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Opinion

Your Highness the Prime Minister, we want something after 40 years of much ado

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

YOUR HIGHNESS, there is no doubt that the fruits of the new era are beginning to blossom in the process of restoring Kuwait to its pioneering position; as His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah promised in his speeches.

This necessitates the Council of Ministers to be determined and active in getting rid of what the parliamentary tyranny committed in previous parliaments when they approved arbitrary legislation. They benefited from unrealistic interpretations of the Constitution, especially since it is multifaceted and has loopholes that allowed some parliamentarians to practice arbitrariness, which no other country in the world has ever witnessed.

Sometimes, they imposed laws that contradicted the social and cultural nature of Kuwait. They wanted to amend Article Two of the Constitution, as if the Islamization of laws was the salvation of the nation. In fact, they wanted to make Kuwait more like Afghanistan -- the Taliban, rather the 'radicalization' of society.

In reality, Kuwait is a moderate and tolerant Muslim country. This is the reason why they disrupted development projects to put pressure on those concerned to achieve their goals. From this standpoint, Kuwait declined in recent decades; when these people had the upper hand in the National Assembly.

Today, there is an opportunity to get out of the dilemma of development backwardness through many aspects that must be modernized as quickly as possible, without the need to rush things.

This includes getting rid of the problem of the actuarial deficit that the Public Institution for Social Security is suffering from, which indicates a deficit in the State. The Municipal Council did well by transferring land to the Ministry of Finance to allocate it for the institution.

Your Highness the Prime Minister, there is a proposal for the State to save a lot of money, and even increase revenues -- to allocate the land in the North for that institution and other parties, provided they invest it in development projects; whether warehouses, labor and industrial cities, or others to serve the area. Another condition is that they have a transportation license for transporting workers to their workplaces.

This is in addition to free trade zones in that region; similar to other Gulf countries, some of which have allocated more than 25 free trade zones.

On the other hand, the land obtained by the social security institution in the interior regions should be allocated for the implementation of entertainment and other projects managed by the youths of Kuwait; instead of the suffering they experience while waiting for employment in the public sector, which has become saturated. It has turned into disguised unemployment and a waste of public money without any benefit.

Also, in those areas, rental fee is reduced and paid by the tenant directly to the institution. Some of the plots can even be sold to investors and industrialists; thus, transforming the entire Kuwait into a workshop.

Your Highness the Prime Minister, there was a draft law on the northern economic zone in previous national assemblies. It languished in the drawers as

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NewsWatch

RIYADH: The first edition of the symposium on pathways to reduce carbon emissions in petroleum downstream industries kicked off in Riyadh on Tuesday.

The symposium is organized by the General Secretariat of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), in collaboration with the Saudi Ministry of Energy and Japan's Cooperation Center for Petroleum and Sustainable Energy (JCCP).

Inaugurating the symposium, Saudi Ministry of Energy official **Dr. Khaled Al-Mehaid** underscored significance of such a congregation, pointing out that thus far all expectations indicate that oil demand is to last for many decades.

Hydrocarbon sources must be consumed properly and in accordance with international regulations, asserted Al-Mehaid, adding that this could be executed via circular economy applications that rely on managing and conserving energy and promoting consumption of renewable energy sources. (KUNA)

ISTANBUL: The Turkish Coast Guard Command rescued on Tuesday 50 migrants who were pushed back into Turkish waters by Greek forces.

Teams were dispatched to the Menderes district of **Izmir on Turkey's Aegean coast** after detecting irregular migrants in a rubber boat, the Coast Guard Command was quoted by Turkish News Agency (Anadolu) as saying.

The coastguards rescued 19 migrants, including three children, from a life raft that was pushed back into Turkish territorial waters. (KUNA)

Kuwait water usage jumps by 45 mln imperial gallons



An oil platform operated by Kuwait Gulf Oil Company, a vital component of the nation's energy sector.

Kuwait Gulf Oil Company photo

'Conservation vital to protect water reserves, budget'

By Mohammed Ghanem and Marwa Al-Bahrawi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, June 25: Statistics issued by the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy revealed a 45 million imperial gallon increase in water consumption which reached 505.701 million imperial gallons compared to the production of 460.491 million imperial gallons on Monday.

Sources from the ministry attributed the increase in consumption over production to the rising temperatures, indicating that the strategic water reserve reached 3,649.378

million imperial gallons. Despite this, it is still necessary to rationalize the consumption of water similar to electricity in order to avoid withdrawing from the strategic water reserve and to save millions spent to desalinate water from the sea, sources added.

In a related context and in spite of the high temperatures that exceeded 50 degrees Celsius, the electricity load index stabilized in the green zone yesterday; recording 16,021 megawatts at peak time for the second day in a row after the entry of nearly 1,000 megawatts from South Zour Station after the completion of the necessary maintenance works.

Sources explained that the stability of the index in the green zone does not mean the ministry will not resort to programmed cuts if it needs to do so due to any emergency or increase in consumption rates. Therefore, it is necessary to continue to follow rationalization mechanisms

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Philippine congressman lauds Kuwait gov't

'Receiving Filipino domestic workers applications begins'

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, June 25: Kuwait Union of Domestic Labor Offices (KUDLO) Chairman Khaled Al-Dakhnan has confirmed the start of receiving applications for the recruitment of domestic workers from the Philippines.

Al-Dakhnan made the announcement shortly after Kuwait and the Philippines reached an agreement to lift the ban on Filipinos, and allow the issuance of all types of entry and work visas for them.

He said the union will visit the Philippines next month to strengthen coordination with recruitment agencies there regarding the recruitment mechanisms. "We hope to open more countries for the recruitment of domestic workers to increase the number of offices, so the citizens have more options," he added.



Salo

On the recruitment of workers from Ethiopia, Al-Dakhnan clarified that recruitment has not started since the signing of the agreement. "We are waiting for the visa ban to be lifted urgently to begin the recruitment of Ethiopian workers," he stated.

He thanked First Deputy Premier, Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousuf Al-Sabah for the efforts he exerted in the resumption of the recruitment of Filipino workers.

In a related development, KABAYAN Partylist Representative Ron P. Salo lauded the Kuwaiti Government, the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) headed by Secretary Hans Cacdac, and the Philippine Embassy officials led by Ambassador to Kuwait Jose Cabrera III for their efforts in resolving the labor issue that has greatly affected both Filipino workers and their employers in Kuwait.

The lifting of the ban reflects the commitment of Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf to the Philippine delegation led by Salo when the latter had a courtesy call with Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf on June 13 during his Middle East consultation with the Filipino workers. Ambassador

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Day by Day

A SYRIAN national who has been implicated in a money laundering scheme involving approximately KD 120 million (roughly half a billion dollars) has been arrested.

This incident suggests he may not be acting alone, as indications point to the possible involvement of others who may soon be uncovered.

The authorities should not limit their oversight to just exchange offices, and many other sectors require

vigilant monitoring and thorough auditing.

This includes businesses involved in ticket preservation, private aircraft leasing, and various other industries. It's possible that more individuals of Syrian origin, possibly holding dual citizenship, could be implicated in similar activities.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Amir condolences Jordan over aid trucks' accident

Kuwait slams attacks on hospitals, UN agencies

VIENNA, June 25, (Agencies): Kuwait strongly condemned the ongoing attacks targeting facilities, places of worship, hospitals and buildings affiliated with the United Nations (UN), including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in Palestine.

This came in a statement by Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva, Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen, during a meeting of the UN Advisory Committee and the UNRWA.

Ambassador Al-Hayen reaffirmed Kuwait's steadfast and principled commitment to supporting the Palestinian cause, expressing Kuwait's aspiration to enhance the partnership with the UNRWA on all fronts.

Amassador Al-Hayen also emphasized Kuwait's support for the noble and significant role that UNRWA played in providing vital humanitarian aid to the people who were affected in occupied Palestine, as well as in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

The Kuwaiti ambassador pointed out that this commitment was clearly reflected through Kuwait's support for various initiative in this regard, the latest being the political initiative launched in collaboration with Jordan and Slovenia, aimed at strengthening countries' commitment to UNRWA.

