



KUWAIT, PHILIPPINES COMMIT TO DOMESTIC WORKERS AGREEMENT

Kuwait lifts ban on Filipino workers

Philippine Embassy welcomes decision to reinstate Filipino worker recruitment

By Marlon Aquino Malinao
Managing Editor, Arab Times

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: First Deputy Premier and Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousuf Al-Sabah recently met with Philippines Department of Migrant Workers Undersecretary Bernard Olalia to discuss resuming recruitment of workers from the Philippines.

In an official statement on 'X' account, the Public Relations and Security Media General Department of the Interior Ministry confirmed Monday that Kuwait and the Philippines have agreed to lift Kuwait's recruitment ban, allowing entry and work visas for Filipinos.

The department revealed that the State of Kuwait and the Republic of the Philippines issued a joint statement confirming that the two sides held a meeting Sunday afternoon at Seif Palace. The statement attributed the decision to the friendly relations between the two countries, as well as their commitment to strengthen this relationship.

- The statement enumerated the salient points agreed on during the meeting:
1. Lift the ban imposed by Kuwait, and allow the issuance of all entry and work visas to Filipinos.
2. Allow the recruitment of domestic workers who previously worked abroad.
3. Establish a joint technical working committee whose members are from the concerned authorities in both countries. This committee shall meet periodically to address labor-related issues and other concerns that might surface in the future.
In terms of resolving the issues by the Joint Technical Working Committee, the Kuwaiti and Philippine governments affirmed their commitment to the Domestic Workers Employment Agreement that the two governments signed in 2018.

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Opinion

HH the Amir's courageous measures rescued us from parliamentary tyranny

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah
Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

IT IS necessary to be fair in examining the current reality that Kuwait is experiencing, and how things have changed for the better.

Nonetheless, more is needed in order to overcome the accumulations of the past stage, which lasted for about 40 years, and then start again.

If there is a will and a decision, the people will support and rejoice over the achievements, no matter how simple they may be at first; because they will accumulate over time and become large, benefiting the nation and the people, especially after many years of decline and attempts to undermine the Constitution according to theories that prevent any progress in the country.

They portrayed the Constitution as if it is Divine Scripture, while the parliamentarians and those who benefited from the constitutional loopholes imposed restrictions that only exist in their inner circles or serve their personal or parties' interests. Therefore, they sought to impose laws that limit the powers of the ruler.

In 2013, when Egypt got rid of the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood, some parliamentarians supporting that group demanded the imposition of a law preventing His Highness the Amir from donating more than \$5 million as per the agreement of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to help Egypt get out of the crisis. Note that such amount is a loan, not a gift.

In another year, when the press began to shed light on the disgraceful practices of the parliamentarians and their exploitation of the mission entrusted to them by the people just to serve their personal interests, they proposed a law prohibiting criticism of the National Assembly and the parliamentarians. They demanded for amendment of the Constitution and imprisoned anyone who did so for five years. They were seeking for parliamentary tyranny that no other country in the world had ever witnessed. This means they wanted to stop the hand of the ruling house, and then seize the powers of HH the Amir and the executive authority.

Since that day, a saying has been repeated in the diwanis and the press: "There are 51 amirs in Kuwait -- one at Seif Palace and the rest in the National Assembly." This was a catalyst for utter chaos and bigger corruption, which almost threatened the fate of the country. Thus, the people started to ask the leadership and those who have the solution to take decisive steps.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah had repeatedly warned the National Assembly and the Council of Ministers against taking the wrong path and to not exploit influence for personal goals, but they continued doing so. This prompted the last treatment, which is cauterization. This time it was done with the wisdom of His Highness the Amir who treated the source of the defect through

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NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Monday a cable to Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, congratulating him on the 11th anniversary of assuming post.

His Highness the Amir commended the achievement of Qatar during the reign of Sheikh Tamim, saying that the fellow Gulf country had bolstered its status on the regional and international arenas.

He wished Sheikh Tamim and the Qatari people further progress and development.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent on Monday a cable to Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, congratulating him on the 11th anniversary of his reign.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince lauded the achievement of Qatar and Sheikh Tamim, affirming that the fellow Gulf country had become a beacon of develop-

ment and progress known to the region and the world. He wished the Qatari leadership and people evermore progress and development. (KUNA)

DUBAI: A possible attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels on Monday targeted a ship further away from nearly all of the previous assaults they've launched in the Gulf of Aden, officials said, potentially part of a widening escalation by the group.

The attack comes as the U.S. has sent the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower back home after an eight-month deployment in which it led the American response to the Houthi assaults. Those attacks have reduced shipping drastically through the route crucial to Asian, Middle East and European markets in a campaign the Houthis say will continue as long as the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip rages on. (AP)

'Implement renewable energy purchase'

Kuwait power consumption stabilizes amid extreme summer temperatures

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: Although temperatures continued to rise above 50 degrees Celsius, the power consumption index has now stabilized, reaching the green zone with peak consumption of 16,468 megawatts.

Sources from the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy attributed this stabilization to the addition of 500 megawatts to the electricity grid two days ago, following the completion of maintenance works at South Zour station. They also cited efforts to rationalize electricity consumption in government agencies and raise public awareness about the importance of conservation, aided by media campaigns.

Sources clarified that the power consumption indicator being in the green zone does not mean the end of the planned power cutoff throughout the summer season. They hinted that the ministry could resort to this measure in case of high consumption or any emergency. They also emphasized the need to continue the rationalization efforts in all types of housing areas, particularly since the ministry set the peak hours from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm.

On the other hand, Head of Kuwaiti Society for Sustainable Energy Eng. Souad Al-Hussein said the government's intention to purchase renewable energy from citizens is an ambitious plan and could greatly contribute to rationalizing traditional energy produced from fossil fuels on one hand, and increasing production capacity on the other hand. He said this trend has not been applied until now, stressing there has been an unjustified delay. "If only this was implemented three years ago, we would have had power surplus that could be exported," he asserted. He further clarified that purchasing renewable energy from citizens will contribute to reducing the consumption of one house from 30 percent to 40

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Day by Day

LIFE is full of experience and wisdom. However, it is also full of stones that someone has to watch out for and avoid. As an alternative, collect these stones and make your stairs to stay on top. The question is: Do we have plenty of time to collect such stones and construct the stairs out of them? All we need is patience and awareness. Hopefully, we can figure out what life requires. ... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya at the 19th Asia Cooperation Dialogue ministerial council in Iran.

Gaza at 'high risk' of famine despite increased aid: experts

Kuwait urges ceasefire and aid flow in Palestine

TEHRAN, June 24, (Agencies): Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya underlined Monday the necessity of putting an end to Israeli occupation's massacres and violations in Palestine, and welcomed the Security Council's approval of ceasefire resolution stipulating withdrawal of occupation forces, allowing for repatriation of Palestinians, and guaranteeing flow of aid.

Al-Yahya made these remarks at the 19th Asia Cooperation Dialogue ministerial council in Iran, affirming Kuwait's intent on boosting joint work and cooperation between member states, especially as Kuwait hosted the first ACD meeting and is home to its headquarters.

The Foreign Minister commended all efforts supporting Palestinian cause, arriving at just permanent peace and achieving the legitimate aspirations of Palestinian people.

Concluding his statement, Minister Al-Yahya called on member states to actively strengthen partnership, cooperation, and turning this dialogue into a regional organization.

Meanwhile, the Solidarity Association for Social and Cultural Development (Tadamon)'s President Alaa Maqboul said that the association began the distributing Eid Al-Adha sacrificial meat in the West Bank in cooperation with Kuwait's International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO).

The President told KUNA that the project was executed under the slogan (your sacrifice is a ritual and feeding), and the meat was distributed to the families of orphans registered with it.

Nearly 250 families, who have lost a breadwinner and keep facing great difficulties, have benefited from the project. He stated that a committee was formed to supervise the work in the field of sacrifices in Nablus Governorate, and to ensure the distribution of sacrifices to the largest possible number of beneficiaries.



Palestinians loot a humanitarian aid truck as it crossed into the Gaza Strip in Rafah, on Dec. 17, 2023. An influx of aid appears to have eased a hunger crisis in northern Gaza for now, but the entire territory remains at 'high risk' of famine after Israel's offensive in Rafah caused massive displacement and the disruption of aid operations in the south, a draft report said Monday. (AP)

The association's administration expressed their gratitude for implementing such projects due to their importance and their great role in supporting charitable work and supporting needy families.

In latest development, an influx of aid appears to have eased a hunger crisis in northern Gaza for now, but the entire territory remains at 'high risk' of famine after Israel's offensive in Rafah caused displacement and the disruption of aid operations in the south, a draft report said Monday.

The report by the leading international authority on the severity of hunger crises said nearly everyone in Gaza is struggling to get enough food and that more than 495,000 people, or greater than a fifth of the population of 2.3 million, are expect-

ed to experience the highest level of starvation in the coming months.

That's despite months of U.S. pressure on Israel to do more to facilitate aid efforts, the installation of a \$230 million U.S.-built pier that has been beset by problems and repeated airdrops by multiple countries that aid agencies say are insufficient to meet vital needs.

Israel invaded Gaza after Hamas' attack on Oct. 7, in which Palestinian militants killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted about 250. The war has killed more than 37,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which doesn't say how many were civilians or fighters.

Israel imposed a complete siege on the territory at the start of the war and has only gradually eased it under pressure from Washington. The war has destroyed most of Gaza's capacity to produce its own food.

The latest findings come from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC, an initiative first set up in 2004 during the famine in Somalia that now includes more than a dozen U.N. agencies, aid groups, governments and other bodies. The Associated Press obtained a draft of its latest report, the final version of which is set to be released Tuesday.

In its last report, in March, the IPC said that famine was "imminent" in northern Gaza, which has suffered widespread destruction and which Israeli troops have surrounded and largely isolated since the earliest days of the ground invasion. That report said that around a third of Gaza's population was experiencing stage 5 hunger - the highest level of starvation.

In April, after Israeli strikes killed seven aid workers and sparked international outrage, Israel promised to ramp up aid, and it later opened additional land crossings in the north.

Regulation breaches

Kuwait Municipality blocks 245 buildings in Farwaniya

KUWAIT CITY, June 24, (KUNA): The Kuwait Municipality said it has blocked 245 buildings in Farwaniya Governorate this month due to their in compliance with relevant regulations.

The move came following intensive field tours by the municipality's supervision team for buildings nationwide to check for construction regulation violations, chief of Farwaniya Municipality's engineering supervision department Jassem Al-Khuder said in a press statement.

The inspection tours are also intended to make sure that homeowners comply with the rules of engineering licenses

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Municipality team during a field tour in Farwaniya.

KUNA photo

Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:14 Asr 15:24
 Sunrise .. 04:49 Maghrib .. 18:51
 Zohr 11:50 Isha 20:23

Local

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

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Very hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-32 km/h.

Weather

By Night: Hot to rather hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-30 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	48	34

Kuwait Airport	48	31
Abdaly	49	31
Jahra	50	33
Salmiyah	38	33
Nuwaisib	48	28
Wafra	49	27

Dr. Al-Awadhi meets with a number of Bahraini health officials

'Kuwait keen on bolstering health cooperation with Bahrain'

By Khlood Al-Enezi

MANAMA, June 24, (KUNA): Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi praised historical and close ties between the State of Kuwait and the Kingdom of Bahrain on Sunday, expressing wishes to achieve more fruitful cooperation that contributes to developing health services and raising the standards of health care for citizens of the two countries.

In a statement to KUNA, Dr. Al-Awadhi made his remarks on the occasion of his visit to the Kingdom, which is within the framework of strengthening bilateral relations and continuous coordination between the two countries in the health and medical fields.

The minister added that during his meeting with a number of Bahraini health officials, led by the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Health, Lieutenant General Dr. Sheikh Mohammad

bin Abdullah Al-Khalifa, and the Bahraini Minister of Health, Dr. Jalila bint Al-Sayid, discussion focused on health issues of common interest.

The minister noted that the meetings emphasized the importance of enhancing cooperation in the fields of health care and exchanging expertise, including successful experiences in addressing health challenges.

