns aimed at removing illegal constructions and mitigating their impact on infrastructure. Despite initial efforts to cut off power to these units, many violations persisted due to insufficient follow-up and enforcement in areas like Farwaniya and Hawalli.

Authorities reaffirmed the state's commitment to safeguarding public services from exploitation and abuse, ensuring that those responsible for unauthorized constructions face legal consequences.

The focus is on curbing the influence of profiteers who have exploited regulatory loopholes for personal gain, at the expense of infrastructure stability and public safety.

#### **PAM allows registering 2** drivers under one vehicle

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: The Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) recently issued a decision allowing companies and institutions to register two drivers under one vehicle, reports Al-Shahed daily.

PAM clarified that the decision is applicable to trucks, half-lorries and other heavy vehicles, not the private cars; while stressing the need for employers to be committed to the number of employees specified by

The authority pointed out that the decision is in response to the recent complaints of employers and companies about the high salary of the drivers of such vehicles, stressing that the employees at the Labor Estimation Department will be closely monitored in the coming period to prevent manipulations to take advantage of the decision.



Algharabally and Al Enzi with the honored graduates.



Recognizing two distinguished graduates.



Honoring a top student.

#### **Company organizes its annual ceremony**

### Zain recognizes Kuwait's top high school graduates for academic year 2023-2024

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: Zain organized its annual honoring ceremony to recognize and celebrate Kuwait's top high school graduates for the academic year 2023-2024. The event was held at the company's headquarters in Shuwaikh and was attended by the students and their parents, along with Zain Kuwait ĈEO Nawaf Algharabally, Ministry of Education Assistant Undersecretary Maryam Al Enzi, and the Ministry's Official Spokesperson Ahmad Al

During the event, Zain honored the very top graduates in three categories: top graduates nationwide, top Kuwaiti graduates, and top graduates from Special Education Schools. Students from both science and humanities disciplines were recognized within each of these categories.

In his opening speech, Zain Kuwait CEO Nawaf Algharabally expressed the company's immense honor and pride in the distinguished graduates. He highlighted that their achievements are a testament to their hard work, determination, and pursuit of excellence. Algharabally noted that the graduates have shown not only academic excellence but also leadership, creativity, and resilience, which are traits essential for success in any field.

He also extended his deepest congratulations and gratitude to the families of the graduates, acknowledging that their support and guidance were crucial for the students'



Recognizing a Special Education graduate.

success. Algharabally emphasized that the achievements of each student are not only personal milestones but also accomplishments for the entire nation.

Ministry of Education Assistant Undersecretary Maryam Al Enzi expressed the Ministry's appreciation to Zain for holding this initiative every year, where the company celebrates the nation's top graduates and sheds light on their most distinguished achievements. She noted that such efforts contribute to supporting the educational ecosystem

At the end of every academic

year, Zain holds its annual ceremony to celebrate the top high school graduates after the results are officially announced by the Ministry of Education. The company takes this opportunity to express its pride in Kuwait's future leaders, shed light on their talents, and reaffirm its unwavering support to education in the community. Zain firmly believes in the im-

portance of contributing to the progress of education. By presenting similar initiatives, Zain looks to empower and prepare the youth for the important roles they will play in the future of the nation.

#### **Council set to discuss public school parking lots**

#### By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: The Municipal Council's Technical Committee, chaired by council member Munira Al-Amir, will hold its first meeting for the third term on Tuesday, to discuss the following:

Proposal of council member Fahad Musaed Al-Abd Al-Jader Al-Awal regarding public school park-

■ Request to allocate markets to sell local agricultural products in each governorate,

■ Proposal to purchase homes and

plots in Khaitan-Block Five,

■ Proposals of Chairman of the council Abdullah Al-Mahri to amend Article 10 of Ministerial Resolution No. 322/2023 regarding the system of dividing and subdividing land intended for construction; and the council's decision on numbering some plots in Kuwait City,

■ Request to allocate agricultural plots for the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises Develop-

■ Request of Kuwaiti Scouts Association regarding the naming of

the roundabout next to the associa-

tion's headquarters,

■ Request of the Ministry of Communications to allocate a site for the third major fiber optic network project in Subiya, ■ Proposal of Technical Commit-

tee Chairperson Muneera Al-Amir to specify the architectural identity

of government buildings,

Proposal of council member Abdullatif Al-Daei to add a health

activity in cooperative societies, - Request of the owners of mobile

vehicle enterprises to specify sites for their business, ■ Request of Kuwaiti Lawyers

Association to stop the licensing of law offices in residential areas.

### طيوانية 🕈 diwaniya

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

### 'Harnessing AI, smart design vital to enhance safety in construction'

"IN today's era of advanced construction methods and readily available smart design technologies and artificial intelligence tools, there exists a significant opportunity to enhance security and safety measures for buildings, workers' housing in residential areas, and construction sites," columnist Dr Nada Sulaiman Al-Mutawa wrote for Al-Jarida daily.

"To begin with, by harnessing smart design and construction techniques, buildings can be constructed with rigorous adherence to safety standards. This encompasses implementing robust fire safety systems, ensuring adequate ventilation, maintaining proper structural integrity, and upholding human rights in housing con-

"The integration of modern technologies like AI allows for real-time monitoring of building conditions, enabling the detection of potential hazards and facilitating prompt interventions to prevent accidents.

The incident in the Mangaf area, where workers were housed in unsafe conditions,

underscores the immediate need

for proactive measures.
"The regulatory bodies, including ministries overseeing construction and labor affairs, must take decisive action by conducting regular and thorough inspections. These inspections should go beyond mere compliance with building codes; they must ensure that workers are provided with humane living con-



Dr Al-Mutawa

"The primary challenge lies in effective decision-making and enforcement of regulations, particularly in the face of recurring incidents. To address this, there is an urgent requirement for legislative reform and the introduction of updated procedures that incorporate technological advancements. This includes implementing stricter penalties for non-com-pliance with safety and housing standards can serve as a deterrent and ensure accountability among property owners and contractors.

"This is in addition to leveraging digital tools such as AI for continuous monitoring can help identify potential safety hazards and ensure timely interventions; promoting transparency in construction and housing practices through public reporting of inspection results and compliance status can foster accountability and trust.

"By adopting these measures, regulatory bodies can significantly improve safety standards in residential buildings and construction sites, thereby safeguarding the well-being of workers and residents alike.

"This proactive approach not only addresses immediate concerns but also lays the groundwork for a more resilient and secure built environment in Kuwait.

"Expanding on the suggestions to develop a comprehensive strategy for enhancing security and safety in residential and construction settings we must implement mandatory online courses through the Ministry of Interior's platform.

"These courses should cover a range of topics including fire safety protocols, emergency response procedures, and occupational health standards. By making these courses accessible via the ministry's website or a dedicated app, all stakeholders, including property owners and workers, can be educated and equipped with essential knowledge. This initiative aims to prevent accidents and ensure effective responses during emergencies.

"This is in addition to creating a team comprising industrial engineering students or recent graduates. This youth team can be tasked with addressing critical issues such as labor overcrowding and building safety.

"Their fresh perspectives and innovative ideas can contribute to optimizing space usage, enhancing building designs for compliance with safety standards, and proposing practical measures to improve both living and working conditions in residential and construction

"Putting in place and establishing a centralized database dedicated to monitoring housing conditions across Kuwait. This database would consolidate information on safety inspections, compliance with housing standards, and living conditions of workers. Accessible to relevant authorities and stakeholders, it would facilitate data-driven decision-making and ensure prompt interventions where necessary.

"Deploy artificial intelligence (AI) technologies for predictive maintenance in buildings and construction sites. AI can analyze data collected from sensors to predict potential equipment failures or safety hazards. This proactive approach allows for timely maintenance and interventions, thereby reducing risks and enhanc-

ing overall safety. "Advocate for legislative reforms aimed at modernizing laws and procedures related to construction, housing, and labor safety. These reforms should incorporate technological advancements and best practices to improve regulatory frameworks. Strengthening enforcement measures and ensuring compliance with updated regulations will be crucial in achieving a safer built environment.

"By implementing these strategies, Kuwait can take significant strides towards enhancing security and safety in residential and construction settings. Collaboration between government entities, technology experts, educational institutions, and industry professionals will be essential in effectively addressing challenges and achieving sustainable improvements in safety standards.

"Legislation on Fire Safety Equipment -- Introduce and enforce laws requiring property owners across residential and commercial properties to install and maintain fire alarm and protection systems. This legislation should mandate regular inspections to ensure equipment functionality and compliance with safety standards. By implementing these measures, Kuwait can significantly mitigate the risk of fire-related incidents and elevate overall safety standards in buildings.

"Interactive Ministry of Interior App -- Develop an interactive mobile application under the Ministry of Interior's oversight. This app should be designed to provide safety instructions, alerts, and warnings in multiple languages. It should include real-time updates on emergencies, evacuation procedures tailored to specific locations, and direct access to emergency service contacts. By leveraging modern technology, Kuwait can ensure that critical safety information reaches diverse

populations promptly, fostering a culture of preparedness and effective response during crises.

"Utilizing Artificial Intelligence (AI) -- Deploy AI technologies to analyze demographic data, population density, and architectural insights. AI can provide valuable recommendations for optimizing safety measures and building designs that effectively mitigate risks. For instance, AI can suggest improvements in building materials or designs that enhance fire resistance and structural integrity.

"Additionally, innovative solutions such as utilizing recycled materials, like repurposed tires, can address environmental concerns while bolstering safety meas-

ures.

"Collaborative Implementation -- Collaboration

-- Collaborations. among government agencies, educational institutions, technology experts, and community stakeholders is essential for the successful implementation of these initiatives. This collaboration should prioritize safety, sustainability, and regulatory compliance to create a secure environment for residents, workers, and visitors

"Setting a New Standard -- By embracing technology, promoting education on safety practices, and fostering innovative solutions, Kuwait can set a new benchmark for safety in urban planning and construction.

'This holistic approach ensures a safer and more resilient future, enhancing the quality of life for all residents and contributing to sustainable development goals.

"In summary, through robust legislation, technological innovation, and collaborative efforts, Kuwait can establish a comprehensive framework that enhances safety across its urban landscape. This approach not only mitigates risks but also promotes sustainable practices and prepares the community to respond effectively to emergencies."

#### Also:

"The Mangaf building disaster isn't just a tragic fire incident; it's a catastrophic event that has profoundly shaken Kuwait due to its unprecedented scale of casualties and injuries. Unlike typical fire incidents, which usually cause limited harm, this disaster resulted in significant loss of life and injuries, marking it as one of Kuwait's deadliest in recent history, comparable only to the Mubarakiya fire of March 31, 2022," columnist Youssef Al-Shehab wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"The causes of the Mangaf disaster are complex and cannot be overlooked. They stem from several factors, each contributing to its devastating impact:
"Negligence and Greed -- Some individuals prior-

itized financial gain over the safety and lives of others, resulting in overcrowded and unsafe living conditions within the building.

"Lack of Oversight -- Government agencies, particularly the municipality and fire department, failed in their duty to enforce safety regulations and conduct regular inspections. The building, which housed approximately 196 people in cramped conditions, reflects a severe oversight failure.

"Systemic Corruption -- Years of corruption within government agencies normalized negligence and compromised safety standards across various sectors. This systemic issue allowed unsafe living conditions to persist without adequate intervention.

"To address these systemic issues requires urgent and comprehensive reforms such as -- Immediate Response: Efforts must prioritize the recovery of injured individuals and support for affected families, including medical care, counseling, and financial assistance.

"Legal Accountability -- Those responsible for neglecting safety regulations and allowing hazardous conditions must face legal consequences. This includes individuals enabling unsafe living arrangements and officials failing in oversight responsibilities.

"Reform of Oversight Practices -- Government agencies must undergo significant reforms to strengthen monitoring and enforcement of safety standards in residential and commercial buildings. This includes regular inspections, strict penalties for non-compliance, and transparent reporting mechanisms.

"Public Awareness and Education -- Initiatives should educate residents and property owners about safety regulations and their rights through campaigns, mandatory safety training, and accessible digital re-

"Technological Integration -- Utilizing technology such as AI for real-time monitoring of building conditions can enhance proactive measures to prevent future

"The Mangaf building disaster serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of negligence and corruption on safety and human rights. Addressing these issues demands coordinated efforts from government, community leaders, and stakeholders to prevent such tragedies in the future and uphold Kuwait's commitment to safety and welfare.

"The aftermath of the disaster has revealed longstanding issues of building violations, regulatory chaos, and a disregard for safety and legal norms in residential areas. Despite prior warnings and concerns, responsible authorities often showed inadequate responsiveness, possibly influenced by influential figures obstructing inspection and enforcement efforts for personal gain.

'However, there has been a renewed effort led by ministers Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef and Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, alongside firefighting and security agencies, to inspect unsafe dwellings thoroughly. Their proactive response underscores the need for sustained vigilance and enforcement beyond immediate crises.

"Moving forward, sustained inspection efforts are crucial to uphold the state's authority consistently and prioritize public safety over personal or financial interests. Accountability for negligence must be swift and robust to address past indecision and weak enforcement perpetuating unsafe conditions.

In conclusion, the lessons learned from Mangaf must drive enduring reforms, evolving Kuwait's regulatory frameworks to effectively safeguard citizens and residents. Only through unwavering commitment to law enforcement and decisive action can tragedies like Mangaf be prevented, preserving lives and upholding governance integrity in Kuwait.'

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

'Need for everyone to adhere to traffic laws'

### **General Traffic Dept deals with 4,397 road accidents**

**By Munif Naif** 

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: The latest traffic statistics revealed that the General Traffic Department (GTD) at the Interior Ministry dealt with 4,397 road accidents from June 1-21 -- about 200 accidents and 30 injuries per day.

first week of June, the number of traffic accidents reached 1,552 with 266 injuries. In the second week, the number of accidents reached 1,662 with 257 injuries. In the third week, the number of accidents reached 1,183 with 215 injuries. The total number of injuries resulting from these accidents

The statistics showed that in the reached 738 within only 21 days of this month.

Security sources revealed that the most common cause of road accidents is not paying attention or using the mobile phone by hand while driving. They stressed the need for everyone to adhere to traffic laws to guarantee the safety of



Photo by Rizk Taufiq

One of the violating shops being issued citations

#### Linking fire alarm devices in buildings with KFF eyed Acting Director of Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) Major Gen-

eral Khalid Abdullah Fahad formed a team of technicians tasked to conduct a study on linking fire alarm devices in buildings with the Central Operations Unit in KFF, reported Al-Shahed daily.

Director of the Public Relations Department at

KFF Brigadier Mohammad Bader Al-Ghareeb said the project is aimed at making Kuwait safer by minimizing deaths, injuries and damage to properties caused by fire incidents and speeding up the response of firefighting forces to calls about such

Meanwhile, KFF closed several shops in different governorates for failure to obtain licenses from KFF reports Al-Shahed daily.

In the meantime, Major General Fahad recently visited the marine firefighting stations tasked to guarantee the safety of sea-goers. He expressed his gratitude to the firefighters, affirming they are always ready to carry out their tasks and protect the people.

### **Detention of 27 in KD 120m** laundering case 'extended'

Court sets July 8 to hear Al-Qarifa case; dead body found

By Jaber Al-Hamoud, Munif Naif Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, June** 23: The detention renewal judge has rejected the request to release the defendants in the largest money laundering case involving 27 individuals including six citizens, and decided to extend their detention for 14 days pending investigation into the case.

In the previous hearing, the defendants -- six citizens, eight Syrians, 12 Egyptians and one Lebanese -- denied all the charges.

Their defense team demanded for their release on any bail amount that the court deems appropriate due to the lack of justification for pretrial detention but the court rei

Case files indicate that the defendants formed a gang, through which they were able to launder money more than KD120 million - within a short period and transferred it illegally by using local banking systems for the purpose of hiding it and camouflaging its source.

Al-Qarifa's case set for July 8: The Court of Appeals set July 8 for the trial of former Fourth Constituency candidate Musaed Al-Qarifa who was sentenced to four years in prison for inciting others to overthrow the regime and for broadcasting false news.

KUWAIT CITY, June 23:

of the Ministry of Interior re-

near a beach, reports Al-

beach visitors. The authori-

ties have taken necessary le-

der, and safeguarding beaches.

underscored their determina-

endanger themselves or oth-

The Public Relations and Se-

the Directorate-General of

Fire Department said firemen

from Maidan Hawally put

out fire in the basement of a

building in the area, reports

from the firemen swiftly ar-

rived at the scene and man-

aged to extinguish the blaze

without any casualties.

According to a statement

Al-Jarida daily.

The administration empha-

gal actions against them.

This conduct posed a sig-

Seyassah daily.

The Public Prosecution ordered

the pretrial detention of Al-Qarifa on charges of insulting the authority of HH the Amir in a symposium he held at his electoral headquarters when he ran for the 2024 National Assembly election.

The prosecution affirmed that it interrogated the accused regarding the recordings of the symposium posted on social media.

Citizen found dead: The body of a citizen was found on the Sixth Ring Road near Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Causeway (Doha Link), reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to a security source, the Ministry of Interior's Operations Unit received a report that an unknown body was found on the Sixth Ring Road.

Immediately, security personnel and an ambulance were dispatched to the site. Upon their arrival, it became clear that the person had been dead for some time as the body appeared to be decomposed.

Results of the preliminary examination of the body revealed that he was a citizen in his 50s. The body was referred to the Forensic Medicine Department to determine the cause of death.

A case was registered and investigations are ongoing.

Ministry refutes rumor: The Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs has denied the rumor spread on social media that it will call for Dhuhe and Asr prayers only as a measure to rationalize power consumption, reports Al-Shahed daily.

In a press statement, the ministry confirmed it is committed to rationalizing the use of electricity; but without affecting the rituals and five prayers. It added that worshipers are welcome to pray five times per day in all the mosques whose doors are open to all believers, while urging everyone to obtain information from official sources only to avoid facing legal problems.

66 referred to DCGD: The Rescue Police General Department has announced that 66 people were referred to Drug Control General Department (DCGD) within a week.

The Rescue Police General Department explained that security and traffic officers in various governorates resulted in the arrest of 111 wanted persons, 24 people whose residency permits have expired and 73 who have no valid identification documents, in addition to the seizure of 150 judicially wanted vehicles.

It also reported that 12,524 traffic violations were recorded and seven vehicles were impounded.

Trio in medicines theft: The Criminal Security Sector of the Ministry of Interior has arrested a three-man gang of Asians, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The suspects are charged with stealing medicines from a medical store and selling them illegally through grocery stores. The daily added, one of the sus-

pects is employed by the Ministry of Health and using his position has been stealing medicines with the help of two others.

The seized items and the suspects are currently under the process of being handed over to the appropriate authorities to initiate legal proceedings against them.

This operation underscores the commitment of Kuwait's security apparatus to combating crime, ensuring public safety, and upholding the integrity of public institutions against exploitation and abuse.



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#### \_

#### Strategic collaboration demonstrates commitment to humanitarian causes

### Boursa extends partnership with UNHCR on World Refugee Day



to of campaign participants

A group photo of campaign participants.

#### Divers relieve coral reefs of hard waste off Kuwaiti shores

Teams of Kuwait Diving Club and the Kuwait Olympic Committee on Saturday cleaned the coral reefs around Umm Al-Maradem island.

Up to 50 divers took part in the operation, aimed at enhancing environmen-

tal awareness and affirming the national responsibility to preserve the marine environment, said Talal Al-Serhan, the club chair in remarks to KUNA.

The divers, assisted by peers from the Coast Guards and the Ministry of Interior, removed plastic and metallic litter.

Al-Serhan noted that the activity coincided with the International Olympic Day, marked by athletes and associations worldwide with diverse communities' actions.

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: Boursa Kuwait reaffirmed its commitment to supporting humanitarian causes by extending its strategic partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for the fourth consecutive year on World Refugee Day 2024, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This partnership underscores Boursa Kuwait's dedication to making a positive impact within the community it serves and highlighted the following key partnership points.

Support and Contributions -- Over the past four years, Boursa Kuwait has actively supported UNHCR's projects aimed at alleviating the plight of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). This support has included contributions to shelter, food, and emergency aid initiatives benefiting over 1,600 families in the Middle East.

Focus Areas -- Boursa Kuwait's contributions have specifically targeted emergency efforts in regions such as Sudan, Syria, and Lebanon. This includes support for UNHCR's annual winter assistance program, which provides crucial aid during harsh conditions

Advocacy and Awareness -- The partnership emphasizes raising awareness within society about the critical importance of assisting individuals affected by conflict, persecution, and displacement. Boursa Kuwait encourages listed companies and private sector entities to join efforts in supporting UNHCR and addressing the needs of refugees worldwide.

Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) -- Boursa Kuwait's initiative aligns with the UN's SDGs, particularly focusing on goals related to poverty eradication, hunger elimination, good health, quality education, clean water and sanitation, reducing inequalities, and fostering partnerships for sustainable development.

Corporate Sustainability Strategy -The partnership reflects Boursa
Kuwait's broader corporate sustainability strategy, which integrates
social responsibility governance, best
practices in the sector, and stakeholder expectations. It aims to establish
enduring partnerships that leverage
expertise from diverse fields to drive
sustainable impact.

World Refugee Day 2024 -- On June 20th, World Refugee Day commemorates the resilience and courage of refugees worldwide. This year's theme, "For a World Welcoming Refugees," emphasizes global solidarity in supporting refugees and creating inclusive environments for their integration and empowerment.

UNHCR's Appreciation -- Nisreen Al-Rubaian, UNHCR representative in Kuwait, expressed gratitude for Boursa Kuwait's continuous support, highlighting the pivotal role of such partnerships in improving conditions for refugees globally amidst ongoing and unresolved crises

and unresolved crises.

Boursa Kuwait's ongoing collaboration with UNHCR underscores its commitment to corporate social responsibility and its role in contributing positively to humanitarian efforts. By leveraging its platform and resources, Boursa Kuwait aims to foster sustainable development and make a meaningful difference in the lives of

#### 68 psychiatric clinics in all governorates

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: The Ministry of Health has confirmed the establishment of 68 psychiatric clinics within primary health care centers (dispensaries) across all governorates of Kuwait, reports Al-Jarida daily.

To access these services, individuals are required to schedule an appointment in advance through the ministry's official website.

This initiative aims to provide accessible mental health care services to residents throughout the nation.

### Addressing controversial issues crucial for Kuwait's future development & prosperity

Educational sector requires urgent attention



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KUWAIT CITY, June 23: The report from Al-Shall addresses significant issues in Kuwait's education system and the recent controversy over leaked exam questions highlighting the deeprooted challenges that have affected educational standards and governance for decades, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The report begins by tracing problems back to the early 1990s, following Kuwait's liberation, when policies like "Study a year, skip two years" were implemented. This initiative was perceived as a means to placate public discontent, rather than a genuine effort to improve education.