Ambassador Al-Hayen confirmed that Kuwait would spare no efforts in supporting UN agencies, especially the UNRWA, having contributed more than USD 300 million over the past decade, with the latest contribution being approximately USD 30 million to support the agency's relief efforts.

He added that Kuwait urged the international community to increase financial and political support for



Palestinians mourn for their relative girl killed in an Israeli bombardment on a residential building owned by the Nasr family in the Maghazi refugee camp outside the morgue of al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al Balah, central Gaza Strip, Tuesday, June 25, 2024. (AP)

UNRWA - particularly in the current circumstances - to help the agency fulfill its mandated role.

In his speech, Ambassador Al-Hayen addressed the continued brutal and blatant aggression by the Israeli occupation in Gaza and Rafah, which can only be described as a violation of all international and humanitarian laws.

He stated that this ongoing aggression has resulted in more than 37,000 martyrs and targeted more than 88 percent of schools, with the latest being Al-Sardi school on June 6, 2024, and destroyed nearly 435 health facilities and more than 260 places of worship.

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Kuwait boosts health emergency preparedness

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 25: Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Affairs at the Ministry of Health Dr. Munther Al-Hasawi has affirmed that the ministry is focusing on preparations for health emergencies by monitoring and responding to any health emergency - whether related to viruses, bac-

teria, parasites, fungi, biological, chemical, environmental, radiological or nuclear situations.

Al-Hasawi made the statement on the sidelines of the launching of the course entitled, "Building Medical Capacities to Respond to Radiation Incidents," held at the theater of Kuwait Institute for Medical Specializations in cooperation with the European Union, United Nations, Center of Excellence and Gulf Cooperation Coun-

cil (GCC).

He said the ministry has had a number of achievements in this field, as evident in the establishment of the Kuwait Poison Control Center and Kuwait Center for Disease Control or Kuwait CDC that was inaugurated a few weeks ago, as well as the activation of training and development in the Radiation Protection Department.

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Prayer Timings

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

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-42 km/h with a chance for rising dust over open areas.

Weather

By Night: Hot to rather hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-38 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec		
Kuwait City	48	36	Kuwait Airport	49
			Abdaly	49
			Jahra	51
			Salmyyah	43
			Nuwaisib	46
			Wafra	48
				36
				28
				35
				35
				31
				30

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



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives citizens at the Al-Sabah Family Diwan.



KUNA photos

HH Crown Prince welcomes citizens to Al-Sabah Family Diwan

KUWAIT CITY, June 25, (KUNA): In a friendly and welcoming atmosphere, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received a number of citizens in Al-Sabah Family Di-

wan at Bayan Palace on Monday.

The reception reflected the one-family spirit in Kuwaiti society that has been renowned for fraternal coherence and communication between the leadership and people.

Panel sets out comprehensive guide for halal food regulation

National Halal Food Committee holds inaugural meeting

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 25: The inaugural meeting of the National Halal Food Committee yielded several significant recommendations and decisions aimed at regulating the importation and certification of halal food in Kuwait.

The following are the details: Preparation of Importation Guide -- The Standards and Metrology Department at the Food and Nutrition Public Authority was tasked with initiating the preparation of documents and arrangements to create a comprehensive guide outlining the conditions and requirements for importing halal food into Kuwait. This guide will serve as a reference for all importers to ensure compliance with halal standards.

Professional Certification for Halal Slaughtered Animals -- The committee proposed the development of a professional certificate specifically for halal slaughtered animals. This certification aims to standardize and ensure the adherence to halal slaughtering practices, meeting Islamic dietary laws.

Terms

Terms of Reference and Tasks -- The meeting defined the terms of reference and tasks of the National Halal Food Committee. These include technical and administrative oversight by the Food and Nutrition General Authority concerning halal foods, as well as the establishment and revision of mechanisms for appointing Islamic bodies authorized to issue halal certificates and halal slaughter certificates. Accreditation and Certification -- There was an emphasis on enhancing accreditation activities for certification bodies involved in halal certification. The committee plans to participate in inspection visits to verify compliance with relevant halal requirements.

Development and Awareness Programs -- Proposals were made to develop programs aimed at raising awareness, conducting research, and advancing initiatives related to the committee's objectives. This includes following up on legal directives, legislation, and standard specifications relevant to halal food.

Overall, the decisions taken in the first meeting of the National Halal Food Committee reflect a concerted effort to regulate and enhance the importation and certification processes of halal food in Kuwait.

These measures are intended to ensure that imported halal products meet strict standards and are compliant with Islamic dietary laws, thereby safeguarding consumer interests and promoting transparency in the market.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting.

Other Voices

Muhammad Musaed and the crimes of citizens

By Ahmed alsarraf

The late colleague Muhammad Musaed Al-Saleh, in an old article whose meaning I still remember, expressed his astonishment at the keenness of National Assembly legislators to be strict, sometimes exaggerated, in stipulating very severe punishments for some crimes, which citizens rarely committed, and he demanded that the sentences be more rational.

Soon, citizens will commit the same crimes, which were once limited to others, and among them may be the children and grandchildren of the legislators themselves!

"Abu Talal" was prophesying, but no one then, nor now, usually listens to what is written by the pens of sincere writers. In the recent period, the sentences issued to citizens have increased, which is a characteristic that "disappoints" them, and they have become major competitors to others, especially in committing serious crimes.

Only recently was the Criminal Security Sector able to arrest 4 people, working for the Ministry of Education, and 6 others, who ran accounts on social media sites that leaked high school exams.

As it became clear from the events of the worst fire disaster that occurred in Kuwait, there were citizens involved in it.

The Criminal Court also recently sentenced the president of a sports club to 6 months in prison, for his role in challenging the integrity of a member of the judiciary.

This was preceded by the issuance of an appeals ruling upholding the first-instance verdict, sentencing two citizens to death for their role in the killing of a third citizen.

This was preceded by a death sentence upheld by the Court of Appeal against a family member for killing a citizen. A final Cassation Court ruling was also issued against a former Minister of Social Affairs, the Undersecretary of the Ministry itself, and the President of the Federation of Cooperatives, to varying prison terms, for their role in stealing public money.

Five Kuwaitis male and female were also arrested at the airport, with one million Lyrica capsules in their possession, and two of the accused worked for the Customs, the agency entrusted

with detecting drug smuggling!

Let us not forget in this haste that those who facilitated, assisted, and participated in the forging of nationality certificates and disability certificates. They were all dishonest citizens. All of this is the tip of the iceberg, as laxity was comprehensive, overwhelming, and unfortunately continued for a long time.

While this article was being written, there came the news that a Criminal Court verdict put behind bars a Kuwaiti doctor working for a government hospital for 5 years with work and enforceable labor, obliging him to return his salaries and fining him twice the amount, bringing the total amount he must pay to one million dinars.

It is reported that he was receiving full salaries for a period of 15 years undeservedly, so where was the oversight of other citizens regarding his violations throughout this period?

The prosecution also ordered the imprisonment of 27 people, including 6 Kuwaiti citizens, who were able to launder money worth more than 120 million dinars, and the majority of that money belonged to drug dealers, whose trade destroyed the lives of tens of thousands!

What we often need is not to tighten penalties, in all cases, but to implement laws, prevent exceptions, issue laws to fill loopholes, amend old ones, and be firm, be speedy, and transparent in application.

As for what was stated by the Minister of Education that he would resort to striking those who failed the tests with an iron hand, this is not permissible in the state of law.

Proper procedure requires, in any incident or crime, putting all the facts and data before the prosecution, investigation committees, and the judiciary, to issue a fair ruling, and not rushing to impose punishment on the weak, and leaving the strong aside, as happened in the incident of expelling thousands of poor workers from their apartments, under the pretext of their violations of the laws, turning a blind eye to the violator.