The minister expressed his thanks to the Kingdom, represented by its leadership and people for the warm welcome, wishing it further progress and prosperity.

He also expressed his admiration for the academic and educational level provided by the Arabian Gulf University, during his visit to the university, where he met with the university's President, Dr. Saad Al-Fuhaid, a number of faculty members, and a group of Kuwaiti students studying there.



Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan in a group photo during her visit to the Municipal Council, Monday.

Photo by Mahmoud Jaded

Several other issues discussed

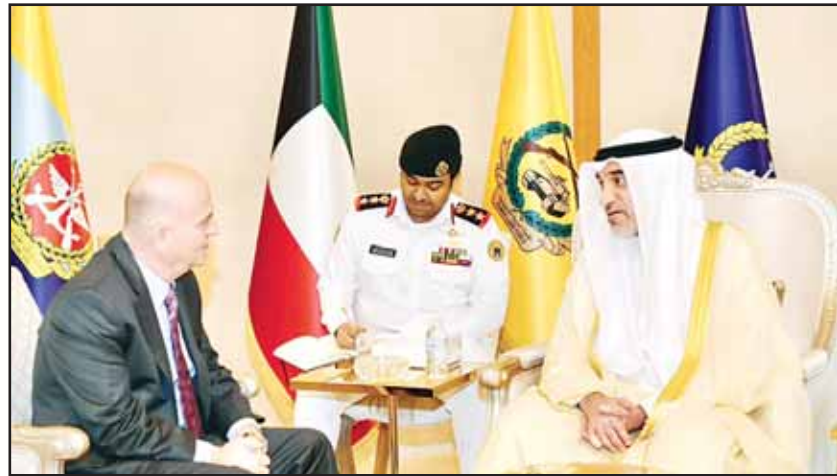
First Deputy PM discusses co-op with Croatian and Iranian envoys

KUWAIT CITY, June 24, (KUNA): First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Affairs Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah received on Monday the Croatian and Iranian ambassadors to discuss cooperation and several topics of common interest.

This came in a statement by the Ministry of Defense, saying that Sheikh Fa-

had Al-Yousef received Croatian Ambassador to Kuwait Amir Muharemi, and later received Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Toutouchi, each separately in his office in the ministry's headquarters.

It added that during both meetings, all sides discussed cooperation, topics of common interest and latest regional and international developments.



Croatian Ambassador Amir Muharemi.



Iranian Ambassador Mohammad Toutouchi.

KUNA photos

Six winners announced

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait spreads joy with the exciting A+ Student account prizes

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: As part of its continuous efforts to reward its loyal customers and demonstrate its commitment to youth, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced the six fortunate winners of KD 50 Trolley vouchers as part of the A+ Student account quarterly draw.

ABK is pleased to congratulate Mohammed Rabea Ajaj Sah, Abdullah Tajaddin, Taihbah Mohammad Yousef Eissa, Rashed Abdullah Mohammad Faraj, Abdullah Attaallah Enad Alenezi, and Munierh Madian Daief.

As ABK gears up for its next draw, it invites everyone to brace themselves for even more worthwhile prizes, promising two winners the chance to win KD 250 vouchers from Oula fuel each. The stakes are also high as the third draw beckons a tempting KD 700 worth of Apple gifts, while the grand finale offers one lucky recipient an unforgettable journey to any dream destination.

And that's not all! ABK ensures A+ Student account holders are pampered with a 30% discount on Talabat during weekends, an enticing 25% discount at Trolley's Mubarak Al Abdullah and Egaila branches,



ABK's A+ Student account draw.

and an exclusive opportunity to get complimentary VOX Cinemas tickets through the Bank's exciting ongoing 'Buy One Get Two Free' offer.

Commenting on the campaign, Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, said, "Join us in celebrating these winners and ABK's steadfast commitment to evolving in harmony with our customers' needs." She continued, "We are dedicated to crafting innovative products, services, and solutions tailored to all customer segments. Students hold a special place for the Bank, and we are thrilled to shower them with exclusive offers and discounts in collaboration with esteemed partners across various sectors."

Don't miss out! Stay connected with ABK on social media for the latest marketing efforts and seize the opportunity to revel in ABK's year-long promotions!

Municipal Affairs minister urges speeding up projects' execution

Dr Al-Mashaan visits Municipal Council

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: Minister of Public Works and Minister of Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan has stressed the need to strengthen cooperation between the State Ministry of Municipality and the Municipal Council to expedite the implementation of vital development projects in the country.

In a statement on the sidelines of her recent visit to the council, coinciding with its first regular session for the third round chaired by Abdullah Al-Mahri; Al-Mashaan explained that the visit is an opportunity to exchange views and discuss the latest developments and challenges that the two institutions are currently facing, as well as ways to enhance cooperation to achieve the country's comprehensive development goals.

She expressed appreciation for the important role that the council plays in the development of the society and in protecting the environment. She underscored the need to fortify channels of communication and cooperation between the ministry and the council in order to integrate their roles and accelerate the implementation of priority municipal projects.

She discussed several future projects and initiatives during the visit with the aim of improving infrastructure and municipal services, while enhancing community participation. She also emphasized the importance of technology, digital transformation and innovation in developing the municipal sector and providing better services to people.

Appreciation

On the other hand, Chairman of the Municipal Council Abdullah Al-Mahri expressed his appreciation for Al-Mashaan's visit, which reflects the true spirit of partnership between the ministry and the council.

He confirmed the council's commitment to supporting the efforts of the ministry and to work together in improving municipal services and the quality of life in cities and other areas.

In a related development, the council discussed the following in its first session for the third round:

■ Requests of the Ministry of Finance to transfer a land in Al-Rai measuring 706,000 square meters, and allocate part of housing site no. 47 located in front of Shaheed Park in Mirqab-Block 2 measuring 51,000 square meters for the benefit of the ministry - particularly the State Treasury - to pay the actuarial deficit of the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS), while adopting the Kuwait Municipality's conditions for approving these



Some more photos from the Municipal Council meeting.

Photos by Mahmoud Jaded

Other Voices

A tribute to Ambassador Claire Le Flecher: enhancing bonds between France & Kuwait

By Nasser Al-Hajeri

As Claire Le Flecher's tenure as the French Ambassador to Kuwait comes to an end, it is fitting to reflect on her significant contributions and celebrate the deepening of the Franco-Kuwaiti relationship under her leadership. Appointed in late 2021, Le Flecher has worked tirelessly to enhance diplomatic, economic, cultural, and educational ties between the two nations, leaving a lasting legacy.

From the outset, Ambassador Le Flecher prioritized strategic dialogues at the highest levels. Her efforts were instrumental in elevating the France-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue to a ministerial level, with the first meeting held in 2022. This ensured that key dimensions of bilateral relations, including trade, investment, and cooperation, were addressed comprehensively. This dialogue facilitated increased French exports to Kuwait, ranging from aeroplanes and electrical materials to luxury fashion items, and bolstered Kuwaiti investments in France.

One of the hallmark initiatives of Le Flecher's tenure was the launch of the France-Kuwait Friendship Society in 2023. Aimed at gathering private actors and civil society from both countries, this society is presided over by Mohamed Al Sager from the Kuwaiti side and Mrs. Dominique Sénéquie from the French side. This initiative has significantly strengthened the socio-cultural and economic bonds between the two nations.

Le Flecher's tenure saw a significant enhancement in educational and cultural exchanges. Recognizing the importance of cultural diplomacy, she actively promoted French language education in Kuwait, with French becoming the second foreign language taught in Kuwaiti secondary schools. Her initiatives to increase Kuwaiti

student mobility to France have opened new avenues for academic collaboration and cross-cultural understanding.

Ambassador Le Flecher has also made notable strides in increasing the activity of the Francophonie in Kuwait. She promoted the idea that Kuwait could join the Francophonie organization and established monthly Francophone diwanias to further this cause. Additionally, she distinguished herself as the ambassador who visited the most diwanias during Ramadan, with 113 visits in 2024 alone. She also opened a Ladies Divaniya on Wednesdays, fostering greater inclusivity and cultural exchange.

Economic cooperation was another cornerstone of Le Flecher's ambassadorship. She played a pivotal role in facilitating key commercial deals, such as the delivery of Airbus aircraft to Kuwait Airways. This move not only enhanced trade but also underscored the robust economic partnership between France and Kuwait. Furthermore, Le Flecher's commitment to sustainable energy solutions saw French companies collaborating with Kuwaiti entities in the fields of hydrogen production and solar generation, aligning with global sustainability goals.

Ambassador Le Flecher placed a strong emphasis on military cooperation. This included high level exchanges between senior military authorities, training, and military exercises such as Pearl of the West. The 1992 defence agreement between France and Kuwait, the oldest in the Gulf region, has cemented a unique bond following the liberation of Kuwait in 1991-1992. Ambassador Le Flecher reaffirmed France's commitment to continuing and developing this crucial defence relationship.

As Ambassador Claire Le Flecher departs, her legacy of strengthened bilateral relations, increased cultural and educational exchanges, and robust economic and military cooperation will undoubtedly continue to shape the future of Franco-Kuwaiti ties. Her dedication and achievements serve as a beacon of effective diplomacy and international friendship.



Al-Hajeri

requests. It stressed the need to coordinate with the ministries of services and adhere to their requirements, if any, before utilizing the site. Authorize the administration to move and modify the shape and boundaries of the site in the event of conflict with any existing infrastructure or for any regulatory reasons, and fix the site with the final coordinates as per the agreement that the ministries of services and the concerned authorities will reach. Coordinate with the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) and other concerned authorities to modify the metro campus in a

way that does not conflict with the location, and amend the cadastral plans related to the metro campus while canceling any previous decisions that contradict this.

■ The proposed addition of space for a modern laboratory building for water analysis in Shuwaikh, affiliated with the Ministry of Electricity.

■ Minutes of the first extraordinary meeting for the third session and nominated council member Aliaa Al-Farsi as member of the Council Bureau.

■ The council demanded for an update on the response of PART to the issue of repairing the lower

part of Abdul Razzaq Gate, Kuwait City and the Mubarakiya Markets Development Project.

The council deferred discussion on the invitation to the 11th meeting of the Capital Governorate Committee for the second session of the 13th legislative term and approved the election of the chairman and rapporteur of the subcommittees for the governorates.

The council also postponed talks on the request of the Ministry of Oil undersecretary to allocate the land of the oil complex in Shuwaikh for the establishment of the headquarters of the Ministry of Oil and Kuwait Petroleum Corporation.

Future Generations Fund faces 'challenges' for renewed vision

Strategic revamp eyed amid fiscal pressures

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: The Future Generations Fund of Kuwait, established in 1976, has played a crucial role in managing surplus oil revenues for long-term investment, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Originally designed to safeguard Kuwait's wealth for future generations, the FGF was influenced by the success of the earlier Kuwait Investment Office, the world's first sovereign wealth fund. Over decades, the Fund has accumulated substantial assets, pivotal in funding Kuwait's reconstruction post the Iraqi invasion of 1990.

However, challenges arose as oil price volatility and rising government expenditures strained the Fund.

Initially mandated to receive 10% of government revenues, this contribution was later halted due to fiscal pressures. Moreover, to alleviate budget deficits, assets from the General Reserve Fund were transferred to the FGF, altering its intended role as an independent financial entity.

Given these shifts, there is a growing consensus on the need to revamp the Fund's strategy. Suggestions include establishing a new investment fund affiliated with the Fund, akin to models seen in Singapore and the UAE, which could spearhead economic development initiatives locally. Such a fund would focus on strategic investments in sectors crucial for economic diversification, job creation, and revenue generation beyond oil.

Key principles for this revamped fund would include:

Professional Management and Governance -- Ensuring the fund is managed by professionals with robust governance structures to enhance transparency and mitigate corruption risks.

Clear Investment Objectives -- Defining investment criteria aligned with national economic priorities, such as



School honors top students.

Top students honored

The Fajr Al-Sabah National Secondary School celebrated the achievements of its top students from the scientific branch of the general secondary school, reports Al-Jarida daily. Maryam Imad, Lynn Nasser, and Khadija Reda were honored for achieving first place with a perfect

score of 100%.