It symbolized a commodification of education, reducing it to a transactional process rather than a foundational pillar of societal development.

Over time, educational quality deteriorated, compounded by incidents such as the acceptance of under qualified individuals into professional fields due to nepotism or influence. These practices undermined educational integrity and contributed to a culture where educational credentials were often devalued.

The recent controversy involving leaked exam questions exemplifies broader systemic failures. Despite previous pledges to safeguard exam integrity, leaks continue to occur, affecting tens of thousands of stu-

dents and officials. This indicates a lack of effective governance, where policies intended to prevent such incidents have proven inadequate.

The report argues that addressing leaked exam questions in isolation misses the larger crisis in Kuwaiti education -- a crisis characterized by systemic corruption, lack of oversight, and a decline in ethical standards.

The focus on punitive measures against those responsible for leaks, while necessary, does not address the underlying issues that perpetuate such practices.

The environment within Kuwaiti education is described as deeply corrupted, where deception and forgery have become normalized. This environment not only harms educational outcomes but also jeopardizes the future of the country, especially given the significant role of the public sector in Kuwait's economy.

The report advocates for comprehensive reforms that go beyond addressing immediate incidents like exam leaks. It calls for surgical removal of systemic tumors within Kuwait's educational infrastructure, implying a need for fundamental restructuring and governance reforms to restore integrity and effectiveness.

While the banking sector in Kuwait shows positive financial indicators, the educational sector faces profound challenges that require urgent and sustained attention to restore trust, integrity, and quality. Addressing these issues is crucial for Kuwait's future development and prosperity.



The Kuwait Airways team participating in the exhibition.

### Kuwait Airways participates as official carrier at Travel and Tourism Exhibition

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: Kuwait Airways recently participated in the Tourista Travel and Tourism Exhibition as the official carrier of the event, held at the Capital Mall on June 21 and June 22, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The exhibition provided a platform for Kuwait Airways to showcase its role as a prominent national carrier in the region and highlight the offerings of its Holidays Office.

Hamad Al-Uthaina, Acting Director of Corporate Communications and Public Relations at Kuwait Airways, expressed the airline's pleasure in participating in the Tourista exhibition, which specializes in tourism and brings together numerous travel and tourism agents.

He emphasized that such exhibitions not only create new business opportunities but also keep participants informed about the latest trends and developments in the aviation sector.

Al-Uthaina highlighted Kuwait Airways' commitment to supporting local exhibitions, considering them integral to Kuwaiti society and crucial for the development of

the tourism and travel sector.

He underscored that Kuwait Airways participated in Tourista through its Holidays

Office, which showcased attractive travel packages featuring discounts of up to 30 percent on economy class and 25 percent on business, first, and royal classes.

The Holidays Office also offered various travel packages for cruise trips to destinations suited for this type of travel.

Regarding pricing and services, Al-Uthaina mentioned that Kuwait Airways has been diligent in providing the best prices and offers to its customers, following directives from the Board of Directors. These efforts included forming a Prices Committee to ensure competitive pricing and enhance service quality.

He emphasized Kuwait Airways' commitment to customer satisfaction by engaging with them through various media channels and participating actively in local and regional events and exhibitions.

Looking forward, Kuwait Airways intends to continue offering special promotions and services through the summer period, allowing travelers to explore a wide range of options through the Holidays Office. This approach aims to enhance customer experience, providing comfortable and enjoyable travel opportunities with exclusive offers.

#### **Promoting culture of knowledge-sharing amongst employees**

### Markaz conducts series of awareness seminars on combatting cyberattacks

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" organized a series of awareness seminars for its employees and board of directors on the cyber threat landscape. The educational session, titled "Fraud and Cyberattacks: Detection and Prevention," aimed to raise awareness and empower the attendees to identify and counter any forms of phishing, ransomware, or malware assaults. The internal seminars were presented by Rahaf AlGharaballi, Senior Analyst, Risk Departmentat Markaz and Noor AlMuhanna, Analyst, Compliance Department at Markaz.

The seminars highlighted the diverse and ever-evolving threats in the cyber world, providing valuable insights on how to navigate these risks and avoid falling victim to attacks. The knowledge-sharing sessions also delved deep into the topic, presenting the evolution of cyberattacks and the significant increase in incidents following the COVID-19 pandemic. In the modern world, where data is extremely valuable, safeguarding sensitive information is paramount for any business

The awareness seminarsalso illustrated how the cyber threat landscape has advanced with the advent of artificial intelligence through multiple case studies. These interactive sessions concluded by presenting concrete, actionable solu-



Group photo during the Markaz awareness seminars for its employees and board of directors on the cyber threat

tions to detect and prevent cyber threats. It also outlined the immediate measures to be adopted at the onset of an attack.

Commenting on the initiative, Pradeep Rajagopalan, EVP of Analytics and Internal Controls at Markaz, stated, "In today's everevolving digital landscape, it is imperative for businesses to remain vigilant against the potential risks posed by cyber threats.

Markaz is committed to safeguarding the data of our valued clients and securing our organizational assets from any possible cyberattacks. The Risk and Compliance departments continuously works with stakeholders to ensure that our network security systems are foolproof. Furthermore, our internal educational initiatives play a pivotal role in empowering employees and equipping them with the knowledge and appropriate tools to mitigate online fraud and cyber risks. This underscores our dedication to upholding excellence in compliance and risk manage-

Markaz's efforts to frequently conduct awareness seminars for its employeeson diverse and relevant topics reflect its commitment to fostering a collaborative and knowledge-sharing work culture. This initiative also falls inline with the company's corporate social responsibility strategy and its key pillars - Building human capacity, aligning business environment with the principles of sustainable development and promoting good governance in the business environment.



Board of directors.



Rahaf AlGharaballi and Noor AlMuhanna.

#### **Balancing innovation with legal precision**

#### Electronic arbitration revolutionizes dispute resolution in the digital era

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: The concept of electronic arbitration represents a significant evolution in dispute resolution, particularly suited to the digital age where commercial transactions increasingly online, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Unlike traditional arbitration, which relies on physical meetings and documents, electronic arbitration leverages information and communication technologies (ICT) to conduct proceedings entirely over the internet or through other modern means like computers and fax.

The following are the advantages of Electronic Arbitration:

- Encouragement of Investment: Facilitates and encourages investment through online platforms and e-commerce.
- Speedy Resolution: Allows for faster resolution of disputes compared to traditional methods.
- Cost Reduction: Reduces expenses associated with travel, physical hearings, and document handling.
- Ease of Obtaining Rulings: Provides convenience in accessing and receiving arbitration rulings electronically.

The following are the disadvan-

tages:

Application of Jus Cogens

Application may not Rules: Electronic arbitration may not apply mandatory international law rules (jus cogens), potentially leading to issues with the enforceability of arbitration awards.

■ Trust Issues: Concerns about the reliability and trustworthiness of electronic transactions and the enforceability of arbitration awards issued electronically.

■ Confidentiality Concerns: Risks regarding the confidentiality of arbitration proceedings conducted online, as sensitive information may be vulnerable to unauthorized access or

Addressing these challenges requires the development of robust legislative frameworks and international standards governing electronic transactions and arbitration in international commerce

Such frameworks should adapt to technological advancements, ensuring they remain relevant and effective in safeguarding the integrity and confidentiality of arbitration process-

es conducted electronically. In conclusion, while electronic arbitration offers numerous advantages in terms of efficiency and accessibility, it necessitates careful consideration of legal frameworks to mitigate risks and ensure its effectiveness and trustworthiness in resolving disputes arising from electronic commercial transac-

### Al-Mutawa calls for enhanced protections for subcontractors in Kuwaiti government projects

Delays threaten companies' financial stability

**KUWAIT CITY, June 23:** Tariq Al-Mutawa, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Sudair Trading and Contracting Company, emphasized the critical need for the Central Agency for **Public Tenders to establish** a robust mechanism to resolve issues and ensure the rights of subcontracting companies involved in government projects, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Al-Mutawa has highlighted several pressing concerns faced by approved subcontractors in Kuwait.

Firstly, he pointed out that subcontractors approved by regulatory authorities often encounter delays in receiving payments owed to them after completing subcontracts for projects awarded to large, often non-local companies through government tenders.

These delays, according to Al-Mutawa, have significant negative impacts on the market dynamics and operational capabilities of subcontracting firms,



A site under construction; (inset): Tariq Al-Mutawa the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Sudair Trading and Contracting Company.

potentially jeopardizing their financial stability and ability to undertake future projects.

Al-Mutawa underscored that some entities responsible for project oversight withhold payment to subcontractors due to observations or disputes with the primary contractors.

He emphasized that if there are is-

sues or observations, they should be promptly addressed by identifying the responsible party and ensuring that subcontractors receive their due payments for work completed satisfacto-

Moreover, Al-Mutawa expressed concern over the prolonged duration subcontractors wait to receive their

In line with its commitment to Diraya campaign

KFH warns against donations to unknown entities

payments, which in some cases exceeds five years after project completion. He estimated that the outstanding dues to subcontractors collectively amount to at least 100 million dinars.

These delayed payments not only hinder the subcontractors' financial liquidity but also affect their ability to fulfill obligations to banks and other financial commitments, potentially leading to financial crises and bankruptcy threats.

Al-Mutawa stressed the urgent need for regulations and mechanisms to safeguard subcontractors' rights, asserting that they play a crucial role in project execution, contribute positively to the economy by employing local workers, and deserve protection and support through legislative and regulatory frameworks.

He called for the issuance of new laws and decisions to organize and strengthen the subcontracting sector, ensuring its sustainability and ued contribution to the local market.

Al-Mutawa urged for the development of a comprehensive roadmap to ensure timely and fair payment of subcontractors' financial dues, emphasizing the importance of organizing and supporting this vital sector for the benefit of Kuwait's economic development and stability.

Biometric measures rolled out

**Kuwait Airport preps summer travelers** 

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: Director of the Airport Security General Department at Kuwait International Airport Brigadier Bader Al-Shaya said the preparation for the travel season, which coincides with the summer vacation, is ongoing to ease the departure and arrival procedures, reports Al-Rai daily.

Al-Shaya affirmed the department is working hard to remove obstacles that travelers might face during the summer vacation season, which lasts for 105 days -- from the beginning of June until Sept 15. He said the total number of passengers within this period is estimated at 5.5 million -- 2.7 million departures and 2.8 million arrivals on board 42,000 flights. He added all the passport control counters have been activated, especially during the peak period (16 in Terminal Four, 20 in Terminal One and eight in Terminal Five; indicating it takes only seven seconds to stamp a passenger's passport and 20 seconds in case the employer is under training.

Regarding citizens and expatriates banned from traveling for not paying debts and fines, Al- Shaya confirmed the establishment of centers at the airport for those who cannot pay online. He revealed the concerned institutions with payment centers at the airport include the Ministry of Electricity and Water, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Communications and General Traffic Department in Ministry of Interior. He added the travel ban is nullified as soon as the debt or fine is paid.

He stated the department, in coordination with airline companies, is keen on foiling attempts to enter Kuwait illegally. He disclosed that several individuals have been arrested for illegal entry, pointing out this is a confirmation that Kuwait is not a haven for people smugglers. He cited as an example those who tried to enter the country on forged passports and those who used the passports of others. He asserted such individuals are sent back to their countries of origin upon completion of the necessary legal measures.

He went on to say that those residing in other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries can obtain a visit visa upon arrival as per ministerial decision no. 2030/2008 and its amendments. He revealed the decision stipulates that the visa applicants must have a residency permit in any of the other GCC countries valid for at least six months. He clarified this is applicable to doctors, chief executive officers, owners of companies, businesspersons, engineers, pilots, diplomats and highly qualified individuals. He added the wife, children and domestic workers accompanying the concerned individual are exempted from the aforementioned requirements.

Moreover, he revealed that the biometrics of almost one million passengers arriving at the airport have been taken since the beginning of the process; while a number of centers were established at the airport for this purpose.

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) advises customers to exercise caution when donating or making financial contributions through websites on certain occasions.

In a press release, KFH highlighted how fraudsters exploit specific events. They do this by sending phishing emails that request donations through bank transfers or payments on fake websites. Their ultimate goal is to steal money from unsuspecting victims.

KFH warned about the dangers of new phishing scams that have recently emerged. The bank advised customers to verify the website's safety, legitimacy, and authenticity before making any do-

As part of its ongoing support for

Ministry oversaw 21 fundraising proj-

ects during the last month of Ramadan,

generating approximately 50 million

The Ministry's rigorous review pro-

cess ensured the accuracy of financial

data submitted by charitable societies,

comparing it with bank statements and

issuing detailed reports for each proj-

Ramadan were addressed promptly

with legal measures, while more seri-

ous infractions involving non-charita-

ble entities were referred to the Public

Minor violations reported during



Diraya logo

Diraya campaign to promote banking awareness, in collaboration with the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Kuwait Banking Association, KFH explainedthat scammers are employing new methods of fraud.

The rise of digital payments and the growing reliance on smart-

phones and the internet have created new avenues for fraudsters. They exploit this by targeting the millions of customers who conduct their transactions and daily business online. These fraudsters attempt to trick users into revealing sensitive account information, ultimately aiming to steal their money.

Fraudsters can leverage advanced AI and vast datasets to analyze online purchases and identify patterns that suggest potential victims with vulnerable accounts.

KFH added that fraudsters can target anyone, regardless of age or social status. They employ various tactics, including enticing but fake offers, seemingly urgent bank warnings about account problems, suspicious friend requests online, or pleas for help over the phone.

#### **HH the Amir**

#### **Continued from Page 1**

are considered the administration that prevents the use of 'wasta' (influence), which distracts them from performing the duties assigned to them.

They deliberate on grievances and then present the best solutions to the executive office. They are the open eyes of the ruler in terms of implementing justice.

Without a doubt, any leader is a human being with limited energy and cannot follow up all State affairs on

Therefore, we seek the help of honest individuals with a conscience, who work silently and whose main concern is the country and its interests.

Today, there are many of these people in Kuwait. We clearly see the work of some of them in the most difficult circumstances, because difficulties reveal the true nature of a person.

Hence, the meeting of His Highness the Crown Prince with the citizens is a successful step and a genuine fulfillment of the promises of His Highness the Amir.

Everyone sees that it is within what His Highness the Amir promised to his people. Today, we are in an era of lovalty and firmness. It was said in the past: "Prosperity requires loyalty and a generous person. If he promises, he fulfills the promise.'

Thus, we are facing a man of decision who fulfills his promises. For this reason, Kuwait is awaiting many Amiri promises that will come one after the other. This has started to emerge from the cycle of conflict of interests between parliamentarians and ministers, as well as the exploitation of influence, in order to move towards the leadership again.

#### **Converting basement**

#### **Continued from Page 1**

income, which endangers properties and human lives and is a serious violation of municipal regulations and law,"

said Sendan.

The Municipality will be on the lookout for such violators, Sendan confirmed, adding that citizens and residents can report any violations to the Municipality Hotline (139) or WhatsApp number (24727732).

#### **Kuwait steps up**

#### **Continued from Page 1**

efforts by involving well-established charitable societies in these initiatives. The Ministry has circulated directives to the heads of these societies, emphasizing their role in Kuwait's international commitments to counter

extremism and terrorism. These efforts have contributed positively to Kuwait's international standing, leading to its transition from the "gray" list to the "white" list alongside countries recognized for their rigorous efforts against money laundering and terrorist financing, as reported by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). In a different area of focus, the 1st repatriation

Prosecutor.

#### **Continued from Page 1**

fought together in Syria's 13-year conflict, helping tip the balance in favor of Syrian President Bashar Assad. Officials from Iran-backed groups say they could also join together again against Israel.

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said in a speech Wednesday that militant leaders from Iran, Iraq, Syria, Yemen and other countries have previously offered to send tens of thousands of fighters to help Hezbollah, but he said the group already has more than 100,000 fighters.

"We told them, thank you, but we are overwhelmed by the numbers we have," Nasrallah said.

Nasrallah said the battle in its current form is using only a portion of Hezbollah's manpower, an apparent reference to the specialized fighters who fire missiles and drones.

But that could change in the event of an all-out war. Nasrallah hinted at that possibility in a speech in 2017 in which he said fighters from Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan and Pakistan "will be partners" of such a war.

Officials from Lebanese and Iraqi groups backed by Iran say Iran-backed fighters from around the region will join in if war erupts on the the Lebanon-Israel border. Thousands of such fighters are already deployed in Syria and could easily slip through the porous and unmarked border.

Some of the groups have already staged attacks on Israel and its allies since the Israel-Hamas war started Oct. 7. The groups from the so-called "axis of resistance" say they are using a "unity of arenas strategy" and they will only stop fighting when Israel ends its offensive in Gaza against their ally, Hamas.

"We will be (fighting) shoulder to shoulder with Hezbollah" if an all-out war breaks out, one official with an Iran-backed group in Iraq told The Associated Press in Baghdad, insisting on speaking anonymously to discuss military matters. He refused to give further details.

The official, along with another from Iraq, said some advisers from Iraq are already in Lebanon.

An official with a Lebanese Iranbacked group, also insisting on anonymity, said fighters from Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces, Afghanistan's Fatimiyoun, Pakistan Zeinabiyoun and the Iran-backed rebel group in Yemen known as Houthis could come to Lebanon to take part in a war.

#### **World News Roundup**

#### Europe

#### Japan royal family in UK

#### Ukrainian drones kill 4 in Russia & Crimea

KYIV, Ukraine, June 23, (AP): Russian authorities said four people died in Ukrainian drone and missile attacks on Sunday, a day after Russia's bombing of Ukraine's second largest city of Kharkiv killed three people and left dozens in hospitals.

Three people - including two children - were killed by falling debris when five Ukrainian missiles were shot down in Sevastopol, a port city in Russia-annexed Crimea, said Mikhail Razvozhayev, the city's Moscow-installed governor. Close to a hundred people were injured, he said.

One person was killed and three injured in Russia's Belgorod region, bordering Ukraine, when three Ukrainian drones attacked the city of Grayvoron, regional Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said.



down 33 Ukrainian drones over Russia's western Bryansk, Smolensk, Lipetsk and Tula regions, the Russian Ministry of Defense said Sunday. No casualties or damage were reported. The attacks came after Rus-

Air defenses overnight shot

sia struck Kharkiv on Saturday afternoon with four aerial bombs, hitting a five-story residential building and killing

Cleh Syniehubov said that 41 people were still being

treated for injuries on Sunday. In a video address following the attack, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged Ukraine's partners to bolster its air defenses.

"Modern air defense systems for Ukraine - such as Patriots, accelerated training of our pilots for F-16s, and most importantly, sufficient range for our weapons - are truly necessary," he said.

Two people were wounded by falling debris when two Russian missiles were shot down over the Kyiv region overnight, Ukraine's air force commander Mykola Oleschuk said.

Regional Gov Vadym Filashkin of Ukraine's partly occupied Donetsk region said that Russian attacks on Saturday killed two people and wounded four.

#### Signal

Meanwhile, behind the smiles, the balloons and the red-carpet pageantry of President Vladimir Putin's visit to North Korea last week, a strong signal came through: In the spiraling confrontation with the U.S. and its allies over Ukraine, the Russian leader is willing to challenge Western interests like never before.

The pact that he signed with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un envisions mutual military assistance between Moscow and Pyongyang if either is attacked. Putin also announced for the first time that Russia could provide weapons to the isolated country, a move that could destabilize the Korean Peninsula and rever-

He described the potential arms shipments as a response to NATO allies providing Ukraine with longerrange weapons to attack Russia. He bluntly declared that Moscow has nothing to lose and is prepared to go "to the end" to achieve its goals in Ukraine.

Putin's moves added to concerns in Washington and Seoul about what they see as an alliance in which North Korea provides Moscow with badly needed munitions for its war in Ukraine in exchange for economic assistance and technology transfers that would enhance the threat posed by Kim's nuclear weapons and missile program.

The new agreement with Pyongyang marked the strongest link between Moscow and Pyongyang since the end of the Cold War.

Kim said it raised bilateral relations to the level of an alliance, while Putin was more cautious, noting the pledge of mutual military assistance mirrored a 1961 treaty between the Soviet Union and North Korea.

#### Also:

**LONDON:** Emperor Naruhito of Japan and his wife Empress Masako arrived in the UK on Saturday ahead of a long-awaited official state visit originally scheduled for 2020 before the coronavirus pandemic delayed those plans.

The smiling couple, who landed late afternoon at Stansted Airport north of London, will spend seven days in the UK carrying out private engagements before the official state visit begins on June 25. The couple have connections to the UK, having studied at the University of Oxford at different times.

The trip was intended to be the 64-year-old emperor's first overseas visit after he ascended the Chrysanthemum Throne in 2019. But it was delayed by COVID-19. He later attended Queen Elizabeth II's funeral in September 2022.

The state visit begins Tuesday, when King Charles III and Queen Camilla will formally welcome the emperor and empress before they take a ceremonial carriage ride to Buckingham Palace. Naruhito will also lay a wreath at the tomb of the unknown soldier in Westminster Abbey then return to the palace for a

**LONDON:** The chief data officer of **Britain**'s Conservative Party has taken a leave of absence, British media reported Sunday, following growing allegations that the governing party's members have been using inside information to bet on the date of Britain's July 4 national election.

The Sunday Times and others reported that Nick Mason is the fourth Conservative official to be investigated by the UK's Gambling Commission for allegedly betting on the timing of the election before the date had been announced.

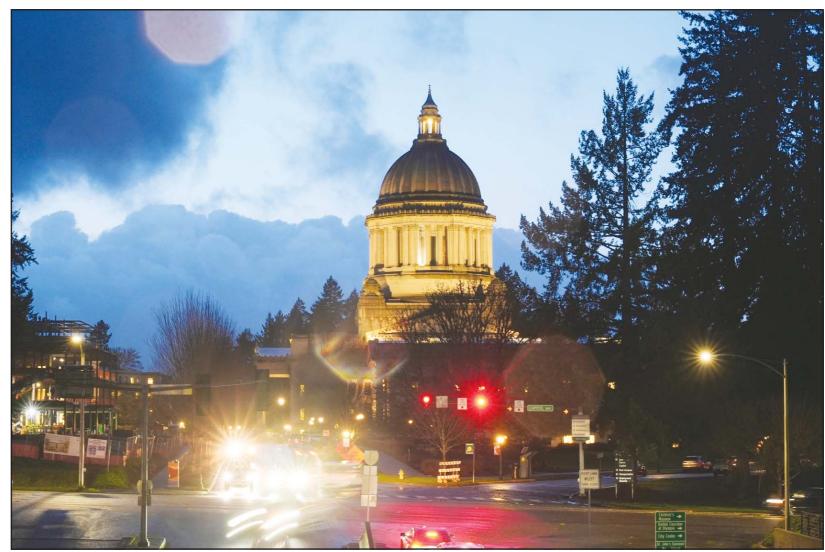
The Times alleged that dozens of bets had been placed with potential winnings worth thousands of

Two other Conservative election candidates, Laura Saunders and Craig Williams, are under investigation by the gambling watchdog. Saunders' husband Tony Lee, the Conservative director of campaigning, has also taken a leave of absence following allegations he was also investigated over alleged betting.