How wonderful it was to read the text of the Interior Ministry's announcement, which prohibited the operation of delivery motorized bicycles, from 11 am until 4 pm, regardless of the opinion of some about it, and which stipulated that non-compliant people would be subject to "violation of the conditions of the permit," that is, within the law, without exaggeration.

□ □ □

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HH the Amir congratulates Mozambique on Nat'l Day

KUWAIT CITY, June 25, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday a congratulatory cable to the President of the Republic of Mozambique, Filipe Nyusi, on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished President Filipe Nyusi good health and wellbeing and for Mozambique more progress and prosperity.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown

Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to President Filipe Nyusi, on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished President Filipe Nyusi good health and wellbeing.

Also, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to President Filipe Nyusi, on his country's National Day.



KUNA photo

Kuwait's First Deputy PM, Defense Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad receives UAE Ambassador Dr Al-Neyadi.

Kuwait, UAE eye closer security co-op

Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah held talks on Tuesday with UAE Ambassador Dr. Matar Al-Neyadi, focusing on efforts to strengthen security cooperation between the two Gulf Arab neighbors.

The Kuwaiti minister praised the

"depth" of relations with Abu Dhabi, saying such ties are "brotherly and historic."

The UAE diplomat, alongside a delegation accompanying him, was appreciative of the Kuwaiti hospitality, saying the matters discussed aimed to propel bilateral cooperation to greater levels, according to an interior ministry statement. (KUNA)



KUNA photo

Kuwait Ambassador to India Al-Shemali meets with Indian Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar.

Kuwaiti envoy stresses efforts to consolidate ties with India

NEW DELHI, June 25, (KUNA): Kuwait Ambassador to India Meshal Al-Shemali called on Tuesday for intensifying efforts to deepen existing relations between India and Kuwait and diversify them into new fields.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) after meeting with Indian Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar in New Delhi, the ambassador said that during their talks, bilateral issues of mutual interest and ways to enhance cooperation mechanism between the two countries in economic, political, cultural and social fields came up for discussion.

The ambassador also congratulated Jaishankar on his reappointment to the post of Minister of External Affairs following the parliamentary elections and subsequent formation of the new government.

He stressed that the days to come will witness visits by officials of the two coun-

tries at different levels, which will include political consultations and joint ministerial meetings covering various sectors.

He also stressed the importance of strengthening trade relations, which have witnessed significant development recently, as the total bilateral trade with Kuwait during the past fiscal year amounted to USD 10.47 billion marking an annual growth of 34.7 percent. Kuwait is the ninth largest oil suppliers to India meeting 3 percent of India's total energy needs.

He quoted the Indian minister as extending his sincere thanks to the leadership and government of Kuwait for their efforts and interest in supporting Indians in the background of the tragic fire accident that occurred at a residential area, killing approximately 49 people from the Indian community residing in Kuwait.

Kuwait collects over 85,000 blood bags, 8,000 bags of platelets in 2023: minister

Kuwaitis make up 55% of donors

KUWAIT CITY, June 25, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi, announced on Monday that more than 85,000 bags of blood and 8,000 bags of platelets will be collected during the year 2023, stressing the keenness to "obtain safe blood with the best modern scientific methods to ensure the provision of high-quality blood and cell therapy."

This came in a speech delivered by the Minister of Health during the Blood Transfusion Services Department's celebration on the occasion of World Blood Donor Day, in honor of distinguished donors, distinguished entities in organizing specialized campaigns, and entities with social responsibility.

Minister Al-Awadhi explained that citizens constituted 55 percent of blood donors, compared to 45 percent for residents of 75 nationalities.

He pointed out that the Ministry of Health, represented by the Department of Blood Transfusion Services, is seeking to obtain international recognition from the American Blood Banks Organization, noting that "the Kuwaiti Blood Bank is the only Arab bank to obtain recognition in applying four standards: (reference laboratories),



Kuwaiti Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi poses for a group photo during World Blood Donor Day celebration.

(blood transfusion), (blood donation), and (genetic laboratories)."

He praised the fruitful efforts and joint cooperation between the Ministry of Health and governmental and pri-

vate bodies and institutions that play an essential and effective role in the success of blood donation campaigns that contribute to increasing the strategic reserve, considering blood dona-

tion "a humanitarian mission in which the entire community participates."

The Minister of Health extended his sincere thanks and great gratitude to every group that voluntarily donated blood without compensation in order to contribute to saving lives and helping patients in need, appreciating the role of the Blood Bank in supporting the strategic blood reserve.

For her part, Director of the Blood Transfusion Services Department, Dr. Reem Al-Radwan, said in a speech that the State of Kuwait participates every June in the World Health Organization's celebrations of World Blood Donor Day, which is held this year under the slogan "20 years of celebrating giving ... Thank you to blood donors."



Part of honoring blood donors.



Photos by Mohammad Morsi

Broader cooperation

Governor of Capital hosts Cyprus and China envoys

KUWAIT CITY, June 25: Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali, the Governor of the Capital, held meetings

with two distinguished diplomats at his office in the Governor's General Office, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

First, he welcomed Michael Ma Fros, the Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to Kuwait. Their discussions focused on enhancing bilateral relations between Kuwait and Cyprus, exploring avenues for deeper cooperation.

Later in the day, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem received Zhang Jianwei, the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Kuwait. The meeting centered on mutual interests and ways to strengthen ties between Kuwait and Beijing to advance shared priorities and mutual benefits.

Ambassador Jianwei expressed gratitude for Kuwait's warm hospitality towards the Chinese diplomatic mission, emphasizing the importance of Kuwait-China relations. In response, Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali thanked Ambassador Jianwei for his visit and appreciated China's efforts to enhance cooperation with Kuwait.

These meetings underscore Kuwait's commitment to fostering diplomatic relations with both Cyprus and China, aiming for broader cooperation and mutual prosperity.

KFAED participates in ACG meet

KUWAIT CITY, June 25: The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) participated in the 2024 regular meeting of the heads of institutions of the Arab Coordination Group (ACG), reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The meeting, led by the Fund's Acting Director General Waleed Al-Bahar took place in Vienna, Austria.

In a statement, the Fund highlighted discussions on various shared interests and methods to enhance the group's operations in addressing pressing economic and social chal-

lenges.

Key topics included climate change and food security in partner countries. The group reaffirmed its commitment to advancing collaborative efforts and harmonizing activities to align with global development standards, aiming to maximize the impact of projects funded in developing nations.

Emphasis was placed on fostering joint initiatives to tackle climate change impacts, with member contributions geared towards supporting sustainable development initiatives.

Al-Yahya's leadership hailed

Iran's Ambassador commends Kuwait's vital role in Asian Cooperation Dialogue

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 25: Iran's Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Mohammad Totonji, highlighted Kuwait's pivotal role in the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), underscoring its support since the forum's inception and its hosting of the general secretariat.

Speaking on the occasion of the forum in Tehran, Totonji commemorated the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad for his constructive contributions to prior forum activities. He emphasized the significance of Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya's recent visit to Tehran to lead the Kuwaiti delegation, affirming the forum's importance in charting Asia's future path.

Totonji described the ACD as an intergovernmental organization established on June 18, 2002, headquartered in Kuwait, and encompassing 35 Asian countries, including Kuwait and Iran.

The forum, initiated by the Thai Prime Minister, aims to bolster cultural, economic, and social cooperation across Asia, uniting nations to enhance regional stature globally by leveraging strengths and opportunities, reducing poverty, and elevating living standards.

Over the years, the ACD has made significant strides in developing financial and economic markets, enhancing competitiveness, and achieving tangible successes.

Iran, a key member state, has consistently supported the ACD's objectives, collaborating with other nations to bolster its framework.

Totonji noted that Iran assumed the forum's presidency in September 2023, with a theme centered on modern technologies fostering Asian connectivity and strength. The cities of Yazd and Isfahan hosted significant events in 2024, including forums on tourism and commerce chambers, respectively.