The school administration extended their congratulations to these outstanding students, wishing them continued success and excellence as they move forward to the university stage and beyond, aiming for a bright future ahead.

job creation, economic multiplier effects, import substitution, and export enhancement.

Long-term Vision -- Emphasizing long-term investments in infrastructure and large-scale projects that yield sustainable economic benefits, complemented by smaller projects to support local enterprises.

Strategic Partnerships -- Collaborating with local and international private sectors and infrastructure funds to leverage expertise and optimize returns.

Sectoral Focus -- Prioritizing investments in critical sectors like transportation (e.g., railways, metro), energy (including renewables), and industrial projects (such as petrochemical complexes), which are essential for economic growth and diversification.

Stability and Security of Returns -- Investing in infrastructure funds and regional projects to ensure stable and secure returns, while diversifying risks.

Evaluation and Impact Measurement -- Implementing metrics to assess the socioeconomic impact of investments, including job creation, GDP contribution, and technological advancement.

By realigning the Fund's strategy along these lines, Kuwait aims to mitigate dependency on oil revenues, foster sustainable economic growth, and secure its financial future.

This strategic overhaul would require legislative support, expert consultation, and careful implementation to achieve desired developmental outcomes while safeguarding the fund's integrity and purpose.

Farewell meeting with Ambassador Miguel Moro Aguilar

Spain is an important partner in railway project: Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: His Excellency Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah visited the office of the Spanish Ambassador to Kuwait, His Excellency Miguel Moro Aguilar, to bid him farewell on the occasion of the end of his tenure in Kuwait, which extended for four years, and was full of hard work and the pursuit of converging views between the two friendly nations for the benefit of both parties.

Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah expressed his thanks to the Ambassador for his excellent performance during his time in his second homeland of Kuwait, especially the beginning of his tenure was associated with a critical period, he presented his credentials during the Covid corona health crisis, that caused the closure of outlets of life worldwide, and he proved with his terrific work his ability to overcome all difficulties, and during the meeting, means of strengthening trade relations were discussed, particularly in the field of renewable energy where the potential for collaboration is very important, as Kuwait declared its commitment to enhancing it to reach 15 percent by year 2030. In this regard, for example the Spanish company TSK developed the solar energy plant in Al Shaqaya, which is considered one of the largest high quality projects in the region.

Moreover, the cultural cooperation, exchange of visits, and benefiting from



His Excellency Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah with Spanish ambassador His Excellency Ambassador Miguel Moro Aguilar.

mutual experiences in the fields of writing and creativity in all fields were also discussed. Sheikh Mubarak noted the importance of Kuwait Airways opening a direct line to Madrid and Barcelona in the last two years as a boost for closer collaboration in new areas as health, sports, shopping or nature tourism.

The Spanish ambassador conveyed to Sheikh Mubarak his deep appreciation for his continuous support and friendly attitude in this period, and stated that Spain and Kuwait enjoys a

strategic partnership, which is bound to grow significantly in the next few years, if we all make the right decisions and take the appropriate steps. And, Sheikh Mubarak stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation in the railway project that Kuwait is adopting with the cooperation of its neighbors from the Gulf countries because of their great experience in this field in Spain and in regional markets as Saudi Arabia, stressing that Kuwait seeks to achieve an unprecedented development renaissance under the direction of His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Further, His Excellency Ambassador Miguel Moro Aguilar said that economic and trade relations between Kuwait and Spain have increased drastically with the continuous growth in the Spanish exports, reaching 394 million euros in 2022, and Spanish imports from Kuwait have also increased by 150 percent, especially petroleum products, noting that there are about 14 Spanish companies working in Kuwait on projects in various fields. And in regard to tourism, he mentioned that tens of thousands of Kuwaitis visit Spain every year, and many of them own private properties, especially in the south of the country.



The Minister of Information reviews the preparations for the celebrations of Kuwait as the Capital of Arab Culture and the Capital of Arab Media 2025.

Al-Mutairi reviews preparations to celebrate Capital of Arab Media '25

KUWAIT CITY, June 24, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi reviewed on Sunday the preparations of the supreme committee to celebrate Kuwait as the Capital of Arab Culture and Media 2025.

During the meeting, the activities, programs, and necessary procedures and preparations related to the two occasions

were reviewed to highlight the pioneering cultural and media role of Kuwait in the Arab world.

The meeting discussed the coordination mechanism with all relevant authorities in the country for their participation in the activities of the two events. It also touched on follow-up supervision of the development of media, marketing and promotional plans for the two events.

Eligible candidates for re-engagement

Ministry of Education taps retired professionals to fill teaching gaps

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: The Ministry of Education is pursuing the assistance of Kuwaiti educational professionals whose services have concluded, including retirees from recent years, to address staffing shortages in schools.

According to Al-Rai, relevant departments have compiled a detailed report outlining specific areas where the expertise of retired Kuwaiti teachers can be utilized.

Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Dr. Adel Al-Adwani, initiated this study in response to identified shortages, particularly in scientific subjects.

He emphasized the urgent need for collaboration with the Civil Service Com-

mission to explore how retired Kuwaiti educators can contribute to maintaining educational standards and supporting national workforce development.

Dr. Al-Adwani also stressed the importance of establishing clear criteria for eligibility, such as the health status of retired staff members and their disciplinary records, ensuring that only suitable candidates are considered for re-engagement.

In coordination with the public education and administrative sectors, the Ministry is evaluating the potential of employing retired Kuwaiti experts in specific disciplines included in the recent announcement for non-Kuwaiti applicants.

These disciplines include English, French, mathematics, science (physics, chemistry, biology, geology), philosophy, Arabic language, computers, social studies, Islamic education, decoration, and electricity.

Expanding market opportunities

Investment company explores potential IPOs for medium-sized family-owned enterprises

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: A prominent investment company in the financial market is currently evaluating several medium-sized family-owned firms with the intention of preparing them for listing on the stock exchange, reports Al-Jarida daily.

According to financial sources, there is growing interest in second-tier family companies that are operationally sound but require capital enhancement and adjustments to meet listing criteria.

Reports indicate that a financial advisory team is conducting thorough assessments of approximately four companies to determine their readiness and requirements for listing.

Concurrently, these firms are engaging with regulatory authorities to seek preliminary opinions and ensure compliance with applicable conditions, procedures, and controls.

Regulatory bodies have shown openness to expanding the market base, emphasizing market development as a key objective that positively impacts market dynamics. Additionally, there are indications that some subsidiaries of already listed companies are also

poised for separate listings or integration into existing entities through indirect processes.

The upcoming wave of IPOs is expected to feature medium-sized companies priced at levels conducive to attracting a broader base of individual investors. This strategy targets inclusion in the main 50 and main markets, aiming to diversify investor participation and capitalize on existing liquidity seeking viable investment opportunities.

In contrast to previous experiences where high-priced stocks faced challenges with individual investors, current IPOs are anticipated to yield profit margins ranging from 5% to 10%. Medium-capitalization companies historically demonstrate strong demand and achieve profitability goals, making them attractive investment prospects.

The market's substantial idle liquidity underscores the potential for ongoing investment opportunities throughout the year, contingent upon the availability of reliable, operational companies that meet investor criteria and regulatory standards.



JULY

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Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
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BHD 60.984 net	BHD 136.198 net
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NOW	NOW
BHD 76.230 net	BHD 170.247 net

Promo period from 23rd June to 31st July 2024 Terms & conditions apply*

Enhancing cross-cultural communication

AUK's Faculty Speaker Series explores English as Soft Power

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: The American University in Kuwait (AUK) recently concluded its Spring 2024 Faculty Speaker Series (FSS) with an insightful session titled "English as a Soft Power - Ukrainian Perspective." The virtual event, held via Zoom, featured Dr. Serhii Petrenko from Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv as the esteemed speaker.

English for Academic Purpose (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Dr. Petrenko explored practical implications for Kuwaiti students amidst the prevalent presence of English in Kuwait.

Attendees were actively engaged throughout the session, which included interactive elements such as discussions on the associations with AI-generated images and the examination of various dimensions of soft power in diplomacy. Dr. Petrenko elucidated on the pillars of soft power, highlighting culture, values, and foreign policy as key components.

The session commenced with a warm welcome from Dr. Salime Smadi, professor of organizational behavior, who expressed gratitude to Dr. Petrenko, as well as Dr. OlhaScheda from the Embassy of Ukraine, for their participation.

The presentation underscored the vital roles of language in diplomacy, ranging from negotiation to fostering cross-cultural understanding. Dr. Petrenko advocated for innovative English language teaching approaches, including backward planning, project-based learning, and the Dogme approach, to enhance students' language skills effectively.

Dr. Petrenko's presentation delved into the multifaceted aspects of English as a soft power tool, emphasizing its significance in cultural exchange and public diplomacy. Drawing on his extensive experience in teaching

FSS serves as a platform for intellectual discourse and knowledge exchange, reaffirming AUK's commitment to academic excellence and global engagement.



Screenshot of zoom lecture.

KIB announces winners of Al Dirwaza account's weekly draw

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the winners of the weekly draw held under the Al Dirwaza account's 2024 campaign, which is distinguished by the highest number of winners throughout the year. The fourth weekly draw, based on customers' May deposits, recently took place in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as well as representatives from the Bank.



Al Dirwaza account's flyer.

The KD 1,000 prize was awarded to Asma Jassem Mohammad Gholum, Khaled Abdullah Khaled Alajmi, Maha Homoud Muhameed Alotaibi, Sabry Hussain Amin Mahmoud, and Mohammad Adnan Zaki Alhassan, whilst the KD 500 prize was awarded to Mohammad Rajaei Mohammad Ramadhan, Laila Murad Hajj Ashkenani, Azeezah Yousef Qambar Jaafar, Ahmad Yaqub Ahmad Alsharrah, Abdullah Nader Abdulrahman Alawadhi, Zahrah Abdullah Ghuloum Ali, and Mohammed Omar Rateb Aljohary.

The expected profits are automatically deposited into the customer's account within the first day of the beginning of each month.

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

Al Dirwaza account is also in compliance with the provisions of Islamic



KUNA photo

First Deputy Prime Minister, Secretary of Defense and Secretary of the Interior during his meeting with the Deputy Secretary of Migrant Labor of the Republic of the Philippines.

HH the Amir's

Continued from Page 1

the suspension of seven articles of the Constitution related to the National Assembly - a move welcomed by the people who were burned by the fire of parliamentary practices devoid of logic.

On the other hand, these measures did not limit freedom of expression and opinion. The press is still playing its role in revealing any defect in State facilities. Rather, it has become more free and social media has not been subjected to any harassment, except with regard to violating the Amiri entity and the powers of His Highness the Amir, which are punishable by the Constitution and the law.

Yes, the measures taken by His Highness the Amir stopped the encroachment on the powers of other authorities and prevented the dominance of one component over another.

It is true that there are no parties in Kuwait, but the parliamentarians' practices were more fatal to the national fabric than the partisan chaos. They fanned the flames of tribalism and sectarianism, which began to raise their flags above the flag of Kuwait. For those who have not realized this, it means threatening the fate of the homeland.

Today, we have started to witness the fruits of the courageous and resolute Amiri measures. Institutions have begun to organize their work so that Kuwait truly returns to being the 'Pearl of the Gulf', and even a jewel in the crown of the Arab world.

Kuwait Municipality

Continued from Page 1

and the number of allowed stories, he added.

He vowed that the municipality would take the necessary legal action against law-breakers.

Kuwait lifts

Continued from Page 1

Moreover, in a statement to Arab Times, the Philippine Embassy affirmed that it welcomes the lifting of the visa ban on Filipino citizens and the return of Filipino workers to Kuwait.

The Embassy added it looks forward to the enhancement of the bilateral relationship between the two friendly countries with forthcoming meetings and discussions that will take up and address the outstanding

Audit Bureau raises critical gas loss issues at KIPIC LNG import facilities

Urgent calls for accountability amid environmental concerns

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: The Audit Bureau's observations regarding the liquefied natural gas (LNG) import facilities of the Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) highlight several critical issues related to gas losses and opera-

tional practices, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The following are the key points based on the Bureau's findings and KIPIC's responses:

Gas Losses and Control Issues

Quantitative Lack of Control -- The Audit Bureau noted a significant amount of liquefied natural gas losses totaling 1,609 million cubic feet during the fiscal year 2022-2023, costing approximately \$6.53 million. This highlights a lack of stringent control over gas loss quantities.