The growing scandal, which came just two weeks ahead of the national election, has dealt a fresh blow to Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservative Party, which is widely expected to lose to the opposition Labour Party after 14 years in power.

Sunak said this week that he was "incredibly angry" to learn of the allegations and said that anyone found to have broken the law should be expelled from his

Saunders, a candidate standing in Bristol, southwest England, has said she will cooperate fully with the investigation. Williams was Sunak's parliamentary private secretary as well as a candidate.



The Washington state Capitol building is pictured on Jan 9, 2024, in Olympia, Washington. King County Superior Court Judge Michael Scott on June 21 has paused parts of a new Washington state parental rights law derided by critics as a 'forced outing' measure. (AP)



A person holds a dog while being evacuated in the bucket of a front end loader in Hawarden, Iowa on June 22 in the wake of flooding from the Big Sioux River. Massive upstream rainfall sent the river over its banks in Hawarden causing massing flooding that prompted evacuations. (AP)



Criswell

#### **America**

FBI offers reward for info: Federal authorities offered a reward for information about those responsible for igniting a pair of New Mexico wildfires that killed two people and destroyed hundreds of homes in the past week.

The FBI on Saturday offered up to \$10,000 for information in connection with the South Fork Fire and Salt Fire in southern New Mexico, which forced thousands

An agency statement said it was seeking public assistance in "identifying the cause" of the fires near Ruidoso, New Mexico, that were discovered June 17. But the notice also pointedly suggested human hands were to blame, saying the reward was for information leading to arrest and conviction of "the person or persons responsible for starting the fires.

The South Fork Fire, which reached 26 square miles (67 square kilometers), was 26% contained on Saturday, while the Salt Fire, at 12 square miles (31 square kilometers), was 7% contained as of Saturday morning, according to the National Intera-gency Fire Center. Full containment was not expected until July 15.

Recent rains and cooler weather have assisted more than 1,000 firefighters working to contain the fires. Fire crews on Saturday took advantage of temperatures in the 70s Fahrenheit (21 to 26 Celsius), scattered showers and light winds to use bulldozers to dig protective lines.

Deanne Criswell, administrator of

the Federal Emergency Management Agency, met with Gov Michelle Lujan Grisham, Crawford and Mescalero Apache President Thora Walsh Padilla on Saturday. (AP)

Maine doctor convicted: A Maine doctor who runs an addiction treatment center has been convicted on multiple counts of illegally distributing opioids including oxy-

Maine, was found guilty in federal court Friday of distributing the opioids at her

According to court documents, she did so without a legitimate medical purpose and knowing that some patients were battling an opioid addiction.

codone, hydromorphone and fentanyl.

Dr Merideth Norris, 53, of Kennebunk,

She prescribed the drugs, according to court documents, even after patients failed

#### **Politics**

#### 'It'll be showdown between Biden, Trump'

### Kennedy Jr fails to qualify for CNN's debate

COLUMBIA, SC, June 23, (AP): Independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr has failed to qualify for next week's debate in Atlanta, according to host network CNN, falling shy of benchmarks both for state ballot qualification and necessary polling.

The missed markers mean that the June 27 showdown will be solely between Democratic President Joe Biden and presumptive Republican nominee Donald Trump. That denies Kennedy a singular opportunity to stand alongside the leading candidates in an attempt to lend legitimacy to his longshot bid and convince potential supporters that he has a shot at winning. In a statement Thursday, Kennedy called his exclusion from the debate "undemocratic, un-American, and cowardly."

Both the Biden and Trump campaigns fear that Kennedy could play spoiler in what's anticipated to be a close general election.

#### **Participate**

According to the criteria set out by CNN, candidates would be invited to participate in the debate if they had secured a place on the ballot in states totaling at least 270 votes in the Electoral College, the minimum needed to win the presidency.

Biden and Trump have easily cleared the polling threshold but won't be certified for the ballot until their parties formally nominate them later this summer. Both have secured enough delegates to lock in their nominations.

Kennedy's campaign says he has satisfied the requirements to appear on the ballot in 22 states, with a combined 310 electoral votes, though not all have affirmed his name will be listed. California, the largest prize on the electoral map with 54 votes, will not certify any candidates until Aug 29.

Candidates were also required to reach a polling threshold of 15% in four reliable national polls by June 20, another metric CNN said Kennedy failed to meet. According to the network, Kennedy has received at least 15% in three qualifying polls so far and is currently on the ballot in six states, making him currently eligible for 89 Electoral College votes.

Last month, Kennedy filed an elec-

drug tests or were known to redistribute the

A federal jury convicted Norris on 15

counts of distributing controlled sub-

drugs in the community.

tion complaint alleging CNN is colluding with Biden and Trump to exclude him from the June 27 debate, alleging that the participation requirements were designed to ensure only Biden and Trump would qualify and claiming that he is being held to a higher standard.

CNN has said the complaint is without merit. Kennedy's campaign did not immediately respond to a message Thursday seeking comment on CNN's announcement and asking if he planned to take any further action about his exclusion. Last month, Biden and Trump

agreed to the CNN debate and a second on Sept. 10 hosted by ABC, bypassing the nonpartisan commission that has organized debates for nearly four decades.

After winning a coin toss, Biden's campaign chose the right podium position, meaning that he will be on the right side of viewers' screens, with Trump on the left, according to CNN. Trump's campaign then opted to deliver his closing statement after Biden.

Both campaigns have agreed to appear at podiums, and microphones will be muted except for the candidate whose turn it is to speak.

#### Also:

HARRISBURG, Pa: Independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr filed paperwork to get on the ballot for the November election in swingstate Pennsylvania, the state's election office said.

Kennedy's filing comes six weeks before the Aug. 1 deadline, after which the paperwork can be challenged in

The campaigns of both President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump fear that Kennedy could play a spoiler role in what's anticipated to be a close election, especially in Pennsylvania, the nation's fifth-most

populous state. To qualify for the ballot in Pennsylvania, Kennedy must file 5,000 signatures of registered voters.

With its 19 electoral votes, Pennsylvania is a top-tier prize that has swung between the parties in the last two presidential elections. Both were closely contested: In 2016, Trump won Pennsylvania by 44,000 votes over Democrat Hillary

stances and she faces up to 20 years on

her patients' safety at risk, according to the

Prosecutors accused Norris of putting

**Clinton**, and four years later Biden beat Trump by 81,000 votes.

Libertarian **Jo Jorgensen** was on the ballot in 2020 and collected just over 79,000 votes, while three minor-party candidates on the ballot in 2016 — the Libertarian Party's Gary Johnson, the Green Party's Jill Stein and the Constitution Party's Darrell Castle — and got nearly 190,000 votes combined.

Kennedy's petitions could challenged in court by the two major parties, and both Trump's and Biden's campaigns have sought to portray him as an adversary. Legal challenges must be filed no later than Aug 8.

Kennedy, an environmental lawyer and prominent anti-vaccine activist, abandoned his Democratic primary challenge to Biden last year and began campaigning as an independent.

Among the obstacles he faces is a requirement to secure ballot access state by state. That requires him to collect millions of signatures that must be verified by election officials before his candidacy is approved.

Kennedy's campaign has previously said he has satisfied the requirements to appear on the ballot in 22 states, with a combined 310 electoral votes, though not all have affirmed that his name will be listed.

 $\textbf{COLUMBUS, Ohio:} \ \ A \ \ county \ \ judge$ stripped Republican Ohio House Speaker **Jason Stephens** of his control over the GOP caucus' campaign fund on Friday, escalating intraparty tensions in the chamber headed into November's election.

Franklin County Common Pleas Judge Mark Serrott issued his preliminary injunction from the bench in a lawsuit filed against Stephens in October by a rival GOP contingent. The dispute was prompted by Stephens, a fellow conservative, relying on the combined votes of all House Democrats and just a minority of House Republicans to win the speakership.

Serrott said the faction representing a majority of the House Republican caucus should make decisions about the fund, since majorities rule in a democracy, in order to comply with state



Japanese Emperor Naruhito, (center left), and Empress Masako, (center right), smile as they depart for the state visit to Britain, at Haneda airport in Tokyo, Japan on June 22. Japanese Crown Prince Akishino is seen at left, while Crown Princess Kiko is at second left. (AP)

Portland Press Herald, and failing to heed warning signs like failed drug tests among her patients or advisories from insurance companies about her prescribing of dangerous combinations of opioids and other

Her defense team tried to make the case that Norris helped patients reduce their medications and that the charges ignored the complexity of treating people who were addicted to opioids and struggled to find a doctor, the newspaper said. (AP)

Kentucky shooting kills 1: One person is dead and seven others were injured after a shooting at a Kentucky nightclub early Sat-

urday morning, authorities say.
Louisville Metro Police Department officials said they responded to a call of several people shot at the H20 nightclub in Louisville just before 1 am. One man, 40-yearold Joseph D. Bowers of Indianapolis, was pronounced dead at the scene. Another adult was transported to UofL Hospital with gunshot wounds police believe to be "critical and life-threatening.'

Six other people transported themselves to area hospitals with injuries that were not

life-threatening. The Louisville Metro Police Department's Homicide Unit is investigating the

case. There are currently no suspects.
"The relationship of the victims, if any, is not known at this time," police said in a statement later Saturday. (AP)

#### Lat/Am

#### Milei criticized

#### Bolivia 'political fight' paralyzes government

LA PAZ, Bolivia, June 23, (AP): Protesters streamed into Bolivia's capital, throats hoarse from chanting and feet blistered from a week of walking along the

The throngs of street vendors in the South American country's vast informal work force ended their nearly 100-kilometer (60-mile) march from Bolivia's mountain-rimmed plains with a call that summoned years of growing anger over the nation's dangerously depleting foreign-exchange reserves: "We want dol-

With prices surging, dollars scarce and lines snaking away from fuel-strapped gas stations, protests in Bolivia have intensified over the economy's precipitous decline from one of the



continent's fastest-growing two decades ago to one of its most crisis-stricken today. "We can change the coun-

try because we are the engine of production," Roberto Ríos Ibáñez, secretary-general of Bolivia's Confederation of Merchants, said as weary protesters broke for lunch around him in the capital's traffic-snarled center. "The govern-ment doesn't listen. That's

why we're in the streets.' Bolivia's financial quagmire stems, at least in part, from an unprecedented rift at the highest levels of the governing party

President Luis Arce and his one-time ally, leftist icon and former President Evo Morales, are battling for the future of Bolivia's splintering Movement for Socialism, known by its Spanish acronym MAS, ahead of elections in 2025.

#### Unrest

The political fight has paralyzed the government's efforts to deal with the deepening economic despair and analysts warn that the social unrest could explode in the historically turbulent nation of 12 million peo-

Cracks in the governing party opened in 2019, when Morales, then Bolivia's first Indigenous president, ran for an unconstitutional third term. He won a contested vote plagued by allegations of fraud, setting off mass protests that caused 36 deaths and prompted Morales to resign and flee the country.

After an interim government took control in what MAS called a coup, Morales' chosen successor, Arce, won election on a campaign promise to restore prosperity to Bolivia, once Latin America's mainstay source of natural gas.

Arce had been Morales' finance minister who oversaw years of strong growth and low inflation, but assuming the presidency in 2020, he encountered a bleak economic reckoning from the coronavirus pandemic. Diminished gas production sealed the end of Bolivia's budget-busting economic model.

#### **Popular**

Still hugely popular among Bolivia's Indigenous communities, coca growers and union workers, Morales saw an opportunity. After returning from exile, the charismatic populist announced plans last year to run in the 2025 vote - setting himself on a collision course with Arce, who is expected to seek re-election.

"Bolivia has an Indigenous majority and people will instinctively support someone like Morales based on what he represents," said Diego von Vacano, an expert in Bolivian politics at Texas A&M University and former informal adviser to Arce. "Now they have the push factor, the lack of success of the Arce admin-

Earlier this month, Morales drew tens of thousands of loyalists to Cochabamba southeast of La Paz, galvanizing his rural stronghold.

Arce disputes the legitimacy of Morales' campaign, arguing a 2023 constitutional court ruling bars him from running.

Legal experts say it's not so clear-cut.

Morales, who proclaimed in his speech that "we have complied with the rules," has threatened to unleash mass unrest if he is disqualified from running.

Meanwhile, with the cash crunch denying access to dollars to pay suppliers abroad, Bolivian merchants have produced extraordinary scenes on the border with Brazil and Peru by clamoring to buy the U.S. currency at inflated prices in the neighboring countries.

#### Also:

**BUENOS AIRES, Argentina:** Campaigning last year as a libertarian outsider, Javier Milei electrified rallies with his vows to destroy Argentina's corrupt political elite. But the eccentric economist-turned-president now faces accusations of hypocrisy over his Supreme Court nomination.

What makes his choice of **Ariel Lijo**, 55, so extraordinary is not just the judge's lack of appellate experience or scant scholarly publications, but that he has been accused of conspiracy, money laundering and illicit enrichment, and has come under scrutiny for more ethics violations than almost any other judge in his court's history.

"This is a massive regression, an effort to undermine the judiciary and the fight against corruption," said Juan Pappier, deputy director of the Americas at Human Rights Watch. "This is Milei's biggest contradiction.'

The backlash to Lijo's May 28 nomination was swift. Protestors rallied outside the Supreme Court. Legal watchdogs, business groups and newspapers castigated Milei for elevating an exemplar of the class that he had vowed to disrupt.

**GUATEMALA CITY:** Guatemala President **Bernardo** Arévalo says opposition in the Congress and the Attorney General's Office have made it difficult to implement the change he seeks for the Central American

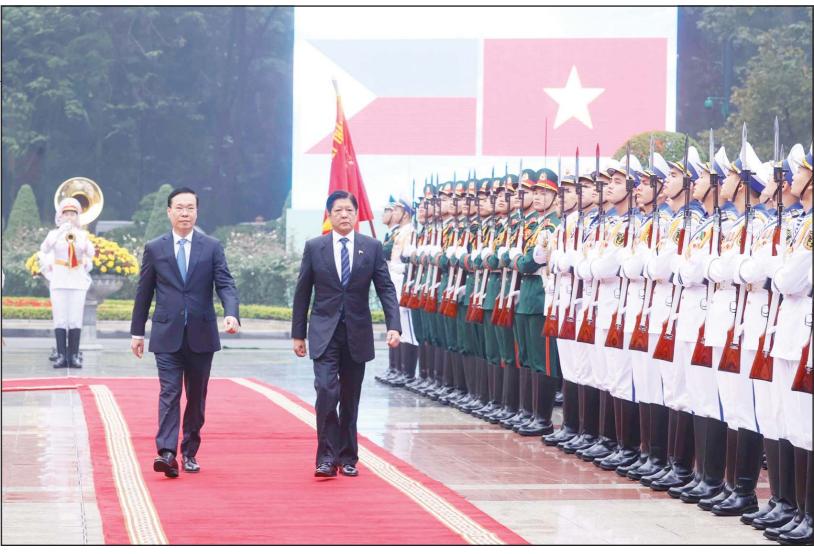
The politician from the progressive Seed Movement party was elected in August after voters angry at widespread corruption and leaders' failure to tackle it made a decisive choice for change, elevating his long

nation which he found "semi-destroyed" when he took

office almost six months ago.

shot candidacy. Central America's most populous country and the region's largest economy continues to struggle with poverty and violence that have driven hundreds of thousands of Guatemalans to migrate to the U.S.

"What has impacted me the most is seeing how corruption has impacted the executive capacity of all the country's institutions; the levels of abandonment and dysfunctionality of the institutions are terrible,' Arévalo said Thursday in an interview with The Associated Press.



Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, (right), and Vietnamese President Vo Van Thuong inspect honor guards during a welcome ceremony in Hanoi, Vietnam on Jan 30. Vietnam is ready to hold talks with the Philippines to settle their overlapping claims to the undersea continental shelf in the South China Sea, official Vietnamese media said on June 21 in a diplomatic approach that contrasts with China's increasingly assertive actions to fortify its claims in the contested waters. (AP)



Merchants shout slogans during an anti-government march against the banks' lack of US dollars, in La Paz, Bolivia, June 17. With prices surging, dollars scarce and lines snakaway from fuel-strapped gas stations, protests in Bolivia have intensified over the economy's pre-cipitous decline. (AP)



#### Africa

Malawi MP, activist arrested: Police in Malawi have arrested a Member of Parliament, Kamlepo Kalua, and an activist, Bon Kalindo, for their social media posts regarding the June 10 plane crash that killed the country's Vice President Saulos Chili**ma** and eight other officials.

National police spokesperson Peter Kalaya confirmed the arrests in a statement dated Friday, saying they had made "inflammatory social media posts which are full of innuendos and insinuations.'

The voice notes in question contain serious criminal elements as defined by the Electronic Transactions and Cyber Security Act, Kalaya further said. The police spokesperson further said that

the posts have the potential to incite violence and disorder. The social media posts reportedly made by Kalua and Kalindo questioned and con-

tradicted the authorities' narrative regarding the cause of the plane crash. The plane, a Dornier 228 military aircraft belonging to the Malawi Defense Force, crashed on June 10 in a forest a few kilometers away from Mzuzu City in northern Malawi due to poor weather conditions, according to the country's Secretary to the

President and Cabinet, Colleen Zamba. Malawian President Lazarus Chakwera has since engaged foreign experts to join the Malawi Defense Force and the Malawi Police Service in investigating the crash to find out the actual cause. (Xinhua)

Floods in Niger kill 21: Floods in mostly arid Niger have killed 21 people and affected more than 6,000 others during just the first few weeks of the African country's rainy season that runs through September, a government official said.

Thirteen people were killed when their homes collapsed and eight died by drowning following heavy rains, Col Boubacar Bak, the director-general of civil protection, said on national TV on Thursday evening.

From the Maradi region of south-central Niger, 35-year-old resident Ali Abdou told The Associated Press by phone that heavy rains destroyed houses in his community. "It is only the first rain of the season and our houses are already down," Abdou said. The rainy season, which lasts from June

to September, regularly claims many lives in Niger, including in desert areas.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs says that floods and heavy rains hitting the country in recent years are due to climate change. (AP) 

S.Sudan VP expresses concerns: South Sudan's vice president said that peace

#### Asia

#### **US envoy visits Hanoi**

#### 'Manila won't back down, but won't start war'

MANILA, Philippines, June 23, (AP): The president of the Philippines said Sunday his country would not yield to "any foreign power" after Chinese forces injured Filipino navy personnel and damaged at least two military boats with machetes, axes and hammers in a clash in the disputed South China Sea, but added the Philippines would never instigate a war.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr flew with his top generals and defense chief to the western island province of Palawan, which faces the South China Sea, to meet and award medals to navy personnel who came under assault by the Chinese coast guard Monday as they attempted to deliver food and other supplies to an outpost on the hotly contested Second Thomas Shoal.

Videos and pictures of the chaotic faceoff made public by the military showed Chinese coast guard personnel hitting a Philippine navy boat with a wooden bar and seizing a bag while blaring sirens and using blinding strobe lights. The Chinese government said that its coast guard had to warnings not to stray into what China calls its own offshore territory, a claim long rejected by rival claimant governments and international arbi-

#### Confrontation

The violent confrontation sparked condemnation and alarm from the US, the European Union, Japan, Australia and other Western and Asian nations, while China and the Philippines blamed each other for instigating it. Marcos's key advisers said Friday that his administration has no plan to invoke the country's mutual defense treaty with the United States.

"We are not in the business to instigate wars," Marcos told Filipino forces. "In defending the nation, we stay true to our Filipino nature that we would like to settle all these issues

peacefully." In Monday's faceoff at the shoal, Marcos said "we made a conscious and deliberate choice to remain in the path of peace." The Filipino navy special operations group personnel who came under attack used only their bare hands to push back the Chinese, some of whom pointed knives at them, said Philippine military chief Gen Romeo Brawner Jr.

'We stand firm. Our calm and peaceful disposition should not be mistaken for acquiescence," Marcos said. "History itself can tell that we have never, never in the history of the Philippines yielded to any foreign power."

Chinese officials in Manila and Beijing did not immediately comment on Marcos's remarks.

Marcos praised about 80 officers and personnel involved in Monday's supply mission, including one who lost his right thumb during the high seas confrontation, saying they "exercised the greatest restraint amidst intense provocation." He issued an appeal: "Continue to fulfill your duty of defending the nation with integrity and respect as you have done so far."

The territorial disputes, which involve China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan, have long been seen as a flashpoint that could pit the USagainst China if high seas confrontations escalate into armed conflict. Washington has repeatedly warned that it is obligated to defend the Philippines, its oldest treaty ally in Asia, if Filipino forces are attacked, including in the South

Indonesian forces have also opened fire on Chinese fishing boats in past confrontations in waters off the Natuna islands on the fringes of the South

Meanwhile, Philippines said Friday it has no plan to invoke its mutual defense treaty with the United States after the Chinese coast guard reportedly rammed, boarded and used machetes and axes to damage two Philippine navy boats in a chaotic faceoff that injured Filipino navy personnel at a disputed shoal in the South China Sea.

#### Also:

HANOI, Vietnam: A senior US diplomat held talks in Vietnam on Saturday and said that the trust between the two countries was at an "all-time high," just days after Russian President Vladimir Putin's state visit to Hanoi.

US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs Daniel Kritenbrink insisted that his trip was unrelated to Putin's visit on Thursday. Vietnam had elevated the United States to its highest diplomatic status, comprehensive strategic partner, last year, putting it at the same level as China and Russia. The elevation of the US ties suggested that Vietnam wanted to hedge its friendships as Western companies look to diversify their supply chains away from China. Kritenbrink was speaking at a briefing for selected media in Hanoi. A recording of the interaction was reviewed by The Associated Press.

Putin's trip to Hanoi had triggered a sharp rebuke from the US Embassy in Hanoi, which said that "no country should give Putin a platform to promote his war of aggression and otherwise allow him to normalize his atrocities," referring to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, now in its third year.

The American East Asia envoy echoed those concerns but said that he made it clear to Vietnamese officials that the "main reason" for his trip was the partnership between the US and Vietnam. He met Vietnamese Foreign Minister Bui Thanh Son.

"Only Vietnam can decide how best to safeguard its sovereignty and advance its interests," he said, while stressing the economic relations between Vietnam and its largest export market, the US Trade between the two countries was \$111 billion in 2023 compared to just \$3.6 billion between

Russia remains important for Vietnam, not just because it is an old ally from the Cold War era, but also because it continues to be its biggest defense supplier and Russian oil exploration technologies help maintain Vietnam's sovereignty claims in the contested South China Sea.