HE Mohammad Totonji, Iran's Ambassador to Kuwait.

New circular issued

Public Authority retracts online teaching decision

KUWAIT CITY, June 25: Just 24 hours after initially approving "online" teaching for the next two weeks, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training swiftly retracted its decision in response to widespread objections from faculty members concerned about its impact on educational quality, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Dr. Hassan Al-Fajjam, the Director of the authority, issued a new circular endorsing in-person classes for the remainder of the summer semester.

The updated circular cited feedback from faculty members and technical challenges encountered on the first day of online classes, exacerbated by the short summer semester.

Emphasizing student interests and after consultations with the Ministry of Electricity, the Authority reinstated in-person teaching. The directive stressed the need for energy conservation during working hours to support national efforts in preserving the electrical system.

CAPT announces bidding process for Holy Qur'an printing complex

KUWAIT CITY, June 25: The announcement by the Central Agency for Public Tenders outlines the upcoming tender process for the establishment, completion, and maintenance of the Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Complex for the Printing of the Noble Qur'an, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Here are the key points from the announcement:

Project Details -- The project involves establishing, completing, and maintaining the Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Complex; the complex will be located in the Subhan area on a plot of land measuring 27.2 thousand square meters.

The building itself will cover approximately 44.72 thousand square meters. The complex will house printing halls, their annexes, administrative offices, and associated services.

Initiation and Design -- The Ministry

of Works initiated legal procedures to propose the project. The project design has been completed, indicating readiness for implementation.

Tender Process -- The Central Agency for Public Tenders announced that bids for the project will be accepted starting July 23.

The tender will follow the procedures and frameworks outlined in the Public Tenders Law.

Specialized companies will be invited to participate in the bidding process.

Purpose -- The establishment of the complex aims to facilitate the printing of the Noble Qur'an, underscoring its cultural and religious significance.

The tender process is set to begin shortly for the construction of the Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Complex, which will play a pivotal role in the printing and preservation of the Noble Qur'an.

JULY

Room Promotion

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

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

World News Roundup

Europe

ICC issues warrants

India's Modi to 'visit' Russia, Kremlin says

MOSCOW, June 25, (AP): Indian Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** is scheduled to visit Russia, the Kremlin announced Tuesday.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's foreign affairs aide, Yuri Ushakov, said that Modi's visit was being prepared but didn't announce a date, saying that it will be done jointly later.

Russia has had strong ties with India since the Cold War, and New Delhi's importance as a key trade partner for Moscow has grown since the Kremlin sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022. China and India have become key buyers of Russian oil following sanctions imposed by the US and its allies that shut most Western markets for Russian exports.

Under Modi's leadership, India has avoided condemning Russia's action in Ukraine while emphasizing the need for a peaceful settlement.

Modi's visit follows his reelection for a third straight term. He last visited Russia in 2019 for an economic forum in the far eastern port of Vladivostok. He last traveled to Moscow in 2015.



Modi

ICC issues warrants for Russia officials: The International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants Tuesday for Russia's former defense minister and its military chief of staff for attacking civilian targets in Ukraine.

The court is accusing former Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and chief of staff Gen Valery Gerasimov of war crimes and the crime against humanity of inhumane acts.

The court said in a statement that warrants were issued because judges considered there were reasonable grounds to believe that the men are responsible for "missile strikes carried out by the Russian armed forces against the Ukrainian electric infrastructure" from Oct. 10, 2022 until at least March 9, 2023.

"During this time-frame, a large number of strikes against numerous electric power plants and sub-stations were carried out by the Russian armed forces in multiple locations in Ukraine," the court added.

Last year, the court also issued a warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin, accusing him of personal responsibility for the abductions of children from Ukraine.

Ukraine set to launch EU talks: Ukraine is set to officially launch membership talks with the European Union on Tuesday in what President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has described as a dream come true for his country's citizens more than two years into a war with Russia.

Deputy prime minister for European and Euro-Atlantic integration Olga Stefanishyna will lead Ukraine's delegation at an intergovernmental conference in Luxembourg marking the official opening of talks to align the country's laws and standards with those of the 27-nation bloc.

A few hours later, Moldova, which applied to join the EU after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and was granted candidate status four months later, will take part in a separate intergovernmental conference to officially launch its own accession process.

Ukraine, too, sought candidate status in the days after Russia invaded. By June 2022, EU leaders had quickly made it official. But things have moved more slowly since then and membership, if it comes, might be years away.

Turkey's accession talks have lasted almost two decades without result.

Still, starting the talks process is sending another strong signal of solidarity with Ukraine beyond the billions in financial support the EU has provided. It's also a show of support for Moldova, which has faced its own challenges with Russia.

Tuesday's intergovernmental conference marks the launch of talks but the negotiations themselves are unlikely to begin for a few months.

Candidate countries must bring their laws and standards into line with those of the EU in 35 policy areas, known as chapters, ranging from the free movement of goods through fisheries, taxation, energy and the environment to judicial rights and security.

Macron warns voters: French President Emmanuel Macron is warning voters against choosing the far right or the hard left, asserting that their divisive policies increase the risk of political "conflict and civil war," ahead of Sunday's first round of crucial parliamentary elections.

Macron said both the far-right National Rally and hard-left France Unbowed bring bad responses to "real problems" because they "respond in some way by increasing conflict and civil war."

Macron called snap elections following the defeat of his centrist alliance at European Union elections earlier this month. Voters will choose lawmakers for the National Assembly in two rounds on June 30 and July 7.

"When you are fed up with everything, when daily life is hard, you can be tempted by extremes that have quicker solutions. But the solution will never lie in rejecting others," Macron said.

He asserted that the National Rally's policies, detailed by the party's president Jordan Bardella on Monday, would "lead to civil war" and are "an impoverishment program, because it's several thousand euros in hidden taxes every day and an impossibility of paying pensions and paying employees well."

Antisemitic incidents in Germany: A group that tracks antisemitism in Germany said Tuesday it recorded an overall increase of more than 80% in incidents last year, with well over half of the total coming after Hamas-led militants attacked Israel in early October.

The RIAS group said it recorded 4,782 antisemitic incidents in 2023, ranging from comments to attacks. That compared with 2,616 in 2022.

The group said that 2,787 of last year's recorded incidents - more than the previous year's total - took place after the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas on Israel, which triggered the ongoing war in Gaza.

The incidents RIAS documented last year included seven cases classified as "extreme violence," which did or could endanger lives or result in severe injury, 121 attacks, 329 cases of targeted damage to property, 183 threats and 4,060 incidences of offensive behavior.



Mounted soldiers pass Buckingham Palace on their way to Horse Guards Parade as they take part in the ceremonial welcome for the state visit of the Japanese Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako to Britain in London on June 25. Inset: From left, Japan's Empress Masako, Britain's King Charles III and Japan's Emperor Naruhito pose for a family photo at the ceremonial welcome for their state visit to Britain, at Horse Guards Parade. (AP)

Britain's King Charles III welcomes visiting Japanese emperor, empress

King Charles III welcomed the Japanese emperor and empress for a state visit that began on Tuesday, offering the best in pomp and circumstance as the UK seeks to bolster its role as the most influential European nation in the Indo-Pacific region.

Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako are to attend a banquet hosted by the king, lay a wreath at Westminster Abbey and tour one of Britain's premier

biomedical research institutes. But the emperor began this week's trip by visiting a site that has special meaning: The Thames Barrier.

The retractable flood control gates on the River Thames seemed a natural destination for a royal long interested in the waterway that runs through the heart of London. Naruhito studied 18th-century commerce on the river as a graduate student at the University of

Oxford some 40 years ago.

He chronicled the interest in his memoir "The Thames and I," together with his fondness for Britain and its people. The future emperor got a chance to experience life outside the palace walls. Tuesday's ceremonial welcome seemed warm. Charles and Naruhito, who have known each other for years, settled into the back of a carriage and chatted like old chums. (AP)

Politics

Burgum backs CO2 pipeline favored by Biden

Trump changes 'tone' before CNN debate

NEW YORK, June 25, (AP): After months of casting President Joe Biden as a shell of a man incapable of putting two sentences together, Donald Trump has changed his tune days before their first debate.