Specific Observations

Absence of Approved Loss Limits -- There were no defined permissible quantities or percentages for gas losses approved by Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and KIPIC management. Monthly losses at times reached 232 million cubic feet, which constituted 3.25% of the gas delivered to the network.

Burning of Gases -- A substantial portion of the losses, amounting to 450.1 million cubic feet (73.9% of total losses), was attributed to burning gases such as torch gas and fire gas. This practice not only leads to financial losses but also contributes to environmental damage.

Unspecified Lost Gas Quantities -- Approximately 159 million cubic feet (26.1% of total losses) were classified as unspecified and unaccounted for. These quantities sometimes appeared as negative values in monthly reports, indicating discrepancies and irregularities in gas accounting.

Audit Bureau's Recommendations

The Bureau demanded that KIPIC define permissible gas loss quantities and percentages; obtain approval from KPC and company management for these limits; specify the authorized job titles responsible for approving these limits; identify the causes of gas losses and hold accountable those responsible if losses exceed approved limits; implement technical measures to reduce the burning of gases, thereby minimizing financial and environmental losses and investigate and explain the reasons behind negative gas quantities reported in certain months to ensure accurate gas import and delivery monitoring.

KIPIC responded by stating that it is currently conducting a study to establish gas loss rates according to international standards aimed at achieving the lowest possible loss rate and once the study is completed, KIPIC plans to seek approval from KPC and its management for these standards.

KIPIC is also implementing an initiative to replace the burning of torch gas with nitrogen gas, which is expected to reduce environmental losses.

Regarding negative gas quantities, KIPIC explained that these discrepancies occur due to metering issues aligned with approved supplier tables. They are working to rectify these discrepancies to ensure accurate gas quantity controls.

In conclusion, the Audit Bureau's findings underscore the need for KIPIC to enhance control mechanisms over LNG import facilities to minimize losses, comply with approved limits, and mitigate environmental impact.

KIPIC's initiatives and responses indicate efforts to address these concerns through improved standards, technological upgrades, and better operational practices.

Council set to convene a workshop on addressing environmental challenges

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: The Environmental Affairs Committee of the Municipal Council is set to convene a workshop on tire landfills and their implications for public health and environmental safety, Wednesday, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The workshop, spearheaded by Eng Alia Al Farsi, Chairperson of the committee, aims to explore sustainable solutions for tire recycling with a goal of achieving zero waste.

In a press statement, Al-Farsi highlighted several key points to be discussed during the workshop. Notably, she emphasized the potential of fine tire waste in the asphalt industry as a viable solution.

Demonstrative experiments in Kuwait have shown that using tire waste to fill dangerous potholes offers a quick and cost-effective remedy.

This approach also reduces the need for transporting waste over long distances, which is currently necessary between tire collection points and recycling facilities.

The workshop's agenda includes an assessment of the current state of tire waste management, locations for tire collection, and the logistics involved

in transporting them to Salmi landfills.

Additionally, discussions will cover the allocation of lands for waste collection, challenges faced by recycling factories, and the underlying causes of frequent landfill fires and toxic emissions.

Al-Farsi emphasized that twelve governmental, private, and public benefit entities have been invited to participate. These include the Public Authority for Industry, the Environment Public Authority, the World Health Organization, tire recycling facilities, the Kuwait Green Building Council, the Kuwaiti Society for Environmental Protection, the General Fire Force, the Fatwa and Legislation Department, as well as representatives from the ministries of Health, Interior, and Public Works.

The workshop underscores Kuwait's commitment to addressing environmental challenges associated with tire waste through collaborative efforts across various sectors. It seeks to foster dialogue, share insights, and formulate effective strategies towards sustainable tire recycling practices and environmental protection.

MoH targets social media drug sales

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: The Ministry of Health has coordinated with the concerned authorities, including the Ministry of Interior, to arrest social media site owners who promote the sale of banned medicines, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.


Sources disclosed the Health Ministry took this step after noticing an increase in

the phenomenon of displaying and selling banned medicines on some social media sites. Sources pointed out the Health Ministry is closely monitoring such activities, in coordination with the concerned authorities like the Cybercrime Department in the Interior Ministry to investigate, control and refer these sites to the judiciary.

Sharia and approved by the KIB's Sharia Supervisory Board. Furthermore, the account comes with a wide range of benefits, including the ease of opening the account, which does not require a salary transfer, and the customer's ability to open it remotely without visiting a branch through KIB Online on the Bank's website or KIB Mobile application on smartphones.

Additionally, Al Dirwaza account automatically grants customers instant issuance of an ATM card, with a KD 2,000 ATM daily withdrawal limit, as well as the ability to issue credit cards against the cash collateral in the account. To open the account and participate in its draws, a minimum of KD 100 is required and can only be withdrawn upon account closure.





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The American University of Kuwait received its Institutional Accreditation from the Private Universities Council (PUC), Ministry of Higher Education in the State of Kuwait, and has a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation with Dartmouth College (Hanover, N Hampshire - USA).

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
JAPAN - Nikkei 225	+208.18	38,804.65	SAUDI - TASI	-32.93	11,697.04
PHILIPPINES - PSEI	+113.98	6,272.46	DUBAI - DFMGI	-11.94	4,000.25
			EGYPT - EGX 30	-159.97	26,902.40
			PAKISTAN - KSE 100	-631.52	78,232.13

Business

Kuwait Airways reaps benefits of new ticket pricing strategy

Airline ensures compliance with aviation regulations and market demands

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: The results of the travel ticket price processing committee formed by the Board of Directors of Kuwait Airways Company recently began to reap the fruits of its work, which appeared clearly on the ground through the positive results it achieved that led to reaching the desired goals in treating the previously applicable prices.

The decision of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Airways to form this committee came in implementation of the directives of the political leadership to harness all capabilities to serve our valued citizens and customers and give them broader options and opportunities to suit their aspirations.

In this regard, the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Captain Abdul Mohsen Salem Al-Faqaan, said that the signs of the committee's work began to be reflected on the ground by the company's executive management, as the travel ticket price processing committee accomplished what was required of it in a short period of time, which included many research procedures and examination of defects in Pricing processes and developing solutions that are in line with the company's available capabilities. Through it, it achieved positive results in line with market data, whether regionally or globally, indicating that the committee worked on developing several recommendations, the most important of which is changing the pricing policy and providing competitive prices in addition to providing different offers over several periods and ensuring that prices are available to the public, and finally changing the policy. Travel agent



Chairman of the Board, Captain Abdul Mohsen Salem Al-Faqaan.



Kuwait Airways' fleet aircraft.

in the national carrier and providing them with opportunities to develop a strategic plan in line with Market requirements.

He added, "Kuwait Airways has recently focused on developing reservations, pricing, and network planning systems in line with the latest systems in the world of aviation and the commercial air transport sector."

Al-Faqaan added, saying: "Kuwait Airways is keen to offer tickets in a way that suits the competitive market and according to the market share, with its full commitment to aviation regulations and procedures, especially in light of the tangible support that Kuwait Airways is witnessing from the General Administration of Civil Aviation, which has had a positive impact on Cooperation at various levels."

Al-Faqaan pointed out that the prices of travel tickets in general vary from one season to another and based on the concepts of supply and demand, indicating that the company was keen to achieve balance in the sales process by reaching profitability and ensuring the continued preservation and satisfaction of valued customers, especially since Kuwait Airways is considered a category of

companies. The airline is characterized by its luxury character due to the distinguished and exceptional services it provides to valued customers, in addition to its seat space, as well as its being the national carrier of the State of Kuwait, which makes the responsibility greater in providing the best services and keeping up with developments in the world of aviation. Including providing the best prices, whether by offering discounted prices or presenting offers on an ongoing basis through Kuwait Airways Holidays office, which offers distinct travel packages with the aim of ensuring access to the various segments of travelers on board Kuwait Airways.

It is worth noting that Kuwait Airways recently launched its new prices in addition to offers for travelers through its participation in one of the exhibitions specialized in tourism and travel, where the company achieved remarkable success through the arrival of a large number of exhibition visitors and benefiting from the offers presented by the Kuwait Airways Holidays Office, especially the launch of its latest campaign by offering... Price offers on various distinguished summer destinations.

GCC growth forecast cut to 2.2%

ICAEW report predicts slow recovery for Mideast in '24

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: The latest Economic Insight report for the Middle East, commissioned by ICAEW and compiled by Oxford Economics, predicts a slow recovery for the region in 2024 due to extended oil production curbs. The GCC growth forecast has been revised down to 2.2% from 2.7% three months ago, though non-energy sectors remain resilient, including in Bahrain and Qatar.

The OPEC+ group's extension of voluntary output cuts through Q3 implies a delayed recovery in GCC energy sectors. GCC oil output will now shrink by 2.6% this year instead of the 1.3% expansion forecasted three months ago. Saudi Arabia, which is cutting production to the greatest extent, will see oil activities contract by 5% this year, down from a predicted growth of 0.7% three months ago. However, as voluntary production cuts are reversed in 2025, energy sectors will begin making positive contributions to GCC growth.

Qatar's GDP growth projection for this year stands at 2.2% and is expected to rise to 2.9% in 2025. In contrast, Bahrain's GDP growth is 3.1% this year, but is expected to slow to 1.4% in 2025.

Since Qatar is not involved in the OPEC+ production quotas, its gas sector is a priority, with authorities doubling down on the North Field gas expansion project, promising a positive medium-term impact. Bahrain, on the other hand, continues to diversify its economy and reduce reliance on oil revenues. Last year its non-oil growth grew by 3.4%, accounting for nearly 84% of GDP.

High-frequency data paints a positive outlook for non-energy sectors across the GCC. In Saudi Arabia, investments are expected to flow into key sectors supporting giga-projects, including construction, manufacturing, and transportation.

Strong momentum in the sports and entertainment sector will also be seen as the country's transformation continues. The hospitality sector will likely follow, with tourism remaining key to Saudi's growth agenda. Tourism is a strategic sector in other countries too, and will remain a key growth driver. Tourism activity has rebounded strongly, with record visitor numbers across the GCC in 2023, extending into this year.

Non-oil economies will continue to grow despite the GCC's fiscal positions deteriorating. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait will likely see budget deficits this year and next as the current oil price level is below the fiscal breakeven point. However, the overall GCC budget position will likely remain in surplus, bolstered by strong financial standings and favourable credit ratings, allowing continued access to funding from capital markets and IPOs.

Hanadi Khalife, Head of Middle East, ICAEW, said: "While geopolitical risks present headwinds for the GCC and wider Middle East, we are encouraged by the ongoing commitment to diversification and sustainability targets. Qatar, for example, became the first GCC sovereign to issue green bonds despite not having explicit net-zero



Hanadi Khalife - Head of Middle East, ICAEW



Scott Livermore - ICAEW Economic Advisor and Chief Economist and Managing Director at Oxford Economics

targets. Bahrain is also aligning its non-oil economic growth with its Economic Vision 2030 and COP28 commitments to reduce carbon emissions by 30% by 2035."

Scott Livermore, ICAEW Economic Advisor, and Chief Economist and Managing Director, Oxford Economics Middle East, said: "Although the region faces escalating pressures amid slowing global economies, the GCC remains relatively positive due to strong bilateral deals and investment. Qatar recently signed a 20-year supply contract with India for 7.5 million tonnes of liquefied natural gas annually, and a 27-year contract with Taiwan for 4 million tonnes." Bahrain has also seen significant investment growth following the launch of the Golden License initiative in April 2023, which requires a minimum investment of US\$50mn and the creation of at least 500 jobs. Bahrain's financial services sector contributed nearly 18% of GDP, surpassing oil, which contributed 16%."

The GCC inflation forecast for 2024 has been lowered by 0.3 percentage points to 2.2% this year, with a further slowdown to 2.1% expected next year. Excluding housing rents in some countries, notably Saudi Arabia, inflationary pressures remain contained, with rates below 2% in all GCC countries except Kuwait and the UAE.