Kritenbrink said that China's increasingly assertive actions in pressing its claims to virtually the entire South China Sea were a cause of "great concern" for the region and the world.

The territorial disputes, which involve China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan, have long been seen as an Asian flashpoint that could pit the US against China if the high seas confrontations escalate into an armed conflict.

Vietnam said Friday that it was ready to hold talks with the Philip**pines** to settle their overlapping claims to the undersea continental shelf in the South China Sea in a diplomatic approach that contrasts with China.

"We think that China's actions, particularly its recent actions, around the Second Thomas Shoal, vis-à-vis the Philippines have been irresponsible, aggressive, dangerous, deeply destabilizing," Kritenbrink said. He stressed that defense treaties between the US and its ally the Philippines were "iron-

talks in neighboring Kenya have failed to acknowledge the country's peace agreement established in 2018, alleging a new draft agreement is aimed at replacing the original

Riek Machar in a protest letter to the

talks' mediator said the draft established alternative institutions to replace or run in parallel with those established by the previous peace agreement. He added that the current peace talks should complement and not obliterate the original deal.



Refugees fetch water at the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement in Turkana County, Kenya on June 17. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UN-HCR) hailed Kenya for its continued support and solidarity, which have been crucial in providing a haven for refugees since 1992. (Xinhua)

The former rebel leader signed an agreement with President Salva Kiir in 2018 that ended a five-year civil war that killed about 400,000 people. Machar and Kiir were on opposite sides in the war and Machar was appointed vice president after the 2018 deal. His group isn't part of the current talks, which are for groups that were not included in the 2018 agreement. (AP) 

Probe begins into police conduct: An investigation began Friday in Kenya into police conduct during protests against a government plan to impose new taxes, according to the country's police watchdog.

The chairperson of Kenya's Independent Policing Oversight Authority, Anne Makori, lauded protesters for demonstrating peacefully and urged police to exercise restraint while noting the killing of a protester and injuries sustained by demonstrators and police officers.

Thousands of protesters had marched in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi and other major cities and towns across the country, demanding that legislators reject a finance bill that has imposed new taxes on Kenyans.

The mother of the young man who was shot and killed during the protests told journalists her son was coming from work when tear gas was hurled in his direction and police fired at fleeing protesters.

Gillian Munyao said her 29-year-old son, Rex, was with some friends when he fell after being hit in his left leg. (AP)

SAUDI

**EGYPT** 

### Kuwait's economic policy department scales back operations post-pandemic

Fiscal policy department lacks leadership

**KUWAIT CITY, June 23:** The Department of Macroeconomic and Fiscal Policy, under Kuwait's Ministry of Finance, has seen a shift in its operational status following the Covid-19 pandemic, reports Al-Jarida

Established in 2009, the department became more active during the pandemic, playing a significant role in coordinating economic policies and strengthening ties with both local and international economic entities. This period of activation was crucial for making important financial decisions and implementing economic reforms aligned with Kuwait's strategic

However, according to sources, the department has now reverted to a more passive state. It currently lacks both a director and an executive team, and its responsibilities, particularly those related to formulating economic policies and providing technical and economic opinions, are either being handled directly by the Ministry of Finance or outsourced to other entities that may not have the requisite expertise.

Previously integral to forecasting expenditures and revenues, as well as contributing to economic reforms and the government's agenda, the department's role has diminished. This change comes as the Ministry of Finance considers integrating the department into its budget management structure, moving away from its previous direct affiliation with the Minister's Office.

Initially established under a cooperation agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the department was tasked with monitoring developments in Kuwait's economic sectors and making economic forecasts for the short and medium term. It has historically played a crucial role in international coordination efforts, working closely with global financial bodies like the World Bank and the IMF.

The reduction in the department's role has raised concerns about Kuwait's economic strategy and its ability to navigate future economic challenges effectively. Critics argue that scaling back the department's influence may lead to less coordinated financial decisions and a lack of strategic alignment in Kuwait's economic policies.

In summary, while the Department of Macroeconomic and Fiscal Policy initially played a pivotal role in Kuwait's economic landscape, recent developments suggest a shift towards reduced operational capacity and a potential reevaluation of its organizational structure within the Ministry of Finance.

The sources highlighted the extended role of the Department of Macroeconomic and Fiscal Policy within Kuwait's Ministry of Finance, emphasizing its critical contributions to economic coordination with international bodies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund

Over the past four years, this department has played a pivotal role in engaging with global advisors, discussing macroeconomic plans, managing public finances, overseeing financial reforms, and enhancing Kuwait's economic profile through strategic budgetary reforms.

During its active period post-Covid-19 pandemic, the department's advisory role was instrumental in forecasting economic trends, providing insights on rationalizing

Rates - 23rd June 2024

#### **GCC** exports decline in April

### Kuwaiti exports rise 7% in first four months of 2024

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: The

Ministry of Commerce and Industry reported that Kuwaiti exports reached a value of 103 million dinars in the first four months of 2024, reflecting a 7% increase compared to the same period in 2023, which saw exports valued at 96 million dinars.

However, the ministry's statistics for April revealed a significant month-on-month decline. Kuwaiti exports in April fell by 51% to 19 million dinars, down from 40 million dinars in March. Exports to Gulf Cooperation Council countries dropped by 58%, amounting

expenditures, determining budget allocations, and offering technical opinions on inflation and other eco-

nomic matters.

This proactive stance not only supported Kuwait's efforts in combating inflation but also facilitated its participation in government programs, economic reforms, and development initiatives crucial for the country's growth.

However, recent developments indicate a decline in the department's operational capacity. Currently lacking both a director and an executive team, the department's influence has diminished, raising concerns about its ability to maintain a strategic ecoto about 12 million dinars. Exports to other Arab countries decreased by 29%, reaching 6 million dinars compared to March.

Exports to European countries stood at 953 thousand dinars, a 27% decrease from the previous month. Conversely, exports to African countries saw a substantial rise of 96%, totaling 161 thousand dinars in April compared to 82 thousand dinars in March. Exports to Asian and Australian countries amounted to 68 thousand dinars. Meanwhile, exports to the Americas plummeted by 95%, reaching just 13 thousand dinars compared to 28 thousand dinars in

nomic direction within the Ministry of Finance. Critics argue that scaling back the department's role may lead to less disciplined and coherent financial decisions, potentially undermining Kuwait's economic stability and long-term growth objectives.

In conclusion, while the Department of Macroeconomic and Fiscal Policy initially played a pivotal role in Kuwait's economic strategy and international relations, its current state of contraction raises questions about the future direction of Kuwait's economic policies and the effectiveness of its financial management framework.

#### **KFH & NBK dominate sector**

### Kuwaiti banking sector sees 6.6% profit increase in Q1/24

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: The report on the Kuwaiti banking sector for the first quarter of 2024 highlights several key financial indicators and performances of the nine banks operating in Kuwait, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The banking sector collectively achieved a net profit of approximately 411 million dinars for the first quarter of 2024, which represents an increase of 6.6 percent compared to the same period in 2023 (where profits were about 385.4 million dinars) compared to the fourth quarter of 2023, profits increased by 19.2 percent, from about 344.8 million dinars.

The total allocations held by the banks during the first quarter of 2024 amounted to about 66.5 million dinars, showing a decrease from about 89.4 million dinars in the same period last year. This decrease of approximately 25.6 percent is close to the percentage increase in profits, indicating prudent financial management amidst local economic conditions.

The so-called conventional banks reported profits of about 212.4 million dinars, comprising 51.7 percent of the total net profits. This reflects a 9.0 percent increase compared to the first quarter of 2023. Islamic banks reported profits of about 198.6 million dinars, representing 48.3 percent of total profits.

The P/E ratio for the banking sector on an annual basis was approximately 16.1 times, which improved slightly from about 16.5 times in the same period last year. The ROA increased slightly to about 1.39 percent compared to 1.35 percent in the previous year, while the ROE also saw a slight increase to about 12.2 percent from 12.1 percent in the same period last year.

The following is the profit dis-

tribution among banks:

Kuwait Finance House
(KFH) recorded the highest profits among the banks, amounting to about 162.8 million dinars, representing 39.6 percent of the sector's net profits.

■ National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) followed with profits of about 146.6 million dinars, accounting for 35.7 percent of total profits.

Concentration of Profits: KFH and NBK together accounted for 75.3 percent of the banking sector's total profits, indicating a concentration of profits among the largest banks.

The remaining seven banks shared about 24.7 percent of the sector's profits, with Commercial Bank of Kuwait having the highest share at approximately 6.9 percent and Warba Bank the lowest at about 1.2 percent.

■ The Gulf Bank was the only bank among the nine to experience a decrease in profits, with a decline of approximately -25.6 percent. Its profits for the first quarter of 2024 were about 12.9 million dinars, down from about 17.3 million dinars in the same period last year.

Overall, the report underscores a positive growth trajectory for the Kuwaiti banking sector in the first quarter of 2024, with most banks showing increased profitability and resilience in navigating economic challenges.

#### **Eurozone economic recovery slows in June**

### Central Banks diverge in monetary policy amid varied economic data and inflation pressures

#### **By National Bank of Kuwait**

#### **United States**

US CPI Shows No Growth in

The US Consumer Price Index was unchanged in May 2024 on a seasonally adjusted basis after rising 0.3 percent in April. Over the past 12 months, the all-items index increased by 3.3 percent before seasonal adjustment. Shelter costs rose by 0.4 percent, and the food index increased by 0.1 percent, with a notable rise in the food away from home index. Energy prices fell by 2.0 percent, driven by a 3.6 percent decrease in the gasoline index. The all-items less food and energy index rose by 0.2

#### percent in May m/m. Federal Funds Rate Un-

changed The Federal Reserve announced that economic activity has continued to expand at a solid pace, with job gains remaining strong and unemployment low. Inflation has eased but remains elevated. Thus, the Federal Reserve has decided to maintain the target range for the federal funds rate at 5.25 to 5.50 percent. As well as continue to reduce their holdings of Treasury securities and mortgage-backed securities to achieve maximum employment and 2% inflation over

#### the longer run. **US Retail Sales Rises in May**

Retail sales in the US rose by 0.1% in May as seen in the monthover-month figure, higher than the previous -0.2% figure seen in April, while still lower than expectations of a 0.3% rise. Meanwhile core retail sales were unchanged from the previous month at -0.1%, lower than expectations of a 0.2% rise. The figure indicates that the US economy is losing some momentum in the consumer space even as employment data shows a resilient labor market.

#### Flash Services and Manufacturing PMI Increase

The S&P Global Flash US Composite PMI rose to 54.6 in June 2024, marking a 26-month high. The services sector led the expansion, with business activity growing at its fastest pace since April 2022. Where the Services PMI increased to 55.1, up from 53.4 in May. Manufacturing output also improved, though at a slower rate at 51.7 up from 51.0. Employment rose for the first time in three

months, and input cost inflation

#### This Week's Expected 3-Month Open Low High Close Maximum Forward 1.0700 1.0730 1.0741 1.2655 1.2656 1.2676 1.2645 1.2560 1.2680 1.2620 158.93 159.79 159.79 159.00 161.00 157.59 158.66 0.8937 0.8900 0.9040 0.8842 CHF 0.8914 0.8903 0.8944

slowed to a five-month low. Future sentiment remained optimistic, though manufacturing optimism hit its lowest level in 18 months amid concerns about the demand environment and election-related

The US Dollar index closed the week at 105.796.

#### Europe

#### Flash Eurozone PMI Shows Slowed Recovery

The eurozone's economic recovery slowed in June 2024, as indicated by the HCOB Flash Eurozone Composite PMI dropping to 50.8 from 52.2 in May. Manufacturing output fell sharply to a six-month low, with the PMI at 45.6, while the services PMI also decreased to 52.6, a three-month low. New orders declined for the first time in four months, particularly impacting manufacturing. Employment growth slowed, reflecting reduced business activity. Germany showed slight growth, whereas France saw a contraction in output for the second month.

The EUR/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.0691.

#### Swiss National Bank Cuts Interest Rates

The Swiss National Bank lowered its policy rate by 0.25 percentage points to 1.25 percent, effective June 21, 2024. This decision was made to maintain appropriate monetary conditions amid decreasing underlying inflationary pressures. The SNB indicated that they are committed to adjusting their policy to ensure inflation remains within the range consistent with price stability over the upcoming period. While inflation in Switzerland is currently driven by higher prices for domestic services, the

#### **United Kingdom UK Headline CPI Hits Bank of**

SNB forecasts average annual in-

flation of 1.3 percent for 2024.

#### **England Target**

After nearly three years of exceeding its target, UK inflation has finally reached the Bank of England's desired rate of 2%, according to the Office for National Statistics. This marks a substantial decline from the worrying peak of 11.1% recorded in October 2022. core inflation, which excludes fluctuating items like energy and food, remains stubbornly high at 3.5%. This suggests that underlying inflationary pressures persist within the economy, and the Bank is likely waiting for further signs of price stability before considering a rate cut. This wait-and-see approach stands in contrast to the situations in the eurozone and the US, where inflation currently sits at 2.6% and 3.3% respectively.

#### Bank of England Keeps Interest Rates Unchanged

The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) maintained the Bank Rate at 5.25% in its June 2024 meeting. CPI inflation fell to 2.0 percent in May from 3.2 percent in March. Despite stronger-than-expected UK GDP growth, the MPC noted considerable uncertainty in labor market activity and persistent inflationary pressures.

#### Flash Composite PMI Decreases in June

The UK private sector experienced its slowest activity growth in seven months in June 2024. The S&P Global Flash UK PMI Composite Output Index decreased to 51.7 from 53.0 in May. The services sector growth declined to a PMI of 51.2, down from 52.9 in May, while manufacturing output increased to a 26-month high with a PMI of 51.4, up from 53.4 in May.

The GBP/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.2645.

#### **Asia-Pacific**

#### **RBA Keeps Interest Rates Un**changed

The Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) decided to keep the cash rate target unchanged at 4.35% and the interest rate paid on Exchange Settlement balances unchanged at 4.25%. Although inflation has fallen significantly from its peak in 2022, it remains above the target range of 2%. Headline CPI rose by 3.6% over the year to March, with persistent excess demand and domestic cost pressures continuing to influence inflation.

The AUD/USD currency pair closed the week at 0.6639.

#### **BOJ Policy Rate Unchanged**

The Bank of Japan decided to maintain the uncollateralized overnight call rate around 0 to 0.1 percent and will reduce its purchase of Japanese government bonds to ensure better long-term interest rates. While inflation expectations have risen moderately, risks remain high due to uncertainties in overseas economic activity and domestic price-setting behavior. The Bank of Japan will continue to monitor developments and adjust

policies as necessary. The USD/JPY currency pair

#### closed the week at 159.79. New Zealand GDP Shows Signs of Recovery

New Zealand's economy is showing signs of recovery after a period of sluggish growth. In the first three months of 2024 (Q1), the economy bounced back with a 0.2% increase compared to the previous quarter (Q4 2023), exceeding expectations of economists who predicted no change. This marks a turning point after a series of slowdowns, with Q1 being the second quarter to show positive growth since early 2021. The expansion was driven by several sectors, including utilities like electricity and water, services like entertainment, and retail trade. Interestingly, some sectors continued to struggle, like wholesale trade which saw a slower decline than the previous quarter. Overall, the picture is mixed across industries, with 8 out of 16 experiencing growth, particularly those related to rentals, property, and utilities. Looking year-over-year, the annual growth rate also improved to 0.3% in Q1, reversing a slight decline in the previous quarter. While there's still a way to go, these figures offer a hopeful glimpse of New Zea-

The NZD/USD currency pair closed the week at 0.6118.

land's economic recovery.

#### Kuwait

#### **Kuwaiti Dinar**

USD/KWD closed last week at

### **Value stocks at historically low** valuations, reports NBK Wealth

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: Value investing involves selecting stocks listed in the public markets trading at a price below their fair or intrinsic value. The concept of value investing was popularized by Benjamin Graham and the approach was adopted by many successful investors such as Warren Buffet.

Stocks can become undervalued for several reasons, often related to market psychology, companyspecific factors, or broader economic conditions. Regardless of the reason for a stock becoming undervalued, it represents an opportunity for a value investor to

Fund managers use a range of techniques and metrics to assess intrinsic value and screen for potentially undervalued stocks such as price relative to earnings, book value or cash flow where a lower ratio may indicate that a stock is undervalued. The fund manager should then also evaluate the quality of the company's top and executive management, its business model, the outlook for the business, industry trends and the company's standing relative to its competitors (peer analysis) before mak-

ing an investment decision. Value investing carries risk just like all other investments, one key to long term success is to invest with a margin of safety. The margin of safety refers to the difference between the intrinsic value of a stock and its market price. It acts as a buffer against errors in estimation or unforeseen events, offering a cushion for potential losses. When buying undervalued assets, it can take time before the market recognizes their true worth and therefore value investors typically have at least a 3-5-year hori-

Stocks that appear to be undervalued but fail to realize their potential are referred to as value traps and should be avoided by

conducting thorough research to understand the company's prospects. An active manager with strong research capability can add significant value by helping investors avoid value traps and constructing robust, diversified portfolios of value stocks.

Growth stocks (stocks expected to grow at an above-average rate) typically perform better during periods of strong stock market performance and when corporate earnings are on the rise. However, during economic slowdowns, growth stocks tend to underperform value stocks. Value tends to outperform growth during periods of weak stock market performance and in the early stages of an economic recovery. Value stocks typically offer higher dividend yields, which is particularly relevant for investors with a focus on income generation.

In recent years, value has sigunderperformed nificantly growth, leading to growth stocks being valued at near all-time highs relative to value stocks. Due to the recent outperformance, investors in the US large cap market have overweighted their portfolios towards growth stocks, driven partly by the strong performance of the so-"Magnificent Seven" Long-term investors should be cautious of having a significant underweight exposure to value stocks, as relative valuations can vary significantly throughout an economic cycle.

In conclusion, value stocks are currently at historically low valuations compared to growth stocks, key indices are overweight growth due to recent outperformance of the growth style. A long-term horizon is key for an investor that wants to explore value opportunities and an active manager can add significant value by identifying attractive stocks and ensure a robust portfolio construction with sufficient diversification.



#### great potential seen in China-Europe EV co-op towards energy transition

In a move towards a sustainable future, Chinese electric vehicle (EV) manufacturers are contributing to Europe's green transformation, as revealed in a groundbreaking

new report.
Unveiled in Brussels on Wednesday, the "Report on the Development of Chinese NEV Manufacturers in Europe" showcases the synergy between China and the European Union (EU) in their shared quest for carbon neutrality.

Chinese EV manufacturers are translating their expertise into tangible progress for Europe's green transportation sector

through equipment and technological support. By offering mature products and solutions, they act as catalysts for the development of local green travel systems

Frontrunner in green drive
With cutting-edge technology and robust
products, Chinese EV companies are not ust participating but are pivotal in driving Europe's green transportation revolution, highlighted by agreements such as BYD's deal with Swedish public transport leader Transdev AB.

In February 2023, the Chinese carmaker secured their largest ever order with Transdev AB for the supply of 52 electric buses. Since 2015, BYD's electric buses have been deployed in over 100 major cities across 20 Éuropean countries, máking a significant contribution to sustainable public transportation, said the report.

European consumers are also showing a growing interest in Chinese EVs, attracted by their affordability, technological innovation, and extensive features. European sales of Chinese EVs jumped by 23 percent in the first four months this year compared to the same period in 2023.

"We must commend China for its leader-

ship in decarbonization industries. It is an inspiration and a path that we must follow," former Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations Brice Lalonde said in his

opening remarks at the release.

The integration of Chinese EVs into the European market holds promise for both economic and environmental gains. Economically, competitively priced Chinese EVs could drive down costs, making electric cars more accessible to a broader range of consumers. This price competition could stimulate the market, encourage innovation among European automakers, and poten-

tially lead to job creation in related sectors such as EV maintenance, charging infra-structure, and renewable energy.

Environmentally, the widespread adoption of EVs is critical for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector, one of the largest sources of carbon emissions in Europe. Chinese EVs, known for their advanced battery technology and energy efficiency, could significantly contribute to lowering emissions. This shift would be instrumental in helping European countries meet their climate goals. (Xinhua)

#### Policy package kicks in

### China's property market sees promising signs

BEIJING, June 23, (Xinhua): Major Chinese cities have witnessed more signs of warming in the housing market since the government rolled out a combination of policies to prop up the property sector a month ago.

Improved buyer sentiments were observed in cities including Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu, and Hangzhou with a significant increase in inquiries and deals. While the market response has been positive, analysts said more time is needed for the policy effect to fully manifest and the sector still remains in an adjustment phase.

China on May 17 announced new policies to stimulate home purchases, ranging from lower minimum downpayment ratios and the cancellation of mortgage rate floors for first and second homes.

Moreover, local state-owned enterprises are encouraged to buy homes for affordable housing initiatives, and struggling developers may receive more financing support to complete ongoing projects and meet home delivery targets. Recently, multiple new housing projects in Shanghai saw notable increases

in subscription rates and customer visits. In a crowded showroom in Pudong District, an unnamed sales manager said the influx of potential buyers resulted from the relaxed purchase restriction

By mid-June, the city registered 14,730 existing home deals -- surpassing the average monthly level from the previous five months -- since May 28,

when local favorable property measures kicked in. In Hangzhou, east China's Zhejiang Province, the number of second-hand home purchase contracts increased 10 percent from May 31 to June 13 on the

KE Holdings Inc. platform, a leading real estate services provider. The data was "a positive sign that the market vitality continued to improve," said Shangguan Jian, president of the Hangzhou research institute of

Similarly, Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong Province, also saw a clear recovery in the housing market. During the Dragon Boat Festival holiday from June 8 to 10, the sales of new homes stood at about 20,000 square meters each day, marking a 6 percent increase from the same period a year ago, data from the China Index Academy showed.

The market recovery in first and second-tier cities was mainly driven by

### **OpenAl founder Sutskever setting up new Al** company devoted to 'safe superintelligence'

WASHINGTON, June 23, (AP): Ilya Sutskever, one of the founders of OpenAI who was involved in a failed effort to push out CEO Sam Altman, said he's starting a safety-focused artificial intelligence company

Sutskever, a respected AI researcher who left the ChatGPT maker last month, said in a social media post Wednesday that he's created Safe Superintelligence Inc. with two co-founders. The company's only goal and focus is safely developing "superintelligence" - a reference to AI systems that are smarter than humans.

The company vowed not to be distracted by "management overhead or product cycles," and under its business model, work on safety and security would be "insulated from short-term commercial pressures," Sutskever and his co-founders Daniel Gross and Daniel Levy said in a prepared statement.