"I assume he's going to be somebody that will be a worthy debater," the former president and presumptive Republican nominee said in an appearance on "The All-In" podcast last week.

Imitates

The changed rhetoric marks a dramatic shift from how Trump typically describes the man he will face in a rematch this November. At his rallies and in speeches, Trump typically casts the Democratic incumbent as a "low-IQ individual" who is "the worst, most incompetent, and most corrupt president" in the nation's history, and often imitates Biden appearing lost on stage.

The effort to adjust expectations ahead of Thursday's matchup in Atlanta comes amid concerns from some in his party that Trump has set the bar so low for Biden that he is sure to exceed it. And it underscores the stakes for both men in a race that has appeared largely static for months.

Millions are expected to tune in Thursday, offering a rare opportunity for both sides to try to gain momentum in a contest that will likely be decided by a small fraction of voters in a handful of battleground states.

Trump - who has never admitted he lost fairly to Biden in 2020 and continues to spread false and unproven theories about election fraud - may also be setting up a series of excuses in case he is outperformed by Biden.

"Maybe I'm better off losing the debate," Trump quipped in an interview

US judges temporarily halt much of Biden student debt forgiveness plan

TOPEKA, Kan., June 25, (AP): Federal judges in Kansas and Missouri on Monday together blocked much of a Biden administration student loan repayment plan that provides a faster path to cancellation and lower monthly payments for millions of borrowers.

The judges' rulings prevent the US Department of Education from helping many of the intended borrowers ease their loan repayment burdens going forward under a rule set to go into effect July 1. The decisions do not cancel assistance already provided to borrowers.

In Kansas, US District Judge Daniel Crabtree ruled in a lawsuit filed by the state's attorney general, Kris Kobach, on behalf of his state and 10 others. In his ruling, Crabtree allowed parts of the program

that allow students who borrowed \$12,000 or less to have the rest of their loans forgiven if they make 10 years' worth of payments, instead of the standard 25.

But Crabtree said that the Department of Education won't be allowed to implement parts of the program meant to help students who had larger loans and could have their monthly payments lowered and their required payment period reduced from 25 years to 20 years.

In Missouri, US District Judge John Ross' order applies to different parts of the program than Crabtree's. His order says that the US Department of Education cannot forgive loan balances going forward. He said the department still could lower monthly payments.

with Real America's Voice earlier this month. "I'll make sure he stays. I'll lose the debate on purpose, maybe I'll do something like that."

Also:

BISMARCK, ND: North Dakota Gov Doug Burgum is one of Donald Trump's most visible and vocal backers, sprinting around the country to drum up support for the former president's comeback bid while auditioning to be his running mate.

Far from the glare of the campaign trail, however, Burgum is wrestling

with a mammoth carbon dioxide pipeline project in his home state. The \$5.5 billion venture has split North Dakota and left him straddling an awkward political divide as Trump and President Joe Biden offer voters starkly different visions about how to deal with climate change.

A Republican little known outside North Dakota, Burgum is a serious contender to be Trump's vice-presidential choice. The two-term governor has stood out in the narrowing field of choices due to his executive experience and business savvy.

with a full crew of 22 and six salvage experts, the US Coast Guard said in a news release.

The Coast Guard is overseeing the voyage and providing a 500-yard safety zone around the Dali during its trip. (AP)

Team combs for remains: As residents return to a fire-ravaged village in the mountains of southern New Mexico, the mayor on Monday warned them that some parts of Ruidoso remain off limits as special search and rescue teams comb the charred rubble

along the hardest-hit streets.

They're looking for the remains of people who are still unaccounted for after the South Fork and Salt fires ripped through the area just days ago, killing at least two people, forcing thousands to flee and destroying more than 1,500 structures.

Mayor Lynn Crawford put the number of missing at 29. Village officials said in a Sunday night update that the search teams have identified potential additional fatalities, but any confirmation will have to be made by investigators. (AP)

Hiker found safe: A hiker missing for 10 days was found safe in the mountains in Northern California, authorities said.

Lukas McClish, 34, left the rural community of Boulder Creek for a hike on June 11 and was reported missing June 16, according to the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office.

Witnesses heard someone yelling for help on Thursday and searchers were able to locate McClish with drones in the Big Basin Redwoods State Park, more than 7 miles (11 kilometers) from Boulder Creek, the sheriff's office said.

Photos show a dirt-covered McClish embracing family members in an emotional reunion. He was not injured during the 10 days and told KGO-TV he was able to drink water during the ordeal. He said he got lost during what was supposed to be a three-hour hike and couldn't recognize some landmarks destroyed by fires. (AP)



Laurie Jones, a full-time resident of Ruidoso, holds her dog Scout as she waits in her truck for re-entry into the fire-ravaged village on June 24. As residents return to a fire-ravaged village in the mountains of southern New Mexico, the mayor warned them that some parts of Ruidoso remain off limits as special search and rescue teams comb the charred rubble along the hardest-hit streets. (AP)



Crawford



Murthy

America

'Gun violence public health crisis': The US surgeon general on Tuesday declared gun violence a public health crisis, driven by the fast-growing number of injuries and deaths involving firearms in the country.

The advisory issued by Dr Vivek Murthy, the nation's top doctor, came as the US grappled with another summer weekend marked by mass shootings that left dozens of people dead or wounded.

"People want to be able to walk through their neighborhoods and be safe," Murthy told The Associated Press in a phone interview. "America should be a place where all of us can go to school, go to work, go to the supermarket, go to our house of worship, without having to worry that that's going to put our life at risk."

To drive down gun deaths, Murthy calls on the US to ban automatic rifles, introduce universal background checks for purchasing guns, regulate the industry, pass laws that would restrict their use in public spaces and penalize people who fail to safely store their weapons.

None of those suggestions can be implemented nationwide without legislation passed by Congress, which typically recoils at gun control measures. Some state legislatures, however, have enacted or may consider some of the surgeon general's proposals. (AP)

Cargo ship leaves Baltimore: The cargo ship Dali headed out of Baltimore for Virginia on Monday, nearly three months after it lost power and crashed into one of the Francis Scott Key bridge's supporting columns and caused the bridge to collapse.

The 984-foot Dali started moving shortly before 8:30 am with four tugboats. The Dali was sailing under its own power



Denmark's Crown Prince Christian, (third from left), pose with his parents King Frederik, third from right, Queen Mary, (second from left), and his siblings, (from left), Prince Vincent, Princess Josephine and Princess Isabella after completing his final exam and becoming a graduate from Ordrup Gymnasium, High School, in Copenhagen, Denmark on June 24. (AP)

Dr. Saad Al-Nahedh elected an independent member

Zain holds Ordinary General Assembly, elects Al-Kharafi as Board Vice Chairman



Some of the attendees of the Ordinary General Assembly.



Bader Al-Kharafi



Dr. Saad Al-Nahedh

KUWAIT CITY, June 25: Zain Group today held an Ordinary General Assembly at its headquarters with a quorum of 76%, whereby the assembly's proceedings witnessed the addition of a new item, related to electing a member of the Board of Directors to complete the term of the board member who had submitted his resignation previously.

The Ordinary General Assembly agreed to include this new item on the agenda and accordingly, Zain Chairman Osamah Al Furaih, opened the floor for voting on this item, along with the main item previously included on the Assembly's agenda. The main item was

to elect an additional member of the Board of Directors, as a second independent director, in order to fulfill regulatory requirements.

The Ordinary General Assembly elected Oztel Holdings SBC Limited as a complementary member of the Board of Directors, which in turn named Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi as its representative on the Board of Directors. The Ordinary General Assembly also elected Dr. Saad Ahmed Al-Nahedh as an independent member of the Board of Directors, and Fahd Abdel Al-Rahman Al-Mukhaizeem as an alternate board member.