Given the exchange rate pegs against the US dollar, GCC central banks tend to track the US Federal Reserve's policy rates. The US Federal Reserve is expected to begin gradually cutting policy rates in September, totalling a 150bps reduction by the end of 2025.

Central Bank of Kuwait bonds

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the most recent issues of CBK Bonds

and related Tawarruq at a total value of KWD (240) millions for (3) months with Rate of Return (4.375%).

Strategic European expansion

Kuwait Petroleum International's role in sustainable aviation fuel

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: The Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI) CEO is set to inaugurate two clean energy projects in Italy on June 26 this year.

This move is part of Kuwait Petroleum International's ongoing expansion of investments in Italy, following their recent agreement to acquire a 50% stake in Ecofox, an Italian company specializing in organic fuels manufacturing.

Kuwait Petroleum International already owns over 2,800 fuel stations across Italy and holds a 50% stake in the Milazzo refinery.

Their footprint extends across Europe with more than 4,700 fuel stations and significant involvement in

supplying aircraft fuel globally, servicing over 70 airports worldwide.

The sources also revealed that Kuwait Petroleum International completed its first blending process for Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) at its import station in Le Havre, France, by the end of 2023. SAF is noted for its role in substantially reducing carbon dioxide emissions throughout its lifecycle, up to 90% compared to traditional jet fuel.

Looking ahead, the company aims to establish blending facilities in key aviation fuel markets to further support the industry's goals of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

This initiative underscores Kuwait Petroleum International's commitment to advancing sustainable energy solutions and its strategic expansion in the European market.

CMA approves treasury share transactions for listed companies

Kuwaiti Competition Authority reviews economic concentration applications

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: The Kuwait Competition Protection Authority has announced the receipt of three applications for completing the economic concentration process, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to a post on the social networking site "X" by the agency, the following applications were received:

- Domo Toico SRL (Milan) and Kiko S.p.A. (Bergamo Joint Stock Company) have applied for Domo Toico SRL to acquire 70% of Kiko S.p.A.'s shares.

- Richemont Italia Holding S.p.A. and Vernier S.p.A. Italia have applied for Richemont Italia Holding S.p.A. to acquire 100% of Vernier S.p.A. Italia's capital.

- Duet Political Middle Pedic (France) has applied to acquire 51% of Nasco France's capital.

It's worth noting that Law No. 72 of 2020 defines economic concentration operations as a significant change in control over the relevant market.

Meanwhile, the Al-Jarida daily said, the CMA has approved requests from 69 listed companies to activate their rights to buy and sell treasury shares since the beginning of the year. This represents 47.5% of the total 145 listed companies. These approvals allow companies to engage in transactions involving their treasury shares after meeting all regulatory conditions.

Treasury shares serve several strategic purposes for companies. They can be utilized to settle debts, facilitate swap operations during

Banking sector supports real estate with KD 2 bln

Kuwait real estate contracts reach KD 126.29 mln in June

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: From June 9 to June 13, 2024, the total value of real estate contracts registered with the Kuwaiti Ministry of Justice amounted to approximately 126.29 million dinars, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to statistics from the Real Estate Registration and Documentation Department, a total of 120 contracts were recorded across the six governorates of Kuwait during this period.

The breakdown of the contracts included:

- 80 contracts for private real estate with a total value of 37.72 million dinars.

- 36 contracts for investment properties amounting to 64.72 million dinars.

- 4 contracts for commercial properties valued at 23.85 million dinars.

Notably, there were no registrations for industrial properties, coastal strips, craftsmen areas, or exhibitions during this specific period.

In another sector-related development,

acquisitions, and even be allocated to employees through stock option programs.

Additionally, companies use treasury shares to stabilize their stock prices in the market, reduce capital by cancelling shares, issue bonus shares, and enhance earnings per share by decreasing the number of outstanding shares.

Companies may seek approval to buy back or sell up to 10% of their shares, often to address liquidity issues or for financial restructuring. Some companies collaborate with

market makers licensed as investment firms to maintain liquidity and balance demand for their shares by lending treasury shares.

Furthermore, companies have leveraged treasury shares to distribute profits to shareholders, converting them into cash through sales operations. However, regulations prohibit trading in treasury shares during financial statement disclosure periods, ensuring transparency and preventing market manipulation.

The CMA has recently expanded

the permissible uses of treasury shares, including options such as offsetting losses, reducing capital, and distributing profits. Official approvals for dealing in treasury shares are valid for six months, and companies are required to report all transactions annually to the Authority.

In conclusion, treasury shares play a pivotal role in corporate finance strategies, offering companies flexibility in capital management, shareholder relations, and strategic financial operations under regulatory oversight.

KIPIC faces delays in Al-Zour Petrochemical Complex upgrade tender

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: The Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) has encountered delays in its plans to float a tender for a detailed feasibility study concerning the upgrade of the Al-Zour Integrated Petrochemical Complex, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Originally scheduled for April as per the company's annual plan, the tender has yet to be floated, according to MEED sources.

The feasibility study, anticipated to span one year and be contracted on a lump sum basis, holds strategic significance. It aims to assess optimal methods for converting low-sulfur fuel oil (LSFO) from the refinery into higher-value petrochemical products. Concurrently, it seeks to ensure sufficient production of LSFO for the

Ministry of Electricity and Water, which utilizes it as fuel for power generation.

KIPIC's annual plan underscores the study's alignment with strategic goals to enhance domestic refining capacity to 1.6 million barrels per day by 2025, emphasizing maximum conversion capabilities and efficient use of domestic heavy oil. The overarching objective is to meet local energy demands and integrate refining and petrochemical operations within Kuwait.

However, challenges persist with the broader Al-Zour petrochemical complex project, valued at \$10 billion, which is intended to complement the \$16 billion Al-Zour refinery. Significant delays have plagued these ventures in recent years,

compounded by uncertainties surrounding final investment decisions and project timelines.

Moreover, Kuwait's ongoing efforts to secure funding for the Al-Zour project underscore persistent hurdles in advancing these critical infrastructure initiatives. The delays raise concerns about potential further setbacks and the possibility of reevaluating the entire project scope before progressing to tendering major contracts.

KIPIC aims to enhance its refining and petrochemical capabilities through strategic studies and infrastructure expansions but challenges in project execution and funding continue to pose significant obstacles to achieving these objectives within anticipated timelines.

Intensive 6-month bootcamp for new grads

Kuwait Finance House concludes Forssah training program for employees

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) successfully concluded its Forssah program, designed to attract and develop high-achieving Kuwaiti graduates. The program equips participants with the technical and practical skills they need through its specialized tracks in Forssah Tech and Forssah Business.

KFH's Executive Management attended the closing and honoring ceremony, including Group Chief Human Resources and Transformation Officer, Zeyad Abdullah AlOmar and Group Chief Technology, Digital Transformation and PMO Officer, Haytham Alterkait. Other KFH officials were also present.

Through a collaboration with CODED Academy, EMERITUS Training, and KTech Institute for Private Training, 39 KFH employees participated in the Forssah program this year. The rigorous six-month program included a combination of theoretical and practical workshops and training, designed to develop the employees' technical and business skills to make them well-rounded professionals.

Group Chief Human Resources and Transformation Officer, Zeyad AlOmar, emphasized KFH's wealth of expertise across various fields and its commitment to supporting and developing its talented employees at all levels. He highlighted the Forssah program as a key initiative with significant potential to positively impact participants.

"We were committed to ensuring the program incorporated the latest information technology and its applications in banking, reflecting KFH's position as a world-leading



Zeyad Abdullah AlOmar, Haytham Alterkait, and officials from CODED in honoring graduates.

Islamic financial institution. This strengthens trainee capabilities while enhancing the bank's performance, allowing us to maintain

KFH's leadership locally and globally," AlOmar added.

He emphasized the significant contribution of the Forssah pro-

gram, launched by KFH in 2009. This program, featuring comprehensive training programs, has fostered the development of a highly

skilled generation of employees. Furthermore, Forssah undergoes continuous development to keep pace with the latest industry re-

quirements, solidifying its position as an exemplary training path. AlOmar expressed his confidence that KFH's investment in these training programs will yield significant benefits in the future.

Group Chief Technology, Digital Transformation and PMO Officer, Haytham Alterkait, emphasized KFH's commitment to continuous employee training and development. This comprehensive approach aims to enhance employee expertise, contribute to both individual and organizational growth, and ultimately deliver exceptional customer service. He further highlighted that these programs foster creativity, cultivate future leaders, and equip them to navigate the evolving landscape of the times and labor market, ensuring KFH's continued leadership.

Alterkait stressed the importance of empowering employees. He emphasized providing them with the necessary technological tools and motivating them to innovate and share their creative ideas. This is especially crucial in today's era of rapid change and development, driven by advanced technology, digitization, artificial intelligence, machine learning, cybersecurity, cloud computing, data, and more.

Alterkait emphasized the importance of KFH's employee training and development for enhancing customer experience. He explained that by equipping employees with the latest skills, KFH can innovate services that streamline customer interactions. This is especially crucial in today's fast-paced environment, where ensuring a safe and high-quality customer experience requires continuous improvement.

'Bank serves as role model in delivering social responsibility through constant contributions'

NBK's initiative fulfills young cancer patient's architectural dreams

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) always seeks to bring a smile to the faces of children with cancer, by supporting them and realizing their dreams through its 'I Dream to Be' initiative, which has been ongoing for 12 years.

In this context, the bank granted the wish of Joud Al Merai, a 12-years old girl, who is undergoing treatment at NBK Children's Hospital, to become an architect and décor professional, as she has a sense of creativity and is fond of design since an early age.

To this end, NBK's team took child Joud on a tour in KAYAN Architects, in coordination with company's owner, Bashar Al Salem, for designing sketches, interacting and teaching her some tips and techniques. Following that, NBK's team accompanied Joud to Hassan Abul's Showroom where she picked and designed a whole space including carpets, sofas, curtains, chairs and lamps. She also got the chance to design her dream home with architects on the computer as she picked several materials to be used in it.

The 'I Dream to Be' initiative aligns with NBK's commitment to deliver its social responsibility through unwavering contributions bolstering its position as the leading bank in social responsibility in Kuwait, especially in children's healthcare.

On this occasion, Joanne Al Abdul Jaleel, NBK Public Relations Manager at National Bank of Kuwait said, "At NBK, we take pride in the 'I Dream to Be' initiative, which has fulfilled the dreams of many children and given them hope, and every time we fulfill a



NBK grants Joud's wish to be an architect and décor professional.

children's dream, we feel proud of this initiative that brings a smile to the faces of children and their families."

"NBK's social contribution is not limited to financial support, but also addressing children's psychological and moral needs to help them through these difficult times, as the bank makes its utmost endeavors to grant children's wishes, bring joy to their hearts, enhance their vision for the future, and give them happiness and hope for a bright tomorrow, she noted.

"NBK serves as a role model in de-

living social responsibility through constant contributions on all levels, especially healthcare services, and the activities and initiatives to develop the healthcare system in NBK Children's Hospital," she emphasized.

"Seeing children recover and the joy on the faces of their families encourages us to do our utmost endeavors to further advance the 'I Dream to Be' initiative. NBK also continues to support the hospital by developing all units and providing comprehensive care that transcends treatment services by organizing a variety of

entertainment activities that bring joy and happiness to children and their families," she mentioned.

NBK stands out with a rich record of various pioneering humanitarian and social initiatives, showing unwavering dedication to extending all sorts of support to children. Additionally, it continuously organizes many visits to childcare institutions to foster a culture of community service and raise awareness of social responsibility, underscoring a deeply rooted approach which it always seeks to promote.

Kuwait tops Bahrain's inward FDI stocks

Bahrain attracts record FDI inflows of \$6.8 billion in '23

MANAMA, June 24: The island nation of Bahrain has secured a record-breaking USD 6.8 billion in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows in 2023, according to the latest World Investment Report (WIR 2024) by the United Nations Conference of Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The figure tops the previous record set in 2022 marking a mammoth increase of 148%. This contributed to the growth of cumulative inward FDI stocks, which climbed from USD 36.2 billion in 2022 to USD 43.1 billion.