The three said Safe Superintelligence is an American company with roots in Palo Alto, California, and Tel Aviv, "where we have deep roots and the ability

robust demand from new residents and young people seeking stable homes for marriage or children's education, said Li Yujia, chief researcher at the Guangdong Housing Policy Research Center.

Li emphasized that loosening policies have unlocked accumulated purchasing power previously constrained by policy limitations, insufficient credit support, and cautious market sentiment.

As it has only been a month since this round of policies came into force, some analysts and industry insiders still anticipated further observation of the policy effects.

Sutskever was part of a group that made an unsuccessful attempt last year to oust Altman. The boardroom shakeup, which Sutskever later said he regretted, also led to a period of internal turmoil centered on whether leaders at OpenAI were prioritizing business opportunities over AI safety.

At OpenAI, Sutskever jointly led a team focused on safely developing better-than-human AI known as artificial general intelligence, or AGI. When he left OpenAI, he said that he had plans for a "very personally meaningful" project, but offered no details.

Sutskever said that it was his choice to leave OpenAI.

Days after his departure, his team co-leader Jan Leike also resigned and leveled criticism at OpenAI for letting safety "take a backseat to shiny products." OpenAI later announced the formation of a safety and security committee, but it's been filled mainly with company insiders.

Wu Wenhui, a real estate agent in Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province, said the waitand-see attitude still lingered among buyers. Huang Xue from the China Index Academy's Sichuan branch called on more efforts to further revitalize the market, such as improving policies on land reserves and more swiftly pushing for trade-ins of commercial homes.

The government in the next step should continue to fully implement existing policy measures and stimulate effective demand in a bid to help stabilize the housing market, said Yu Xiaofen, head of the real estate research institute at the Zhejiang University of Technology.

#### Mine has large uranium deposits

### Niger revokes French company's op permit

**Expert: Spain-China deal to help** 

create 'business opportunities'

NIAMEY, Niger, June 23, (AP): Nigerien military authorities have withdrawn the operating permit for a large uranium mine from the French company Orano, the company said, significantly escalating tensions between the military junta and the country's former colonial power.

Niger, a landlocked country of 26 million, is the world's seventh biggest supplier of uranium, used for the production of weapons and nuclear power. In 2022, the country supplied over a quarter of the uranium used in the European Union, according to the bloc's nuclear energy agency, making it its second-biggest uranium source, after Kazakhstan

Before the military coup last year, Niger was the West's major economic and security partner in the Sahel, the vast region south of the Sahara Desert that has become a hot spot for violent extremism. But the military junta which seized power on the pledge of cutting ties with the West vowed to review mining concessions in the country and ordered the withdrawal of

Western troops. The Imouraren mine, located in the northern part of the country, is one of the largest uranium deposits in the world, with reserves estimated at 200,000 tons. Mining activities were supposed to start there in 2015, but

BARCELONA, Spain, June 23,

(Xinhua): A deal signed by Spain and

China to boost bilateral trade and

investment will help create business

opportunities for both countries, a

extremely beneficial to countries like

Spain, which are open to imports but

traditionally also export a great deal.

In fact, the rise in our GDP is not only

due to tourism but also to a rise in our

exports," said Josep Maria Gomes,

International Business Developer at

the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce.

Dialogue Mechanism agreement

signed on June 3 was the result of the

Economic and Industrial Commission

Spain's largest trading partner outside

the European Union (EU). At the same

time, Spain is the EU country that

exports the most p... to China, which is

also importing increasing amounts of

In recent years, annual bilateral

Spanish w... and olive oil.

Gomes underlined that China is

held in Madrid.

Spanish-Chinese

The permanent Cooperation and

Mixed

he said.

"Greater cooperation with China is

Spanish expert told Xinhua recently.

production was halted after the crash in uranium prices following the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan.

Thursday's decision by the Nigerien junta comes "despite the resumption of activities on site, pursuant to the expectations they had expressed," the company said in a statement.

"Current market conditions, with a favorable increase in the price of uranium, make it possible to once again consider putting Imouraren into operation," it said late Thursday. The infrastructure had reopened earlier this month, it added.

The company's exploitation plan "did not meet our expectations," the Nigerien mining ministry wrote to the company in a letter dated June 20 and seen by The Associated Press. As a result, the mine has been "returned to the public domain" and exempted from all contractual rights, the letter said.

Orano, which has been operating in Niger for over 50 years, said it has always followed "a responsible approach of partnership and transparency, acting in continuous consultation with the State of Niger and local stakeholders."

The company said it was "willing to keep all channels of communication open" with the Nigerien junta, but it reserved the right to challenge the decision to withdraw the permit in a national or international court.

trade between China and Spain has

risen to over 50 billion euros (53.5 bil-

lion U.S. dollars), according to the

Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade

importance of China as a growing

market for our products, because until

now we've seen China as a supplier,

and there are sectors in China that are

far more technologically developed

than ours that can help us become

He underlined that as well as boost-

ing exports to China, Spain wants to

encourage Chinese investment in

Spain through such bilateral agree-

tial investment in such strategic areas

as the auto sector or renewable energy,

so it wants to show Chinese companies

that they are welcome to invest here,

According to the Spain China

Council Foundation, in 2022 China

invested 95 million euros in Spain,

while Spain invested 42 million euros

"What Spain is looking for is essen-

more competitive," said Gomes.

"We've only lately realized the

## **US home sales drop in May** amid rising mortgage rates

High prices discourage prospective buyers

LOS ANGELES, June 23, (AP): Sales of previously occupied U.S. homes fell in May for the third straight month as rising mortgage rates and record-high prices discouraged many prospective homebuvers during what's traditionally the housing market's busiest period of the year.

Existing home sales fell 0.7% last month from April to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.11 million, the National Association of Realtors said Friday.

Sales also fell 2.8% compared with May last year. The latest sales still came in slightly higher than the 4.07 million pace economists were expecting, according to FactSet.

'I thought that we would actually see a recovery this spring -- we are not seeing it," said Lawrence Yun, the NAR's chief economist.

Despite the pullback in sales, home prices climbed compared with a year earlier for the 11th month in a row. The national median sales price rose 5.8% from a year earlier to \$419,300, an all-time high on records going back to 1999. It's also up 51% from five years

Home prices rose even as sales slowed and the supply of properties on the market hit its highest level in 4

"It's somewhat of a strange phenomena," Yun said. "We had low home sales activity, prices are hitting record highs and homes look like they're still getting multiple offers.

The U.S. housing market has been mired in a slump going back to 2022, when mortgage rates began to climb from pandemic-era lows. Existing home sales sank to a nearly 30-year low last year as the average rate on a 30-year mortgage surged to a 23-year high of 7.79%, according to mortgage buyer Freddie Mac.

The average rate on a 30-year mortgage has mostly hovered around 7% this year as stronger-than-expected reports on the economy and inflation have forced the Federal Reserve to keep its short-term rate at the highest level in more than 20 years. Federal Reserve officials said last

week that inflation has fallen further toward their target level of 2% in re-



reports on this week's average U.S. mortgage rates. (AP)

### Japan's century-old bank faces mounting crisis over high U.S and, European rates

TOKYO, June 23, (Xinhua): Century-old Japanese financial institution Norinchukin Bank has announced plans to sell approximately 10 trillion yen (about 63 billion U.S. dollars) in overseas bonds, primarily U.S. and European government bonds, by the end of the current fiscal year in March 2025, as it faces massive losses.

The move aims to mitigate the risks associated with holding low-yield bonds amidst high interest rates in the United States and Europe, and this decision is expected to convert the bank's on-paper losses into actual losses, potentially increasing its net losses for the fiscal year to 1.5 trillion yen, according to local media reports.

Established in 1923, Norinchukin Bank is one of Japan's largest institutional investors, primarily serving the

cent months and signaled that they

expect to cut their benchmark interest

rate once this year. The central bank

nation's agricultural, forestry, and fisheries cooperatives.

A spokesperson for the bank revealed in a recent interview that the bonds being sold constitute about one-sixth of its global investment portfolio. The sale is projected to triple the bank's deficit forecast from its May predictions, with final losses dependent on the actual scale of the bond sales and prevailing market conditions.

The decision came after Norinchukin Bank last month projected a fiscal year deficit exceeding 500 billion yen due to its substantial holdings in overseas bonds. Experts pointed out that the crisis stemmed from the prolonged high interest rates in the United States and Europe along with the delayed rate cuts by the U.S. Federal Reserve.

As of the end of March this year, the bank held approximately 23 trillion

had previously projected as many as

three cuts in 2024, which raised ex-

pectations in the housing market for

yen in foreign bonds, which made up 42 percent of its investment portfolio. The high interest rates have led to a significant drop in the valuation of previously issued bonds, sharply increasing the bank's paper losses.

Norinchukin Bank President and Chief Executive Officer Kazuto Oku stated that U.S. interest rates are unlikely to decrease for a considerable time. "Depending on developments like the U.S. elections, we might further reduce our holdings of U.S. Treasuries," he said.

Despite the substantial loss from selling the 10 trillion yen in foreign bonds, Oku assured that this would not exceed the bank's retained earnings and would have a limited impact on its capital adequacy ratio. He expected a return to profitability in the fiscal year 2025 ending March 2026 with improved financial conditions and investment reallocation.

mortgage rates to have eased further by now.

"Maybe the Federal Reserve interest

### US jobless claims fall to 238,000 from 10-mth high, remains low by historical standards

WASHINGTON, June 23, (AP): The number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits slipped last week as the U.S. labor market remained re-

silient. The Labor Department reported Thursday that jobless claims fell by 5,000 to 238,000 from a 10-month high of 243,000 the week before. The four-week average of claims, which

evens out weekly ups and downs, rose by 5,500 to 232,750, highest since September.

Weekly unemployment claims - a proxy for layoffs - remain at low levels by historical standards, a sign that most Americans enjoy unusual job security. Still, after mostly staying below 220,000 this year, weekly claims have moved up recently.

"Layoffs are still low overall suggesting businesses remain reluctant to reduce headcount in large numbers," said Rubeela Faroogi, chief U.S. economist at High Frequency Economics. "However, there has been a gradual increase in recent weeks that merits watching for signals about a more material weaking in demand for workers going forward.

Nearly 1.83 million people were collecting unemployment benefits the week of June 8, up by 15,000 the week before and the seventh straight weekly uptick.

The U.S. economy and job market have proven remarkably resilient in the face of high interest rates. Employers are adding a strong average of 248,000 jobs a month this year. Unemployment

is still low at 4%.

But the economy has lately showed signs of slowing, perhaps offering evidence that higher borrowing costs are finally taking a toll. For instance, the Commerce Department reported Tuesday that retail sales barely grew last

The Federal Reserve raised its benchmark interest rate 11 times in

2022 and 2023, eventually bringing it to a 23-year high to combat a resurgence in inflation.

Inflation has come down from a mid-2022 peak 9.1% but remains stubbornly above the Fed's 2% target. Fed policymakers announced last week that they have scaled back their intention to cut the rate three times this year. Now they are anticipating only one rate cut.

## What's On

#### **Abrar Al-Ibrahim leads jewelry fundamentals workshop**

### Gulf Bank resumes GB Masterclass series with jewelry focus

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: As part of its ongoing efforts to engage with the community, Gulf Bank has resumed its GB Masterclass series, which was initiated in collaboration with a team of experts and specialists from various fields. The latest session focuses on Jewelry Fundamentals and is conducted in partnership with the renowned Kuwaiti designer, Abrar

Designer Abrar Al-Ibrahim hosted a lecture and interactive workshop at The Avenues, attracting a significant audience of women passionate about diamonds, jewelry, and gemstones. The session covered topics such as diamond and gemstone examination, selection, evaluation, and design.

Gulf Bank is committed to actively interacting and communicating with the wider community and its clients year-round. This commitment is exemplified through thoughtfully curated programs aimed at promoting sustainability principles in society. Through the GB Masterclass series, developed in collaboration with a diverse group of experienced experts and specialists, Gulf Bank addresses topics of wide interest to its audience.

It's important to highlight that last year, the bank arranged numerous lectures and workshops covering diverse fields including Makeup, Fashion Styling and Getting Ready for Ramadan. These sessions, which catered to the



Gulf Bank engages community with interactive jewelry workshop

interests of both the public and clients, each lasted for two consecutive hours.

The bank expressed pride in its close ties to the community, continuously working towards meeting the aspirations of both the public and clients through a variety of meaningful initiatives and events. It looks forward to introducing more initiatives in the future.

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

and seamless banking experience.

Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining robust developments in sustainability at environmental, social

and governance levels through diverse sustainability initiatives, strategically selected to benefit the Bank both internally and externally. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties transactions, all while ensuring a simple to achieve it. IVECO Drive the road of change



IVECO delivers daily 4x4 trucks to Kuwait's MEW

High-performance IVECO trucks boost MEW's capabilities

### KAICO delivers eight 'IVECO Daily 4x4' trucks to Ministry of **Electricity & Water & Renewable Energy's partner company**

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: Kuwait Automotive Imports Company (Alshaya & Alsagar), the authorized distributor of IVECO in Kuwait, is pleased to announce the successful delivery of 8 units of IVECO Daily 4x4 trucks to the Ministry of Electricity & Water & Renewable Energy (MEW)'s partner company.

This significant delivery, executed in partnership with one of our valued customers, marks a key milestone in enhancing the operational capabilities of the MEW.

The IVECO Daily 4x4, delivered to the MEW, represents a full line-up of go-anywhere vehicles, offering unmatched versatility and performance essential for the Ministry's demanding field operations. Featuring a solid load-bearing chassis and high-performance suspensions, it is ideal for customization across various missions. The Daily 4x4 excels in navigating tough terrains and mixed roads, ensuring seamless operation with both allroad and off-road versions.

The Daily 4x4 vans come equipped with versatile transmission options, featuring either the HI-MATIC automatic transmission, known for

its seamless multi-brand compatibility, or manual transmission. These choices endow the vehicle with exceptional off-road prowess while delivering superior comfort and user-friendly operation.

Mr. Ashish Tandon, the General Manager of KAICO, expressed his enthusiasm for the partnership, stating, "We are beyond delighted to contribute to enhancing the Ministry's operational fleet with these high-performance trucks, which will undoubtedly support their critical work in managing Kuwait's energy and water infrastructure."

Vinukumar Nair, Sr. Divisional Manager – Fleet & Leasing, highlighted the importance of this delivery, saying, "We are proud to deliver these exceptional IVECO Daily 4x4 trucks to our valued customers. This collaboration underscores our commitment to providing high-quality, reliable vehicles that meet the specific needs of our clients. We are confident that these trucks will significantly contribute to the Ministry's operational efficiency and success."

The collaboration between KAICO, our valued customer, and the Ministry of Electricity & Water & Renewable Energy reflects a shared commitment to innovation, excellence, and sustainability.

This partnership is poised to set a new standard in the provision of specialized vehicles for essential government operations.

#### **About IVECO**

IVECO, a European (Italian) world-leading manufacturer of trucks and vans, provides a comprehensive range of vehicles tailored to meet diverse needs, locations, and missions. Specializing in innovative and sustainable transport solutions, IVECO is renowned for its durability, efficiency, and advanced technology. IVECO trucks and vans are engineered to perform exceptionally well under various climates, cargos, and missions, making them ideally suited for the demanding working conditions and extreme environments of this region.

#### **About KAICO**

Kuwait Automotive Imports Company (KAI-CO) is a leading automotive distributor in Kuwait, representing some of the world's most renowned automotive brands. With a strong commitment to customer satisfaction and quality service, KAICO has established itself as a trusted name in the automotive industry.

Easy access to Al Najma account via app

### **Al-Tijari announces winner** of Al Najma account draw

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: Commercial Bank of Kuwait conducted the weekly draw for Al Najma Account on Sunday, June 23, 2024. The draws were conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Mr. Mansour Al-Dhafiri.

The result of the draw were as

1. Al Najma weekly draw – the prize of 5,000/- Kuwaiti Dinars went to the winner Miss. Sabah Kassem Al Kamash

The Bank stated that Al Najma Account prizes are distinguished by the diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that the account offers weekly prize of KD 5,000/-, monthly prize of KD 20,000/- and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the mega annual prize of KD 1,500,000.

Al-Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 200, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 200 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more



Commercial Bank of Kuwait conducts Al Najma Account weekly draw

balance a customer maintains in Al Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win,the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking services that customer can enjoy.

The Bank revealed that Al Najma account is available to everyone, and anyone can open Al Najma account through CBK mobile application in simple steps from anywhere and at any time.

#### **Bank introduces digital account opening**

### Warba reveals winners of weekly Sunbula draw

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: Warba Bank - the best bank in banking services for the corporate sector and banking services for the investment sector in Kuwait - announced the winners of the weekly Sunbula draw. Warba Bank will continue to make draws for 10 weekly winners for the Sunbula account in the presence of a representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Warba Bank employees.

As for the lucky customers for the weekly Sunbula draw, 10 winners were chosen from Warba Bank's customers, each of whom received 1,000 Kuwaiti dinars. The Winners are:Mr. Adel Abdul Hamid Al-Qallaf, Mr. Ayman Abdul Rahman Al-Ammar, Mr. Mubarak Saud Hamad Al-Suwailih, Mr. Ma-jdi Rushdi Salim Al-Ashqar, Mrs. Buthaina Salem Muhammad Al-Shammari, Mr. Saad Muhil Shaalan Al-Anazi, Mr. Ahmed Abdul Rahman Al-Mulhim, and Mr. / Walid Mahmoud Taher Abu Saa, Mr. Ali Mansour Naji Al-Ajmi, and Mr. Zabin Hazmi Žabin Āl-Maya

Al-Azmi. The Sunbula account is the perfect choice for all those who wish to save money and achieve great financial returns on their balances at the same time; in addition to multiple opportunities to win cash prizes throughout the year.

With regards to the conditions for winning the Sunbula, Mr. Abdulaziz Soud Al-Bekheet - Director Region Retail Banking Groupstates: "Only 100 KD is required to enter the weekly Sunbula draws and other major draws, whereby the customer still gets one chance per every 10 KD in the account, and the chances are calculated according to the lowest balance in the account during a month. Therefore, a full month must have passed in the account to qualify for the weekly draw, and two full months for the major draws to calculate the opportunities. There are no restrictions or



limits for withdrawal and deposit, the higher the deposited amount, the greater the customer's chances of winning".

Notably, in accordance with the terms of its ambitious five-year strategy, Warba Bank has launched its latest banking solutions service "Customer Onboarding". This will enable non-Warba Bank customers to apply for opening an account in an easy digital way through the bank's website without the need to visit any of the bank's branches, and within only five minutes - through the new and unique automated system used to enable this service - new customers will be able to complete the request to open an account at any time and

It is worth mentioning that Warba Bank is one of the banks that achieved great successes in a short period of time, as it occupied a leading position in the field of digital Islamic banking services for individuals, and it is one of the most local banks in terms of the number of shareholders, and these are among the most prominent elements that make the bank close to all members of society.





KIB Excellence Program

#### KIB honors its Q1 2024 top-performing employees

As part of its ongoing efforts to encourage its staff and invest in its outstanding talents, Kuwait International Bank's (KIB) Retail Banking Department (RBD) organized its quarterly Excellence Recognition event during which the top-performing employees for the first quarter of 2024 were announced and rewarded. This celebration, which took place at the Bank's head office, reflects KIB's commitment to acknowledging its highpotential talents and encouraging them to take active steps toward further development, with the full support of the Bank in the form of resources, training material, and other growth opportunities.

In this regard, Mohammed Dashti, Senior Manager - Service Quality Unit at KIB, said: "At KIB, we always strive to live up to our main slogan, 'Bank for Life', and firmly believe that employees across all departments are the backbone and driving force of this institution. Our Excellence Recognition Program is only one of many efforts that we are adamant about developing to recognize dedicated and accomplished individuals for their contribution to accomplishing the Bank's goals and strategic objectives. Only when we motivate our staff to find what they excel at and support them to pursue it can we continue to grow and flourish on all levels.

He added: "On behalf of KIB's Executive Management, I would like to express my sincere pride in the Bank's ambitious employees who continue to set an example of professional excellence and whose devotion remains a fuel that drives this institution toward new frontiers of success."

Leading up to the quarterly Excellence Recognition event, candidates are assessed based on their customer service performance as well as general KPIs. After the top employers for Q1 2024 were announced, managers were given the floor to deliver a word of gratitude to the outstanding employees, encouraging them and others to maintain their unwavering commitment to achieving excellence in their lines of work.

It serves to note that KIB remains committed to placing its employees at the center of the Bank's priorities and isone of the leading financial institutions on the human capital development front. Through its human capital development arm, KIB Life Academy, the Bank has delivered numerous programs that guarantee the ongoing personal and professional growth of its employees, such as its flagship program, Waed, among

to her latest album, "The Tortured Poets Department," to get the sense that Swift had soured on the country's capital city after long making it a regular hangout and then her second home. The record's fifth track is titled "So Long, London."

As Swift brings her blockbuster Eras Tour to London's Wembley Stadium this weekend, some Swifties therefore are wondering if they are witnessing the beginning of an extended goodbye.

London isn't ready to see her go. The area around Wembley was transformed for the shows, with fans posing in front of a giant mural of the singer and traveling stairs christened "Swiftie Steps" and other tributes.

Swift announced that 88,446 people were in attendance at Friday's show in what she called "the most exhilarating city in the world." Among the famous attendees: Prince William celebrating his 42nd birthday at the show and posing for a photo with Swift along with two of his children, Prince George and Princess Charlotte.

Swift gave fans a wink and a nod toward her London life during one of her two solo acoustic surprise songs: a piano medley that opened with the London-set "The Black Dog" and segued into "Come Back, Be Here" and then "Maroon."

In addition to this weekend's shows, Swift will return to Wembley for five more in August to close the tour's European leg.

London is the only city on the tour where Swift is stopping twice.

Some worry the arrangement may represent a swan song of sorts, while others think it just reflects a new era in Swift's bond with the Big Smoke. Whether "So Long, London" turns out to be a final chapter or a bookend to her valentine to the city, the song "London Boy," Eras is arriving as an emotional milestone.

#### Relationship

"Her relationship now kind of assumes London won't be somewhere she will be. It's not like there is an American football player living here," said Maggie Fekete, 22, a Canadian graduate student who credits the London references in Swift's music with orienting her when she moved to the city three years ago. "I think there will be a lot less London in her music, which is sad."

Stella Elgood, 25, of London, said Friday she assumed Swift would sing "So Long, London" at some point during her eight nights in the city but that Swift "will always be welcome.

"Especially since she dated Harry Styles, she's been here in the Zeitgeist," Elgood said.

For those who haven't been paying attention, Swift had a series of romances with famous British citizens (including Styles in 2012) that ended last year, when she started dating Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce. The speculation surrounding "So Long, London" and a mournful companion song that mentions a London pub, "The Black Dog," stems from the 2023 breakup of Swift and English actor Joe Alwyn, who were together for over six years.