After the Assembly, Zain Group's Board of Directors met,



Zain Kuwait HQ building.

and the Board elected Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi as Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors.

On May 22, 2024, the Group held an Extraordinary General Assembly that witnessed the Assembly's approval of the Board of Directors' recommendation to approve the amendment of Article 15 of the Company's Articles of Association in accordance with the requirements of Article 2-2 of Module Fifteen "Corporate Governance".

Article 15 now stipulates: "The Company shall be managed by a Board of Directors consisting of ten members. Each shareholder, whether a natural person or a legal

entity, may appoint representatives to the board in proportion to the shares that they own. The General Assembly shall elect the remaining members by secret ballot. The number of Board members appointed in said manner shall be deducted from the aggregate number of Board members that are elected. Shareholders having representatives on the Board of Directors may not participate with other shareholders in electing the remaining members of the Board of Directors, except in relation to those shares that exceed the percentage used for the appointment of their representatives to the Board of Directors.

Concern mounts about attacks

EU targeting Russia's LNG ghost fleet with sanctions

BRUSSELS, June 25, (AP) - The European Union on Monday slapped new sanctions on Russia over its war on Ukraine, targeting Moscow's shadow fleet of tankers moving liquefied natural gas through Europe as well as several companies.

At a meeting in Luxembourg, where the sanctions were endorsed, EU foreign ministers also agreed on new financial support to help Ukraine defend itself. Some expressed concern about a rise in hybrid attacks by Russia - including allegations of election interference, cyber-attacks and sabotage.

In an effort to push Russia into using more costly routes for energy purposes, the ministers said in a statement, the EU will "forbid reloading services of Russian LNG in EU territory for the purpose of transshipment operations to third countries."

The EU estimates that about 4-to-6 billion cubic meters (141 billion-212 billion cubic feet) of Russian LNG was shipped to third countries via EU ports last year. Russia is suspected of running a "ghost fleet" of up to 400 ships to evade sanctions and keep up the flow of energy earnings so that it can finance the war.

The measures will target ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore transfers as well as reloading operations. It also involves a crackdown on the re-export of LNG to third countries via the EU, plus a ban on new investments to help Russia complete LNG projects it is working on.

Scores of new "entities" - often companies, banks, agencies and other organizations - were added to the EU's list, including some in China, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. Many are accused of circumventing the bloc's sanctions or providing sensitive equipment to Russia.

More than 50 officials are also being targeted with asset freezes, as well as

travel bans. Russia's President Vladimir Putin, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and scores of lawmakers and several oligarchs are among more than 1,700 people already listed by the EU.

Over 400 entities previously hit include companies working in the military, aviation, shipbuilding and machinery sectors, the Wagner mercenary group, political parties and banks. Around 210 billion euros (\$225 billion) worth of Russian Central Bank assets are blocked in the EU.

After chairing the meeting, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said that "Putin wants to prove that Ukraine is vulnerable, and we have to prove that we will support Ukraine."

Borrell said that an agreement was reached to provide Ukraine with 1.4 billion euros (\$1.5 billion) in July, and a further 1 billion euros (\$1.1 billion) by the end of the year, to boost its stocks of air defense equipment and ammunition, and to help bolster the country's defense industry.

The money would be drawn from profits made from frozen Russian assets held in Europe, he said.

Earlier, some ministers had insisted that action must be taken to end hybrid attacks in Europe by Russia that take place in a "grey zone" just below the threshold of military action which are aimed at destabilizing Ukraine's backers.

Finnish Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen said that "there's a plethora of actions they have been undertaking against European countries." Finland has closed border crossings with Russia, blaming the Kremlin for an orchestrated campaign exploiting migrants.

"There is no observer status in Europe anymore to Russia's aggression. We are all victims of Russia's aggression," she said. "It is crucial that we keep on aiding Ukraine because Russia only understands power."

China to create new 'consumption' scenarios to tap consumer demand

BEIJING, June 25, (Xinhua) - China is moving to foster new consumption scenarios in multiple sectors, including tourism, automobiles and electronics, aiming to boost consumer demand and promote the steady growth of consumption.

According to the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the country's top economic planner, China will expand its visa-free transit policy, loosen vehicle purchase restrictions and spur intelligent, AI-powered electronics consumption.

The country will include more countries in the visa-free transit policy and increase inbound flights from major passenger source countries to optimize its entry and exit measures, stated a circular jointly issued by the NDRC and four other government bodies on Monday.

To further facilitate the travel experience of overseas tourists, China will launch additional high-quality inbound travel products and services.

Efforts should be made to improve street signs in foreign languages in public places such as popular tourist attractions, restaurants, hotels and airports, the circular noted.

In terms of payment services, China

will promote the acceptance of overseas bank cards in various venues and stores, enabling easier access to dining, accommodation, transportation, ticket purchases and reservations for international visitors to the country, according to the circular.

Chinese cities with restrictions on vehicle purchases are encouraged to ease these limitations and provide additional quotas for vehicle purchases. Local governments are encouraged to support vehicle replacement and renewal when conditions allow.

The circular noted that efforts will be made to steadily promote the commercialization of autonomous driving and new scenarios for advanced smart driving.

Automobile-related products and services will be enriched in diverse scenarios, such as car races, camping and car modification. The country will also further enhance the safe and convenient trading of used cars.

Furthermore, China will support the consumption of new-generation high-tech electronics, such as smart wearables and AI-powered humanoid robots.

The circular said that efforts would be made to facilitate human-computer interaction by promoting the development of technologies like flexible displays, supercharging, AI assistants and on-device large models.

Apple first target of EU's digital competition rules

Rulebook has tech giants on radar

LONDON, June 25, (AP) - European Union regulators on Monday leveled their first charges under the bloc's new digital competition rulebook, accusing Apple of preventing app makers from pointing users to cheaper options outside its App Store.

The European Commission said that according to the preliminary findings of its investigation, the restrictions that the iPhone maker imposes on developers using its mobile App Store had breached the 27-nation bloc's Digital Markets Act.

The rulebook, also known as the DMA, is a sweeping set of regulations aimed at preventing tech "gatekeepers" from cornering digital markets under threat of heavy financial penalties. The commission opened an initial round of investigations after it took effect in March, including a separate ongoing probe into whether Apple is doing enough to allow iPhone users to easily change web browsers, and other cases involving Google and Meta.

Apple has been facing pressure on both sides of the Atlantic to tear down some of the competitive barriers around its lucrative iPhone franchise.

The U.S. Justice Department filed a sweeping antitrust lawsuit against Apple this year, accusing it of illegally monopolizing the smartphone market and boxing out competitors, stifling innovation and keeping prices artificially high. By the time that case was filed, Apple had already started to comply with a U.S. court order enabling links to alternative payment systems within iPhone apps, but a judge has expressed frustration with the company's approach and has indicated may changes may be required.

App makers such as Spotify had complained for years about Apple's requirement that subscriptions only be bought through iOS apps, allowing the company to take a commission of up to 30%. Those grievances culminated in European regulators slapping Apple with a \$2 billion fine for unfairly favoring its music streaming service over Spotify and other rivals.

Under the DMA's provisions, app developers must be allowed to inform customers of cheaper purchasing options and direct them to those offers. The commission, the bloc's executive arm, said App Store rules "prevent app developers from freely steering consumers to alternative channels for offers and content."

Apple now has a chance to respond to the findings. The commission must make a final decision on Apple's compliance by March 2025. The company could face fines worth up to 10% of its global revenue, which could amount to billions of euros, or daily penalties.

The regulatory tensions prompted Apple to recently raise the specter of excluding the European market from a package of new artificial intelligence features coming to iPhones because the



The logo of Apple is illuminated at a store in the city center in Munich, Germany, on Dec. 16, 2020. European Union regulators have accused Apple of breaking new rules on digital competition by preventing software developers on its App Store from steering users to other venues. (AP)

Canada to start '30-day' consultation to slap surtax on Chinese electric vehicles

TORONTO, June 25, (AP) - Canada's government is investigating whether to impose a surtax on imports of Chinese-made electric vehicles.