Marking one of the highest ratios in the world, Bahrain's FDI stocks relative to GDP stood at 99.7% as of the end of 2023, a figure significantly higher than the global average of 46.9%. According to Bahrain's Information & eGovernment Authority, the top countries contributing to Bahrain's FDI stocks as part of a diverse portfolio include Kuwait (36%), Saudi Arabia (23%) and the United Arab Emirates (10%).

H.E. Noor bint Ali Alkhulaif, Minister of Sustainable Development and Chief Executive of Bahrain Economic Development Board (Bahrain EDB) said: "The milestone FDI inflows attracted in 2023 reflects the strength of Bahrain's value proposition and continued standing as a trusted destination of choice for regional and global investors seeking best value operating costs in a strategic location that serves as an ideal gateway to the region and beyond."

The island nation continues to cement its reputation as an attractive hub for investments, where the government continues to prioritise the ongoing development of forward-looking regulatory frameworks alongside the implementation of strategic economic plans to encourage economic growth and

diversification. Bahrain's nominal GDP increased from around USD 11 billion in 2003 to over USD 43 billion in 2023, marking an average annual growth of 7%, surpassing the global average of 5%. In addition to securing healthy economic growth, Bahrain's economy also diversified, the financial services sector overtook the oil sector as the highest contributor to real GDP, standing at 17.8% in 2023, marking a milestone achievement.

The Minister of Sustainable Development and Chief Executive of Bahrain EDB added, "Backed by an agile government, highly skilled bi-lingual talent pool, and financially liberal environment, Bahrain has proven itself as a leading investment destination enabling leading companies to benefit from a business-friendly environment. At Bahrain EDB, we continue to tactically work towards attracting increased investments from priority markets, supported by Team Bahrain, in the interest of sustaining economic growth and diversification."

Attracting a total of USD 2.4 billion in investments from 9 major projects and set to generate 3,000 job opportunities, the Golden License has been a pivotal initiative launched in Bahrain in April 2023, which has successfully encouraged increased regional and international investments. Spanning across various sectors, the latest projects awarded a Golden License in 2024 include Bahrain Titanium, the first facility of its kind in the region set to be established by Interlink Metals & Chemicals, the construction of the first greenfield head office of National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) outside of Kuwait, the development of a data centre facility and international submarine cable by Beyon, and the development Bahrain Marina.



Bahrain Bay Skyline

Yellen announces \$100m fund for affordable housing efforts

Housing costs surge amidst supply shortages

WASHINGTON, June 24 (AP): The Biden administration is announcing new steps to increase access to affordable housing as still-high prices on groceries and other necessities and high interest rates have dramatically pushed up the cost of living in the post-pandemic years.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen will promote the new investments on Monday during a visit to Minneapolis. The investments include providing \$100 million through a new fund over the next three years to support affordable housing financing, boosting the Federal Financing Bank's financing of affordable housing and other measures.

The increased attention to home prices comes as the housing crunch becomes an increasing issue in this year's general election campaign.

"We face a very significant housing supply shortfall that has been building for a long time," Yellen says in remarks prepared for delivery Monday afternoon. "This supply crunch has led to an affordability crunch."

Yellen says the Democratic administration is "pursuing a broad affordability agenda to address the price pressures that families have been feeling."

Both homebuyers and renters are facing increasing housing costs that skyrocketed after the pandemic. According to the Case-Shiller 20-City Composite Home Price Index, home prices increased

by 46% between March 2020 and March 2024. A new Treasury analysis shows that over the past two decades, housing costs have been rising faster than incomes.

Meanwhile, 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 homebuyers during what's traditionally the housing market's busiest period of the year.

For low-income Americans, statistics from the National Low Income Housing Coalition show that nationally there is a shortage of more than 7 million affordable homes for the more than 10.8 million extremely low-income U.S. families. And there is no state or county in the country where a renter working full-time at minimum wage can afford a two-bedroom apartment, according to the group.

It is becoming a crisis in some cities. For instance, on Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts the cost of housing has become a public safety issue as it becomes difficult to attract and retain correctional officers and 911 dispatchers.

President Biden and presumptive GOP nominee Donald Trump have put forward a variety of proposals on how to make life more affordable for average Americans, from Trump proposing to make tips tax-free for workers and Biden pursuing a plan to cut student loan payments for borrowers. A representative from the Trump campaign did not respond to an Associated Press request for comment.

But increased housing costs have some economists predicting the crunch may not end until the Federal Reserve lowers its key interest rate, which

remains at 5.3%.

Sal Guatieri, a senior economist at BMO Capital Markets Economic Research, wrote Friday that little change is expected in the housing market "until the Fed reduces policy rates."

Diane Yentel, president and CEO of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, said the White House has made efforts to prevent evictions and address the housing crisis, "but there is much more work still to be done."

Yentel said congressional action is needed to "quickly enact transformative and badly needed housing investments. Only through a combination of administrative action and robust federal funding can the country truly resolve its affordable housing crisis."

In her speech, Yellen is to call on Congress to pass Biden's proposed budget, released in March.

The budget calls on Congress to provide a tax credit for first-time homebuyers and includes a plan to build more than 2 million homes. It would expand the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit.

The Biden administration has taken other steps to boost the housing supply, including launching a multi-agency effort to encourage states and cities to convert more empty office buildings into housing units, with billions of federal dollars available to help spur such transitions.

In July 2023, the Department of Housing and Urban Development provided communities with \$85 million to reduce barriers to affordable housing, such as zoning restrictions that in some places have become a hurdle to increasing the supply and density of affordable housing.

Young Kuwaiti pianist captivates classical music audiences in Geneva

VIENNA, June 24, (Agencies): Young Kuwaiti pianist Rawan Behbehani captivated audiences at the Victoria Hall Theater in Geneva. Her appearance, the first of its kind, is a considerable feat, as the concert venue is known for hosting musical geniuses. Behbehani, a prodigy of classical music, appeared on stage for eight minutes playing the second movement of Beethoven's four-movement second Symphony.

The young pianist told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) of her overwhelming joy for representing Geneva's Conservatoire alongside her peers, as the institute is the oldest in Switzerland and one of the oldest in Europe.

Behbehani answered a question on the musical pieces that have influenced her saying that she has been moved by the work of Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn and other classical music geniuses.

She spoke to KUNA of her recent visit to Mozart's home turned museum, where she also attended a concert, and voiced her hope for a chance to play at Vienna or Salzburg's Opera Houses.

The 15-year-old Rawan discovered her passion for classical music at the ripe age of six, and despite her youthful career, she has already been awarded 13 international prizes.

She performed with an orchestra for four times, including a per-



Young Kuwaiti pianist Rawan Behbehani with her Russian composer instructor. KUNA photo

formance in Kuwait with Prague's philharmonic orchestra at the age of 10, a performance in Geneva at 12, and on Omani women day at the local opera house in 2022.

Upon realizing her talents, Rawan's family made sure to create the proper environment to cultivate her gift. About five years ago, the family moved to Switzerland for Rawan to pursue her passion in a place where classical music thrives.

Also:

BEIJING: The Beijing Youth Orchestra, a new ensemble featuring student musicians, is expected to perform at Carnegie Hall, a prestigious concert venue in the **United States**, in August.

The orchestra, jointly curated by **China's** National Center for the Performing Arts (NCPA) and the Beijing Municipal Education Commission, comprises 131 musicians from the Central Conservatory of Music and two middle schools in Beijing.

At the invitation of Carnegie Hall, the ensemble, along with six other youth orchestras from across the world, will participate in World Orchestra Week, presenting **New York** audiences with both Western and Chinese orchestral works, according to an NCPA statement.

The young musicians will also engage in a series of exchange activities during their stay in the United States, the statement noted.

The year 2024 marks the 45th anniversary of the establishment of China-U.S. diplomatic relations. The trip by the young musicians represents an effort by the NCPA to promote cultural exchanges between the two countries.

Music

Variety



This image released by Focus Features shows Jodie Comer (left) and Austin Butler in a scene from 'The Bikeriders.' (AP)

Film

Nichols' latest is a journey through Americana and identity

'Bikeriders' explores birth of subculture

By Jake Coyle

Still images have been a source of wonder and mythology in the films of Jeff Nichols.

"Mud," Nichols' Twain-soaked Mississippi fable, seemed derived from the magical sight of a boat held aloft by a tree. "Loving," about a '60s interracial marriage, took inspiration from tender Life magazine photographs taken of the real-life couple. Nichols' latest, "The Bikeriders," is based on photographer Danny Lyon's 1968 book of the same name, for which he spent four years with a Chicago motorcycle club.

It's not hard to see what Nichols saw in Lyon's black-and-white stills. There's the stylish raw materials - the chrome bikes, the slicked back hair, the black leather jackets. But there's also a just emerging anti-authoritarian, easy-riding spirit and camaraderie. Like the central figures of "Loving," they are classically drawn outsiders who encapsulate something glorious and uneasy about freedom in America.

In the exhilarating first half of "The Bikeriders," which opened in theaters Friday, Nichols is less compelled to build a narrative around his bike gang, the Vandals (based on the Outlaws) than summoning an intoxicating atmosphere reminiscent of those old photographs. "The Bikeriders" eventually becomes saddled with heavier plot mechanics - you can almost sense his riders growing weary from having to strap narrative devices onto their bikes. The movie wants to ride, but it's not sure how much story to pack for the trip. But this is a vivid dramatization of the birth of an American subculture.

The framing device Nichols settles on is Lyon, himself, played by Mike Faist, who's conducting interviews for his book. His conversations with a woman named Kathy (Jodie Comer) bookend and sporadically narrate the movie.

Kathy, also based on a real person, seems at first an unlikely spokesperson for the gang. She speaks

with a thick Illinois accent (an actorly distraction throughout) and has no affection for motorcycle riders. But one night at a bar, she sees Benny (Austin Butler) across the smokey room and, even if she doesn't admit it at that moment, falls for him. Again, it's not hard to see why. Butler is by now well removed from Elvis Presley but the suppleness with which he can sink into mid-century America is no less apparent. Benny drives Kathy home, parks his bike outside the place and patiently waits for her boyfriend to skip town.

Nichols, a devotee of films like "Hud" and "Cool Hand Luke," is a filmmaker who works very consciously within classic American idioms. In Butler he has his James Dean, making Tom Hardy his Marlon Brando. Hardy plays Johnny, Benny's best pal and the one who starts up and presides over the Vandals. (The "whaddya got" clip of Brando from "The Wild One" is even briefly seen on a small TV in "The Bikeriders.")

Lifestyle

The Vandals, as a club, start about as simply as kids might call a tree house to order. They're a bunch of guys who like riding motorcycles and like talking about them. Simple as that. But men come like moths to a flame, attracted by the tough lifestyle, the cool jackets with patches and a way out of mainstream America. Among them are Cal (Boyd Holbrook), Cockroach (Emory Cohen), Funny Sonny (Norman Reedus) and Zipco (Michael Shannon).

"Obscenity and motorcycles travel hand in hand," someone says, with pride. The early days of the group are, it would seem, a lot of fun. Barroom brawls and riding carefree through corn fields. Most of these guys don't have much, but they have each other. And their loyalty is total.

Kathy isn't so sure. She watches the growing gang - a completely male bunch - with skepticism and fear for Benny. (In a scene teased in the film's

opening, he's beaten badly enough to be hospitalized.) Sometimes, they throw down purely for fun. They are the original Fight Club.

But soon, Kathy isn't the only one with doubts at what they've created. As their gang grows, what the Vandals embody is less clear, even to Johnny and Benny. Some of the new entrants are coming straight back from Vietnam. Their old hijinks give way to more serious crimes. In one chastening scene, Kathy finds herself very nearly assaulted by its members. The gang - and all its posturing of toughness - begins to feel more like a trap for even its leader. Benny is drawn into a choice between the Vandals and Kathy. The homoerotic subtext is understated but not ignored; when Benny and Johnny discuss their future together, they do it gently and intimately, in the dark, like a secret confession.