Alwyn is assumed to have inspired "London Boy," a song from her 2019 album "Lover." A special-edition "Lover" CD included what ap-

peared to be a January 2017 diary entry in which Swift talked about being "essentially based in London" but trying to lay low. British tabloids later reported that Swift spent much of the COVID-19 pandemic sheltering with Alwyn in north London.

The Sun newspaper reported in December that the multiple Grammy-winner had bought a large property in the area and was remodeling it to be her base in Europe. After Swift released "The Tortured Poets Department" last month, however, a writer for the British edition of ELLE magazine observed that Londoners had an opening "for an all-American A-lister who can slot into her place in our collective consciousness.

"We had Swift before we lost her to her record-breaking, box officebreaking Eras Tour and now, it would appear that her vacant position has been filled by Zendaya," writer Naomi May playfully posited before listing the various locations the American actor had been spotted with her longtime boyfriend, British actor Tom Holland.

Either way, the capital is putting on quite a show of its own to make sure Swift and her fans feel appreciated. Guides are offering walking, bus and taxi tours that retrace her footsteps, including a kebab shop whose owner says his establishment is supplying sandwiches for the singer and her crew on Friday.

Before the end of August, Swifties can partake in a full diet of Swiftthemed brunches and dance parties, or ride the London Eye Ferris wheel accompanied by a string quartet playing her music. Souvenir stalls in Camden Market, one of the places mentioned in "London Boy," stocked up on Swift-specific caps, T-shirts, bags and stickers in preparation.

#### **Variety**



This image released by Searchlight Pictures shows Jesse Plemons in a scene from 'Kinds of Kindness.' (AP)

#### Film

Lanthimos' 'Kinds of Kindness' is infuriatingly opaque

#### ates: Iran's Supreme Court overturned the death sentence of a government critic and a popular hip-hop artist, Toomaj Salehi - who came to fame over his lyrics about the death in police custody of Mahsa Amini in 2022

Saturday In a post on social media platform X, Raisian said that the court assessed the case and found Salehi's past six years in prison as "excessive" since the punishment was more than what was allowed by law. He added that another branch of the court will now

review the case.

Salehi's death sentence in April by a Revolutionary Court in the central city of **Isfahan** created confusion as even Iran's state-run IRNA news agency and the judiciary did not formally confirm it. Such courts in Iran often involve closed-door hearings with evidence produced secretary and give limited rights to those on trial.

tional criticism from the United States and United Nations experts, who condemned it as a sign of Tehran's continuing crackdown against all dissent following years

Salehi was released from prison last November after spending a year there on charges that his supporters said were based on the hip-hop artist's music and participation in the protests that broke out in Iran over the death of Mahsa Amini, 22. Amini died in the custody of the country's morality police after being detained for wearing her hijab too loosely.

Salehi rapped about Amini in one video, saying: "Someone's crime was dancing with her hair in the wind." In another verse, he predicts the downfall of Iran's

theocracy. Shortly after his release last year, Salehi was sent to prison again after saying in a video message that he was tortured after his detention in October 2022. State media at the time released a video showing him blindfolded and apologizing for his words, a statement likely to have been made under duress. Later in 2023, a court sentenced Salehi to more than six years in prison. (AP)

### **DUBAI. United Arab Emir-**- his lawyer Amir Raisian said

The news quickly drew internaof mass protests.

### Emma Stone forays into fearlessness

#### By Jocelyn Noveck

Tf our world should one day cease to exist, and some Limproved civilization from another galaxy stumbles upon our popular culture and seeks to understand all the fuss about Emma Stone - well, we now have the film clip they should see.

She's not even speaking, so translating Earth language won't be an issue. She's simply dancing. It's toward the end of her latest collab with Yorgos Lanthimos, the challenging, intriguing, perplexing-ifnot-downright- infuriatingly-opaque "Kinds of Kindness." Stone is doing an improvised victory dance, and it's glorious. What's clear is that the Stone-Lanthimos pairing, in their third feature together, is continuing to nurture an aspect of Stone's talents that increasingly sets her apart: Her fearlessness and the obvious joy she derives from it.

Then again, it's possible we especially love this scene because by now we're parched - thirst is actually a theme of the film, but let's forget that for a second - for a wee bit of joy. There's barely an ounce of it in "Kinds of Kindness," nor is there much beauty (unlike the gorgeous period romps many know Lanthimos best for, "The Favourite" and last year's sumptuous "Poor Things.") Nor is there any recognizable kindness to speak of - "recognizable" being the operative word here. Which might be the point of the title. Or not.

So what is "Kinds of Kindness"? OK, here goes. Lanthimos, working for a fifth time with screenwriter Efthimis Filippou ("The Lobster"), has created a triptych - three mini-films with the same cast. A solidifying troupe of Lanthimos regulars appears, with Willem Dafoe, one of the most distinctive actors in the universe, rejoining Stone's Bella from "Poor Things," joined now by a terrific Jesse Plemons, who won the best actor prize at Cannes, as well as Hong Chau, Margaret Qualley, Mamoudou Athie and Joe Alwyn.

These three segments, which together run close to three hours, are separate stories with different characters, and an overarching theme that can best be explained by parsing the lyrics of a Eurythmics song.

"Sweet dreams are made of this," goes the iconic song, with which Lanthimos begins his movie. Then, more importantly: "Some of them want to use you. Some of them want to get used by you. Some of them want to abuse you. Some of them want to be abused.' Yup, all these things happen in "Kinds of Kindness," a meditation on our free will and the ways we willingly forfeit it to others - in the workplace, at home, and in religion. For all these characters, something about being subjugated by someone else provides a perverse sense of comfort.

In the first segment - easily the tightest, most entertaining and impactful - our protagonist, Robert (Plemons), works for some sort of shady business run by Raymond (Dafoe), who controls everything Robert

#### Voyage

And we do mean everything. What he eats, drinks, wears, where he lives with his wife - also hand-chosen for him - even what time they get intimate, and whether they procreate. Raymond decides it all, and that's fine with Robert - it even gets him cool gifts, like a smashed John McEnroe racket - until he's asked to basically commit manslaughter.

He underperforms and is fired. Then, he becomes obsessed with getting back into his boss' good graces, whatever it takes.

Stone appears 40 minutes into the movie, a cog in the same wheel. But she takes center stage in the next installment, as Liz, beloved wife of Daniel, a suburban cop (Plemons, with shorter and lighter hair). Liz, a scientist, has vanished during a sea voyage - she's "traveled the world and the seven seas," to continue with the Eurythmics lyrics.

Finally she's rescued, and returns home to her loving husband. Loving, that is, until Daniel starts suspecting she's not really Liz (she may also be a cannibal). She sure looks like Liz, but her shoes don't fit. Also, she likes chocolate now and can't remember Daniel's favorite song. So, he starts testing her, asking her to do awful things. And for some reason, she

We won't spoil any of the mini-endings, though you may find they're not really endings anyway. (If the lack of clarity in this review is annoying you, well, welcome to this movie? Should that have been an exclamation point? We're suddenly feeling insecure even about punctuation.) But the "whoa, what?" feeling you may have at the end of the second part can't fester, because soon we're in a cult, where the only liquid members can drink is sanctified by the tears of creepy leader Omi (Dafoe, who else?) and wife Aka

Stone and Plemons reunite here as cult members tasked with finding a woman, out there somewhere, who's able to raise the dead. For this holy search for a spiritual leader, Emily (is this a nod to Stone's real name?) has left a husband (Alwyn) and young daughter behind. She drives a purple sports car with increasing abandon (speaking of fearless, Stone has said she did much of her stunt driving). But she, too, messes up, and is left begging to be allowed back in.

Will she find what she is looking for?

Well, that depends on whether she knows what it is. Characters here actually seem to find what they think they seek - but it leads them, of course, down dark paths. But hey, everybody's lookin' for something, the song tells us. Not to be trite, but who are we to

In any case, seeking a neat conceptual bow to wrap this all up - as in Bella's satisfying empowerment in "Poor Things" - will lead nowhere. So maybe the best lyric we can take from the Eurythmics is the simplest one of all:

"Keep your head up. Movin' on."

"Kinds of Kindness," a Searchlight Pictures released in theaters Friday, has been rated R by the Motion Picture Association "for strong/disturbing violent content, strong sexual content, full nudity and language." Running time: 144 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four. (AP)

#### MIAMI BEACH, Fla.: Rapper Travis Scott was arrested in

Miami Beach early Thursday on misdemeanor charges of trespassing and public intoxication after officers say they found him at the city's marina shouting obscenities at people on a yacht and disobeyed their order to leave.

Officers went to the marina



shortly before 1 a.m. after receiving a call about people fighting on a yacht, according to a police report. When they arrived, they found

Scott, 33, standing on the dock yelling at people on the ship, the report says. Officers told him to sit down, but he kept standing back up and yelling. They could smell

alcohol on his breath, the report

The man who called police did not want to press charges, so Scott was allowed to leave.

As he walked away, however, Scott kept turning to yell obscenities at people on the yacht. He left as a passenger in a waiting car, but returned five minutes later and

ignored officers' orders to again leave, the report says

Officers say he then began velling again, disturbing people in nearby boats and buildings. When officers asked if he had been drinking, he replied, "It's Miami." He was arrested. Scott was released from Miami-Dade County Jail before noon after posting a \$650 bond. (AP)

#### **People & Places**





Hermes

#### **Subdued collection**

### Van Noten bids adieu with fabrics, fantasy

PARIS, June 23, (AP): The curtain fell and the disco ball was raised celebrating 38 years and 150 collections of Dries Van Noten, who staged his final fashion show Saturday at Paris Fashion Week. The Belgian fashion maestro, a member of the influential "Antwerp Six" known for his innovative and unexpected elegance, announced his retirement in March of this year.

Meanwhile, golden feathers cascaded down models' concealed faces at Loewe for a show that evoked myths and sartorial whimsy. It set the stage for a more subdued collection this season from Northern Irish designer Jonathan Anderson -but one which continued to blend fantasy with high fashion. Here are some highlights of Saturday's spring 2025 mens-

His departure marks the end of an era. To the sound of Donna Summer's "I Feel Love," Dries Van Noten took his final curtain call at a warehouse in northern Paris in front of an 8-meter-high disco ball, at the helm of a bedazzling silver runway that had just

acted as the stage of his swan song - his 150th show. Van Noten is one of the famed 'Antwerp Six' designers, including Ann Demeulemeester, who all trained at Antwerp's Royal Academy of Fine Arts in the early '80s, and had an important impact on global fashion. His career, which has spanned five decades since his first menswear line in 1986, has been marked by a fusion of familiar and unfamiliar elements, creating a sense of surprise and poetry in his collections. He is revered across the fashion industry for his unique

It's no wonder the great and the good of fashion, including Diane von Fürstenberg, Thom Browne, and Pierpaolo Piccioli, attended the event to celebrate his career.

The Saturday night collection gleamed. It was a varied display playing loosely on the theme of wrapping up or exposing. Known for his innovative use of fabrics and textures, Van Noten showcased plenty of disco-ready sheen and shimmer.

It was all about the fabrics. He employed semi-sheer crinkled polyamide resembling glass and "one-sided foils that shift, liquid-like, between silver and gold." This inventive fabric manipulation resulted in a spring show that balanced fun and somber styles - as wisps of the fragile silver foil runway floated up in the air, almost weightlessly.

#### **Patterns**

Van Noten also incorporated a traditional Japanese marbling technique called suminagashi, dating back 1,000 years. This method involves floating ink on water and then transferring it to material, creating unique, organic patterns. Here, foliage and flower prints evoked fireworks bursting against the night sky.

Throughout his career, Van Noten has been celebrated for riffing on historical and subcultural references. This final show was no exception, seamlessly integrating disco influences with his unique take on modern gender-fluid masculinity. A sheer, almost-seedy pink trench caught the slight silhouette of the male model's bare arm in a subtle peek-a-boo trick.

Van Noten's mastery of unexpected color combinations was also on display, including saturated mixes like a combination of pink, with green and deep burgundy. His ability to juxtapose formal and casual wear - like pairing elongated double-breasted suits with playful, shimmering pieces-highlighted his signature style.

As the 66-year-old takes his final bow, the fashion world reflects on the legacy of a designer who continually pushed boundaries, redefined elegance, and brought a distinctive Belgian touch to the global stage.

**Variety** 

**DUSHANBE:** A readers' seminar on the book "Xi Jinping: The Governance of China" was successfully held here in the capital of Tajikistan on Saturday.

More than 150 representatives across various sectors of China and Tajikistan, including politics, academia, and publish-

ing, attended the event. The attendees believe that the book deeply explains the meaning and development context of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, and concentrates on President Xi's in-depth thinking on China's national governance and global governance issues.

The publication of the Taiik version of the book provides an authoritative reading material for Tajik readers

to understand China in the new era and Chinese modernization, said the

**Hermes** 

Under the leadership of President Xi, China's successful experience and remarkable achievements in governance have provided valuable references for developing countries,

the participants said.
China upholds the common values of humanity, including peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy,

and freedom, playing an active role in building a community with a shared future for mankind, implementing the three major global initiatives, jointly building the Belt and Road, fostering exchanges between Eastern and Western civilizations, and promoting global prosperity and stability, they

**MEXICO CITY:** A park on the south

added. (Xinhua)

as a man slashing a white luminescent sword through the air shouts: "Check the defense! Onlookers watch curiously and a dogwalker asks about the duel, which breaks out four nights a week. The Jedi Knight Academy, founded in 2019, is a lightsaber combat and choreography school in

Mexico City and a dream come true for fans of the Star Wars franchise. "When students arrive some of them drop the saber. They don't know how to handle it properly, and with the passing of time you see them grow," said instructor **Úlises Vázquez**, also

known as the Jedi master. "Today they are youngsters who became excellent athletes and excellent lightsaber fight-





ers and fencers."

**Hermes** 

Above and below: Models wear creations for the Hermes Spring Summer 2025 collection presented Saturday,

June 22, in Paris. (AP)

During daily three-hour sessions, fans of the George Lucas saga can learn how to perform lightsaber combat in true Luke Skywalker-style.

Based on **Jedi** and **Sith** teachings - initially based on ancient swordfighting techniques - these duels and choreographies between Jedi are not only fun and spectacular to watch, but also a complex discipline that integrates elements of martial arts like kendo, aikido and tai chi.

Classes usually start with meditation and a warmup. Instructors then show students different exercises, which they perform again and again as they strive for perfection. Some later duel with protective equipment that looks like a galactic fencing uniform. Their sabers are made of ballistic-grade polycarbonate and illuminated from within in a

rainbow of colors. (AP) 

**GENEVA:** A Swiss museum on Thursday pulled down five paintings, including a van Gogh and a Monet, after the foundation that owns them called for a deeper look at their origins following new US guidelines on how to handle artworks once confiscated by the Nazis.

The Foundation E.G. Bührle Collection, which owns the works formerly shown at the Kunsthaus Zürich museum, said it was looking to reach a "fair and equitable solution" with the legal successors of the former owners,

who were not identified. The foundation's board called for a new assessment of the works under new "Best Practices" published by the US State Department in March on how to deal with Nazi-confiscated art, as an upgrade to principles adopted in 1998.

'This is an important step in implementing the new Best Practices, now endorsed by 24 countries, including Switzerland," Stuart Eizenstat, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's special adviser on Holocaust issues and a key architect of the principles, said in an email.

The works include the oil paintings 'Jardin de Monet à Giverny' by Claude Monet from 1895, and "Der alte Turm" by Vincent van Gogh, of 1884. The other three are 19th-century works by French painters Gustave Courbet, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Paul Gauguin.

A sixth painting, **Edouard Manet**'s 'La Sultane," was also considered as 'a case deserving particular attention,' the foundation said in a statement last Friday. (AP)



Hermes

Hermes

### attendees

#### 

#### Study projects doubling of heat-related cardiovascular deaths

### American Heart Association highlights dangers of extreme heat

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: The American Heart Association (AHA) has issued a warning highlighting the dangers of extreme heat, particularly for individuals with heart disease, reports Al-Qabas daily.

This caution coincides with the onset of the summer season and the current record high temperatures observed across various regions globally, including the United States.

According to a recent study published in the American Heart Association's Circulation journal, deaths related to cardiovascular diseases linked to extreme heat are projected to double over the next two decades. Researchers emphasized that high temperatures and dehydration can significantly strain the heart, leading to increased pressure and potential health complications.

Preliminary research presented at scientific sessions by the AHA revealed that short-term exposure to high temperatures might exacerbate inflammation and disrupt the body's immune

These effects can heighten susceptibility to infections and accelerate the progression of cardiovascular conditions. Furthermore, when combined with heavy fine particle pollution, extreme heat could double the risk of fatalities from heart attacks.

In response to these risks, the AHA recommends several preventive measures to mitigate heat-related illnesses: Avoid sun exposure: Especially in the afternoon when the sun's rays are strongest, particularly for vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, and individuals with chronic

diseases Dress appropriately: Wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing made of cotton, along with a hat and sunglasses to shield against the sun.

Stay hydrated: Drink adequate amounts of water before, during, and after outdoor activities. Avoid beverages containing caffeine, as they can contribute to dehydration.

Limit physical activity: Refrain from strenuous physical exertion during periods of high heat to reduce the strain on the heart.

In recognizing the symptoms of heat-related stress, the AHA advises individuals to be aware of signs such as headache, cold and clammy skin, rapid and weak pulse, dizziness, muscle weakness or spasms, nausea, vomiting, and loss of consciousness.

Those experiencing these symptoms are urged to seek immediate refuge in a cool environment, cease physi-

role of prevention in maintaining cardiovascular health during periods of extreme heat.

#### First-approved DMD med

### AAW and Roche introduce Elevidys therapy to Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: In partnership with the Ministry of Health, Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. (AAW), and the Swiss multinational healthcare company Roche, announced today the successful registration and introduction of Elevidys to Kuwait, the first approved diseasemodifying therapy for Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD), a rare genetic muscle-wasting disease.

This achievement is part of the ongoing collaboration between the parties that aims to bring the latest advancements and cutting-edge therapies to Kuwait's healthcare sector, address unmet medical needs, and improve the quality of life for patients in the coun-

#### Target

Elevidys is designed to address the underlying cause of Duchenne. It targets skeletal, respiratory, and cardiac muscle expression of shortened dystrophin. The innovative therapy is a one-time treatment administered through a single intravenous dose, and represents a significant milestone in the field of Duchenne muscular dystrophy treatment, providing a convenient and effective solution for patients in Kuwait.

Kuwait Medical Genetics Centre Clinical Genetics Specialist, Dr. Hadeel Alrohaif, said, "As healthcare providers dedicated to serving patients with rare genetic disorders, we are thrilled about the registration of Elevidys as a potential treatment for Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD). This milestone directly targets the genetic cause of the condition, adding hope for improved outcomes. The registration of Elevidys in Kuwait is a crucial step in our efforts to enhance the lives of DMD patients. We eagerly anticipate its positive impact on their well-being and quality of life.

Adan Hospital Consultant Pediatric Neurologist and Head of Pediatric Neurology, Dr. Sara Alenezi, said, "Kuwait's swift registration of DMD gene therapy ahead of developed countries is a testament to the dedication to cal activity, and rehydrate. Persistent symptoms necessitate prompt medical The Association underscores the importance of adhering to these guidelines to safeguard against heat-related health risks, emphasizing the critical

pediatric care. It demonstrates a proactive approach to addressing the urgent needs of children with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, setting a com-

mendable example for other nations

in improving outcomes for pediatric

patients worldwide." Roche Country Manager, Ahmed Tawfik, stated, "Roche is proud to collaborate with the Kuwait Ministry of Health and AAW in serving patients with DMD and all patients in Kuwait. Our shared commitment to improving healthcare and providing innovative solutions drives us to work tirelessly to make a difference in the lives of pa-

tients." AAW CEO and Chairman, Mr. Faisal Al Mutawa said, "Our partnership with Roche for over 70 years and our commitment to the Kuwait healthcare community has made us pioneers in leading Kuwait's healthcare landscape and introducing innovative medications. The swift registration of Elevidys is a great example of our excellent cooperation with the regulatory authority at the Ministry of Health, and our commitment to enhancing patient care and providing access to innovative treatment for every patient in Kuwait.

#### **Improve**

Roche is a global pioneer in pharmaceuticals and diagnostics, focused on advancing science to improve people's lives. It is the world's largest biotech company, with truly differentiated medicines in oncology, immunology, infectious diseases, ophthalmology and diseases of the central nervous

AAW is one of the largest trading and commercial companies in Kuwait and operates in multiple consumer, pharmaceutical, and retail sectors. The company's pharmaceutical division is one of the company's oldest divisions with operations spanning over 70 years and a portfolio of global products from global pharmaceutical companies, such as Roche. It is also one of the major suppliers to the Ministry of Health, hospitals and pharmacies in Kuwait.

Heatwave: An invisible killer threatening lives

## How does heat kill? It shuts down your organs and overworks heart

NEW YORK, June 23, (AP): As temperatures and humidity soar outside, what's happening inside the human body can become a life-or-death battle decided by just a few degrees.

The critical danger point outdoors for illness and death from relentless heat is several degrees lower than experts once thought, say researchers who put people in hot boxes to see what happens to them.

With much of the United States, Mexico, India and the Middle East suffering through blistering heat waves, worsened by human-caused climate change, several doctors, physiologists and other experts explained to The Associated Press what happens to the human body in such heat.

The body's resting core temperature is typically about 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit (37 degrees Celsius).

#### Heatstroke

That's only 7 degrees (4 Celsius) away from catastrophe in the form of heatstroke, said Ollie Jay, a professor of heat and health at the University of Sydney in Australia, where he runs the thermoergonomics laboratory.

Dr. Neil Gandhi, emergency medicine director at Houston Methodist Hospital, said during heat waves anyone who comes in with a fever of 102 or higher and no clear source of infection will be looked at for heat exhaustion or the more severe heatstroke.

"We routinely will see core temperatures greater than 104, 105 degrees during some of the heat episodes," Gandhi said. Another degree or three and such a patient is at high risk of death, he said.

Heat kills in three main ways, Jay said. The usual first suspect is heatstroke - critical increases in body temperature that cause organs to fail.

When inner body temperature gets too hot, the body redirects blood flow toward the skin to cool down, Jay said. But that diverts blood and oxygen away from the stomach and intestines, and can allow toxins normally confined to the gut area to leak into cir-



A man pours cold water onto his head to cool off on a sweltering hot day in the Mediterranean Sea in Beirut, Lebanon, July 16, 2023. As temperatures and humidity soar outside, what's happening inside the human body can become a life-or-death battle decided by just a few degrees. (AP

"That sets off a cascade of effects," Jay said. "Clotting around the body and multiple organ failure and, ultimately, death.