A 30-day consultation on the issue will begin on July 2 to counter what Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland said Monday is a clear effort by Chinese companies to generate a global oversupply.

Canada's move comes weeks after both the United States and the European Commission announced plans to impose higher import tariffs on Chinese EVs this summer.

"Our automotive sector supports nearly 550,000 good paying Canadian jobs," Freeland said. "Canadian workers and the auto sector are fac-

ing unfair competition from China's intentional state directed policy of overcapacity that is undermining Canada's EV sector ability to compete in domestic and global markets."

The consultation will seek input on what is driving China's surging EV exports, including unfair market practices as well as labor and environmental standards.

In addition to a surtax, the consultation will consider whether Canada should change which cars are eligible for the federal EV purchase rebate worth up to \$5,000 Canadian (\$3,661) per vehicle.

It will also look at whether to expand investment restrictions in Canada.

Right now the only Chinese-

made EVs imported into Canada are from Tesla, made at the company's Shanghai factory. There are no Chinese-branded EVs sold or imported at the moment.

Freeland said Canada will act in concert with its allies in the United States and the European Union. She noted North America has an integrated auto sector, and said her government would ensure Canada doesn't become a dumping ground for Chinese oversupply.

U.S. President Joe Biden has said Chinese government subsidies for EVs and other consumer goods ensure that Chinese companies don't have to turn a profit, giving them an unfair advantage in global trade.

free apps, which don't pay any fees, from jumping ship.

"We are concerned Apple's new business model makes it too hard for app developers to operate as alternative marketplaces & reach their end users on iOS," the European Commissioner for Competition, Margrethe Vestager, said on social media.

Apple Inc. said over the past several months, it "has made a number of changes to comply with the DMA in response to feedback from developers and the European Commission."

"We are confident our plan complies with the law, and estimate more than 99% of developers would pay the same or less in fees to Apple under the new business terms we created," the company said in a statement. "All develop-

ers doing business in the EU on the App Store have the opportunity to utilize the capabilities that we have introduced, including the ability to direct app users to the web to complete purchases at a very competitive rate."

The company said it will "continue to listen and engage" with the commission.

The EU had been carrying out a similar investigation since 2020 into whether Apple's in-app purchasing system and restrictions violated Brussels' antitrust laws. But "to avoid multiple investigations into the very same conduct," that probe is being shut down to focus on the investigation under the DMA, which clearly spells out what Apple can't do, the commission said Monday.

AI song-generators Suno, Udio sued for copyright breach

BOSTON, June 25, (AP) — Big record companies are suing artificial intelligence song-generators Suno and Udio for copyright infringement, alleging that the AI music startups are exploiting the recorded works of artists from Chuck Berry to Mariah Carey.

The Recording Industry Association of America announced the lawsuits Monday brought by labels including Sony Music Entertainment, Universal Music Group and Warner Records.

One case was filed in federal court in Boston against Suno AI, and the other in New York against Uncharted Labs, the developer of Udio AI.

Suno AI CEO Mikey Shulman said in an emailed statement that the technology is “designed to generate completely new outputs, not to memorize and regurgitate pre-existing content” and doesn’t allow users to reference specific artists.

Shulman said his Cambridge, Massachusetts-based startup tried to explain this to labels “but instead of entertaining a good faith discussion, they’ve reverted to their old lawyer-led playbook.”

Udio didn’t immediately respond to requests for comment.

RIAA Chairman and CEO Mitch Glazier said in a written statement that the music industry is already collaborating with responsible AI developers but said that “unlicensed services like Suno and Udio that claim it’s ‘fair’ to copy an artist’s life’s work and exploit it for their own profit without consent or pay set back the promise of genuinely innovative AI for us all.”

AI has been a heated topic of conversation in the music industry,

with debates ranging from the creative possibilities of the new technology to concerns around its legality. In March, Tennessee became the first US state to pass legislation to protect songwriters, performers and other music industry professionals against the potential dangers of artificial intelligence. Supporters said the goal is to ensure that AI tools cannot replicate an artist’s voice without their consent.

The following month, over 200 artists signed an open letter submitted by the Artist Rights Alliance non-profit calling on artificial intelligence tech companies, developers, platforms, digital music services and platforms to stop using AI to infringe upon and devalue the rights of human artists.

The 2024 BET Awards are fast approaching. Last year’s show celebrated 50 years of hip-hop with tributes to the genre’s earliest voices, late legends and new talent during a show packed with spectacular performances that consistently felt like a party. This year is stacking up to be just as exciting with award-winning performers - **Lauryn Hill**, anyone? - and presenters.

Oscar-nominated actor **Taraji P. Henson** will once again host the BET Awards.

“I am thrilled to be returning as the host of the ‘BET Awards’ for the third time,” she said in a statement. “I am also looking forward to celebrating my peers and the impact of our culture on entertainment.”

Here’s everything you need to know before the June 30 show.

The BET Awards will air live on June 30 at 8 p.m. Eastern on BET from the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles.

Drake leads the nominations with seven, including an album of the year nod for his eighth studio album, “For All the Dogs.” One of the awards he’s up for is the music video for “First Person Shooter,” his collaboration with **J. Cole** that may have been the catalyst for his recent beef with rapper **Kendrick Lamar**.

Nicki Minaj follows with six, including for album of the year for her highly anticipated “Pink Friday 2” release. Two of her nominations were for her song with Ice Spice, “Barbie World,” part of the blockbuster “Barbie” soundtrack.

J. Cole, **Sexyy Red**, **SZA** and best new artist Grammy winner **Victoria Monét** tie with five nods; **21 Savage**, **Beyoncé**, **Doja Cat**, **Megan Thee Stallion**, **Tyla** and **Usher** boast four each.

A few months after wowing audiences while headlining the 2024 Super Bowl halftime show, Usher will also receive the lifetime achievement BET award.

The film nominees this year are: “American Fiction”; “Bob Marley: One Love”; “Renaissance: A Film by Beyoncé”; “Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse”; “The Book of Clarence”; “The Color Purple”; “The Equalizer 3” and “The Little Mermaid.”

Simone Biles, **Naomi Osaka**, **Steph Curry**, **LeBron James** and **Patrick Mahomes** are among the sports stars competing for awards.

Music

Variety



A model wears a creation for the Chanel Haute Couture Fall-Winter 2024-2025 collection presented Tuesday, June 25, 2024 in Paris. (AP) — Details Page 12

Television

Gladstone brings heart, humor to gripping tale

Laughter, resilience in ‘Fancy Dance’

LOS ANGELES, June 25, (AP) — Lily Gladstone knows the gravity stories about what she calls the “epidemic” of missing and murdered Indigenous people have. But she also values humor in telling those stories.

In “Fancy Dance,” released Friday in limited theatrical and streaming release on Apple TV+ June 28, Gladstone plays Jax, who has cared for her niece, Roki, since her sister’s disappearance on the Seneca-Cayuga reservation in Oklahoma. As the pair searches for their loved one and prepares for Roki’s upcoming powwow, they share moments of unexpected levity baked into the emotional story.

“You would be very hard pressed to find any Indigenous person in North America today that is not touched by an element of the story very personally,” Gladstone said in a recent interview with The Associated Press. “We all know an MMIP (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Person). It’s something that we all collectively kind of grieve and work to fix. ... We stick together and we survive through it by being funny, by finding humor in it.”

Newcomer Isabel Deroy-Olson, who stars alongside Gladstone as Roki, said the film’s humor helps the audience get through the heavier moments of the story — which was also true for the actors.

“With all of us having a pretty similar sense of humor, we brought that behind the scenes, too, as a way to kind of lift each other up, and that’s so true in all of our communities,” she said. “We just like to laugh with each other. Showing that both on and off screen was really important to us.”