As the Vandals' original ideals disintegrate, it can feel like "The Bikeriders" gets locked into a familiar "Goodfellas"-like structure, but with a telling shift in narrator for a drama that's ultimately about masculinity. This is a movie that's juggling a lot of contradictory ambitions. It wants to be authentic but it wants to tell a grand America saga. It wants mythology but also naturalism. It's those instincts that have made Nichols one of the most essential filmmakers of his generation, even if the results have sometimes been underwhelming by a hair. Even his best, most firmly rooted films ("Take Shelter," "Mud") strive for a balancing act that can be elusive.

But I think it's those dual impulses - and, again, all the cool jackets - that makes "The Bikeriders" work. The movie is unabashedly romantic about the Vandals but it's equally dubious about the rugged masculinity they embody, too. "The Bikeriders" has its hands firmly on the throttle just it does the brakes.

"The Bikeriders," a Focus Features release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for language throughout, violence, some drug use and brief sexuality. Running time: 116 minutes. Three stars out of four. (AP)

NEW YORK: Weekend number two was just as joyous for "Inside Out 2."

The Pixar sequel collected \$100 million in ticket sales in its second weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday, setting a new record for an animated movie in its follow-up frame in theaters. The previous best second weekend for an animated title was the \$92 million for "The Super Mario Bros. Movie." Only six movies ever have had better second weekends.

In just a week and a half, "Inside Out 2," starring Amy Poehler as Joy, Maya Hawke as Anxiety and Lewis Black as Anger has become 2024's highest-grossing film to date with \$724.4 million globally, including \$355.2 million in US and Canadian theaters. That passes the \$711.8 million worldwide total of "Dune: Part Two." "Inside Out 2" will likely blow through the \$1 billion mark in about a week, which would make it the first film since "Barbie" to do so.

The record haul for "Inside Out 2," though, recalled past years when \$1 billion grosses were more commonplace for the Walt Disney Co. It is also a much-needed blockbuster for Pixar, which after experimenting with direct-to-streaming releases, reconsidered its movie pipeline and approach to mass-audience appeal.

Now, "Inside Out 2," which dipped a mere 35% from its \$154 million domestic debut, is poised to challenge "The Incredibles 2" (\$1.2 billion) for the all-time top grossing Pixar release. It could also steer the venerated animation factory toward more sequels. Among its upcoming films is "Toy Story 5," due out in 2026.

For theater owners, "Inside Out 2" could hardly have been more needed. But it also reminded exhibitors of how feast-or-famine the movie business has become in recent years. Since the pandemic, movies like "Barbie," "Spider-Man: No Way Home" and "Top Gun: Maverick" have pushed ticket sales to record heights, but follow periods in between box-office sensations have grown longer. Ticket sales over Memorial Day last month were the worst in three decades.

Some of 2024's downturn can be attributed to release-schedule juggling caused by last year's writers and actors strikes. The biggest new release over the weekend was Jeff Nichols' motorcycle

gang drama "The Bikeriders," a film originally slated to open in 2023 before the actors strike prompted its postponement.

"The Bikeriders," starring Jodie Comer, Austin Butler and Tom Hardy, came in on the high side of expectations with \$10 million from 2,642 venues in its opening weekend. "The Bikeriders," which



Hawke



Poehler

cost about \$35 million to produce, was originally to be released by Disney before New Regency took it to Focus Features last fall. (AP)

BOSRA, Syria: The ancient city of Bosra in southern Syria, a testament to civilizations spanning millennia, is locked in a new battle

-- preserving the precious heritage from the ravage of yearslong war.

Enlisted in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Bosra's history dates back to 1500 BC, with Nabateans, Romans, Byzantines, and Islamic Caliphates all leaving their mark. Today, the city boasts a well-preserved Roman theater, a panoramic citadel, and a unique mosque, alongside temples, baths, and ancient city walls.

During Roman rule in the second century AD, Bosra rose to prominence as the regional capital.

Alaa Al-Salah, director of the Bosra Archaeological Site, described a meticulously planned city mirroring Rome itself, complete with a grid layout, roads, theaters, a hippodrome, and baths. (Xinhua)

Untreated sunburn could lead to dehydration and heat-related illness

Dermatologist advises when to seek medical care for sunburns

CLEVELAND, June 24: With residents and holidaymakers in the Northern Hemisphere often enjoying summer outdoors, an expert from global health system Cleveland Clinic is urging them to recognize the signs of a severe sunburn, and to know when to seek medical care.

"Most of the time we are worried about the long-term effects of sunburn such as skin cancer development, that is, basal cell and squamous cell from accumulative UVA exposure and melanoma from acute burns/UVB exposure. However, there are health impacting consequences even immediately after the acute sunburn," says dermatologist Amy Kassouf, MD.

"You don't need to see your healthcare provider for every sunburn. A small patch of first-degree sunburn – the least severe type – does not typically cause serious health issues," Dr. Kassouf explains. "However, as your skin continues to react to ultraviolet (UV) radiation, you may develop concerning symptoms. Getting medical care when needed can prevent some of those serious conditions from developing."

According to Dr. Kassouf, sunburns are similar to thermal burns – the kind caused by touching hot surfaces, liquids, steam or flames. Although they don't go as deep as thermal burns, they are more damaging to a person's DNA.

She recommends consulting a healthcare provider in several instances, such as having a first-degree burn all over the body, which increases the risk of developing a heat-related illness; a large area of blistered skin, which increases the risk of infection; or symptoms of sickness or dehydration, such as fever, chills or faintness.

"Blistering skin means there's more damage in the deeper layers of your skin," Dr. Kassouf adds. "You're more likely to dehydrate, become feverish and develop inflammation. That's when you need to seek medical care."

Dr. Kassouf adds that a second-degree sunburn can also cause health issues including dehydration, sun poisoning, heat exhaustion, heat stroke and infection.

Dehydration

Badly burned skin no longer holds moisture in your body, so you may dehydrate. Signs that you're severely dehydrated could include dry mouth or thirst; inability to urinate or dark-colored urine; constipation; disorientation or confusion; dizziness, especially when rising to stand; exhaustion; and headache or confusion.

Sun poisoning

Sun poisoning is almost like an allergic reaction to a sunburn, Dr. Kassouf says. Essentially, the extreme exposure to UV radiation causes skin inflammation. The main difference between sun poisoning and a typical sunburn is the additional symptoms an individual may develop with sun poisoning, including a burning sensation; chills; extreme thirst; itchiness; nausea or a rash.

Heat exhaustion

Dr. Kassouf points out that a person does not need to be in extreme heat to develop heat exhaustion. Severe sunburn causes a loss of body fluids that can lower blood pressure and blood volume. The first symptom is fatigue. In addition to feeling tired, a person may also experience dizziness; intense thirst;

feeling faint; fever; headache; or sweating heavily.

Heatstroke

Heatstroke happens when the body can no longer control its temperature, Dr. Kassouf says, warning that the condition can cause permanent disability or even death if not treated quickly. It typically begins as heat exhaustion, but the symptoms rapidly worsen and may include extreme sweating or hot, dry skin (if dehydrated); loss of consciousness; mental impairments such as confusion and slurred speech; seizures; or very high body temperature (over 40 degrees Celsius).

Infection

"The danger of developing an infection is typically greater a few days after the burn, when the blisters are breaking and there are exposed lower layers of skin," Dr. Kassouf says. Telltale signs of infection can include an increase in redness, pain, and swelling; a severe fever; or a covering of pus or crust over the open site.

Why it's important to seek medical care for a sunburn

Dr. Kassouf urges people not to ignore the early signs of dangerous sunburn. "See your provider if you have any signs of dehydration, sun poisoning, heat exhaustion or heatstroke. The symptoms of these health conditions go far beyond sunburn discomfort, can last much longer – and may even cause lasting damage," she says.

"When your sunburn is serious, your skin is no longer a strong protective barrier for your body," Dr. Kassouf reiterates. "You might develop symptoms of heat-induced trauma, such as dehydration, low blood pressure and shock. But it all starts with the sunburn, and shade alone is not a reliable way to prevent overexposure to the sun. Be sure to take preventative steps such as wearing sun protective clothing, hats and sunblock."



Dr. Kassouf

'Expand tirzepatide use'

Obesity medication may treat sleep apnea: study

NEW YORK, June 24, (AP): A popular obesity drug may help treat a dangerous disorder in which people struggle to breathe while they sleep, a new study finds.

Tirzepatide, the medication in the weight-loss drug Zepbound and also the diabetes treatment Mounjaro, appeared to reduce the severity of sleep apnea along with reducing weight and improving blood pressure and other health measures in patients with obesity who took the drug for a year.

Eli Lilly and Co., the drug's maker who paid for the research, has asked the Food and Drug Administration to expand use of the drug to treat moderate to severe sleep apnea, in which people stop and start breathing during sleep, a spokesperson said Friday. A decision is expected by the end of the year.

But an outside expert cautioned in an editorial that more research will be needed to tell if the drug can be used as "a sole treatment" for obstructive sleep apnea, which occurs when tissue in the throat relaxes and collapses during sleep, fully or partially blocking the airway.

Sleepiness

It affects an estimated 20 million Americans and can cause short-term issues such as snoring, brain fog and daytime sleepiness but also severe long-term issues such as heart disease, dementia and early death.

The research, published Friday in the New England Journal of Medicine and presented at a medical meeting, included nearly 500 people diagnosed with obesity and sleep apnea. Half of them used what's typically known as a CPAP machine that feeds oxygen through a mask to keep airways open during sleep. The other group included people for whom a CPAP machine had failed or wasn't tolerated.

The study found that patients in both groups who got weekly injections of tirzepatide reduced the number of episodes per hour in which their breathing slowed or stopped completely during sleep by about half to nearly 60%, compared to about 10% in people who

got a dummy drug. Up to half of the patients taking tirzepatide reduced the apnea episodes enough to potentially resolve the disorder, compared with up to 16% of those using the placebo medication, according to the research.

On average, patients who took tirzepatide also lost between 18% and 20% of their body weight and showed improvements in blood pressure and a condition in which blood oxygen drops during sleep. Patients also reported better sleep and fewer sleep disturbances, the study found.

Research

The new research shows that tirzepatide is "a more effective knife in the drawer," for treating sleep apnea, said lead author Dr. Atul Malhotra, a sleep medicine specialist at the University of California, San Diego.

In an accompanying editorial, Dr. Sanjay Patel, a sleep medicine specialist at the University of Pittsburgh, cautioned that whether tirzepatide can treat sleep apnea in real-world patients "remains unclear" because of the way improvement is measured. He also noted that cost and access remain obstacles to using tirzepatide and that the addition of the drug as a treatment could exacerbate racial and other disparities in addressing sleep apnea.

Dr. Paul Peppard, a sleep medicine researcher at the University of Wisconsin who was not involved in the study, said losing weight has long been recommended as a way to reduce the severity of sleep apnea by expanding lung capacity, reducing fat in the airways and improving oxygen usage. While diet and exercise can spur weight loss and reduce the consequences of the disorder, the ongoing obesity epidemic in the US proves that shedding pounds is difficult for many people, he said. In such cases, medications such as tirzepatide can help.

"I expect that these drugs could be used as a tool to treat many of the established outcomes of obesity," Peppard said.

Consult doctor before starting a new exercise routine

Seeking eternal youth? Try gym and weight-resistance training

TOKYO, June 24, (AP): Here's the message from Dr. Marcos Bamman, a physiologist with decades of research into aging who preaches the benefits of weight-resistance training for those who are getting up there.

We're talking 60-plus - women and men. And we're talking about hitting the gym and weight training. Don't be put off, Bamman says.

"Resistance training is in many ways the true fountain of youth," Bamman said in an interview with The Associated Press. "I like to say the fountain of youth is the water cooler in the gym."

Of course, there are biological limits. But Bamman says the bulk of age-related decline in strength, flexibility and endurance is behavioral - putting too few demands on the body, not too many.

Muscle

"When I tell somebody that in four to six months your strength and muscle mass and overall muscle function is going to elevate to the levels of people 30 to 35 years younger, that hits home," he said.

So you know you're too sedentary and the birthdays keep piling up. You suspect resistance training would be beneficial. But perhaps you're intimidated. Don't be.

Check with medical professionals to make sure there are no health problems that stand in your way.

Then find a gym. Larger gyms offer a social component with things to do on a day off from weight training. And Bamman suggests getting a trainer.