But the bigger killer in heat is the strain on the heart, especially for people who have cardiovascular disease,

It again starts with blood rushing to the skin to help shed core heat. That causes blood pressure to drop. The heart responds by trying to pump more blood to keep you from passing out.

"You're asking the heart to do a lot more work than it usually has to do," Jay said. For someone with a heart condition "it's like running for a bus with dodgy (hamstring). Something's going to give.'

The third main way is dangerous dehydration. As people sweat, they lose liquids to a point that can severely stress kidneys, Jay said.

Many people may not realize their danger, Houston's Gandhi said.

Dehydration can progress into shock, causing organs to shut down from lack of blood, oxygen and nutrients, leading to seizures and death, said Dr. Renee Salas, a Harvard University professor of public health and an emergency room physician at Massachusetts General Hospital. "Dehydration can be very danger-

ous and even deadly for everyone if it gets bad enough - but it is especially dangerous for those with medical conditions and on certain medications,' Salas said.

Dehydration also reduces blood flow and magnifies cardiac problems, Jay said.

Heat also affects the brain. It can cause a person to have confusion, or trouble thinking, several doctors said.

"One of the first symptoms you're getting into trouble with the heat is if you get confused," said University of Washington public health and climate professor Kris Ebi. That's little help as a symptom because the person suffering from the heat is unlikely to recognize it, she said. And it becomes a bigger problem as people age.

One of the classic definitions of heat stroke is a core body temperature of 104 degrees "coupled with cognitive dysfunction," said Pennsylvania State University physiology professor W. Larry Kenney.

#### Humidity

Some scientists use a complicated outside temperature measurement called wet bulb globe temperature, which takes into account humidity, solar radiation and wind. In the past, it was thought that a wet-bulb reading of 95 Fahrenheit (35 Celsius) was the point when the body started having trouble, said Kenney, who also runs a hot box lab and has done nearly 600 tests with volunteers.

His tests show the wet-bulb danger point is closer to 87 (30.5 Celsius). That's a figure that has started to appear in the Middle East, he said.

And that's just for young healthy people. For older people, the danger point is a wet bulb temperature of 82 (28 degrees Celsius), he said. "Humid heat waves kill a lot more

people than dry heat waves," Kenney

When Kenney tested young and old people in dry heat, young volunteers could function until 125.6 degrees (52 degrees Celsius), while the elderly had to stop at 109.4 (43 degrees Celsius). With high or moderate humidity, the people could not function at nearly as high a temperature, he said.

"Humidity impacts the ability of sweat to evaporate," Jay said.

Heatstroke is an emergency, and medical workers try to cool a victim down within 30 minutes, Salas said.

The best way: Cold water immersion. Basically, "you drop them in a water bucket," Salas said. But those aren't always around. So

emergency rooms pump patients with cool fluids intravenously, spray them with misters, put ice packs in armpits and groins and place them on a chilling mat with cold water running inside it. Sometimes it doesn't work.

'We call it the silent killer because it's not this kind of visually dramatic event," Jay said. "It's insidious. It's

#### Smoking blamed for 480,000 deaths annually

### US OKs first menthol e-cigs to help smokers quit

WASHINGTON, June 23, (AP): The Food and Drug Administration on Friday authorized the first menthol-flavored electronic cigarettes for adult smokers, harms of traditional tobacco smoking.

The FDA said it authorized four menthol e-cigarettes from Njoy, the vaping brand recently acquired by tobacco giant Altria, which also sells Marlboro cigarettes. The decision lends new credibility to vaping com-

panies' longstanding claim that their products can help blunt the toll of smoking, which is blamed for 480,000 US deaths annually due to cancer, lung disease and heart disease. E-cigarettes have been sold in the US since 2007 but in recent years their potential benefits for smokers have been overshadowed by their use by adolescents and teens. Parents and anti-tobacco groups immediately criticized the decision, which follows years of advocacy efforts to keep menthol and other flavors that can appeal to teens off the market.

"This decision could mean we'll never be able to close the Pandora's box of the youth vaping epidemic," said Meredith Berkman, co-founder of Parents Against Vaping E-cigarettes. "FDA has once again failed American families by allowing a predatory industry to source its next generation of lifetime customers - America's children."

Youth vaping has declined from all-time highs in recent years, with about 10% of high schoolers reporting flavors, including menthol. All the e-cigarettes previously authorized by the FDA have been tobacco, which isn't widely used by young people who vape.

Njoy is one of only three companies that previously received FDA's OK for vaping products. Like those products, two of the Njoy menthol varieties come as cartridges that plug into a reusable device that heats liquid nicotine, turning it into an inhalable aerosol. The other two Njoy menthol products are disposable e-cigarettes

#### Control

Njoy's products accounted for less than 3% of U.S. e-cigarette sales in the past year, according to retail data from Nielsen. Vuse, owned by Reynolds American, and Juul control about 60% of the market, while hundreds of disposable brands account for the rest.

Most teens who vape use disposable e-cigarettes, including brands like Elf Bar, which come in flavors

such as watermelon and blueberry ice. Altria's data showed Njoy e-cigarettes helped smoktraditional cigarettes, the FDA said. The agency stressed the products are neither safe nor "FDA approved," and Friday's action is part of a sweeping FDA review

ers reduce their exposure to the harmful chemicals in

intended to bring scientific scrutiny to the multibillion-dollar vaping market after years of regulatory delays. Currently the U.S. market includes thousands of fruit- and candy-flavored vapes that are technically illegal but are widely available in convenience stores, gas stations and vape shops. The FDA faced a self-imposed court deadline at

the end of this month to wrap up its yearslong review of major vaping brands, including Juul and Vuse.

Those brands have been sold in the US for years, awaiting FDA action on their scientific applications. To stay on the market, companies must show that their e-cigarettes provide an overall health benefit for smokers, without significantly appealing to kids.

"Based upon our rigorous scientific review, in this instance, the strength of evidence of benefits to adult smokers from completely switching to a less harmful product was sufficient to outweigh the risks to youth," said Matthew Farrelly of FDA's Center for Tobacco Products.







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#### Keep an eye on Kate Douglass, too

### Dressel, Ledecky win again at U.S. Olympic swimming trials

INDIANAPOLIS, June 23, (AP): Caeleb Dressel locked up his second individual race in Paris, giving him another chance to shine after his stel-

lar performance at the last Olympics. Keep an eye on Kate Douglass, too. She could be one of the the big-

gest American stars at the pool. And, of course, Katie Ledecky will be swimming a whole bunch of events.

Dressel, the winner of five gold medals at the Tokyo Games, claimed a victory in the men's 100-meter butterfly at the U.S. Olympic swimming trials Saturday night.

Dressel followed up his triumph in the 50 freestyle with a winning

#### **SWIMMING**

time of 50.19 seconds, giving him a chance to defend another of the gold medals he captured in Tokyo.

Douglass locked up her third individual event at the Olympics with a victory in the 200-meter individual

She was neck and neck with Alex Walsh at the final turn, but no one could keep up with Douglass on the freestyle leg.

She finished in 2:06.79, while Walsh held on for the second Olympic spot in 2:07.86.

Douglass has lived up to her bill-

ing as one of the world's most versatile swimmers, also claiming trials victories in the 200 breaststroke and 100 freestyle.

"I'm really happy with that," Douglass said. "I was coming into the meet trying to win all three events, but I didn't think I'd be able to achieve that. So I'm happy I did."

Ledecky romped to her fourth victory of the trials, winning the 800 freestyle in 8 minutes, 14.12 seconds. Paige Madden took the second spot in 8:20.71.

Ledecky plans to drop the 200 freestyle from her Olympic program, but will be competing in the 400, 800 and 1,500 free, as well as the 4x200 free relay.

Dressel didn't come close to his world record of 49.45, which he set at the last Olympics. But he led all the way and touched about a halfbody length ahead of 17-year-old Thomas Heilman, who earned the second spot for Paris in 50.80.

Dressel will also swim up to three relays at the Summer Games, which would put him close to the six-event program he had in Tokyo. The only event he didn't win three years ago was the mixed relay.

"It's tough making it through the trials," Dressel said. "This truly is the hardest part."

The only individual gold that

### Bacon, Gibson, Tyler qualify for Paris at US diving trials

KNOXVILLE, June 23, (AP): Sarah Bacon and Alison Gibson will head to Paris to compete in women's 3-meter springboard after claiming the top two spots at the U.S. Olympic diving trials

on Saturday.

Carson Tyler also claimed his spot at the Olympics with a victory in the men's 10-meter platform.

Bacon totaled 639.00 points on the springboard to add a second Olympics

event. She had previously secured a spot in synchronized 3-meter with Kassidy Cook.

Gibson was runner-up with 635.10 to qualify for her second Olympics. She competed in synchronized 3-meter at the Tokyo Games. Krysta Palmer, the reigning Olympic bronze medalist in 3-meter, finished

third with 629.25 to barely miss returning for that event in Paris.
"We have a lot of very good wom-

en's 3-meter divers in this country. It's a very deep field," Bacon said. "It's al-

Dressel won't get to defend in Paris

is the 100 freestyle. He missed out

with a third-place showing in his first

200 butterfly, winning that event at

Heilman will also compete in the

event of these trials.

the trials to become the youngest male to make the U.S. swim team since 15-year-old Michael Phelps in

"The butterfly is in good hands with this guy," Dressel said, motion-

most more stressful in the Olympic tri-

als than it is overseas against the other

countries I would say, just because there are so many good female divers

fourth-round dive, a reverse 2 1/2 pike,

to take the lead by a tenth of a point over

Bacon heading into the last round. Palm-

er was only 7.45 points out of second.
Palmer scored 69.70 points on a

front 2 1/2 with two twists to set the tar-

get in the last round. Gibson followed

with 68 points on the same dive. Bacon

dove last and performed the less diffi-

cult front 2 1/2 with one twist and came

through with 72 points, the highest-scoring dive by any diver in the final.

"I got myself together, hit my last

two dives, and was able to qualify for my second event," Bacon said. "It feels

great. I'm excited to get back to training a little more before Paris and get

Gibson stepped away from diving

Gibson scored 70.50 points on her

here in the U.S.'

ready to roll.'

Palmer - her synchro partner in Tokyo and at these trials - helped persuade her to come back in the fall of 2023.

"Krysta is everything to me," Gibson said. "She literally called me back into this sport. I would not be standing here today if it wasn't for her. She has played an essential role in helping me grow as a person, as a competitor, as a

#### DIVING

friend. So much credit to her. This success is her success as well."

Tyler finished with 965.45 points over two lists of men's 10-meter dives, including 488.25 in the final to claim his first trip to the Olympics.

"I can't put it into words, it's so amazing. All the hard years of training just paid off, and I'm so happy," the 20-year-old said. "I was trying just to take it step by step, one foot in front

ing toward Heilman. "He's scary,

Walsh will get to swim at the Olympics with her sister Gretchen, finally making the team on the nextto-last night of the trials.

after the 2020 Olympic Games. But of the other and not get too outcome oriented. I was confident in myself and thought I could make it happen."

Tyler scored 81.60 or higher on four of his six dives in the finals, including 86.40 on his last dive - a back 2 1/2 with 2 1/2 twists - to clinch his victory. He received 90.75 on a back 3 1/2 tuck that received three 9.5s and three 9.0s from the judges.

Tyler is also in contention to make the Olympic team in men's 3-meter. He holds second place heading into the final Sunday.

USA Diving will await word on a potential second spot in men's 10-meter after World Aquatics reallocates its quota numbers. That puts 2020 Olympian Brandon Loschiavo in position to make the team after he finished second to Tyler with 892.30.

The trials at the University of Tennessee natatorium conclude Sunday. with the women's 10-meter final also

"It means the world," said Alex Walsh, who competed without her sister in Tokyo. "I didn't know if I was going to make it to Paris after she made it. This is a dream we've been dreaming for so long."

## **Boks handle battling Wales** and pull away to win 41-13

South Africans turn on the power at Twickenham

LONDON, June 23, (AP): Depleted Wales produced a battling performance before Rugby World Cup champion South Africa turned on the power to triumph 41-13 at Twicken-

Despite conceding two tries and collecting two yellow cards in the first 15 minutes, Wales defied the pre-match predictions by making it a contest until two late Springboks converted tries.

Wales' list of absentees - players injured, unavailable or rested - ran into double figures and it was widely expected to suffer a crushing defeat.

But it trailed only 14-13 at halftime following a try for outstanding captain Dewi Lake, with flyhalf Sam Costelow adding two penalties and a conversion.

The Springboks, who are building for a two-test home series against Six Nations champion Ireland next month, often struggled to impose themselves in their first outing since retaining the World Cup eight months ago.

There were touchdowns for center Jesse Kriel, wings Makazole Mapimpi and Edwill van der Merwe and hooker Bongi Mbonambi, plus a penalty try, while newcomers Jordan Hendrikse and Sacha Feinberg-Mngomezulu landed six goalkicks.

South Africa ultimately scored 27 second-half points without reply, yet Wales will take a considerable amount of confidence on tour to Australia despite suffering a seventh consecutive defeat dating to the World Cup.

"We have new coaches and had a few players making their debuts, so there were areas of the game that were not as good as we would have liked it to be, but there was certainly no lack of effort and intensity, and we realise



South Africa's Bongi Mbonambi, center left, tackles Wales' Gareth Thomas during the rugby union cup match between Wales and South Africa at Twickenham Stadium, London. (AP)

it will take time for things to come together nicely," Boks coach Rassie

"The important thing is that we achieved our goal and the (four) players who made their debuts showed that they are capable of playing at this

The Springboks went ahead inside four minutes when a sweeping attack was finished by Kriel, and another surge featuring No. 8 Evan Roos prompted a professional foul by Wales wing Rio Dyer, who was sin-binned.

South Africa attacked from a closerange lineout and referee Chris Busby awarded a penalty try after Wales No. 8 Aaron Wainwright illegally pulled down the maul. Wainwright was yellow-carded, Wales was down to 13 men, and South Africa led 14-3.

Wales didn't concede, though. When Boks fullback Aphelele Fassi was yellow-carded after his boot caught flanker Taine Plumtree in the face, South Africa could not clear the danger and Lake pounced for an opportunist converted try, making it 14-10.

A second Costelow penalty meant South Africa led by just a point.

Wales lost tighthead prop Keiron Assiratti, a late starter, to injury on halftime and will hope its not serious for their tour.

South Africa struck two minutes into the second half after giving Mapimpi an overlap to score, and Hendrikse

kicked a long-range penalty.

Feinberg-

Mngomezulu settled South Africa nerves by slotting another penalty from inside his own half, and they led by 14 points.

The quality of the Springboks bench began to take a toll, and Wales was powerless to prevent Mbonambi crashing over, and new wing Van der Merwe breaking clear five minutes from time.

"The last 20 or 30 minutes, there was just too much class from the South Africans," Lake told broadcaster S4C. "We know what South Africa bring, they're a physical team, and you have to stand up to that. We did for one half."

#### **Yufei diappoints**

### China secures 6 Paris quotas at Oly Qalifier Series in a day

BUDAPEST, June 23, (Xinhua): Six Chinese athletes, including four sport climbers and two BMX cyclists, pass through the Olympic Qualifier Series here and won their spots for the upcoming Paris Olympic Games.

In women's Boulder & Lead semifinal round, Luo Zhilu finished fourth and entered the final round scheduled on Sunday, bagging an Olympic Games spot after taking the 7th place at the event in Shang-

"It is great that I have overcome many difficulties and qualified for the Ölympics," Luo told Xinhua.

"It will be my first Olympic Games. I will enjoy it and show my best on that stage," Luo added.

Although Pan Yufei failed to reach the final round of men's Boulder & Lead event, taking the 13th place in overall standings, he still qualified for Paris 2024.

According to the rules, the best 12 Boulder & Lead players of the Olympic Qualifier Series can get their tickets of Paris 2024. However, three climbers of France stood among the best 12 in overall standings, while every National Olympic Committee can only have a maximum of two players in Olympic Games, so Pan obtained his quota

China's Wu Peng beat Amir

Maimuratov of Kazakhstan to win the men's speed climbing title, advancing to Paris 2024. Zhou Yafei, the Series winner in Shanghai, qualified for Paris after pocketing a silver on the women's side in Bu-

In the women's BMX freestyle event, Chinese cyclists Sun Jiaqi and Deng Yawen finished third and fourth respectively. The duo who reached the podium in the series' Shanghai leg all qualified. Chinese

#### **OLYMPICS**

BMX freestyle athletes will have their Olympic Games debut in Paris.

World Champion Hannah Roberts of the United States won the first place with 93.48 points in Budapest, and her compatriot Perris Benegas finished second, trailing by 1.56 points.

In the men's BMX freestyle park event, French Anthony Jeanjean crowned, followed by American Marcus Chrisopher and reigning world champion Darren David Kieran Reilly of Britain.

Breaking kicked off with preselection in the afternoon and prequalifiers in the evening, as China's Qi Xiangyu, Shang Xiaoyu and Zeng Yingying advanced to the last 16, keeping their hopes of competing in Paris alive.



Perris Benegas of the U.S., (left), Hannah Roberts of the U.S., (center), and Jiaqi Sun of China, (right), take a selfie during a medal ceremony for the BMX women freestyle park finals at the 2024 Olympic Qualifier Series held in Budapest, Hungary. (AP)

#### **American bags 4th straight win**

### Bell stays undefeated in NASCAR Xfinity Series

LOUDON, June 23, (AP): Christopher Bell used a three-wide, last-lap pass on Saturday to drive away and win the NASCAR Xfinity Series race for the fourth straight time at New Hampshire Motor Speedway

The 29-year-old Bell needed three extra laps on the 1.058-mile track but remained undefeated at New Hampshire in the Xfinity Series and scored another win for Joe Gibbs Racing in the No. 20 Toyota. The 20 team behind crew chief Tyler Allen has won four times this season with four drivers:

John Hunter Nemechek, Aric Almirola, Ryan Truex and Bell.

"Once I got to the inside at threewide down the front straightaway, I felt like I was in the position I wanted to be in to win the race," Bell said.

Bell led 43 of 203 laps and added this checkered flag to his collection of Xfinity wins at New Hampshire in 2018, 2019 and 2021. Sheldon Creed was second and Cole

Custer third, both drivers caught up in

Bell's thrilling pass and both drivers

fell just shy of keeping Bell out of vic-

tory lane.
"I feel so bad for Sheldon," Bell said. "He's been really really close to winning these things.

Creed has two runner-up finishes this season and 10 overall in the Xfinity

**CAR RACING** 

Series without a win in 86 career races. He's tied with Dale Jarrett and Daniel Hemric for most second-place finishes before a victory.

"I'm running out of ways to lose these things," Creed said.

Bell and Custer kept the headlines confined to the track.

Bell blurted out that Chase Briscoe was set to leave Stewart-Haas Racing, which shuts down at the end of the season, and make the move to Joe Gibs Racing in 2025. Briscoe is slated to drive the No. 19 Toyota for JGR.

Custer lost his Cup ride at SHR after the 2022 season and spent the last two years driving for its Xfinity

Stewart leads New York to 98-88 win over Los Angeles

### **Alan Hansen released from hospital**

LIVERPOOL, England, June 23, (AP): Former Liverpool and Scotland defender Alan Hansen has been released from hospital and will now continue his recovery at home.

A statement from his family on Sunday thanked fans for their support after Liverpool said two weeks ago that its former captain was "seriously ill in hospital.'

The family's statement said: "Alan has been discharged from hospital today to continue his recovery at home. "Alan, Janet, Adam, Lucy and family would like to thank every-

body for their wonderful messages of love and support ... We also hugely appreciate the ongoing respect that has been shown for our privacy as Alan continues his recovery. Thank you."

Hansen, who is 69, joined Liverpool from Scottish team Partick Thistle in 1977. The defender won three European Cups, eight league titles, two FA Cups and three League Cups in 620 appearances for Liver-

He retired in 1991 to start a successful career as a television pundit.

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NEW YORK, June 23, (AP): Breanna Stewart had 33 points, seven assists and six blocks to help the New York Liberty beat the Los Angeles Sparks 98-88 on Satur-

Sabrina Ionescu added 24 points and Kayla Thornton had 20 for New York (14-3), which has won 10 of its last 11 games, including the first meeting between the teams on Thursday 93-80.

Stewart made sure they'd sweep the two games. She had an incredible first half on both ends of the floor. Stewart scored 24 points and five assists to go along with five blocks. She became the first player in WNBA history to have over 20 points, five assists and five blocks

Stewart, who also had three steals, made eight of her 10 shots from the field in the opening 20 minutes

New York trailed 31-23 early in the second quarter before the reigning MVP took over. Stewart outscored the Sparks 19-13 the rest of the period as the Liberty built a 54-44 lead at the half.

The Liberty put the game away in the third quarter and up 20, Stewart had a chase-down block on Stephanie Talbot that drew the crowd to its feet. That matched Stewart's career-high of six

blocks. Dearica Hamby scored 20 points

to lead Los Angeles (4-13). Mystics 97, Wings 69 In Washington, Emily Engstler

scored 10 of her career-high 23 points in the first quarter, Stefanie Dolson had her first double-double since 2022 and Washington beat Dallas, handing the Wings their 10th consecutive loss.

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#### **Mexico pip Jamaica on Arteaga's 69th-minute goal**

### Venezuela edge short-handed Ecuador at Copa America

SANTA CLARA, June 23, (AP): Jhonder Cádiz and Eduard Bello scored second-half goals after subbing on at halftime and Venezuela rallied for a 2-1 win over short-handed Ecuador in the opening round of group play at the Copa America.

Enner Valencia, who went into the tournament expected to lead Ecuador's attack, was shown a straight red card in the 22nd minute and Ecuador played a man down the rest of the way.

Ecuador, however, took a 1-0 lead in the 40th minute when Jeremy Sarmiento took advantage of a failed clearance of a free kick into the area by Kendry Páez.

Cádiz played a one-touch shot from 15-yards out to make it 1-1 in the 64th minute.

Bello scored on a putback from point-blank range to give Venezuela ander González played an arcing entry from the right side to the center of the area and Salomón Rondón's diving header was parried by goalkeeper Alexander Domínguez and Bello took advantage.

Rondón returned to the starting lineup after scoring as a substitute in the team's last friendly match.

#### SOCCER

Ecuador, which entered the tournament ranked 30th in the FIFA rankings, plays Wednesday against Jamaica at Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas. Venezuela, ranked 54th, plays Mexico on Wednesday at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California.

Venezuelan fans could be heard chanting, "Y va a car, y va a caer, este gobierno va a caer," which translates to "And it's going to fall, and it's going to fall, this government is going to fall." The chant comes ahead of the country's presidential election on July 28.