“You have to keep joy, you have to keep laughter, and you have to keep our optimism in order to survive an ongoing genocide,” said director and co-writer Erica Tremblay.

Named after Jacqueline “Jax” Agtuca, who works for the National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center, Gladstone’s character grows frustrated with the lack of attention or care authorities put towards her sister’s case and turns to her community for help in the search. Gladstone said amplifying this kind of story on screen without it being “shoved down anybody’s throat” can inspire change.

“By being and embodying a character, a person who’s going through the steps of doing that work, you’re inviting the audience into that perspective, into that world where they get to learn about the jurisdic-

tional loopholes and the inequities in society that are creating the obstacles for the characters they’re rooting for,” she said.

“You learn about that obstacle in a way that you have a desire to change it, instead of just hearing about it in a PowerPoint presentation or as a talking point on a news segment that you’re going to fast forward through because you’re more interested in what the score was for your team,” Gladstone continued.

While movies and shows have broached the subject of missing Indigenous people before, they’ve often been criticized for coming up short in accurately and respectfully depicting the issue or don’t reach a wide audience. Taylor Sheridan, co-creator of Paramount hit “Yellowstone,” wrote and directed one of the very few widely distributed films about the topic with 2017’s “Wind River.”

ABC’s 2022 drama “Alaska Daily” also explored violence against Native women and the lack of attention paid to their cases, but was canceled after one season. ABC had previously put out “Big Sky,” a Montana-set drama that premiered in 2020 and caught flak for centering on white victims instead of Indigenous women, who make up the majority of the state’s missing and murdered population.

Missing

The Bureau of Indian Affairs estimates there are approximately 4,200 missing and murdered cases nationally that have gone unsolved.

“Fancy Dance” focuses on the lack of institutional support and jurisdictional issues that make solving cases of missing Indigenous people difficult. In another shift from its predecessors, “Fancy Dance” does not show any violence against women on screen, a move that is often viewed as exploitative.

The film premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2023, and despite critical acclaim, it had not been picked up by a distributor until over a year later. Tremblay said the filmmaking team didn’t see the offers they were expecting based on how they were “hitting the checklist of what it takes to make a successful indie film,” but noted that the film landing on Apple’s streaming service is their “dream ending.”

“The lynchpin to the whole plan to get this film out into the world was Lily’s continued advocacy of the film and the beautiful moment that that she and all of the Indigenous cast and crew of “Killers of the Flower Moon” had last year,” Tremblay said. “Lily using some of that shine to aim at “Fancy Dance,” I think was criti-

cal for us and we’re so grateful to be where we’re at.”

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Occasionally, while filming an intense courtroom scene for his new series, **Jake Gyllenhaal** would catch his “Presumed Innocent” co-star **Peter Sarsgaard** glaring at him from across the room.

“It was just funny,” recalled Gyllenhaal in a recent interview alongside Sarsgaard, doing a quick impression of Sarsgaard’s stare.

“It’s like, ‘OK, OK,’” joked Gyllenhaal as if to say “tone it down” as Sarsgaard cackled at the commentary.

The two rib each other like family because they are family. Sarsgaard is married to Gyllenhaal’s older sister, actor and director **Maggie Gyllenhaal**.

It’s not Gyllenhaal and Sarsgaard’s first time acting together, either. They also co-starred in 2005’s “Jarhead” and 2007’s “Rendition.” But “Presumed Innocent” is their first series together (and Gyllenhaal’s first TV show ever) — and marks the first time they’re playing adversaries.

Premiered recently on Apple TV+, “Presumed Innocent” is based on the legal thriller novel by **Scott Turow** that was originally adapted as a 1990 film starring **Harrison Ford**.

Here, Gyllenhaal plays **Chicago** prosecutor **Rusty Sabich**, charged with murdering his colleague — an accusation that has fractured the district attorney’s office. Sarsgaard is attorney **Tommy Molt**, another co-worker intent on proving Sabich’s guilt. Meanwhile, Sabich’s marriage to **Barbara (Ruth Negga)** is falling apart under the weight of the accusation and the potential he could be found guilty.

Early scripts didn’t pit Sabich and Molt against each other quite as antagonistically, but creator and showrunner **David E. Kelley** took note of Gyllenhaal and Sarsgaard’s chemistry and pivoted.

“It’s a little bit like a football quarterback coming up to the line at some point and looking at what you’ve got in front of you ... and seeing where the opportunities lay,” Kelley said.

O-T Fagbenle, who plays attorney **Nico Della Guardia**, also enjoyed watching the two spar.

“I’m an ignoramus. I only found out on set that they were related,” Fagbenle said. “They got on great, obviously, but they really have brotherly kind of, you know, roughhousing. Not physical but like verbal. And so when I saw them, I was just like, ‘Oh, wow, there is such a history between you two.’”

Features

ARABIC TIMES
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 2024

SANTA FE, N.M.: Alec Baldwin’s defense attorneys argued Monday that damage done during FBI testing to a revolver that killed a cinematographer on the set of the Western “Rust” has stripped them of the ability to put on a proper defense at the actor’s forthcoming trial, and asked a New Mexico judge to dismiss the involuntary manslaughter charge against him.

“They understood that this was potentially exculpatory evidence and they destroyed it anyway,” Baldwin lawyer **John Bash** said during a virtual court hearing. “It’s outrageous and it requires dismissal.”

Prosecutors argued that the gun breaking into pieces during testing was “unfortunate” but that Baldwin’s team still has plenty of evidence for a defense and did not meet their burden for having the case thrown out.

Judge **Mary Marlowe Sommer** said she expects to issue a ruling on the motion to dismiss on Friday.

During the fatal rehearsal on Oct. 21, 2021, Baldwin was pointing the gun at **Halyna Hutchins** on a movie-set ranch when it went off, killing her and wounding director **Joel Souza**, who survived.

Sheriff’s investigators initially sent the revolver to the FBI only for DNA testing, but when an FBI analyst heard Baldwin say in an ABC TV interview in December that he never pulled the trigger, the agency told the local authorities they could conduct an accidental discharge test.

The FBI was told to go ahead, and tested the revolver by striking it from several angles with a rawhide mallet. One of those strikes caused the gun to break into three pieces.

The FBI had made police and prosecutors aware that the test could do major damage to the gun, which hadn’t been tested by the defense, but the authorities went ahead with the test without bothering to disassemble it and photograph its parts first, thus eliminating their most critical evidence in the case, Baldwin’s lawyers argued.

“We can never use our own expert to examine that firearm,” Bash said. The prosecution argued that the gun was not destroyed as the defense said.

“The parts are still available,” special prosecutor **Erlinda Johnson** said. “The fact that this gun was unfortunately damaged does not deprive the defendant of ability to question the evidence.”

But Baldwin’s lawyers said the damage done to the top notch on the revolver’s hammer rendered the

most important testing impossible. They argued that if Marlowe Sommer declined to throw out the case, she should at least not allow any of the technical gun analysis to be presented at trial. (AP)

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LONDON: Taylor Swift had a surprise for fans attending her



Baldwin Swift

Eras Tour at London’s Wembley Stadium on Sunday: her boyfriend and tight end for the Super Bowl-winning **Kansas City Chiefs**, **Travis Kelce**.

Dressed in a tuxedo with a tailcoat and top hat, Kelce joined Swift on stage for a transitional sketch that leads into the song “I Can Do It With a Broken Heart.”

In fan videos, he’s seen carrying Swift, urging her into a costume change. He fanned and powdered her face as part of the act.

Last month, in her first Eras Tour concert since the release of “The Tortured Poets Department,” Swift shook up her setlist. At the La Défense Arena in Paris, fans were treated to the inclusion of

new songs from the record-breaking album released in April.

The billion-dollar Eras Tour is meant to be a career retrospective, with Swift performing more than 40 tracks reflecting 17 years of recorded music. “The Tortured Poets Department” was her first brand-new release since the tour’s start. (AP)