"It's actually quite safe, but it does require proper progression," Bamman said. "You have to have a good in-



Shigeo Takahashi, 83, uses a pec deck machine as he works out at the Fukagawa Sports Center in Tokyo, June 12. If you are getting up there in years, weight-resistance training might deliver unexpected benefits. (AP)

structor who can teach the movements properly."

Bamman, a research scientist at the Florida Institute for Human & Machine Cognition, said finding a fully qualified trainer can be tricky.

"We need more rigorous certification of trainers," he said. "The problem is that you can go online tonight and pay \$50 and get some certification as a trainer."

Bamman suggests resistance training twice a week. Three times is even better, and he recommends non-weight-training days in between. For instance, work out on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and let Tuesday and Thursday be days of rest.

He suggests 10 different exercise movements - eight is sufficient. Do 10 repetitions of each movement. Do this three times, described as three sets. Then move on to the next movement.

When you reach the 10th repetition, you should feel you can't do many more. If you could have done 10 more reps, you might want to increase the resistance.

Bamman says machines are better for beginners, but free weights - barbells or dumbbells - may be more effective as you gain confidence.

Before the weights, start with a 5-10 minute warmup - on the treadmill, stationary bike or elliptical machine - to get the blood flowing. You can add a

few minutes on the mat for stretching and abdominal work.

Then come the weights. "Sometimes you see people who sit on the machine, do a set and then play with their phone for three or four minutes. We like to keep them moving."

Women may benefit from resistance training even more than men because it's a way to fight osteoporosis, the loss of bone density.

"Women are on a disadvantaged trajectory for bone loss, particularly in susceptible areas such as the hips and lower back," said Bamman, who completed his doctorate at the University of Florida College of Medicine.

"But the strength-training benefits for both sexes are really important. There are no sex differences in the ability to respond. In gaining muscle mass and strength in untrained people, men and women track the same.

Yasuko Kuroi is 72 and started resistance training about 20 years ago.

"I saw the men in the gym and thought I could do that, too," she said, speaking at a municipal recreation center in Tokyo.

In a few words: Use it or lose it. Bamman cautions against pampering yourself and criticized even health care professionals "who baby seniors." Of course, common sense is required.

"Our human body is a demand-based system," he explained. "If you chronically impart a low demand on the body, we have adaptations to low demand. That's why we lose muscle mass, that's why we get weaker. We're not demanding much."

NY targets 'addictive' social media feeds for kids

NEW YORK, June 24, (AP): New York Gov. Kathy Hochul on Thursday signed a bill that would allow parents to block their children from getting social media posts suggested by a platform's algorithm, a move to limit feeds critics argue are addictive.

Under the legislation, feeds on apps like TikTok and Instagram would be limited for people under age 18 to posts from accounts they follow, rather than content suggested by an automated algorithm. It would also block platforms from sending minors notifications on suggested posts between midnight and 6 a.m.

Both provisions could be turned off if a minor gets what the bill defines as "verifiable parental consent."

The law does not take effect immediately. State Attorney General Letitia James is now tasked with crafting rules to determine mechanisms for verifying a user's age and parental consent. After the rules are finalized, social media companies will have 180 days to implement the regulations.

"We can protect our kids. We can tell the companies that you are not allowed to do this, you don't have a right to do this, that parents should have say over their children's lives and their health, not you," Hochul, a Democrat, said at a bill signing ceremony in Manhattan.

The signing is the first step in what is expected to

be a drawn out process of rule making, and a probable lawsuit from social media companies to block the law.

NetChoice, a tech industry trade group that includes X and Meta, has criticized the legislation as unconstitutional.

"This is an assault on free speech and the open internet by the State of New York," Carl Szabo, vice president and general counsel of NetChoice, said in a statement. "New York has created a way for the government to track what sites people visit and their online activity by forcing websites to censor all content unless visitors provide an ID to verify their age."

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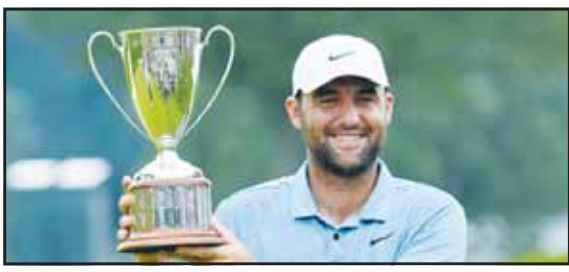
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Scottie Scheffler holds up his trophy after winning the Travelers Championship golf tournament at TPC River Highlands in Cromwell, Conn. (AP) - See Page 14

Sports

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Gold for Hang and Hong

Sheikh Al Qasimi applauds Kuwait's hosting of Asian Fencing Championships

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: For the second consecutive day, the Asian Fencing Championships for men and women, hosted by Kuwait, continued at Hall No. 4 at the International Fairgrounds in the Mishrif area. The event will run until next Thursday, featuring 350 male and female fencers from 36 countries.

On the second day of competition, Hang Ho Wai from the Hong Kong national team clinched the gold medal in the men's epee competition. His compatriot Ng Ho Tin took silver, while Japan's Kumata Akira and Kazakhstan's Sertay Yerlik shared the bronze.

In the women's events, South Korea's Hong Sina won the gold medal in the foil competition. Japan's Kikuchi Komaki secured the silver medal, and the bronze medals were awarded to China's Wang Yuting and Japan's Ueno Yuka.

Sheikh Salem Al-Qasimi, President of the Asian and Arab Fencing Federations, praised the organization of the tournament and expressed confidence in the Kuwaiti Federation's strategy for hosting such a significant event. He noted the high level of competition and hoped for even greater excitement in the remaining days of the tournament. Al-Qasimi highlighted that Kuwait's successful hosting of this major continental event sets a precedent for other federations to follow, paving the way for future achievements.

FENCING

He added, "Fencing is becoming increasingly popular in Asia and is garnering significant attention, similar to its global presence. Asian fencers are now a formidable presence in Olympic competitions. As an Asian federation, we aim to achieve even more success, particularly in the upcoming Olympic Games in Paris 2024."

The Board of Directors of the Kuwait Fencing Federation held a ceremony at the Abdul Hussein Marafi Hall in the Radisson Blu Hotel to honor Sheikh Salem Al-Qasimi, President of the Asian and Arab Fencing Federations. The tournament referees, technical and administrative committees, and volunteers were also recognized for their contributions. The ceremony concluded with a dinner party in honor of the attendees.

England seek to solidify top spot

COLOGNE, Germany, June 24, (AP): England plays Slovenia in its final Group C game at Euro 2024 on Tuesday. Negativity has surrounded Gareth Southgate's team following its unconvincing 1-1 draw with Denmark, but England still tops the group on four points and a draw will be enough to guarantee it advances to the round of 16.

England's 1-1 draw with Denmark has sparked heavy criticism of the team, despite it topping Group C and being likely to progress even if it loses to Slovenia. While England could still finish

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ish third, four points has always been enough to advance to the knockout phase of the Euros as one of the best third-placed teams.

England beat Serbia 1-0 in its opening game.

Winning the group would mean England faces one of the best third-placed teams from Group D, E or F.

Slovenia - on two points - goes into the game knowing it could finish top or bottom of the group, depending on results.

Slovenia has drawn against Denmark and Serbia in its other games in Group C.

All 26 players in England's squad trained on Monday, with speculation Luke Shaw could play for the first time at these Euros, having missed the end of the season with injury.

Southgate may decide to make a change in midfield after experimenting with defender Trent Alexander-Arnold in a holding role. Conor Gallagher could partner Declan Rice instead.

Harry Kane scored a record-extending 64th goal for England in the game against Denmark.

Slovenia is playing in only its second Euros and is still waiting for its first win.

Last-gasp Germany finish top of Group A as Hungary wreck Scotland last 16 hopes



Scotland's goalkeeper Angus Gunn, top, punches the ball over Hungary's Roland Sallai, bottom, during a Group A match between Scotland and Hungary at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Stuttgart, Germany. (AP)

Füllkrug denies impressive Switzerland victory

Youth team opens against Oman

Kuwait kick off West Asian Championship campaign

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: The Kuwait under-19 youth football team begins its journey in the West Asian Championship in Taif, Saudi Arabia, facing the Oman at 5:00 pm in the first group stage. Host Saudi Arabia and Yemen Group A lineup.

In a press conference, Croatian Blue coach Dario Pestic expressed his well-wishes for all teams participating in the tournament, highlighting the value of the experience for his team. Pestic emphasized that this championship marks an important step towards its goals, as it prepares for the Asian Cup qualifiers. He noted that these young players are being groomed to eventually represent the senior national team.

Pestic underscored the importance of the match against Oman, viewing it as a crucial opportunity for the team to perform well and gain valuable experience. Last week, Al-Azraq held a training camp in Egypt, where it played a friendly match against the Egyptian

group game.

Coach Murat Yakin suggested Switzerland had earned the right to make a higher-ranked opponent concerned about

Switzerland's goal was made in Bologna, the upstart Italian club that has qualified for its first Champions League entry next season.

Ndoye timed his run to meet a floated pass across the goalmouth from his Bologna teammate Remo Freuler. The attack began when Fabian Rieder, making his first start since the 2022 World Cup, won the ball in the German half and then fed Freuler.

A video review had denied Germany taking the lead in the 17th. Robert Andrich's long-range shot bounced up and over the dive of Sommer, but the VAR team alerted Italian referee Daniele Orsato to an earlier foul in the goalmouth by Jamal Musiala.

A dramatic stoppage-time goal saw Hungary beat Scotland 1-0 at the European Championship to wreck its opponent's hopes of reaching the knockout stage of a major tournament



The Kuwaiti players hold their final training session before their opener against Oman.

youth team, which ended in a 0-4 loss.

The Croatian coach called up 28 players for the tournament, including Youssef Sabah, Ahmed Khurshid, Jassim Shamouh, Abdullah Al-Ayoub, Abdullah Fares, Miqdad Safar, Abdul-

Wahab Jassim, Youssef Majed, Hussein Al-Kankouni, Talal Al-Matroud, Abdul-Wahab Al-Shalal, Jassim Matar, Abdul-Aziz Abdeen, Fadel Al-Sarraf, Ahmed Boodai, Mohammed Al-Omran, Turki Al-Yousef, Omar

for the first time in its history.

Late substitute Kevin Csoboth scored his first international goal in the 10th minute of stoppage time as Hungary secured third spot in Group

A, behind first-place Germany and Switzerland.

The match was overshadowed by a serious-looking injury to Barnabás Varga midway through the second



Switzerland's Brel Embolo, (left), fights for the ball with Germany's Jonathan Tah during a Group A match between Switzerland and Germany at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Frankfurt, Germany. (AP)

Al-Azmi, Montaser Suleiman, Bandar Qannas, Eid Talal, Thamer Al-Sulaili, Khaled Al-Kharqawi, Abdullah Al-Sarraf, Muhammad Arhama, Muhammad Al-Surai'i, Saud Al-Kandari and Jassim Al-Anazi.

The youth team is following a long-term preparatory program. After the West Asian Championship, it will return to Kuwait for local training before

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heading to Serbia on July 17 for an external camp lasting until August 6. This camp will help it prepare for the Asian Cup qualifiers, which Kuwait will host in September. It will compete in Group C against South Korea, the UAE, Lebanon, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

Following the Serbia camp, the team will participate in a four-team friendly tournament in Azerbaijan over two weeks before returning to Kuwait to play two trial matches before starting the Asian Cup qualifiers.

The Hungary forward was taken to hospital and will likely need an operation after fracturing several bones in his face.

Varga will take no part in the rest of the tournament should Hungary's three points be enough to reach the round of 16 at Euro 2024 as one of the four best third-place teams - which it might not know until Wednesday when the final round of group games finishes.

The whole stadium looked on in concern after Varga collided with Scotland goalkeeper Angus Gunn. His teammates held up blankets to shield the player as he was tended to by medical staff and both sets of fans applauded when Varga was stretchered off after a delay of around 10 minutes.

Germany topped the group after a late goal saw it rescue a 1-1 draw against Switzerland.

Scotland was eliminated after finishing last in the group, with just one point from a draw against Switzerland. It was humiliated 5-1 by Germany in the Euro 2024 opener.