Ecuador lost for just the second time in its last 11 encounters against Venezuela in all competitions (4-2-5). The only Gerardo Arteaga scored from the

edge of the penalty area in the 69th minute, and Mexico beat Jamaica 1-0 in its Copa America opener. El Tri, competing as a guest in

South America's championship for the 11th time, dominated the match and scored on their 17th shot. Joel Latibeaudiere's weak headed

clearance went to Luis Romo, who controlled the ball off a thigh and passed to Arteaga. His left-foot shot beat goalkeeper Jahmali Waite and went inside the far post for his second goal in 25 international appear-

Michail Antonio appeared to put Jamaica ahead with a short-range header in the 50th minute but the goal was disallowed for offside following a video review.

Mexico captain Edson Álvarez left in the 30th minute following a left hamstring injury and was replaced by Romo.

Venezuela beat Ecuador 2-1 in the other Group B match. Mexico plays Venezuela at Inglewood, California, on Wednesday, when Jamaica faces Ecuador at Las Vegas. The group finishes on June 30, when Mexico plays Ecuador at Glendale, Arizona, and Jamaica faces Venezuela at Aus-

El Tri reached the semifinals in 1997, 1999 and 2007. The Reggae Boyz are 0-7 in the tournament fol-



Mexico's Jorge Sanchez, (left), tries to block a shot by Jamaica's Greg Leigh during a Copa America Group B soccer match in Houston. (AP)

lowing group-stage elimination in 2015 and 2016. Before a crowd of 53,763 at NRG

Stadium, Mexico wore red, green and black jerseys patterned after folk

## Afghanistan 'upset' Australia to keep T20 World Cup dream alive



India's captain Rohit Sharma hits a six during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup cricket match between India and Bangladesh at Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in North Sound, Antigua and Barbuda. (AP)

#### India beat Bangladesh

#### KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent, June 23, (AP): Afghanistan kept its Twenty20 World Cup semifinal hopes alive by stunning previously unbeaten Australia by 21 runs in a thrilling encounter.

Despite a second successive hat-trick by Australian bowler Pat Cummins, Afghanistan posted 148-6 after being asked to bat first on a tricky pitch at the Arnos Vale Ground.

Afghanistan pair Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran put on 118 for the highest opening partnership against Australia in a T20 match before Australia's bowlers rallied late, including Cummins' second career hat-trick

just two days after his first. Australia then stumbled with the bat and were all out for 127, with only Glenn Maxwell (59 off 41 balls) coming to grips with the superb Afghanistan bowling attack and the turning wicket.

#### **CRICKET**

Man of the match Guldabin Naib took four wickets in an inspired spell in the middle overs to stall Australia's chase before Azmatullah Omarzai had final wicket Adam Zampa caught in the deep in the final over to complete a stunning win amid jubilant celebrations among the Afghan players and team management.

"It's a massive win for us as a team and as a nation in the World Cup beating (the) champions," captain Rashid Khan said.

"It's so important for us in back home for everyone all around the world where Afghanistan people, the Afghans are there, you know, they are badly missing this win and I'm sure they would have been so proud of and they would have enjoyed the game and I think it's just the beginning now for us," he added.

The victory moves Afghanistan to two points in Group 1 and level with Australia, but behind on net run rate. India leads the group on four points. Bangladesh are bottom after two losses but still have a chance of qualifying for the semifinals.

The final group standings will be decided on Monday when Afghanistan plays Bangladesh at St. Vincent and Australia play India Monday at St.

Earlier, Gurbaz scored 60 off 49 balls, while Zadran made a steady 51

### Italy, Croatia clash with Euros survival at stake

LEIPZIG, Germany, June 23, (AP): Defending champion Italy needs to avoid defeat against neighboring Croatia in their final group game to ensure progress at the European Championship. Croatia can progress with a win, or by avoiding defeat as long as Albania does not beat group-winner Spain in the other Group B game at the same time.

Italy has three points after beating Albania 2-1 in its opening game before losing 1-0 to Spain, which is already assured of winning the group. Croatia lost to Spain 3-0 in its opening game, then drew with Albania 2-2 in their second game, leaving both Croatia and Albania with one point. Albania has the better goal difference.

Though a draw will be enough for Italy's progression, Luciano Spalletti's team will be keen to impress after being thoroughly outclassed by Spain in its previous game. Italy only lost by a goal, but the Italian players spent most of the game chasing Spanish shadows and were saved embarrassment by captain and goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

Zlatko Dalic's Croatia team is once again led by Real Madrid star Luka Modric, who is yet to score in his fifth tournament appearance.

Italy lost in its previous and only game in Leipzig, a 1-0 defeat to East Germany in a friendly in April

Many of the Croatian players have played in Italy, while Italy coach Luciano Spalletti is familiar with Marcelo Brozovic and Ivan Perisic from their time together at Inter Milan between 2017 and 2019. The now 35-year-old Perisic scored 55 goals in 254 games across stints with Inter, winning the Serie A title in 2021 and

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Coppa Italia the next season.

Italy left-back Federico Dimarco is expected to miss the game with a right calf injury sustained in the loss against Spain. Dimarco featured in both of Italy's games

Croatia will be without midfielder Nikola Vlacic, who is no longer with the squad because of an injury, while veteran defender Domagoj Vida missed Saturday's training session with an ankle injury.

off 48 balls as they laid a solid platform - helped by some uncharacteristically poor fielding by Australia.

Marcus Stoinis eventually made the breakthrough in the 16th over, dismissing Gurbaz which led to a flurry of wickets as the momentum shifted.

Adam Zampa (2-28) took two wickets in the next over, including Zadran's, before Pat Cummins again came to the fore.

The seam bowler had Rashid Khan (two) caught by Tim David in the deep with the final ball off the 18th over. Cummins (3-28) returned to bowl the final over of the innings and with his first ball had Karim Janat (13)

again caught by David. For the hat-trick ball Cummins' cleverly disguised a slower delivery which Guldabin Naib could only loft to Glenn Maxwell running in from the boundary to claim the catch.

Australia stumbled early in the chase as it lost Travis Head bowled by Naveen-ul-Haq for no score with the third ball of the innings.

Captain Mitchell Marsh (12) played two big shots before he was Naveen's second wicket and when David War-



Afghanistan's Gulbadin Naib, (left), and teammate Rahmanullah Gurbaz celebrate the dismissal of Australia's Glenn Maxwell during the men's T20 World Cup cricket match between Afghanistan and Australia at Arnos Vale Ground, Kingstown, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. (AP)

ner (three) was out to spinner Mohammad Nabi's first ball the Aussies were in trouble at 32-3 in the sixth over.

Stoinis and Maxwell steadied the Australian innings as they reached 70-3 at the halfway stage. Gulbadin (4-20) was the eighth

bowler used by Afghanistan inside the first 11 overs and it paid a near instant dividend as Stoinis could only sky a pull shot which was caught by Gulbadin then removed David (two)

and when the allrounder had Maxwell spectacularly caught by Noor Ahmad an upset victory appeared likely.

Australia's lower order batters couldn't find the big hits that the moment demanded either and when veteran Nabi took a catch on the boundary to dismiss Zampa (nine), Afghanistan's deserved victory was confirmed. At North Sound, Antigua, Hardik

Pandya blasted Bangladesh with a 27ball half-century and Kuldeep Yadav's three wickets finished off India's win

earlier Saturday.
Pandya struck four boundaries and three sixes in an unbeaten 50 to lead India to 196-5.

Yadav then took 3-19 in four overs to limit Bangladesh to 146-8.

India moved to the top of Group 1 in the Super Eight with two wins from two matches. Afghanistan moved to two points after it beat Australia by 21 runs later Saturday, but stayed behind Australia in third place on net run rate. Bangladesh re-

#### Kazma sign Saud Al-Duwaihi for the upcoming handball season

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: The Kazma Club handball team has signed former national team star Saud Al-Duwaihi for the upcoming 2024-2025 season. The team, runners-up in the Premier League last season, is preparing for a busy season featuring numerous local and international competitions. Kazma will compete in the Federation Cup Championship, which was postponed from last season, as

#### HANDBALL

well as the Super Championship, League, and Cup. Additionally, they will join Kuwait Club in the 27th edition of the Asian Club Championship, set to take place in Qatar this November.

The "Sons of Adailiya" have also renewed the contract of Serbian coach Bozo Rodic for another season, following the team's strong performance last year. Tunisian professionals Anouar Ben Abdullah and Mohamed Farad remain under contract for another season as well.

Dr. Musaed Mufarreh, Director of the first team, emphasized the club's commitment to preparing the handball team thoroughly for the new season. He noted that renewing Coach Rodic's contract was well-deserved, given the team's runner-up finish in the Premier League.

Regarding local player contracts, Mufarreh confirmed that most of the team's key players, including goalkeepers Turki Al-Khalidi, Abdulaziz Al-Dhafiri, Abdul-Rahman Al-Shammari, Fahd Al-Roudhan, Muhammad Mufreh, and Saad Al-Haidari, will remain with the "Orange." However, player Mishari Taha's contract has expired.

Mufarreh also mentioned that the team will organize an external training camp before the start of the Asian Club Championship, including the addition of foreign professionals to strengthen the squad for the continental competition.



Saud Al-Duwaihi

Daku out with two-game ban

### Spain aim to keep winning run going

DUESSELDORF, Germany, June 23, (AP): Spain is already qualified for the Euro 2024 round of 16 as Group B winner and is the only team yet to concede a goal. If it's to qualify, Albania is likely to need a win that would rank among all-time great upsets. The kickoff in Duesseldorf

Spain's slick, confident performance in its 1-0 win over defending champion Italy means that the team - European champion in 1964, 2008 and 2012 - is once again being hailed as a favorite for the title. Germany and Portugal were the only other teams to win their opening two games.

The one possible negative from Spain's win over Italy was that it took an own goal from Italian defender Riccardo Calafiori. No Spain player has scored since Dani Carvajal just before half time in the opening 3-0 win over Croatia.

Albania scored the opening goal in both of its games - breaking a record with one after just 23 seconds - but ended up with just one point after a 2-1 loss to Italy and a dramatic 2-2 draw with Croatia.

It's theoretically possible that a draw might be enough to qualify Albania for the round of 16 as one of the third-place teams with the best record but it would need several other results to go Albania's way. To begin with, even if Albania and Spain were to draw, a win for Croatia over Italy would eliminate Albania.

Spain midfielder Rodri is suspended for the game against Albania after picking up his second yellow card of the tournament against Italy. He broke a rule that only captains can speak with referees at Euro 2024.

Spain coach Luis de la Fuente will have to consider whether to rest right back Carvajal or central defender Robin le Normand, who have already been booked once. Another yellow card would leave them suspended for the round of 16.

Albania says its forward Mirlind Daku is out with a two-game ban from UEFA after chanting nationalist slogans into a megaphone following the Croatia game.

By completing the group stage without conceding a goal, Spain can emulate a feat only two teams managed at Euro 2020. They were Italy and Eng-

Spain's Nico Williams, left, and his teammate Lamine Yamal take part during a training session at their base camp in Donaueschingen, Germany, Sunday, June 23, 2024, ahead of their Group B soccer match against Albania at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament. (AP)

land, who went on to meet in the final where Italy won on penalties.

Spain won all eight of the games it's

#### **SOCCER**

ever played against Albania but needed a 90th-minute goal from Dani Olmo to win their most recent encounter 2-1 in a 2022 friendly.

"We have proved we know what we're doing, we have proved we can play against the strongest teams, teams that put pressure on us. So if you ask me if I think the team is ready to win this competition, my answer is yes." -Spain defender Aymeric Laporte.

"We should enter the pitch to give 100%, the maximum. Spain is a team who likes to play the ball, to control it very well. We should be careful and play with counterattacks and exploit any chance we might have." - Albania winger Arber Hoxha.

#### **Best of the Rest**

China sweep Japan: China overwhelmed Japan to end a 19-year title drought in the Asian Women's U18 Volleyball Championship in Nakhon Pathom, Thailand on Sunday.

China beat Japan 25-22, 25-18, 26-24 to claim the first championship since 2005. China kept a perfect record throughout the tournament without conceding a single set. (Xinhua)

Alanburu crowned champion: Alex Aranburu (Movistar Team) won Spain's national cycling championships on Sunday ahead of former national champion and teammate Oier Lazkano, with Jesus Herrada (Cofidis) in third.

Aranburu finished 53 seconds of Lazkano and 59 ahead of Herrada on the testing 201-kilometer course around San Lorenzo del Escorial, which also contained 3,200 meters of

climbing.
The new champion was able to take advantage of the excellent work of his teammates, with Pelayo Sanchez launching an attack with 40 kilometers left to ride. (Xinhua)



Turkey's goalkeeper Altay Bayindir makes a save during a Group F match between Turkey and Portugal at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Dortmund, Germany. (AP)

# Sports

### **Latest sports scores at — http://sports.arabtimesonline.com**

Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah highlights Kuwait's commitment to sports

### Al-Shemlan wins bronze as Asian Fencing Championship kicks off

KUWAIT CITY, June 23, (Agencies): The Asian Fencing Tournament kicked off in Kuwait, featuring up to 350 champions representing 36 countries. The inauguration was attended by the Minister of Social Affairs, Family Affairs, and Childhood, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, head of the Asian Fencing Confederation Sheikh Salem Al-Qasimi, and the head of the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee, Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser Al-Sabah.

In his keynote statement at the inauguration ceremony, Abdulkarim Al-Shamlan, head of the Kuwait Fencing Federation, emphasized Kuwait's long-standing tradition of hosting international

In the first competition, Korean fencer Oh Sang-uk won the gold medal in the saber category, defeating China's Changping, who secured the silver. Kuwaiti Yusuf Al-Shemlan and Iranian Moham-

In the epee category, China's Yu Sihan claimed the gold trophy, overcoming her compatriot Sun Yiwen, who took silver. South Koreans Kang Young-mi and Song Se-ra each earned a bronze medal.

Al-Huwailah, highlighted Kuwait's efforts in organizing and hosting the tournament, in line with the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-

#### **FENCING**

Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah a patron of sports and athletes. She added that this initiative is also under the guidance of His Highness the faithful Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and closely followed by His Highness

## Portugal book spot in round of 16 as Belgium get campaign on track

Al-Huwailah emphasized that the political leadership believes that the advancement of nations is now measured by excellence in fields related to human capital development, particularly focusing on youth, with sports being a key area. She noted that this tournament stands out, attracting significant attention from the sports media across Asia, and raises its technical level as it is the final

ing teams' success and a pleasant stay in Kuwait, their second home. Abdul Karim Al-Shamlan, President of the Kuwaiti Fencing Association, confirmed Kuwait's role as a

hub for sports gatherings, fostering a spirit of sportsmanship and communication among global communities. He expressed his hopes for the success of all participants, noting that the results of the Asian Championship will impact the Olympic classification of the players. Al-Shamlan highlighted the championship's competitive nature and its imporLots of selfie-seekers for Ronaldo

#### DORTMUND, Germany, June 23, (AP): By the end, it was hard to know what Cristiano Ronaldo was more frustrated about.

Failing to score for the second straight game at the European Championship or having to fend off repeated attempts for selfies by his adoring fans.

In what proved to be a wild and potentially dangerous match for the fivetime world player of the year, Ronaldo had no goals, one assist and no less than four selfie-seeking field invaders for company in Portugal's chaotic 3-0 win over Turkey that secured his team a spot in Euro 2024's round of 16.

Ronaldo, one of the world's most popular and well-known sport stars, was the center of attention as always at Westfalenstadion.

Just not how he might have expect-

"That's the price you pay for being so recognized in the world of football," said Bernardo Silva, Ronaldo's Portu-

Making a record 27th appearance at the Euros, Ronaldo did get his first goal involvement of this tournament when he set up the third by Bruno Fernandes in the 55th minute with an unselfish pass across the face of the six-yard box after being played clean



Ronaldo, the most prolific scorer ever in men's international soccer with 130 goals, rarely passes up such opportunities to add to his remarkable tally.

Perhaps he just wanted another record. This was his eighth assist at a European Championship, more than anyone else.

"It was a pure moment of Portuguese football," Portugal coach Roberto Martinez said in praise of Ronaldo, his captain. "It should be shown in every academy in Portugal and world football, because it showed that the team is the most important thing.'

Then things got a bit silly - and potentially unsafe - for the former Real Madrid, Manchester United and Juventus striker.

Ronaldo was fine posing for a photograph with a young boy who evaded stewards to get on the field in the 69th minute and whipped out his cell phone. That fan sprinted off before finally being grabbed and escorted away by se-

curity. However, Ronaldo certainly wasn't amused when two other fans with phones at the ready tried the same trick in the final few minutes of a game that flew out of control. He threw his arms up in disgust the first time and appeared to actively try to avoid the next one as he defended a corner.

It wasn't clear if those fans got their wish before being taken away.

After the final whistle, there were more security breaches as a fan wearing a red Portugal jersey attempted to get close to Ronaldo while holding a phone. He was soon tackled to the ground. Then two more supporters were prevented from confronting Ronaldo as Portugal's players walked off the field, having just come from saluting their law-abiding fans in the

"It's a concern," Martinez said, "because today we were lucky that the intentions of the fans were good.

"If those intentions are wrong, the players are exposed. I don't think that should happen on a football pitch."

Ronaldo missed out on a chance to score a record-extending 15th European Championship goal against a Turkey team that was its own worst enemy at times.

Not least in the 28th minute when, trailing 1-0 to Silva's strike seven minutes earlier, Turkey center back Samet Akaydin delivered a back-pass that rolled to the side of his goalkeeper and straight into the net. Remarkably, it was a sixth own-goal already at these Euros - and certainly the most embarrassing, with Akaydin later being taken off injured to complete a miserable evening for the defender.

Portugal backed up its opening 2-1 victory over the Czech Republic and has qualified with a game to spare from Group F, guaranteeing a last-16 match in Frankfurt on July 1. Martinez may choose to rest Ronaldo and more of his



A young pitch invader takes a selfie with Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo during a Group F match between Turkey and Portugal at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Dortmund, Germany. (AP)



vies for the ball with Romania's Marius Marin during a Group E match between Belgium and Romania at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Cologne, Germany.

key players for Portugal's final group match, against Georgia in Gelsen-

Turkey stayed on the three points it had from beating Georgia 3-1 in their first game, but the pressure has been firmly ramped up on coach Vincenzo Montella, who faced intense questioning of his tactics from his country's media after the match.

"We were punished harshly tonight," Montella said.

Kevin De Bruyne scored and Belgium got its European Championship campaign up and running after beating Romania 2-0.

The No. 3-ranked Belgians shook off the shock of losing to Slovakia in their opening game by responding with a dominant performance in front of the Belgium royal family at Cologne Sta-

Youri Tielemans gave them a flying start with a goal from the edge of the area in the second minute.

De Bruyne effectively killed the game off in the 80th after converting direct from Belgium goalkeeper Koen Casteels' long kick. All four teams in Group E have three points, meaning there is all to play for in the final round of games on Wednesday. While Belgium won, there was more

frustration for Romelu Lukaku, who had a third goal ruled out by VAR at these Euros.

Still, he was at the center of his team's great start when laying the ball off for Tielemans to score with a low drive from the edge of the box.

It was just what Belgium needed after the Slovakia stunner, which raised the prospect of another early exit from a major tournament after being eliminated at the group stage of the 2022

The format of the Euros, in which the four best third-place teams advance, leaves more room for error. But with memories of Qatar still fresh, another defeat would have broken the confidence of a team criticized for failing to live up to expectations in the past.

Tielemans' goal seemed to lift the pressure, and Belgium ruled the rest of the half with 67% of possession.

Lukaku thought he scored after the break, but VAR said he strayed offside before firing past Romania keeper Florin Nita.

The longer the game went on without Belgium scoring a second, the more the tension rose

Dennis Man could have evened the score when running through on goal, but was denied by Casteels.

Sheikh Ahmed Al-Abdullah, the championship on the continent before the Paris 2024 Olympic Prime Minister, to support and care for the youth and athletes of both Games. Al-Huwailah hwelcomed mad Rahbari each took bronze. the guests, wishing all participattance to the teams involved.

Abdul Karim Al-Shamlan celebrates with bronze medalist Yusuf Al-Shemlan on the podium.

Three referees travel to Saudi Arabia

### **Kuwait U-20 team wraps up training ahead of Championship**

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 23: The Kuwait under-20 youth football team will participate in its final training session before competing in the West Asian Championship, which begins tomorrow in Taif, Saudi Arabia, and continues until July 5. The team will open the tournament by facing Oman tomorrow as part of Group 1, which also includes host Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

The team prepared for the West Asian Championship through an external camp in Cairo, Egypt, where ity played a test match against the Egyptian youth team, which ended in

a 0-4 defeat. Croatian coach Dario is set

#### SOCCER

to exclude five players from the current squad of 28, finalizing a roster of 23 players for the West Asian Championship.

Vice President of the Football Association, Haif Al-Mutairi, stated after the match that trial matches offer an opportunity to exchange experiences and develop skills among players, especially before the start of international and Arab tournaments. He praised the spirit of the youth team players and encouraged them to avoid mistakes in friendly matches and perform well in regional and international competitions to achieve favorable results and rankings for the Kuwaiti fans.

### Max holds off Norris to win Spanish GP

MONTMELÓ, Spain, June 23, (AP): Max Verstappen steered his Red Bull to victory at the Spanish Grand Prix on

mula 1 drivers championship. Verstappen started from second on the grid behind pole-sitter Lando



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands leads the group during the firsts laps of the Formula 1 Spanish Grand Prix at the Barcelona Catalunya racetrack in Montmelo, near Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

After the conclusion of the West Asian Championship, the national youth team will return to Kuwait for local training before leaving on July 17 for an external camp in Serbia, which will



A Kuwaiti dribbles past an opponent during Kuwait, Egypt friendly game.

continue until August 6. During this camp, it will prepare for the Asian Cup qualifiers, which will be hosted by Kuwait in September. The national youth football team will compete in Group 3 alongside South Korea, the UAE, Lebanon, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

whipped past the McLaren driver by

the first turn and then overtook George

Russell on lap three of 66 and never

lenge but Verstappen upped the pace

to cross first. Norris was second, fol-

lowed by Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes

**MOTOR RACING** 

Verstappen said that his moves to

get past Norris and Russell so early

proved crucial so he could build an

advantage and keep the hard-charging

the race was the beginning," Verstap-

pen said. "I took the lead and had my

buffer. After that we had to drive a de-

"I think what made the difference in

Norris tried to mount a late chal-

looked back.

Norris at bay.

fensive race.'

Following the Serbia camp, the team will participate in a four-team friendly tournament in Azerbaijan over two weeks, before returning to Kuwait to hold two trial matches.

Meanwhile, referees Hashem Al-Ibrahim and Abdullah Al-Kandari, along with assistant referee Abdul-Rahman Al-Kandari, traveled to Taif, Saudi Arabia to officiate the West Asian Youth Championship matches.

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